

## MAN IS THE END

A KEY to the contents of Erich Fromm's latest book, *The Sane Society* (Rinehart, \$5)—a work which sets out to examine the troubles of not only the individual in modern society, but also of society itself—is found in the following sentence, taken from the chapter, "Man in Capitalistic Society":

In recent decades, increasing attention has been paid to the psychology of the worker, and to his attitude toward his work, to the "human problem of industry"; but this very formulation is indicative of the underlying attitude; there is a human being spending most of his lifetime at work, and what should be discussed is the "*industrial problem of human beings,*" rather than "*the human problem of industry.*"

In short, *The Sane Society* is a radical book. It does not accept the prevailing canons of either mental or social health. Its author is not interested in easing the pains produced in our abnormal lives by applying psychological techniques which sugar-coat the abnormality. He is interested in the changes which must occur before human beings in general can begin to live normal lives.

For quite some years, the editors of MANAS and doubtless many others have felt the need for critical social psychology to place in proper perspective the errors of a psychological practice which seeks to adjust mental patients to a society which is itself in extreme disorientation and even disorder. Dr. Fromm has met this need—at least, he has written a book which, so far as we can see, defines the problem accurately and takes several long strides toward its (theoretical) solution. *The Sane Society* is moreover a book written without fear or timidity. By writing it, the author joins that celebrated if small band of critics of Western culture which includes Owen, Proudhon, Thoreau, Tolstoy, Marx, Kropotkin, Tawney, Durkheim, Mumford, Einstein, Schweitzer, and a few others.

With no concessions to contemporary hysteria or prejudice, the book ends with a strong recommendation of decentralized, communitarian socialism. The emphasis, however, is on that aspect of socialism which modern socialist movements have tended to neglect—the release of man from bondage, both physical and psychological, to economic processes and goals. Dr. Fromm apparently chooses socialism as an ideal form of social organization for the reason that only in the socialist political tradition are found leading thoughts and ideals which raise *human* objectives above economic or political objectives. These themes are clear enough in Marx and Engels, but, as Fromm points out, they have suffered their greatest betrayal in the totalitarian issue of the Russian Revolution. To some extent, Fromm holds Marx and Engels responsible for this result:

. . . in spite of their own theories, Marx and Engels were in many ways caught in the traditional concept of the dominance of the political over the socio-economic spheres. They could not free themselves from the traditional view of the importance of the state and political power, from the idea of the primary significance of mere political change, an idea which had been the guiding principle of the great middleclass revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this respect Marx and Engels were much more "bourgeois" thinkers than were men like Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Landauer. Paradoxical as it sounds, the Leninist development of Socialism represents a regression to the bourgeois concepts of the state and political power, rather than the new socialist concept as it was expressed so much more clearly by Owen, Proudhon and others. . . . It is the tragic mistake of Marx, a mistake which contributed to the development of Stalinism, that he had not freed himself from the traditional overvaluation of political power and force; but these ideas were part of the previous heritage, and not of the new socialist concept.

The socialist ideal, for Erich Fromm, lies more in the direction of the social forms and relationships evolved by the Communities of Work in France, which have appeared as voluntaristic achievements since World War II. He quotes at great length from Claire Huchet Bishop's *All Things Common* to illustrate the sort of social organization he has in mind to provide the essential ingredients and workings of the sane society.

But these matters are discussed at the end of the book. What, in the first place, is the sane society and how do you recognize it? Dr. Fromm starts by showing that the sane society will tend to be defined in terms of the status quo unless certain positive criteria of sanity are established. "The fact that millions of people share the same vices does not make those vices virtues, the fact that they share so many errors does not make the errors to be truths, and the fact that millions of people share the same forms of mental pathology does not make these people sane."

The sane society, then, according to Fromm, is the society which throws the weight of its tendencies, customs, and institutions in the direction of the fulfillment of individual human life. "Mental health is achieved if man develops into full maturity according to the characteristics and laws of human nature. Mental illness consists in the failure of such development. From this premise the criterion of mental health is not one of individual adjustment to a given social order, but a universal one, valid for all men, of giving a satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence."

Dr. Fromm gives this problem the following definition:

The problem of man's existence, then, is unique in the whole of nature; he has fallen out of nature, as it were, and is still in it; he is partly divine, partly animal; partly infinite, partly finite. *The necessity to find ever-new solutions for the contradictions in his existence, to find ever-higher forms of unity with nature, his fellowmen and himself, is the source of all*

*psychic forces which motivate man, of all his passions, affects and anxieties.*

The grounds supplied to support this account of man are too extensive for reproduction here, and the book, we think, should be carefully read by all who gain an interest in it from this review. We may point out, however, that Dr. Fromm has returned to the position of classical Humanism, as first formulated by Western thinkers during the Italian Renaissance. Pico della Mirandola, the Platonist genius of fifteenth-century Florence, said in his *Oration on Man*:

Thou [Man] shalt define thy nature for thyself. For thou man art made neither heavenly nor earthly, but art as it were thine own maker, having power to decline unto the low brute creatures or be reborn unto the highest, according to the sentence of shine intellect.

It should be added that while *The Sane Society* affords the full moral and rational appeal of the classical Humanist conception of man, it does so in terms which have thoroughly assimilated the insights and idiom of modern scientific research. This is a great achievement. It is great because it restores for men the philosophical foundations of their dignity as human beings while rendering them intellectually invulnerable to the attacks and forays of mechanistic or "materialistic" accounts of human nature growing out of the anti-theological special pleading typical of nineteenth-century attitudes.

Actually, a return to the classical Humanist position *without* the usufruct of four hundred years of scientific thought would get us practically nowhere. The contribution of scientific thought, once its own dogmas are outgrown and set aside, is to make possible a new level of self-consciousness. When we combine the lines of influence which began with Vico in social and historical studies, and with Freud in psychological studies, we obtain a perspective on the human situation which is extraordinarily illuminating, facilitating the objective study of man in relation to his *social* environment—the environment he has created for himself, as distinguished from the

natural environment of the physical world. *The Sane Society*, embodying the maturity which results from this perspective, is a study of this relationship, and is, therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the possibilities of human freedom, since human beings can much more easily change their social environment than their physical surroundings.

Dr. Fromm calls his approach *normative humanism*. This means that the social environment is open to criticism according to some standard of values. We do not have to accept our social circumstances as either right, good, or inevitable. They may be wrong, bad, and mutable. The question which must be answered is: Do they contribute to normal human development or do they block its progress? The answer to this question depends upon the definition of normal human development, and Dr. Fromm has taken his definition from the classical Humanists, as shown.

This approach brings a new complexity to the problem of mental health. In a bad society, the emotional conflict of an individual with his psychological environment may be a sign of mental health, and not evidence of what we call "maladjustment," except in some unimportant, technical sense. The man who has harmonious relations with a sick society cannot himself be well—he only *seems* well to those who are unaware of the general *malaise*. Dr. Fromm develops this idea in an important paragraph:

There is. . . an important difference between individual and social mental illness, which suggests a differentiation between two concepts: that of *defect*, and that of *neurosis*. If a person fails to attain freedom, spontaneity, a genuine expression of self, he may be considered to have a severe defect, provided we assume that freedom and spontaneity are the objective goals to be attained by every human being. If such a goal is not attained by the majority of members of any given society, we deal with the phenomenon of a *socially patterned* defect. The individual shares it with many others; he is not aware of it as a defect, and his security is not threatened by the experience of being different, of being an outcast,

as it were. What he may have lost in richness and in a genuine feeling of happiness, is made up by the security of fitting in with the rest of mankind—as *he knows them*. As a matter of fact, his very defect may have been raised to a virtue by his culture, and thus may give him an enhanced feeling of achievement.

This is the sort of analysis from which modern man can profit, since it deals with matters he can correct, once he becomes aware of them. There is a whole family of studies of the human situation from this point of view, making it the primary diagnostic discovery of the twentieth century. Ortega's *Revolt of the Masses*, for one, contains an important chapter of this analysis, Macdonald's *The Root Is Man*, another. The latest contributor is perhaps David Riesman, whose books, starting with *The Lonely Crowd*, increase our understanding of the relation between individuals and their psychological environment. Now, in *The Sane Society*, the diagnosis is continued and the first steps taken in proposing a remedy. One interesting thing about this book is its extraction from past social and economic analyses (Marx, etc.) of the *psychological* insights they contain, for these embody—according to Erich Fromm, and, we think, in fact—the permanent value of such analyses.

The importance of the diagnosis cannot be exaggerated. MANAS readers who recall reading two weeks ago about "Paul" in the account of Bruno Bettelheim's *Truants from Life* will be interested in the following passage:

. . . defects have been culturally patterned to *such* an extent now that they are not even generally thought any more to be annoying or contemptible. Today we come across a person who acts and feels like an automaton, who never experiences anything which is really his; who experiences himself entirely as the person he thinks he is supposed to be; whose artificial smile has replaced genuine laughter; whose meaningless chatter has replaced communicative speech; whose dulled despair has taken the place of genuine pain. Two statements can be made about this person. One is that he suffers from a defect of spontaneity and individuality which may seem incurable. At the same time, it may be said that he does not differ essentially from millions of others who

are in the same position. For most of them, the culture provides patterns which enable them *to live with a defect without becoming ill*. It is as if each culture provided the remedy against the outbreak of manifest neurotic symptoms which would result from the defect produced by it.

Fromm's criticism of Capitalism is by no means a repetition of the slogans of nineteenth-century economic reformers. A century ago, the chief complaint against Capitalism was that it "exploited" human beings by condemning them to work for starvation wages under hideous working conditions. Today, conditions have changed:

In the twentieth century, such capitalistic exploitation as was customary in the nineteenth century has largely disappeared. This must not, however, becloud the insight into the fact that twentieth-century as well as nineteenth-century Capitalism is based on the principle that is to be found in all class societies: *the use of man by man*.

Unlike nineteenth-century critics, Fromm singles out no personal devils in the form of evil men who must be "expropriated." The authority for the capitalist principle of *using* human beings for economic ends has become impersonal, anonymous. People submit to the principle without being aware of its rule over them or aware of the implication of its values. The manager of a plant suffers as much from this attitude toward human beings as the men who work for him. All who accept the delusion are equally its victims, all are mutilated in their psychic lives by a false sense of self and of their role in society. For a condition such as this, political revolutions offer no answer, so that the timid lovers of the status quo need have no fear that Dr. Fromm will join with other "radicals" to plot an uprising.

There will, however, be resistance to the thesis of *The Sane Society*—the resistance of all those who fear the idea of "growing up," who have come to rely upon the institutional coddling the present society affords to conceal their psychological immaturity. For this reason, critics generally cannot be expected to hail this book with great enthusiasm. They will rather treat it as

"just another book," finding petty faults in it, and patronizing Dr. Fromm for his effort to deal with problems and discuss solutions which require personal self-reliance and feelings of broad responsibility for the welfare of man.

## *REVIEW*

### 1954 TERRY LECTURES

As Harvard psychologist Gordon Allport notes in his introduction to the just published, thirty-first volume of the Dwight Terry series: "Psychological science is gradually assuming a commanding influence upon the thought forms of Western man." Not only this, but, in the opinion of the editors of MANAS, the philosophical development of leaders in this field has itself been remarkable. Dr. Allport, like Erich Fromm, who presented his *Psychoanalysis and Religion* as the 1950 member of the Terry series, has quite evidently stepped far beyond the narrow definitions of psychological science so familiar twenty years ago—but without forsaking the stringent disciplines and experimental referents which give to the word "psychology" a right to scientific acceptance. Those who have indignantly rejected the "materialism" of most academic psychology, however, will profit from a careful reading of Allport's explanation as to *why* the early modern psychologists felt compelled to proceed without the traditional concepts of "self" or "soul." Now, he suggests, a reversal of the trend means not so much that the pioneers in psycho-physiology were "wrong," but, more importantly, that they exhausted the opportunities presented by mechanistic inquiry by proceeding with painstaking care. Men like Allport now feel that they *know*—rather than simply believe—that "an adequate psychology of becoming cannot be written exclusively in terms of stimulus, emotional excitement, association, and response."

Dr. Allport continues:

It requires subjective and inner principles of organization of the sort frequently designated by the terms self or ego. Whether these labels are employed is less important than that the principles they imply be fully admitted in accounting for the development of personality.

Since the time of Wundt, the central objection of psychology to *self*, and also to *soul*, has been that the concept seems question-begging. It is temptingly

easy to assign functions that are not fully understood to a mysterious central agency, and then to declare that "it" performs in such a way as to unify the personality and maintain its integrity. Wundt, aware of this peril, declared boldly for "a psychology without a soul." It was not that he necessarily denied philosophical or theological postulates, but that he felt psychology as science would be handicapped by the *petitio principii* implied in the concept. For half a century few psychologists other than Thomists have resisted Wundt's reasoning or his example. Indeed we may say that for two generations psychologists have tried every conceivable way of accounting for the integration, organization, and striving of the human person without having recourse to the postulate of a self.

In very recent years the tide has turned. Perhaps without being fully aware of the historical situation, many psychologists have commenced to embrace what two decades ago would have been considered a heresy. They have reintroduced self and ego unashamedly and, as if to make up for lost time have employed ancillary concepts such as *self-image*, *self-actualization*, *self-affirmation*, *phenomenal ego*, *ego-involvement*, *ego-striving*, and many other hyphenated elaborations which to experimental positivism still have a slight flavor of scientific obscenity.

(By way of supporting footnote to Erich Fromm's presentation of Freud as a man of stronger ethical or moral concern than Carl Jung, Allport, in this same chapter, observes that "we should note in passing that Freud played a leading, if unintentional role, in preserving the concept of ego from total obliteration throughout two generations of strenuous positivism.")

The Terry Lecturer is obligated to attempt assimilation and interpretation of his particular discipline "as it relates to religion broadly conceived," and Allport, again like Fromm, seems an especially apt choice as a contributor to the series. MANAS gave considerable attention, a year or so ago, to Allport's *The Individual and his Religion*, and it is apparent that the Harvard psychologist has spent a great deal of time in developing a language for distinguishing the hopeful from the discouraging aspects of "religious conscience." His summation of religion

in the present volume has the following paragraphs:

If we encounter in a personality fear of divine punishment as the sole sanction for right doing, we can be sure we are dealing with a childish conscience, with a case of arrested development.

Conscience in personality is by no means always religiously toned. High moral character is found among the nonreligious.

Conscience pre-supposes only a reflective ability to refer conflicts to the matrix of values that are felt to be one's own. I experience "ought" whenever I pause to relate a choice that lies before me to my ideal self-image. Normally when inappropriate decisions are made, I feel guilt. Guilt is a poignant suffering, seldom reducible in an adult to a fear of, or experience of, punishment. It is rather a sense of violated value, a disgust at falling short of the ideal self-image.

The theory I am here suggesting holds that the must-consciousness precedes the ought-consciousness, but that in the course of transformation three important changes occur. 1. External sanctions give way to internal—a change adequately accounted for by the processes of identification and introjection familiar in Freudian and behavioral theory. 2. Experiences of prohibition, fear, and "must" give way to experiences of preference, self-respect, and "ought." This shift becomes possible in proportion as the self-image and value-systems of the individual develop. 3. Specific habits of obedience give way to generic self-guidance, that is to say, to broad schemata of values that confer direction upon conduct.

As a science, psychology can neither prove nor disprove religion's claims to truth. It can, however, help explain why these claims are so many and so diverse. They represent the final meanings achieved by unique personalities in diverse lands and times. Organized religious sects reflect comparable sets of meanings within which the unique meanings achieved by individuals may duster for purposes of communication and common worship.

Psychology can also illuminate the field of religion by following the course of becoming to its ultimate frontiers of growth. It can study man as a representative of his species, as a creature of many opportunistic adjustments, and as a product of tribal molding. But it can study him as well as a self-assertive, self-critical, and self-improving individual

whose passion for integrity and for a meaningful relation to the whole of Being is his most distinctive capacity. By devoting itself to the entire course of becoming—leaving out no shred of evidence and no level of development—psychology can add progressively to man's self-knowledge. And as man increases in self-knowledge he will be better able to bind himself wholesomely and wisely to the process of creation.

The final truths of religion are unknown, but a psychology that impedes understanding of the religious potentialities of man scarcely deserves to be called a logos of the human psyche at all.

Allport's final chapter, "Psychology and Democracy," is in key with the basic theme of Joseph Wood Krutch's *The Measure of Man* and, in fact, Allport's frequent references to Krutch indicate that the latter volume is becoming quite influential, as a MANAS reviewer hoped. The form of analysis is simple and direct: Unless we deepen our conception of man to include some *rationale* for our expressed political belief in his "right to self-determination in all matters of conscience," unless we see in every individual the hope of an endless "becoming," we actually have no rational ground for defending the conception of democracy provided by the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the United States. Allport writes:

Up to now the "behavioral sciences," including psychology, have not provided us with a picture of man capable of creating or living in a democracy. These sciences in large part have imitated the billiard ball model of physics, now of course outmoded. They have delivered into our hands a psychology of an "empty organism," pushed by drives and molded by environmental circumstance. What is small and partial, what is external and mechanical, what is early, what is peripheral and opportunistic—have received the chief attention of psychological system builders. But the theory of democracy requires also that man possess a measure of rationality, a portion of freedom, a generic conscience, appropriate ideals, and unique value. We cannot defend the ballot box or liberal education, nor advocate free discussion and democratic institutions, unless man has the potential capacity to profit therefrom. In *The Measure of Man*, Joseph Wood Krutch points out how logically the ideals of totalitarian dictatorships follow from the premises of "today's thinking" in mental and social

science. He fears that democracy is being silently sabotaged by the very scientists who have benefited most from its faith in freedom of inquiry.

Krutch complains that "we have been deluded by the fact that the methods employed for the study of man have been for the most part those originally devised for the study of machines or the study of rats, and are capable, therefore, of detecting and measuring only those characteristics which the three do have in common."

It is not, we think, careless optimism to predict that the "thought form" of the future will embody conclusions in such language as that provided by psychologists like Fromm, Horney, and Allport—aided by the profound expressions of such a philosopher as C. J. Ducasse and by essayists like Krutch. We seem to be witnessing, in this decade, a rebirth of the human soul—or rather of an expansive view of what the word "soul" may really mean. Perhaps, as has before been suggested, it is through the doors of psychology and philosophy that a new kind of religion will be born—one based not upon revelation or blind belief, but upon those subjective intimations which establish logical connection with the symbolisms of all great religious traditions. Perhaps, then, we are traveling a pathway that will eventually bring us to an *understanding* of Christianity and Buddhism, Hinduism and Mohammedanism—and when understanding is present, useless factionalism eventually declines and disappears. This, incidentally, is a development which a number of reflective Christians are presently expecting, and concerning which the *Christian Century* has printed an article or two.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **POLIO PREVENTION**

DID YOU know that there are specific dietary measures which can be adopted against polio infection? That research along these lines began as long ago as 1931? That a polio epidemic in a southern city of the United States was arrested by diet control in 1948, with the possibility that five thousand less persons contracted the disease during a five-months' period? That *polio epidemics have occurred throughout the world in past years only in those countries with high per capita sugar consumption? That epidemics are unknown in countries with low sugar consumption? That the greater the sugar consumption the more severe the epidemic?*

The italicized lines above are quoted directly from Dr. Benjamin P. Sandler's *Diet Prevents Polio*, published in 1951 by the Lee Foundation for Nutritional Research. It came to us as something of a surprise—even a shock—to learn that this information has been publicly available since January, 1941, in the *American Journal of Pathology*, where Dr. Sandler reported his experimental findings. Here in 1955 we have had a nation-wide polio scare, and a nation-wide campaign in behalf of the Salk vaccine, followed by what was almost a nation-wide fiasco, with some doctors declaring that they would have nothing to do with the Salk vaccine. Yet the simple dietary measures advocated by Dr. Sandler are apparently being kept a secret.

Dr. Sandler's formula for polio immunity is this: Stop eating starch and sugar, or at least drastically reduce consumption of these elements in diet. The effect of eating sugar and starch (which becomes sugar) is to reduce the blood sugar content of the blood. When the normal blood sugar content of 100 milligrams in each 100 cubic centimeter of blood falls, say to from 75 to 55 mg., susceptibility to polio begins and increases with the further loss of blood sugar. The polio "season," Dr. Sandler says, comes in the

summertime because it is then that children eat less protein, more starch, and candy and soft drinks and ice cream. Frequently infection follows excessive consumption of these sweets, and after tiring exercise or play, which also reduces the blood sugar content.

These conclusions are supported in Dr. Sandler's book. He also tells how, in 1948, when he was living in Ashville, N.C., he gained the cooperation of newspaper editors and the local radio stations to secure public attention for his findings. What happened in Ashville as a result should have been the greatest medical story of the year. Dr. Sandler offers no opinion to explain why his program (complete with recommended diets in his book) has not been widely publicized by public health departments everywhere, but he does remark: "The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis has informed me that there was a sharp and significant drop in the sales of soft drinks and ice cream in North Carolina and adjoining states."

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

IN this issue, by courtesy of the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, we are able to establish a connection between two of our contentions—that the national habit of television-viewing will be profoundly influential in shaping the temper of youth in the future, and that the *Guardian* is a good subscription bet for any MANAS reader.

The *Guardian* at hand, for Sept. 8, presents an editor's reflections after reading some notations on TV in *U.S. News and World Report*. Particularly arresting was an observation made by an American parent during a *U.S. News* interview. "Do you think TV has done anything to the way you live?" was the question. The answer was that family outings seem to have dropped out entirely, because the children are so addicted to TV watching that they insist upon returning home early for their favorite shows. Such a short day remained after these hours were deleted, said this father, that there just wasn't time for a real outing. Follows the measured discussion of the *Guardian* writer, which covers the most important aspects of the problem in a most disarming way:

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This mild reply coming as it does in an uncommonly pleasant summer, makes the most pathetic reading to be found in a group of interviews which the magazine "U.S. News and World Report" has conducted among American viewers. Just what television has done to people's lives in the United States is a matter for endless debate to which so far there is no agreed reply. But its importance is not in doubt when twice as many people watch television as take part in all other kinds of "entertainment or leisure activity" in the evening, when seven out of ten children watch between six and eight "most evenings," and when in the year ending in April all set-owners watched, on an average, for about four and a half hours each day. Viewers, in fact, have been keeping slightly longer hours than in the previous year; the

notion that watching would drop off once the novelty had worn off has, it seems, proved false. People do detach themselves after a while, but a little later they go back to their sets once more. The clearest casualty in the struggle for the attention of American citizens is the printed word. The circulation of newspapers and magazines is still going up but at a decreasing rate; magazines in particular may suffer. Books, on the other hand, have already lost ground. Americans spent \$13 millions less on books in 1954 than in 1953, though from one year to the next their numbers and their purchasing power had gone up. All this is something less than proof that (as one teacher has said) Americans are turning into a "chairbound, myopic, and speechless race," but many people are worried from Congressional committees on down.

The point on which all are agreed is that television holds the attention more than other means of conveying speech or action. An experiment at Toronto University suggests that a televised lecture sinks in better than the same lecture heard "live." A New Jersey housewife who "used to read as many as four, five books a month" has virtually given up this "main interest" because her husband prefers to watch television and she does not like to sit in another room.

I tried reading while he watched, and you can imagine how hopeless that is . . . The thing fascinates you. That's why we call ours "the evil." Any intelligent person should be able to control this thing. But it seems to control you after a while.

A New York stockbroker finds that his children "don't read much. In fact, they can't."

Q. Do you mean that they don't want to read?

A. I mean that they literally cannot read—or, if at all, just barely. My 13-year-old boy doesn't know how to read hardly at all.

Q. Do you mean he can't read a newspaper?

A. He can read it with the greatest difficulty.

On the other hand, parents and teachers often find that children absorb a great deal of knowledge from television programmes which they could not have got so easily in any other way. This is some compensation for the children's practice of watching (as a survey in Cincinnati suggests) for about thirty hours a week on an average and so missing a lot of exercise. Great things are expected of television in the schools. But at this rate it is clear that television—with colour, too, coming in soon as an added fillip—must bring about great and lasting changes in American society. At our slower pace we are moving that way too.

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Now, will someone please not stand up and explain that, as soon as proper portable television sets are available, parents and kiddies can resume those wonderful picnics, always so fine for strengthening family ties? As the *Guardian* comment shows, the real danger is twofold—psychological and physical. The problem isn't so much that families come even closer to no longer being families, but that each individual member is threatened with loss of both his bodily verve and his identity. How can you think enough to have a distinct identity if you spend four hours a day staring at TV, or develop a body active enough to appreciate pure country air when you get it? . . . Having obliged Socrates, a short time ago, to advocate throwing all TV sets down the town well, we were obviously in need of support, and thus doubly welcome the *Guardian* editorial.

There is, however, one passage in it we are inclined to question, which avers that thirteen million dollars *less* was spent on books in 1954 than in 1953. What about the swelling volume of "pocket book" editions—all the comparatively inexpensive paper-backs, including the "classics" in thirty-five- and fifty-cent volumes? If one takes the university book stores alone, the conclusion seems obvious that *more* books are being sold than were sold in 1953, but with a smaller total cost to purchasers. Success of the Penguin-

Pelican, Signet-Mentor, Doubleday-Anchor, and Knopf-Vintage books indicates that "mass" culture has one welcome aspect; thousands of people are buying, *because they want to read*, outstanding volumes. This curious counter-trend to TV intellectual passivity may be even more significant than first appears, for the reason that some people buy impressive-looking volumes merely for effect. But no one is likely to buy pocket books for this purpose; "middle class" book dens gain little prestige from coverless reading matter, so that a higher proportion of the consumers of the better pocket lines may be classed as genuinely interested, if not aesthetically particular.

In the cause of optimism we are trying to make the most of this argument, and, though one must admit that the great bulk of pocket volumes is "escape literature," several writers have pointed out that it is not yet known whether the habit of reading "trash" leads one on to better things, or away from them. In our opinion, the steady reader of books, be they good or bad, is apt to escape the most insidious effects of constant television watching—simply because his *own* imagination is at work in some manner and to some degree.

## *FRONTIERS* Non-Political Politics

WE don't know whether to be more grateful to the *Nation* for printing an article like "Toward a New Radicalism" (issue of Sept. 3) or to Waldo Frank for writing it. This article is surely a major classic of periodical literature, marking a revolutionary stride in political thinking in the United States. We have always admired Mr. Frank's work—all the work we can remember—but this seems to us about the best thing he has ever said. Moreover, publishing writing of this character is certainly a change in policy for the *Nation*—not, perhaps, a sudden or easily perceptible change, since the ideas of "Toward a New Radicalism" have been in embryonic existence for several years, and creeping into reviews and articles in all the liberal journals—but a change which is itself radical in comparison with typical *Nation* contents of twenty years ago.

"Toward a New Radicalism" is in the nature of a manifesto. It is not, however, and could not be, the manifesto of an organization, nor does it seek organizational followers, although plenty of "directives" for individual action are provided. It might even be termed an activist supplement to the kind of thinking provided some ten years ago by Dwight Macdonald in his *Politics* articles, "The Responsibility of Peoples" and "The Root Is Man."

Mr. Frank starts out with a frankly Socratic diagnosis of the present. The modern world, he intimates, is not inherently vindictive. We feel its vindictiveness because we have put it there. Some inner atrophy has taken place, producing a state of external and internal circumstances causing us to

live already in an obsession of preparedness for war which is a state of siege, a shut magnetic field to which every resource, economic, intellectual, moral, and æsthetic, must conform or vanish. By melodramatizing this condition and dating it "1984" we blind ourselves to its immediate presence.

Militarization, Mr. Frank points out, has become a permanent trend in the United States. We have relinquished the qualities honored by such American heroes as Jefferson, Lincoln, Thoreau, and Whitman, suffering a basic change that began within

us long ago. Mr. Frank now writes as though he had Emerson's essay on War lying before him as a text:

The thermonuclear bomb did not just "happen"; world communism did not just "happen." Our Western civilization collaborated to produce them, as it produced the science and the machine which created the new nature in which we live—a nature which is our *will* objectified, and which threatens by subtler means than bombs to overwhelm us. Therefore what we fear, and feel desperate need of defending ourselves from, is a complex result of drives within us. But if this is true, the *enemy* is within us; and any military or political method which ignores this premise cannot possibly bring the right conclusion.

Our cities are not yet rubble; we can still parley with the Russians and the Chinese. But what of our capacity to *identify our inward peril*? We observe already the decay in the American people of that metaphysical impulse "to know" which Aristotle found to be the essential human trait; the reign of mediocrity in every realm from politics to education; the regimentation of ethic and opinion without need of the police; the prostitution of our folk arts, less to commercialism than to license and the anesthetics of self-indulgence; the shrinkage of the experience, even of the concept, of the self to fractional, functional figments—"economic man," "societal man," "ego-id man," and the like. Since man is still man, this alienation unconsciously frustrates him. Impotence spurs the destructive, inspires the masked masochist, the less well-hidden sadist. We are appalled by the rise of hoodlumism and juvenile delinquency, by the cult of horror "comics"; but we do not see their relation to a foreign policy based upon "foreign devils" and to an ethic of exhortation which runs counter to our way of life.

The central issue of our time comes to a focus on the term "collectivism." We argue about collectivism as though it were something we could take or leave alone—as though we had a *choice*. Collectivism is not an ideological phenomenon—it is the product of the modern techniques of machine production. It exists everywhere that modern industry exists, regardless of the political slogans and disguises which either exploit or hide its presence. The basic questions are asked by Mr. Frank, as they were asked, a few years ago, by Lyman Bryson in *The Next America*:

Who will control the collectivism? How can the control be brought to gear with the freedom of groups, with the fulness of man? These, not the vain beating back of the tide, are the kinds of questions for which we must find political answers. Not our two parties, nor the First or the Second or the Third or the Fourth International, dreamed of asking them. Obviously, the answers cannot be valid, the questions cannot even be put, unless our political methods are formed by inquiries into man's nature, his emotional and intellectual nutrition, into the character of the world's majority hemisphere, and so on. These are subjects transcending American politics? Subjects for psychology, esthetics, history, religion? They must *subsume* our politics if politics means action and if we are to act against our clear and present danger.

Mr. Frank defines the great need of today as the leverage of a new idealism—an idealism that is conceived in the idiom of the problems we face, and which can give us the necessary elevation to understand and deal with them. Some have called ideals of this sort "counsels of perfection." Mr. Frank terms them "impossibles"—dreams of goodness and righteousness which, in fighting and sacrificing to realize, men create all that we know of civilization. They never wholly succeed, but if they do not strive, civilization withers into a brittle rind. The demand of the present for these "impossibles" is urgent:

In all earlier ages man possessed empirical technics safe in the hands of the child he was. His only technics for spiritual maturity were esoteric, not for the masses; but since his empirical technics were childlike he was safe. The situation has changed. We are still children, but in our infant hands are mature weapons—with no wisdom, shaped to our present circumstance, to teach us how to use them. We require for our crisis a new set of "impossibles," harmonious with and responsive to our condition. Thus our public action, to help us, must be nourished by deep insights apposite and timely in form, and we cannot hope to find them directly in the forms of the conventional religions.

This is the sort of insight which is driving nearly all the serious writers and thinkers of our time to a reinvestigation of religion. The roots of life lie somehow in religious or philosophical attitudes. The serious man of today feels the universal need for a return to roots. For the same reason, doubtless, MANAS writers are unable to escape the

compulsion to discuss and review religious issues, problems, and teachings. A kind of convergence of the interest of the civilized world is compelling a concentration on this subject, and nowhere, it seems to us, do we find a more symmetrical and self-explanatory response to this compulsion than in Mr. Frank's *Nation* article.

He has wise words to offer on the transformations of Russian society in the past thirty years. The Russians are not foreign devils, nor are the Chinese. The actions and decisions of these many millions of people are part of the flow of world history, representing currents in which we, also, have had a part. The immediate need is for a changed attitude, for not only the will to understand, but understanding itself. Then there must be exemplary lives in terms of the new "impossibles"—

. . . there [must] be persons and groups of persons who see the facts, love life, and are methodically prepared to recreate their lives as prototypes for a nation, and a world, in which humane values can flourish. Whether such men regard themselves as political or religious is an option for the semanticist. They will clarify for themselves certain axioms which, beneath differences, unite them. When their *works* bring them into conscious relations with the public need, there will be action.

Self-centered—Frank calls it "Ptolemaic"—nationalism must end. The egomania of nation and culture can no longer be justified. Mr. Frank is uncompromising on this:

Certain absolute standards are expected of me and neither the vileness of others nor self-defense permits me to betray them. My failure to reach a "contract" with others for the abolition of vileness, with guaranties, does not excuse *my* vileness. And if my fear, which may be justified, moves me to endanger the community or to destroy a value in myself, I am a criminal and a coward. These norms have never been applied to nations, and we have survived for better or for worse. Today the nation which imperils the world because "the other fellow" is doing likewise or because it is afraid, or because no general pact against genocide is signed, is guilty without pardon. The world can no longer afford it.

So far as traditional alternatives of social organization are concerned, Mr. Frank prefers the socialist ideal of cooperation to the capitalist "law" of

competition. He points out, however, that the evils of militarism and bureaucracy cannot be avoided by a socialism which remains devoted to the economic values of the bourgeois world. Thus:

Indeed, the danger becomes magnified as the society becomes more strictly integrated in its economic levels—which means that bureaucracy and militarization are more accessible in the socialized system than in capitalism simply because in capitalism the planned integration is bound to be less perfect. The potential evil of bureaucracy might destroy culture, even if militarization were abolished.

Socialism in all its aboriginal forms—of which communism is the crudest and syndicalism the most potential—must be transfigured by a dimension of depth. Like liberalism it can solve no problem of the corruption of power while it remains in bond to the false empiric rationalism which denies the insights of both the common man and of the high religions.

Mr. Frank's program calls for specific conduct in personal and social relations by both individuals and groups. First is the need for action for peace—toward reform in foreign policy, the refusal of military service, disarmament, abolition of weapons which can slaughter entire populations, and world federations.

Second is the need for a thorough examination of the evils of what Mr. Frank calls "our capitalist ethics"—the feelings and attitudes which we live with daily, and "which we are inclined to take for granted."

Then, within the existing social formations—churches, unions, and other groups—individuals must begin to become aware of the limiting egotisms of these institutions.

. . . the consciousness of all such groups is the defensive and excluding one of our ethics, based on the rivalry of egos. Each group, as now psychologically set, ignores the nature of itself, hence ignores the nature of other groups, toward which it now looks in opposition, falsely. This cripples when it does not destroy the group's legitimate achievement.

Other needs encompass similar self-examination and reform in education, and in the arts—in what we accept as the products of artists and writers:

Today we decide that they shall be soporifics, deodorants, titillators of surface sense, and feeders of neurosis. As consumers and critics we must consciously and aggressively revive the almost lost function of the arts as nurture for emotion and mind, as discovery of the experience of the real, as organisms for cognition.

There is also the demand for a new theory or conception of knowledge. The greatest hope lies in modern psychology, yet psychology, Mr. Frank notes, "continues to be framed by an anti-metaphysical dogma which makes it sterile." Psychology must be liberated from nineteenth-century positivism "which excludes whole dimensions of man's nature." (Mr. Frank speaks of Dr. Rhine as among the few who are helping to emancipate psychology.)

Finally, the need for "discovery and mystery of the self":

. . . personal psychological technics, in our terms, are compulsory for us. Only by them can the true contents of the self be known and activated against the egoism which is the source of all evil, the evil end of undirected good. For us theology becomes methodology. This is certain: the old words, such as God, self, state, revelation, knowledge, faith, must be redefined if we retain them.

Mr. Frank has already begun the processes of redefinition for himself and the readers of the *Nation*. These processes now seem to be beginning in earnest and it will be the pleasure of MANAS to report their fruits from week to week. Meanwhile, this writer's last paragraph, calling for a change in human attitudes, is evidence of the character and impact of the "New Radicalism":

If tomorrow morning we find ourselves blown up we have the comfort of knowing that our problems vanish. We must support every effort against war and for survival. But if we survive, the suggestions of such a long-range program as I have ventured to sketch—a program of "impossibles" to create a world in which man may live and grow, a program of the "magic" of changed attitude to humanize our machine jungle—will, in our pursuit of it, be the sole basis for human survival.