



# Man-on-Earth Project

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THE RESULTS of several years of effort by hundreds of research workers, are summarized in a report issued by the Thomas Jefferson Research Centre of Pasadena, California, and entitled *Return to Responsibility*. It purports to be "an analysis of social problems and a proposal for action." The Centre's President is Frank Goble.

In place of today's over-specialization of the social sciences, the report recommends a "systems approach" as is used in industry, where the whole problem is analyzed and theory gets transplanted into action. "We propose a man-on-earth project," says Mr. Goble, "to match our man-in-space project."

The report deals mostly with American conditions, and despite its high-mindedness, it is not free from the American tendency to measure everything in terms of dollars. In reply to the criticism of the "crass materialism" of the U.S. the report cites \$14 billion in philanthropy and \$78 billion in foreign aid. But higher values cannot be reckoned thus. We may not have all the statistics on classical Athens or Renaissance Florence, but we know that they were power-houses of civilization.

Also, the report complains that the amount of money spent on social research is small compared to the amount spent on other research, mostly medical. But here too, the dollars doled out are not a reliable index of results. At the turn of the century much money was spent on research in developing air flight—unsuccessfully; while, without benefit of all this largesse, the Wright brothers (mentioned by Mr. Goble) did the job with paper clips and rubber bands, figuratively speaking. Often, the dispensing of money by large foundations and government aid does the reverse of what it is supposed to do, and creates a great deal of "busy work," bureaucracies, intrigues, sinecures and new privileged classes, and mountains of paper.

But Mr. Goble does put his finger on a number of other fallacious explanations of America's success. It cannot be due to abundant natural resources, as some countries which have them, have not developed (e.g. Brazil). Others which have not got the resources have developed, (e.g. Holland). It is not due to a low ratio of people to land, for we find no correlation to this effect in various countries. Nor is climate the key factor, for similar reasons. And the theory of genetic superiority is out too; on mainland China the same race of people are not accomplishing what is being done on

Taiwan; the same applies to East and West Germany.

The closest explanation for American success found by Mr. Goble is what he calls the "American Ethic"—which he acknowledges is a universal ethic deriving from many sources. (It might be added that it derives most directly from 17th and 18th century Western European thought.) Its features are natural law, reason, enlightened self-interest and justice—"equal opportunity for all, special privilege for none." Mr. Goble contends that a good many of America's present-day troubles can be attributed to the progressive weakening of this ethic.

The American Ethic is compared with rival theories of behaviour, the major ones being: *Christianity*, which has some of the same morality as the American Ethic, but which depends on revelation rather than reason, and accords responsibility to God rather than man. *Marxism* is deterministic, it makes the state responsible instead of the individual, and it makes its way through coercion. *Freudianism* also weakens individual responsibility by holding that man is subject to animal instincts, and it takes its cue from a study of abnormal behaviour. *Behaviourism* studies normal behaviour, but makes man dependent on environmental conditions, thus weakening individual responsibility.

Thus the key factor in the rival theories is the attitude toward responsibility. Mr. Goble finds great hope in recent "Third Force" psychological developments which herald a return to the responsibility of the American Ethic. A Third Force pioneer, Dr. Abraham Maslow, set forth his theories in *Motivation and Personality* after many years of research: that healthy, not unhealthy behaviour should be specially studied; that healthy behaviour strives toward the fulfilling of basic needs, then higher needs—"the need for self-actualization;" that co-operation is normal; and that



moral relativism is not only inadequate but harmful. The healthy individual's interests coincide with the interests of a healthy society—a conclusion reached by Adam Smith and Thomas Jefferson. "Responsibility

## THE AMERICAN DREAM

**A** CORRESPONDENT of the *Saturday Review* who claims to be old enough to remember the paper before certain latter-day perversions, takes up the editor, Wallace Roberts for his editorial on The American Dream by saying: "Our forefathers were not starry-eyed romantics. They did not aspire to a perfect society—by any means. The cliches Mr. Roberts quotes were not part of the Dream, but grew out of events that occurred during the history of our country . . . As for passing laws to adjust malfunctions, the keystone of the American Dream is the protection of citizens from laws. The real American Dream is a nation of free individuals. In this country every man should live as he pleases. He should choose his objectives according to his values and use his own ingenuity to obtain them, his only limit being the freedom of other citizens. This is a tough philosophy and not for weaklings. No citizen is responsible for anyone but himself and his family. Every man must rise or fall by his own efforts." Comments *Manas*, February 11, which reprinted the above: "Actually, it seems a great pity to continue the old argument for and against the Welfare State in the pages of a useful magazine. The case against the all-powerful and all-beneficent state was sufficiently stated more than a hundred years ago by Herbert Spencer. Yet all that stating it did for Spencer was make him a very unpopular philosopher. The fact that he was right is what seems to be coming out now. Why? Mainly because the affairs of state have become too grisly for human beings to bear. Why wasn't Spencer heard a hundred years ago? Probably because people still thought they could solve human problems by finding the correct political system and putting the right administrators in power."

therapy" has worked for individuals and it is time to apply it to society.

This is as far as Mr. Goble takes his present report, and he does not intend to wait until others heed his appeal for some research along these lines but will continue the work begun by his Thomas Jefferson Research Centre.

With reservations and qualifications, this is a good start. Much will depend on the further direction taken. There are times when the report steers a little too close to Dale Carnegie and Moral Rearmament for this reviewer's taste. For instance, it is related that during the depression Dr. Henry Link discovered that the unemployed who belonged to a church made out better than those who did not. Somehow this organizational connection is regarded as a triumph for "individualism," though it looks rather like the reverse. Is the remedy for unemployment that every one should belong to a church? In that case, in order to get ahead, one would have to develop other qualities, and so on, and

there would still be some people at the bottom. The self-improvement admonition to individuals is by no means a solution for the social problem. It cannot remedy a situation in which significant numbers of people are always left out.

Another booby-trap to watch out for is the role of the social engineer. Mr. Goble is impressed with the skills of the managers of business enterprise in America, and he feels the same kind of skills should be directed to social problems. But how is this to be interpreted and how is it to be translated into action? It could too easily result in a set of busy-bodies tampering with the economy—as has already occurred. Some problems get worse the more they are worked over. An example is the race question. Public agencies have exacerbated themselves and everybody else over it—and now from the White House comes a zephyr promising "benign neglect" of the race question. If social managers would content themselves with implementing "equal opportunity for all, special privilege for none"—and then give us benign neglect—that would be fine.

One more observation: Mr. Goble names his Research Centre after that revered Virginia gentleman, Thomas Jefferson. It is curious that Americans love Jefferson so much but do not practise his teachings, while they ignore Jefferson's rival, Alexander Hamilton, whose teachings they do practise. Jefferson wanted ideals to be realized because they were good. Hamilton said they will never be realized until it is profitable for the people who have power to act. It may not be amiss to pay attention to this salty wisdom and to show how ideals can be combined with profitable practicality in order to give people the kind of motivation that makes them act.

## A JUDGMENT ON THEM?

**C**LAIMS AGAINST five farmers made at Bromley County Court, Kent, in February, by the Agricultural Training Board in respect of unpaid training levies (£3 for each farm worker), were successful. The amount involved was £39 but the total amount to be recovered from 20,000 rebel farmers who refuse to pay training levies is £400,000. At this rate it will take a long time to squash the "revolution."

The farmers, who object to "committees for everything," intend to maintain their fight against payment.

One cannot but have sympathy for the stand the farmers have taken but this will be tempered by the thought that the farmers themselves have condoned and supported bureaucratic meddling of this nature through their marketing boards whose "committees for everything" impinge upon the rights and pockets of consumers.