

**Eisenhower Notes for Association of National Advertisers
New York City, October 26, 1948**

We who follow the American way of life today number more than 146 million human beings. In our livelihoods, our attitudes, our national temper, we reflect the physical diversity of a vast continent and all the human deviations of mankind itself.

Nevertheless, from the Atlantic coast to the islands of the central Pacific and from the Aleutians to the Caribbean, in spite of infinite variety, we constitute one united society.

Our unity, not imposed by a despotic government, not enforced by arms, not entrenched in the ignorance of fanaticism, is founded on a spiritual conviction.

We believe in the dignity of the human individual and his possession of inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Our government - the political expression of the American way - exists only to assure each of us the fullest enjoyment of those rights compatible with their just exercise by our fellows.

Because the individual among us thereby has been free to exploit his talents and his opportunities, spurred by the challenges of competition, able to retain his earned profit, protected against arbitrary government interference by our system of free enterprise, we have progressed as a nation beyond all others in material things.

At the same time, because our underlying faith in the dignity of man has been stronger than the lure of gold or the lust of power, we have striven to liberate all men from the shackles of disease, poverty, ignorance and serfdom of every sort.

Whenever the contest has been between profits and humanity, between business-as-usual and even the most bitter struggle on behalf of human rights, the American people have always placed their ideals before their dollars and even their own lives.

Our national strength - product of competitive enterprise and spiritual unity - was never more manifest than in World War II. On the day of the German surrender, the millions of Americans whom I had the privilege to command

constituted the mightiest fighting machine of history. Yet they were only one element in a global array armed and manned by our people for the defense of human freedom.

In that war we proved one principle beyond question - an aroused, united America is the most powerful force in the world today.

Despite that truth, millions of Americans are now fearful of the future. Their fear is rooted in ignorance of our system's enduring worth and fruitfulness. Such ignorance and fear corrupt unity and spawn dictatorial regimentation. To banish fear and to replace it with the knowledge required for confident, productive citizenship is a major task for our schools.

But the school, as of now, is only a part-time venture for part of our people. Even for those of school age, what is taught in the classroom and lecture hall can be undone and nullified in the hours away from school.

There is another force in American life which must be rallied to the extension of knowledge about our system, the building of confidence in our way of life, the strengthening of our unity. You, the advertisers and advertising men of the United States, represent that force.

Through newspapers and magazines, billboards, radio, television and all the other media of your profession, advertising has the eyes and ears of America. No other group possesses tools and techniques with so great an impact on public opinion and attitudes as you.

You have used them to raise the material and physical standards of American life far above the level of the most Utopian dreamer a few generations back. You have built a consumer demand for your products that is the fuel of our mass-produced economy.

But what is the ultimate profit if you double and triple your sales and at the same time the way of life that sustains your freedom to advertise and sell and produce becomes the victim of its internal and external enemies?

Self-interest and patriotism both demand that the talents you possess must be devoted in a certain measure to selling knowledge of this country and its freedoms. Otherwise you may not long be free to sell your products in a free market.

What methods you should adopt, what techniques you should use, are technical matters on which I must not presume to advise you. One word of counsel, however, I would give you.

Shun the selfish!

All Americans are bound by the self-interest that is inherent in a common citizenship. But this can be lost to sight in appeals to group selfishness. Undoubtedly, we as a people are separated into groups by business or profession or even geographical location. We belong to groups whose necessity and whose worth in the economy has been proved - stock exchanges, granges, labor unions, associations of all sorts. But if you become labeled as a mouthpiece for one set of groups to the exclusion of others, your influence is divisive instead of constructive.

Seek instead to present the common ground on which all groups, loyal to our way of life, stand; tell the facts of our freedoms. The truth about America is the most cogent argument for the American way.

You, above all others, have the means to tell it.