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## A Letter to Frank

By JACK SCHWARTZMAN

*Individualism is not acquired;  
it is inbred.*

— CHODOROV

DEAR FRANK:

Yesterday, the President of the United States ordered an "escalation" of the Vietnamese war. He also demanded an increase in the federal income tax. Today, the Governor of New York "requested" a boost in the state tax. Last week, the Mayor of New York City "suggested" an additional local tax. All week long, race riots and labor strikes have caused havoc throughout the country. Unrest, bitterness, hatred, and strife are part of our daily life. Therefore, Frank, I thought of you.

I remember your words: "Taxation is robbery. . . First comes the confiscation under cover of law; with confiscation comes power; power feeds on power; and so we have the Welfare State, or the complete denial of the sanctity of the individual and the glorification of the amorphous god, State. . .

"The State never abdicates; it is constitutionally unable to do so. Its character demands that it accumulate power, always at the expense of Society; and there is nothing else it can do. It is a beast of prey, without any means of sustenance other than what it can grab. . . The power acquired by the State during war—when fear of a foreign enemy reduces resistance to its encroachments—is never relinquished; each war strengthens the State and weakens Society."

How right you were, Frank! How unfortunately right!

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I remember the last time we met. (Was it only a few months ago?) That hollow ghost on the hospital bed—was it really you? I called your attention to the charming woman who came to see you; you opened your eyes, but the twinkle that once lived there was gone forever. The stare was unseeing. "I want to sleep," you mumbled—and we departed. Close to tears, a pretty visitor remarked: "It makes one almost ashamed to be young and alive."

I remember the first time we met. (Was it really twenty-eight years ago?) "A pleasant, burly man," the *Cue* magazine article described you.

You looked more a football coach than the Director of the Henry George School in New York. How fiery, how dynamic, your classes were! "A teacher," you used to say, looking reflectively at the lovely legs of the sweet young thing in the front row, "is a conductor of electricity." Yes, indeed! The very air was charged with currents of sparkling knowledge.

I remember many "Chodorovia": the wild faculty meetings, the editorial discussions on *The (old) Freeman*, the picketing of the school because of your vociferous opposition to World War II, and your words as you watched the pickets: "Long after the names of these bastards are forgotten, my name will be remembered." (What were the names of those b. . . gentlemen?)

I remember your "expulsion" from the school—both as Director and editor, your little office "in exile," your days of struggle and poverty, and your hoarse shouting at the Polo Grounds as we rooted for Durocher's Giants.

I remember the new publication, *analysis*, and your herculean efforts to keep it going. Laughingly, you appeared to deprecate your own efforts. "It is like spitting [you employed another word] in the wind," you used to say. Yet, when some unknowing innocent dared question the wisdom of keeping the new venture alive, your eyes blazed defiance. "A man," you snapped, "must do what he must. Besides—it is fun to fight!"

I remember the sad day that *analysis* ceased to exist. I recall, as well, your return from Colorado after the stroke, your spirited participation in the numerous discussions of our group, and the dinner that we gave in your honor. I likewise recall your presence one evening when a renowned millionaire was delivering a talk, packed (in your estimation) with nonsensical platitudes. During a temporary lull in the speech, a startled audience heard your booming voice snarl across the room: "Bull! Bull! Bull!"

I remember nostalgically the final performance of your intellectual life: the founding of FRAGMENTS. I recall the mutual autographing of the first issue, the acclamation which the lead article (a reprint of yours) re-

ceived, and the last "live" essay that you "wrote." It was "The Great Leader," published in FRAGMENTS, and I recall with what difficulty you dictated it—struggling to make your meaning clear.

I remember vividly being present (by a strange chance—and after a long absence) at your home on the very day that Kennedy (whom you had been bitterly attacking for leading this country toward Statism) was assassinated. I recall the tears streaming down your cheeks (a startling sight!) while you were trying to explain (in language increasingly difficult to comprehend) that you were lamenting the death by violence of a personable young man—not the President of a country. It was an unforgettable incident.

I remember our last ride. We "borrowed" you from your convalescent home, and drove through the countryside while you desperately tried to express yourself. I thought to myself: "This is Frank Chodorov in the car: Frank Chodorov, once a most loquacious speaker, once a most eloquent writer!" And I could not help comparing your fate with that of H. L. Mencken.

I remember—finally—New Year's Eve, 1966: the date of your funeral. The chapel was packed. I recall thinking: "What would Frank do if he were alive now?" And suddenly, I realized how foolish the thought was. The entire room, Frank, was "alive" with your personality; even in "death," you radiated the philosophy to which all of us pay lip service: namely, that so long as any one person still thinks in terms of "inalienable rights," or "natural law," or the eternal "I," to that extent the dignity of man can never be diminished; to that extent the yearning for freedom can never be extinguished.

I have come to the end of my letter, Frank—and must now "sign off." It was a rare experience to have been your colleague; it was a genuine privilege to have been

Your friend,  
Jack

P.S. One thing more: please do not forget to pinch that pretty angelette—at least once—for me.