

Foreword

IT IS HARD to think of an age which, with less reason, has been more smugly self-satisfied than ours. The orthodoxies of the most solidly established high religious ages, founded as they were upon a belief in the transcendent sources of truth, have always been safeguarded by their very belief in the transcendent from the idolatry of man's worship of himself and his established habits. The power of kings and the pride of prelates remained intrinsically limited by the common acceptance of truths to which all men were subject. So when abuses proliferated and prophets arose to condemn the growth of power and the distortion of dogma, though their way was hard, they could appeal to fundamental beliefs to which everyone adhered.

But in our society, where relativism rules supreme, where truth is not merely distorted but its very existence denied, power grows to monstrous proportions without any inner check in the bosoms of those who hold it. In place of truth, the ideal is adjustment, that is, the acceptance of whatever happen to be the modes of thought and action established among us—not because it is purported that they are true, but just because they are. In this paradise for power un-

checked by any criterion but its own, the way of the man who would bear witness to and fight for truth because it is truth is doubly hard. Not only, as in former ages, must he confront the established authorities of the day with the divergence of their acts from the demands of truth; he has to substantiate—explicitly or implicitly—the very title of truth as criterion.

This is the road Frank Chodorov has chosen. As essayist and as editor, on the lecture platform and in his personal influence upon those around him, he has devoted himself to a single end: to bear witness against that worship of the collective which is the omnipresent political error of the 20th century, and to vindicate the primary value of the individual person as the foundation from which all political thought and action derives its meaning.

His firm defense of the value of the individual person is in turn based upon his insistence on the validity of objective truth, of the Natural Law as source and criterion of right and wrong in the relations among men. This, in the atmosphere of the day, is adding insult to injury. Not content with attacking the dominant contemporary assumption that the collective "people," as represented by the state, is the moral center of human existence, infinitely superior to any mere individual person, he strikes at the same time at the positivism and the pragmatism that have made it possible for this assumption to take root and grow.

Frank Chodorov has devoted the whole of his mature life to a struggle against the twin perversions of concentrated power in the state and intellectual irresponsibility in the academy. As editor of *The Freeman*, *Analysis*, and *Human Events*, in his multifarious writings and speeches, in his books—*One Is a Crowd* and *The Income Tax: Root of All*

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Evil—he has never ceased to hammer away at his essential theme: the danger of concentrated power to the freedom of individual human beings. One does not have to agree with him on every aspect of his analysis, or with all his proposals, to recognize that his voice is one of the few clear voices of freedom speaking today. He has truly something of the prophet about him—not the hortatory prophet, but the quiet speaker of parables.

Now in his seventies, he gives us in this book a vigorous and compelling epitome of his beliefs. The sentence with which it ends, "The will for freedom comes before freedom," reflects his purpose and underlines his achievement. For to the re-awakening of the will to freedom and the understanding of freedom, Frank Chodorov has contributed mightily.

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