Erich Fromm on the Nation: ‘I Am Not an Optimist’

By ALDEN WHITMAN

American society has turned sour for Dr. Erich Fromm, the social philosopher and psychiatry, he came to believe, was creating a “sane society” that had no power. “It is a world of the future,” he said, in a comment that has come to be known as a definition of human nature. “Our society is in a serious situation. In the last decade or so, it has been held up by electricity, technology and the nuclear weapon. But we stabilize violence, we stabilize pollution of the environment. And we stabilize the economic relations in which we are trapped, in which we are in a condition of fatality, of the loss of our freedom and our future.”

But aggregation can take the form of flight as well as of fight, he continued. “Aggregation means the conquest of a person’s life, his power, his freedom, his future, his other assets. It is not in human nature to be a conqueror, but on the contrary, to be a victim.”

Displacing the widely held Freudian view—that the urge to destroy is instinctive in man, Dr. Fromm views it as a product of society rather than a biological necessity. His work, as edited in this article, reflects a new understanding of human nature and the role of society in shaping it.

International

Secretary of State Kissinger conferred with King Farouk in London to inform him that American efforts to resolve the Middle East crisis were being continued. He was in London for the continuation of the “Anatomy of Nationalism” program, which he has been conducting for the past 12 years. His schedule for the trip included a meeting with President Sadat of Egypt and a visit to the United Nations headquarters. He is expected to stay in London for the entire week.

Dr. Fromm, as an expert on Middle Eastern affairs, is expected to be asked to give his views on the current situation and the chances for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. He is also expected to be asked to give his views on the role of the United Nations in the Middle East peace conference and the possibility of a direct peace accord between Egypt and Israel.

Dr. Fromm, who has been a critic of American foreign policy, is expected to say that the United States should not be allowed to continue its policy of supporting Israel, as it is seen as a threat to the stability of the region. He is also expected to say that the United States should not be allowed to continue its policy of supporting the Israeli military, as it is seen as a threat to the stability of the region.

The United States has not yet arrived at a point, he said, where it is clear whether it is going to be a friend of the United Nations or a foe of it. He said that the United States should be a friend of the United Nations, as it is the only organization that is capable of handling the crisis in the Middle East.

Dr. Fromm, who has been a critic of American foreign policy, is expected to say that the United States should not be allowed to continue its policy of supporting Israel, as it is seen as a threat to the stability of the region. He is also expected to say that the United States should not be allowed to continue its policy of supporting the Israeli military, as it is seen as a threat to the stability of the region.

The United States has not yet arrived at a point, he said, where it is clear whether it is going to be a friend of the United Nations or a foe of it. He said that the United States should be a friend of the United Nations, as it is the only organization that is capable of handling the crisis in the Middle East.

Dr. Fromm, who has been a critic of American foreign policy, is expected to say that the United States should not be allowed to continue its policy of supporting Israel, as it is seen as a threat to the stability of the region. He is also expected to say that the United States should not be allowed to continue its policy of supporting the Israeli military, as it is seen as a threat to the stability of the region.

The United States has not yet arrived at a point, he said, where it is clear whether it is going to be a friend of the United Nations or a foe of it. He said that the United States should be a friend of the United Nations, as it is the only organization that is capable of handling the crisis in the Middle East.