

O C T - D E C 1 9 6 6

## Frank Chodorov: Teacher

By ROBERT LEFEVRE

THE STOCKY figure with the pipe sat at the desk tamping tobacco into his ever-present briar. Crumbs of tobacco cascaded down his ample foyer and cluttered the otherwise clear space before him.

"The trouble with you conservatives," he observed with twinkling eye and protruding lip, "is that you keep asking for the government to do your job for you. We need some people around who are anti-statists. You conservatives don't really like the state, but you act as if you couldn't get along without it."

A class at the Freedom School was in progress at Rampart College, in Colorado, and Frank Chodorov was presiding. There was never a question as to where Frank stood. He was opposed to socialism in all its forms. There was never a question as to Frank's antecedents, either. Born a Jew, and with the map of Israel stamped on his prominent features, he offered an unforgettable picture of kindness and intellect working as a team.

He had neither political ambition nor political illusions. Insofar as the government was concerned, he required no interpreter. Freedom was his dream and the key to his thinking—freedom, and the right of a man to own his own property and manage it without interference from any state authority.

Frank was not an economist. He had studied economics as a student of the Henry George School, through which he had risen to become one of its more distinguished teachers. Without academic credentials in this field, he became one of the best informed and most useful instructors available.

It was here at Rampart that he obtained what was, perhaps, the deepest wish of his life: to have serious-minded students in a class with him, where he had the time to take up the study of all types of socialism and to reveal and expound upon their logical and economic weaknesses.

He was on the staff of visiting discussion leaders when the school opened in 1957 and continued with these courses for the last five years of active life that were to be made available to him.

While Frank was giving a talk to a graduating class in the summer of 1961, when he was a resident instructor, fate, in the form of a cerebral hemorrhage, struck him down. He was never able after that date to resume a productive schedule. But he remained in the background, a lovable and pathetic figure, visited by friends and cared for by his daughter, Mrs. Grace Klein.

Those who sat at the feet of Frank Chodorov received an indelible impression. Here was a knowledgeable man and a gifted exponent of liberty. His eyes twinkled with good humor almost constantly. I do not recall ever seeing him resentful or angry, even in the face of exasperating density. Sometimes one could have forgiven him something in the way of an outburst. But he carefully and gently refrained from a display of temperament. He reserved his scorn for government lackeys and those who continually rushed to the state for money or other favors.

One day in class, two very fine ladies of divergent religious faiths began a heated discussion of theology. One lady was a Catholic; the other, a Christian Scientist. Each defended her position with fervor while making unsubtle comments concerning the beliefs of the other. Frank tried repeatedly to regain the floor, in an effort to return to the subject, but couldn't be heard above the shrill strophe and anti-strophe.

Finally, as both contestants paused for breath, his voice boomed clear. "The trouble with you Christians," he said kindly, "is that you sound just like Jews."

And there was the evening when a particularly determined young man repeatedly objected to the presumed state of the world if we could not have social security, welfare payments, unemployment insurance from the state, and other tax-supported benefits.

"What would happen," he cried, "if the government stopped providing these things and the market place didn't step in to help?"

Since this was the fourth or fifth time the same objection had been raised, Frank paused before answer-

ing, and silence filled the room.

"You'd suffer," was his brief dismissal.

Possibly the apex of these Chodorovisms was provided one day when someone insisted that the cure for all ills was to elect Republicans to office. No matter how Frank strove to relate the problems raised to the principles of sociology, psychology, and economics, the uneasy student continually offered the panacea. Elect Republicans.

Frank smiled and took his time relighting his pipe. Then he rumbled, "The trouble with you Republicans is that you are proposing to clean up the whole house but you expect to leave the business intact."

Frank and I had only one major point of difference. He had been trained as a Georgist, and whenever the discussion of land arose, he was prone to revert to Georgist solutions. We never had a falling out over this matter. But our views were distinct and divergent. In private, Frank would admit that the Georgist offering was not practical. But, because of his long support of the doctrines of *Progress and Poverty*, it was difficult for him to see any other way of dealing with the scarce factor of land.

Once, following a long discussion on the subject, he struck his colors. "You are right, Bob," he conceded. "The Georgist solution is only a panacea." And he went off muttering under his breath, "Just a panacea." Nonetheless, to the best of my knowledge, he continued to support Georgist doctrine.

And so he served—tirelessly and with unfailing good humor. He would arrive at the start of the summer season, clamber out of the car that had driven him from the airport, and grab me in an enormous bear hug. "Hello, you old anti-statist, you," would be his greeting.

It was always a joy to see him. He was never late for class, and sometimes I had real concern for his health when I would see him on his decidedly bowed legs, wheeling up the hill, puffing and panting in an effort to make certain that the students didn't have to wait for him.

With the passing of the years, Frank became increasingly pessimis-