

ANDREW J. GALAMBOS

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1976, April 4

Dr. Jay S. Snelson
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My Dear Jay:

As you know, writing letters is one of my nemeses -- not because I do not like to write pleasant letters, but because I have so many unpleasant ones I do not have time to write, and I am always behind in all correspondence because I always have such a big backlog of brush-fire type activities which are unpleasant and time-consuming. Some never even get written at all -- the majority, probably.

This is not a brush fire. It not an unpleasant letter; on the contrary, it is one of the most necessary and pleasurable that I have ever written. I don't have time to write it. But, as you can see, I am doing it anyway.

Today you have entered the fifth decade of your life, having just completed four full decades. First of all, let me tell you how much I wish every good for you today and all future days for a very, very long life. The Jews wish people 120 years (I think because of some superstition that Moses lived for 120 years, or so it is stated). I wish you 120 years! But I am not only a Jew, I am a civilization builder; and although I do not think it is possible for either of us to live even that long as yet, and, ironically, it is not likely that my work and your work will take root that fast that it should be possible for us to live 120 years, nonetheless, as a civilization builder, I am anticipating much longer life spans than that; and therefore, my good wishes extend to you to more than 120 years, without limit, so long as you maintain your health and, especially, your intellectual vigor and success.

On this, your fortieth birthday, I cannot let the day go by but to commemorate it with this letter and with the privilege of taking you to dinner inasmuch as, fortunately, our respective lecture schedules leave us free for this evening to see each other. The actual gift for this birthday you received a year ago, Leonardo da Vinci's Madrid Codices (First Deluxe Edition). However, his book does not include my personal good wishes. Last year I extended my best wishes to you for this occasion at the time I gave you the book. But now that the day is at hand, I want to tell the same thing to you in writing. My personal gratitude to you is enormous for the eleven-and-a-half years that you have devoted your full energy to the building of a better world, a durable world, and freedom as a grand by-product. This is most deeply in my mind in expressing to you my gratitude and well wishes. You have chosen, long ago, to be in the same boat with me; you have spent the more mature part of your youth in this activity, with total and sincere dedication. You are now entering an age which is no longer youth, but total maturity, but you are still in the intellectual prime of your

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life, and, in stamina, you have only a few competitors. This clearly comes from your strongly developed proprietary interest in the theory of freedom and primary property.

My work is right; you know it is, too, or you could not be doing this and lasting this length of time. It is my hope, but, unfortunately, not my knowledge, that this work of mine and yours will produce results soon enough, before the literally insane policies of the coercers, together with their mob followers, overwhelm us. Nonetheless, you know, and I know, that we must do what we are doing. For this, I respect you, my friend.

The day before yesterday I heard on the news while driving home, that Ronald Reagan had made a statement, in the midst of his presidential campaign, something to the following effect (not verbatim): "If I didn't think I could win, I wouldn't be trying". This sentence struck me immediately for its weakness and its obvious implication of compromise in order to attain his goal of victory at the polls. I immediately came back with my own attitude on why I am doing what I am doing inasmuch as I do not know that I will win in my own lifetime, or even within the next thousand years, or, for that matter, ever. The ideas are certainly right! Of this I am sure. Of course, I hope I will win in my own lifetime; and I have some confidence that my ideas will prevail for man's new, durable civilization within the next few centuries. But I cannot know this, nor am I pollyana about it. My own attitude is that I do not know if my ideas will triumph in my own time or in a time that precedes the annihilation of man, but I am doing this anyway in the expectation it has a chance; and if I did not do this, the chance would be non-existent. Moreover, I would do this, or something of this caliber in the same direction and vein, even if I knew for 100% certainty that it is hopeless and we will lose, because it is right (my definition, of course). And what else could I do or should do that is either more important or more worthy of my own self-respect, without which life would truly be intolerable? Therefore, I do what I am doing because it is a self-imposed duty and because without doing what is right, I could not live. And I expect and believe that you are doing what you are doing for the same reason. I can pay you no higher tribute.

My best wishes to you this day and all the days that will ever come. And may your health and stamina and success all improve. My very warmest congratulations on your fortieth birthday, and my deep, personal affection to you,

