

**UTOPIAN THOUGHT IN THE WESTERN WORLD**

By Frank E. & Fritzie P. Manuel  
 Harvard, 1979  
 912 pp. \$25



Pierpont Morgan Library.

Over the centuries, many intelligent and sincere people have tried to visualize heaven on earth. The Manuels, both historians, examine Western utopian fantasies from the Bible to Herbert Marcuse. Paradise has never been for everybody. Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), the island society with "equality of property" for all citizens, maintained the institution of slavery for criminals, the conquered, and volunteer foreigners. The Manuels observe a distinction between utopias depicted in paintings and drawings (usually blissful states located far away or in the future) and reasoned and detailed plans. Since the Middle Ages, the latter have increasingly become programs for revolutionary action, beginning with the millennial theology of Thomas Müntzer—a precursor of Karl Marx who roamed the countryside encouraging the poor to storm castles and monasteries in 16th-century Germany. Analyzing the utopians as well as their ideas from a controversial Freudian perspective, the authors conclude that many, including Francis Bacon, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Charles Fourier, and Marx, have had paranoid personalities. Obsessively fearful of the world, each has sought to create a better one.

**THE ACTION FRANCAISE AND REVOLUTIONARY SYNDICALISM**

by Paul Mazgaj  
 Univ. of N.C., 1979  
 281 pp. \$19

Strange bedfellows are the subject of this detailed examination of the dalliance (never fully consummated) between French monarchists and socialists in the years before World War I. The Action Française was a rightist movement with strong royalist and nationalistic beliefs. The revolutionary syndicalists sought to control industry through workers' unions and general strikes. These seemingly disparate groups were not so out of place together, suggests Mazgaj, a University of North Carolina historian. Both looked forward to radical change. Both groups' hopes for the overthrow of Georges Clemenceau's Third Republic were colored by anti-Semitism. Attempts to reconcile the goals of Left and Right began in 1908 with discussions and joint publications. After 1911, however, the question of France's military prepared-

ness gained in importance, and on that issue the two groups found themselves diametrically opposed. The monarchists took an anti-republican stance only with regard to internal French politics. When their beloved country was threatened from without, they parted company with the syndicalists, whose faith in international socialism committed them to advocate the avoidance of hostilities at almost any price. Historically, Left and Right have always been at each other's throats. The unique coalition of French monarchists and syndicalists seems to have been doomed from its inception.

*Contemporary Affairs*

**BREAKING RANKS: A  
Political Memoir**  
by Norman Podhoretz  
Harper, 1979  
375 pp. \$15

In *Making It* (1967), Norman Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary*, blew the whistle on the liberals' climb to success. "Ambition," he wrote in characteristically blunt fashion, "seems to be replacing erotic lust as the prime dirty little secret of the well-educated American soul." In *Breaking Ranks*, Podhoretz describes his personal political evolution from the early days of the Kennedy administration—when he joined the radical reaction against the stolid 1950s—to his current counter-revolution against the New Left. Podhoretz' disenchantment began in 1964. He believed that writers and academics of the Left were recklessly fomenting and exploiting campus anarchy. Their behavior opened to question their allegiance to democracy and their dedication to high intellectual and moral standards. Podhoretz argues that the radicalism of New Left intellectuals (especially Norman Mailer and Paul Goodman, but just about anyone writing for the *New York Review of Books*), among other things, helped to divide and defeat the Democratic Party in 1968 and 1972. Many liberals, shaken by Vietnam, mistook the New Left's scorn of American values "for a form of idealism," he contends. In fact, 1960s radicalism grew out of "an infection of self-hatred."