

# Democratic vocation, moral principles marked lifetime of Arturo Frondizi

by Carlos José González Cabral

*The author worked for the last five years as the private and political secretary of Dr. Arturo Frondizi, former President of Argentina (1958-62).*

The editors of *Executive Intelligence Review* requested that I write on some aspects of the personality and thinking of Dr. Arturo Frondizi, constitutional President of the Argentine Republic from 1958 to 1962. It was my great honor to serve as his private and political secretary for the last five years of his life, a period during which the deceased statesman lived in selfless austerity. As I wrote previously in one of our national newsweeklies, I am not going to praise him on account of his modesty, nor would he have wanted me to. For that reason, I never considered him my boss, but my example. As he climbs the stairs to heaven, I feel certain that he would be pleased with my reviewing some of his thoughts and definitions, which shall always serve the cause of humanity. Being able to serve at his side was a gift of Divine Providence. He died lucid and poor.

Arturo Frondizi was born on Oct. 28, 1908 in the city of Paso de los Libres in the province of Corrientes, land of the Liberator Don José de San Martín. His parents, Julio Frondizi

and Isabel Ercoli, were Italian immigrants from Gubbio. He spent his first years of primary school at a school in Concepción del Uruguay in the province of Entre Rios, and then finished at the Rafael Herrera Vegas school in Buenos Aires—a girls' school. By who knows what premonition, the school director justified the admission of a boy by noting that he would surely be an important man in the future. By 1924, with his family now living in Buenos Aires, he finished high school at the Mariano Moreno National School, and graduated with Honorable Mention in 1926.

He studied law at the School of Law and Social Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires, finishing in just three years with honors. But he didn't want to be recognized in a public ceremony by then-provisional President General José F. Uriburu, who, on Sept. 6, 1930, had overthrown constitutional President Hipólito Yrigoyen. He argued that "I cannot receive the legitimately won Diploma of Honor from the hands of illegitimate authorities." Thus in his youth, Frondizi's democratic vocation and moral principles were indelibly affirmed.

I thought it useful to report on these details of his life, because they will help us to understand many of Arturo



*Dr. Frondizi with his wife, Elena Faggionato de Frondizi, who died in 1990. During their 57-year marriage, Mrs. Frondizi was a dedicated partner, who fully supported her husband's political fight for the industrialization of Argentina and Ibero-America.*

Fronidzi's personal and political positions. I have no intention of writing his biography, which I leave to the historians. Knowing how I came to mention these few facts, I'm sure he would have told me, "Friend González, what's important is not for the people to know where I was born or studied, and much less what my habits and tastes are. What matters is for our people to know how I think as I try to address their problems and concerns."

### A passion

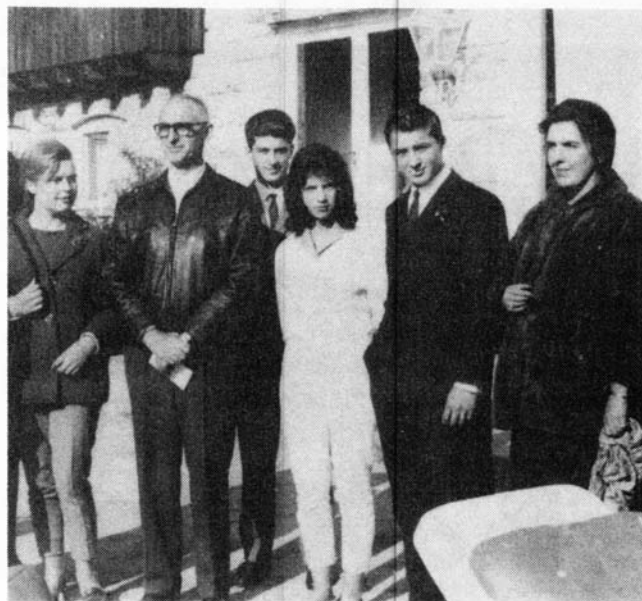
As I write this modest evocation, I am struck on the death of our dear friend Arturo Frondizi, just as he was on the death of Hipólito Yrigoyen, that "two distinct but similar levels remain in my memory." On a personal level, it will be a permanent and unforgettable experience. On the second level, I am obliged to interpret the deepest aspect of his thinking, and thus to help society through political action based on the ideas he sowed.

Fronidzi was pure rationality, but he had the warmth of friendship, of tolerance and respect. He lived reading, meditating, and analyzing. He permanently sought to know *why* things happened and how people thought. Writer Nelly Casas, in her book *Fronidzi: A History of Politics and Loneliness*, wrote that when he met his future wife, Elena, he told her, "My first priority is my political fight; with me you will have no security or company." She replied, "That doesn't matter. I shall always be at your side." They were married on Jan. 5, 1933. Casas continued: "For Arturo Frondizi, nothing comes before his [political] militance, and no one before the Fatherland." In his book *Fronidzi, Behavior and Thought*, writer Cruz Mazadho wrote ". . . He led a double life: that of a politician who fights unceasingly, and that of an intellectual who gives classes, runs magazines and newspapers, studies, and writes."

### Destined for greatness

In 1926, at the age of 18, Arturo Frondizi wrote a magazine article in which he said that "today's generation [remember when this was written—CGC] should know that the formidable task before it is the social question, and by all means at its disposal—justice, hygiene, science, and will—it must make effective the Christian maxim, 'Love each other.'" At about the same time, writing on the question "what is the Fatherland," he said, "the idea of Fatherland resides in, and rests its golden pedestal on, the moral and historical traditions of a people, and at the same time, the memory of the past gains greater force in the vision of the future." Arturo Frondizi's spiritual education within a Catholic home, and the positive influence of his high-school and university professors, to whom he always paid homage, consolidated in his personality the conviction that peace and the rule of law were the only paths which would lead the human being to a destiny of greatness.

In 1933, as a young lawyer, he assumed the defense of 196 political prisoners with the following idea as his central



*Dr. Frondizi visited by teachers and students during his confinement to a hotel in Bariloche, after he was overthrown by a military coup in March 1962.*

theme: "[Peace] cannot be won by violence or the persecution or extermination of adversaries, but by the faithful enforcement of fundamental laws, and the carrying out of each citizen's duties." Fifty years later, Frondizi was to repeat these words to [U.S. President] George Bush, because of the latter's unjust persecution of Lyndon LaRouche. There is little doubt that Frondizi's political and intellectual action was inspired by the deep spiritual, democratic, moral, and pacifist values of Hipólito Yrigoyen, the man he considered to be his teacher. This great Argentine, overthrown by the entrenched oligarchy in 1930, told President Herbert Hoover in 1930 that "reaffirming my religious beliefs that men must be sacred for men and nations for nations and that we must, in a common effort, rebuild the labor of centuries on the basis of a more ideal culture and civilization, of a more solid fraternity and in greater harmony with Divine Providence." This also explains why, after 60 years of defending prisoners, Arturo Frondizi confessed to His Holiness John Paul II in the Aug. 17, 1993 letter he wrote on LaRouche's behalf, that he had been strongly influenced by *The Science of Christian Economy*, the book LaRouche authored while in prison, which states that "in Christian civilization, man must use that quality of being in the image of the living God, the living image of God, alive. He must use reason. His job must be to flow from reason."

Speaking once of common and political crimes, Arturo Frondizi underscored that "it is not possible to equate either morally or legally the man who steals or kills with the man who leaves his home, his wife, and children to risk his life in defense of a political ideal." This also explains that the friendship between Lyndon LaRouche and Arturo Frondizi



*Dr. Frondizi with former Gen. Juan Domingo Perón, in 1973, when Perón returned to Argentina after many years in exile to become President until his death in 1974.*

was not mere coincidence, but the result of profound agreements.

### **The option**

Arturo Frondizi passionately defended development policies, and during his 1958-62 government he set up indestructible landmarks in that direction which, despite being buried by traitors, will inevitably be unearthed by a people who, sooner or later, will see their real destiny above and beyond today's leadership in Argentina and in the entire continent—elites enmired in total decadence.

In his speech before the Legislative Assembly upon becoming President on May 1, 1958, he posed to his nation the option of "continuing paralyzed in our development, gradually impoverishing ourselves, stagnant in our passions and doubting our own abilities, plunging toward backwardness and national disintegration. Or, on the other hand, taking stock of reality, and with an energetic thrust, move forward with decisiveness and courage to conquer the future through the path of progress and the country's greatness."

Determined to fight tirelessly for national development, Frondizi forged a close friendship with President Kennedy in search of the necessary understanding with the United States in support of a policy of economic and cultural integration which would tend to resolve all of the problems and concerns not only of Argentines, but of all the Ibero-American people. President Frondizi excelled in Argentine political life, because at every moment he applied a policy of preserving the

constitutional order, while guaranteeing the integration of the Armed Forces and Argentine workers in defending the national interest, and eliminating false confrontations and promoting a vigorous process of industrialization.

After only three years, his policies achieved oil self-sufficiency, increasing production by 138%. Steel production tripled, and the chemical and automobile industries took off. In 1961, some 137,000 cars were produced and 20,000 tractors sold, a good reflection of the strength of the internal market. Between 1960 and 1962, the year in which he was overthrown, inflation dropped by 50%, and 250,000 workers removed from the state sector found employment in the labor market. These achievements led to a drop in the budget deficit from 7.7% in 1959 to 1.7% in 1962. Despite these advances, some labor leaders and politicians, in connivance with coup-plotters and the big importing holding companies, tried to sabotage the President's program of "national development, social peace, and legality for all." Frondizi met with several world leaders, and was praised for his actions by, among others, Charles de Gaulle, Konrad Adenauer, Indira Gandhi, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and, importantly, John F. Kennedy.

French writer André Malraux stated that Frondizi was a talented President, almost too good for Latin America's reality. On April 15, 1958, as President-elect, Frondizi gave a presentation at a conference at the University of Santiago in Chile entitled "The Transformation of Latin America's Structures." After listening to his speech, Chilean poet Pablo Neruda presented Frondizi with his own *Complete Works* with the inscription "to Arturo Frondizi, whose words in Chile will awaken our America."

### **An admonition**

In 1974, on the occasion of a meeting called to discuss political alliances, Frondizi told then-President Gen. Juan Domingo Perón that his government's economic policies were wiping out the business sector's profits ". . . with the double consequence of eliminating investment, fostering scarcity, and [promoting] denationalization and penetration of the monopolies." Developments today, not only in Argentina but throughout Ibero-America, prove Frondizi right. Speaking that same year as the chairman of his party, Frondizi said: "Necessary revolutions cannot be replaced by the simple functioning of political institutions which do not operate effectively when they are not supported by a solid material base. Institutional stability and social peace are not achieved in the framework of economic strangulation."

When on July 22, 1988 at the age of 80, Arturo Frondizi left the party over which he had presided in the national arena, due to differences in analyzing the causes of great national problems and the measures needed to address them, he vowed to continue disseminating his ideas, respecting those who disagreed, but without concessions or wavering. Less than two years ago, a reporter asked him if he belonged

to some political party. He replied "to none, nor do I support any candidate. I am a pure nationalist." That was Arturo Frondizi!

*EIR*'s readers are familiar with much of his thinking, as some of his writings have appeared in the magazine and in its Spanish-language supplement *Resumen Ejecutivo*. Moreover, his efforts on behalf of Lyndon H. LaRouche have also been widely reported on. The torch he took up as he began his political fight many years ago will permanently enlighten us. He never sowed hatred or grudges, but possessed a great vocation of service on behalf of all of the peoples of Ibero-America.

I know positively that two of Arturo Frondizi's dearest hopes at the end of his life were to see the definitive exoneration of Lyndon LaRouche and to visit the tomb of his intimate friend, John F. Kennedy. Out of respect for his memory, I want to make this known publicly, together with the text of the letter he sent on Jan. 27, 1995 to Sen. Edward M. Kennedy on the death of his dear mother, Rose Kennedy. In part, it read: "Allow me to request, with the boldness of an old man, that in these tragic times for Ibero-America, you take up the unceasing fight to save our people. The legacy of John F. Kennedy is intact and in full effect. The New Frontier has arisen once more." Then he added: "Your victory in the recent elections, in the midst of your party's unfavorable avatars, should perhaps be interpreted as a call or a message which, coming from Arlington [National Cemetery] flies over the pages of *Profiles in Courage*."

This was one of the last letters written by the departed statesman. Already in a May 14, 1993 letter to President William J. Clinton, he had said that, like John F. Kennedy, destiny had placed [Clinton] at the crossroads of "freedom and well-being or poverty and submission."

And once more, Arturo Frondizi did his duty. On Oct. 28, 1993, during a public celebration of his 85th birthday, he told his friends: "The end of my days will find me together with my people and defending their legitimate rights. . . . Were I not to do this, my life would have no meaning."

Let me take the liberty of closing here with the words of condolence which Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. sent to the friends and family of President Arturo Frondizi, entitled "The Torch Has Been Passed:"

"I believe that the great service done to me by our departed friend is generally known in Argentina, and in high places in other parts of the world. He was a true and generous friend to me, and a treasured collaborator on world issues on which we have shared a profound concern since our first meeting, as dinner guests of two mutual friends, nearly eleven years ago. In him, I have met a soul of rare beauty and excellence. I shall miss his presence very much, while I carry my share of the torch which his tired hands passed to us during his last days."

With great humility, a great man said goodbye to another great man.

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## Documentation

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# Arturo Frondizi in his own words

## Speech to the U.S. Congress

*From a speech to the joint session of the U.S. Congress, Jan. 21, 1959, entitled "Argentina and the United States."*

This is the first time an Argentine President has visited the United States, but we have so much in common that rather than a stranger, I feel that I am a member, together with the millions of inhabitants of this great nation, of that grand human experience which is the community of American nations. . . .

Over time, history seems to have affirmed our similarities. Not only were our two countries singled out for national independence, individual freedom, and that wonderful adventure of democratic government. They also demonstrated a similar capacity for assimilating universal culture and an equal pride in defending their sovereignty and self-determination under all circumstances. . . .

The origin of the unity of the Americas is a spiritual one. This continent rose up in history as the land of hope and freedom. Our ancestors envisioned an America in which man could be fulfilled without oppression, injustice or persecution. Thus the great American achievements were always related to freedom. That is why the military heroes of continental independence were statesmen, and history does not remember them as conquerors but as liberators.

The American ideal of democracy, justice, and freedom has been fruitful because it is based on a spiritual conception of man. . . . For us, the human being is a sacred being, and his rights and the institutions which protect his freedom are also sacred. Our concept of spirit, as the driving force of man and of history, is the fundamental reason why the sons of this continent cannot be communists. . . .

We pose the force of the spirit as driving history, and we proclaim the essential unity of the Americas. But these statements cannot cause us to ignore the real and painful fact of unequal continental development. We cannot hide the harsh reality of millions of beings in Latin America who live in backwardness and misery. Nor can we deny that under these social and economic conditions which contradict our ideals of justice and freedom, the life of the spirit becomes untenable. A poor people without hope is not free. A stagnant and impoverished country cannot protect its democratic institutions. On the contrary, it is prone to anarchy and dictatorship. . . .