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Obituaries

Erich Fromm, 79, psychoanalyst

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Erich Fromm, 79, one of the world's most prominent psychoanalysts, died Tuesday at his home near Locarno, Switzerland, of a heart attack.

Mr. Fromm, who won recognition as an author, teacher and philosopher, was a descendent of generations of rabbis. Born in Frankfurt and educated in Munich, Berlin and Heidelberg, he fled Germany shortly after the Nazi's rise to power and became an U.S. citizen.

Convinced that love was the solution to the problem of human existence, Mr. Fromm espoused the theme in his most popular book, "The Art of Loving," writing that "love is the only sane and satisfactory answer."

Shortly after publication, he observed, "Dostoevsky said, 'If there is no God, then anything is possible.' I would say that if there is no love, nothing is possible. Man absolutely cannot live by himself."

Mr. Fromm, a pioneer in the psychoanalytic field, broke early in his career with Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, largely because of Freud's focus on sexuality as the major cause of mankind's troubles.

'Typical puritan'

Fundamentally a religious person, Mr. Fromm dismissed Freud as "a typical puritan" who foolishly argued in favor of dropping all moral-religious barriers to pleasure.

Mr. Fromm fought philosophies that regarded humans as units. He said that the day-to-day, morning-to-evening routines assigned members of both Communist and capitalist societies tended to turn men into robots. "Both (societies) are quite similar. Both are managerial and materialist."

What both systems lack, he wrote, are such elements as spiritual nourishment, love, reason and humility, all required by mankind, he felt, to stay mentally alive. Without those nurturing factors, individuals encounter "alienation," then "death of the spirit," he said. He defined that form of "death" as insanity.

"Too many psychiatrists and psychoanalysts are developing into the new priests of industrialized society," he said in a 1962 interview. "Too many become 'adjusters,' helping everyone to conform ... to become more alienated.

consumer-oriented society. The book's title and theme inspired the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, which Fromm helped organize in 1957. He was active in the peace movement, he explained, "because it helps me keep my balance. The fight for peace is one way to stay sane."

"May Man Prevail?" expressed his concern about the prospects of nuclear war. He contended that the hostility

between the United States and the Soviet Union resulted from paranoid thinking based on misconceptions about each other's aims.

Mr. Fromm is survived by his third wife, Annis Freeman Fromm, whom he married in 1953. His first marriage, to Frieda Reichmann, ended in divorce. His second wife, the former Henny Gurland, died in 1952. He settled in Muralto, outside Locarno near the Italian border, in the late 1960s.

"You can't feel hurt anymore; you can't feel sad anymore. Sadness, which would be the last refuge of humanity in an alienated society, is talked out of you."

Treatment, he said, should be directed at society, not the individual.

Simple lifestyle

Mr. Fromm advocated a more humane, simple lifestyle. He warned that without such change, the world was headed toward psychological and ecological disaster. He pleaded for a "being mode" based on love, pleasure of sharing, and meaningful and productive activity.

Sensing a growing hopelessness, he theorized that the world was going through a second industrial revolution in which "man himself is being transformed into an art of the total machine, passive, unalive and with little feeling."

His concern was how man could come to terms with his isolation, insignificance and doubt about the meaning of life.

His fear was for "unguided, unmotivated youth ... having no loyalties to themselves or their community. A truly nihilistic youth. We shall be hearing from them, and it will not be happy news ..."

His books, such as "Escape From Freedom," traced the development of his philosophy. The book is regarded as a landmark in psychology, intellectual history and political philosophy.

"The Sane Society," one of Mr. Fromm's most influential works, dealt with the alienation of man in a



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