



## Foreword II in Fromm Let Man Prevail

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(1967k-e)

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When I wrote *Let Man Prevail* over seven years ago, I did not expect it would find the response which has resulted in many new printings during these years and finally in the result of my being asked to write a new foreword for a new large edition in 1967.

In trying to respond to this request the first thought naturally turns to the question whether the events of the last seven years suggest any decisive changes in the text of the Manifesto. I have, of course, developed and changed my thinking in some respects, but I feel, on the whole, that the experience of these intervening years does not suggest any fundamental changes. Politically, things are now worse than they were seven years ago. In spite of the de-escalation of the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, the war in Viet Nam has increased the danger of a general nuclear war, particularly since no real progress has been made in the direction of disarmament. Humanly, there is no sign of improvement either. Man is transformed more and more into a thing; means have become ends, and total consumption continues to be the one aim of life. The great hopes and visions of achievements beyond material satisfaction are disappearing ever more rapidly. While lip service is paid to traditional ideals, hopelessness exists behind the facade of consumption and fun. The psychological result of this situation is an increasing {05} destructiveness--man's revenge for „unlived life“. It seems that life is not attractive enough to produce a potent reaction against the danger of universal destruction.

The Soviet block countries do not show a way out. By defining „socialism“ in a purely economic sense, as socialization of the means of production, they are succeeding in industrializing their societies, while adopting excellent measures of social welfare. The price they pay is a high degree of bureaucratization and conservatism. But they are not headed in the direction of shaping a „new man“. Specifically, they have adopted the fundamental principle of capitalism, namely that the only potent motivation for work are material incentives. This question of motivation is, indeed, the central issue for socialism. Marx, like Fourier, Owen, and many others, believed that man can be motivated to work by his being *interested* in his work, its technical, economic and wider social aspects. Beyond this, that the time devoted to work could be reduced drastically and that man would enjoy living because of his interest and participation in the world. Living as a process of productive and active relatedness to men (including himself) and to nature would be the center of man's concern. The industrial age, with its unheard of



capacity for production, has transformed man into a „homo consumens“, the total consumer, the representative of an unmitigated materialism. The ideal of maximal consumption first conquered the „capitalist“ world; it is now conquering the Communist world. If it conquers the whole world, total alienation and total hopelessness will be established.

There are, of course, warnings and critical voices to be heard both in the „capitalist“ and in the „Communist“ countries. But they seem to have little influence. Yugoslavia, with its emphasis on workers' self-management has, more than other countries, recognized the problem, and has tried to achieve a new form of socialism. Whether it will succeed in this aim is a matter of hope.

Are these facts a reason to change our views? On the contrary; they prove the need of making basic changes in society because of the inability of the existing systems to rescue man. Maybe socialist humanism will fail but if it does this will only be because our industrial society is already too sick to recover. For those who cannot give up the hope that the human experiment will not fail at the moment of its greatest crisis, the ideas of humanist socialism have not lost their attraction. We humanist socialists have become more skeptical, above all toward ideologies and promises, but our conviction in the intrinsic rightness of the socialist solution has not become less strong. Our defeat may be temporary or final, but it proves nothing about the value of our ideas. {06}

One remark must be added. Much of our thinking is in danger of becoming ideological, because we lack an adequate anthropology (the science of man) . It is necessary to have a better understanding of the forces which motivate man, and of the conditions which might liberate him from outmoded and hence dangerous forms of feeling and thinking. How can education contribute to critical and objective thinking. How can man be motivated by stimuli other than those of material incentives, that is, increasing consumption? What are the conditions for man's destructive impulses, and how can his energies be channelled in the direction of growth and life, rather than toward destruction and death? What are the principles and values common to the best traditions of man - and how can they be transformed into personal experience, rather than to remain ideological clichés? A study in depth of man, his values, motivations, and the impact of social conditions upon them may help to clarify the need for humanist solutions, by proving not only their need, but also their feasibility.

I do not want to conclude these remarks without mentioning one most encouraging development which has occurred since this pamphlet was first published: the growth of humanist thought not only among Marxist philosophers but also the humanist movement which has become strong within the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches. A dialogue has developed which shows that the common bond of humanism is stronger than the divergence in religious beliefs. The development of this humanist renaissance may well be a decisive factor in the future of man.