

Youth in the Present Day World  
An Essay in Contemporary History

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Youth cannot always be defined by age. If we talk of the "young in age" we may think of children, of adolescents, of young men and women, but we do not necessarily mean that they possess that elusive quality which is youth. To judge by age means to go by physical criteria, by certain biological facts. To speak of "youth" on the other hand is to speak of things spiritual and intellectual. Youth is a category of the mind and not, as many people seem to believe, a category of the body. There are untold numbers of "young people" who are anything but youthful. Their minds are dull and docile, they accept readily everything the older generation tells them, they are not living their own lives but the lives of those older people with whom they happen to be thrown together. They are as old as the grandmother who brings them up. On the other hand there are today great numbers of people between the ages of 30 and 35 who in thought and action show all the restlessness, all the zeal and enthusiasm, even all the lack of balance which is commonly attributed to youth.

The age-standard does not only fail to define "youth", its application can be definitely unjust and harmful. If age is the only standard, if youth depends on biological facts, it is evident that youth is nothing but a preliminary step towards maturity. Youth is but undeveloped manhood. If we accept that attitude we are not far from demanding that youth should be modelled after our own image, that they should be drilled in our own ideas, that they should be educated to resemble as far as possible their elders, since before long they will be "just like us." There is no need to point out how much misery has been created in the world by that approach to youth, how it has led young people to revolt against their own parents, how it has broken up family life, how it has caused young people to commit suicide or to lead a double life, how it has "driven them underground."

Thus, the sooner we abandon the attempt of defining youth by pure consideration of age the better. There is another way which is more likely to lead to a clear understanding of the problem. It lies as already indicated in the realm of spiritual and intellectual life. There we find differences which define the limits between the "young" and the "old" as far as such limits exist at all. It is by analysing these differences that we shall arrive not only at an idea of what we mean by youth, but also of the way of thinking and the preoccupations of present-day youth.

#### Youth in "young" and "old" countries

The differences between the generations are either quantitative or qualitative, differences in degree or in substance. In the United States of America the difference is clearly a difference in degree. Youth is not in opposition to the older generation, but on the contrary overemphasizes, exaggerates the qualities it finds in its elders. The older generation has created a technical civilisation in which speed and efficiency are the guiding principles. The young want even more efficiency, even greater speed. Anyone who has ever been invited by an American college student to ride in his car will appreciate that point. Again the older generation has invented its "Rotary Clubs", the "Kiwanis", the "Elks", the "Knights of Columbus" and all the other organisations which create good fellowship and cultivate citizenship. The younger generation is to be found in the scout movement or in the Y.M.C.As and Y.W.C.As and similar organisations which try to implant the same virtues in the young, possibly in a purer form and certainly in a more extensive way. And where is the newspaper boy who does not dream of becoming some day President of the United States or even a second Mr. Rockefeller? There are of course dissident groups, but the large majority of American youth aspires to follow in the footsteps of its elders. This is not surprising. The pioneer days of America are not far behind, its history has been a history of conquest and adventure in the best sense of the word. Pioneering, conquest, adventure are

dreams of the young. Because they have remained also the vision of the old there is no real difference between the generations. Because the young find their heroes in the old generation and because the old find the continuation and fulfilment of their vision in the young there has been no youth movement in the European sense in the United States. With "America's Coming of Age" this situation will probably change, but of this anon.

Great Britain is at the other end of the scale. It is commonly called an "old" country, which means if anything that it has a well-balanced society, where everyone knows his place and opportunities and is on the whole satisfied with them, a country which owing to a century-long, unbroken tradition and development has acquired a "savoir faire" which makes it equal to any emergency. This at least is the belief of the average Englishman, though the post-war crisis has somewhat shaken this belief, at least amongst the younger people. Nevertheless it is true to say that in England, just as in America, there is as yet no real opposition between the young and the old. The ideal of the "gentleman" remains unshaken, hardly anyone doubts the wisdom of parliamentary methods, as was shown recently by the complete failure of Mosley's "fascist party", and general belief has it that with the end of the present economic crisis there will be a return of prosperity for all classes. The only difference again seems to be a difference in degree - the greater vigour with which the young Englishman gives himself up to sport or the greater enthusiasm which he shows in canvassing for his party on election day. If America has no youth movement because all appear equally young, one is tempted to say that Great Britain has no distinct youth movement because all are equally old. Yet, the dissident groups are probably larger than they are in America because Great Britain has suffered more from the War than the United States, because elements have entered English life which do threaten to destroy its age-old tradition. There are already tendencies amongst young people which not only in degree but also in substance differ from the ideas of the older generation.

Leaving aside for the moment these new distinctions of recent years, which will be dealt with later on, it can be said in a general way that in distinctly "young" or "old" countries like the United States or Great Britain - both taken only as examples - which can look back upon a continuous development not vitally disturbed by upheavals or catastrophies there is no clear line of demarcation between the young and the old. If any line is to be drawn, and keeping in mind the reservations which were made at the beginning, it may be drawn for the purpose of this study somewhere between the ages of 20-23 for the working classes and between 24 and 26 for the academically trained, who on the whole see less of life than the young workers, and who have to shoulder their family and other responsibilities at a later age.

Turning to countries like Germany, Italy or Russia we find a totally different situation. Here are real differences in substance of thought and outlook between the young and the old generations. Difference is hardly the word - there is real opposition, there is a fight on. Youth is in a revolutionary state and its thought and actions can only be understood in terms of revolution.

#### A Country in Transition - The German Youth Movement

Like every revolution, the German Youth Movement sprang from the soil of repression and unfreedom. Its protagonists were the young generation of a powerfully aspiring people, full of an energy of life that was still fresh and vigorous. This young generation was held under by an enormous pressure of social, religious and ethical standards which had become a matter of course, and which had in their petrification lost all living contact with the individual, and therefore choked the free growth of personality as soon as it began to germinate. Such standards, whether we dub them conventions, prejudices or moral laws, are inevitable, and manifest themselves in all the social groups of every land. But the German in his yearning for the abstract goes beyond all other peoples in putting causes before personalities. As Keyserling says, the tendency of the German is "to impose ideals and programmes regardless of the wills of those who have to carry them out. The tone of every regulation proves it; never yet have

I read one which did not irritate my inmost soul. This is because the logical contents and consequences are felt to be of greater importance than the living men to whom they refer." From this German trait it is easy to understand that before the War, favoured by a long period of undisturbed development and strengthened by the political system of the day, the regulating and standardising of life was so extended and hardened into set forms that in Germany more than anywhere else personality had no room to grow. Youth seemed bound to be broken on the wheel of these fixed forms which home and school, State and Church represented. There lies one of the essential reasons why it was in Germany of all the countries of the earth that the Revolution of youth grew to such mighty proportions.

The reaction of youth was at the outset naive and simple. At first - in the middle of the nineties - a handful and then an evergrowing crowd of young people, mostly from the secondary schools, fled from the strict routine of daily life into the woods and on to the moors, to live their own lives free from constraint. On long excursions, round the camp-fires and in the tent these "Wandervögel" discovered Nature. But they discovered also a new relation to each other, they found themselves in a new fellowship, not determined or regulated from without, which was for that very reason a true fellowship. The "Wandervögel" stood on his own feet, and therefore in opposition to most of the falsified forms of life into which the older generation sought to force him. Sincerity, as truth to oneself, and personal responsibility became the foundation-stones of the new life. This period of the Youth Movement, of naive, direct human fellowship, culminated in the first big youth congress on the mountain of "Hohen Meissner" in 1913; it may also be said to have ended there. It was a period in which the opposition of youth to traditionalist age was felt as a living experience, but the whole range of problems involved in that opposition was not yet grasped.

Then came the War. The "Wandervögel" formed a majority of the volunteers - a strong sense of romance and the love for their homeland which had been deepened by their wanderings - summed them to the flag. Thousands upon thousands of them never returned. But it was not only its finest leaders that the Youth

Movement lost through the War - it lost also the naivete of its origin. Questions covering State and Nation pressed for an answer, nor could the movement ignore the social tension that marked the end of the war. The dislike felt even before the war for the German Churches was reinforced in wide circles by the defence and often glorification of war of which those churches were guilty. Youth now made conscious efforts to get beyond the mere opposition to traditional ideas, and to go deep into the problems raised for modern life by the war and the rise of Industry. A mass of material produced during those days witnesses to the earnestness and the zeal for truth with which these questions were tackled. The first characteristic of this period was penetrating criticism of the existing order. The "Freideutsche Jugend" particularly, who had grown out of the "Wandervogel", did admirable pioneer work. But criticism was not the last word; youth pressed forward towards realisation of what they saw in the future - new forms for State, religion, ethics and class-fellowship. And here the ways parted. Young people who all drew from the same fount an aspiration after personal responsibility and sincerity and after a living fellowship now parted company. The Marxist took leave of the Nationalist, Catholics and Protestants shut themselves off from each other in separate unions.

This development was hastened by the efforts of the parties and Churches, of teachers and politicians to get hold of the young people again and to use them for their own ends. They succeeded only partially however. Though hundreds of youth organisations, leagues and unions followed upon the "Wandervogel" movement, though they might call themselves democratic, nationalist, Catholic or Protestant, the new and unique thing which the Youth Movement had brought, the deep and intimate feeling for leadership and discipleship, the unreserved giving of oneself to the fellowship, the awareness of personal responsibility - all this remained. Their common origin in a hope and promise of deeper fellowship remained undeniable, despite all other differences. Thus, though a youth movement in the sense of the first "Wandervogel" hardly exists any longer, the effects of that

first moral revolution of German youth are indestructible. Those boys and girls have become men and women, who in party and church, in school and home stand for a deepened personal life, and a renewal of human relations in the spirit of fellowship. They may be 35 or 40 but they are still "young" and youth accepts them as leaders. It is they who are filling the forms created by the political revolution of 1918 with meaning and content; more than this, they are even reshaping these forms in the light of the hard necessities with which present-day Germany is faced. The revolution is still on.

What will be the outcome? Uninitiated observers from the outside will only see confusion in the present-day situation. Not being aware of the underlying unity which binds together youth in all parties and churches they will only remark upon the fact that youth is to be found in all the extremist parties which fight each other to destruction. The latter is only too true - youth is swelling the ranks of the extremists. Nor is it surprising in view of the stark misery which young people have to face. There are the millions of young workers to whom work and livelihood are denied, there are the students who are finishing their studies in the face of most terrific financial difficulties and who know all the time that after having finished their studies they will only join the ranks of the unemployed. Already there are between 50,000 and 70,000 young university graduates who have never had a job. There will be 120,000 of them in two years' time, and that in a country which has altogether only about 350,000 people engaged in intellectual professions requiring university training. Small wonder that the students are driven into extremist views and that more than half of them are to be found in the Hitler party, the party of the National Socialists. Even more important is the fact that even those who are in the youth groups of the older established parties and religious confessions are more radical than ever before and that - very much in opposition to the older leaders - they seek contacts with youth in all other, even officially "hostile," groups. In spite of appearances, of party declarations and street-fighting the old distinctions of "right" and

"left", of "conservative" and "socialist" are disappearing. Youth is struggling for a common basis. What then, we may ask are the elements it already has in common?

Youth in Germany is anti-individualistic. Young people despair of what they call the "individualistic liberalism of the western democracies." They see in it merely the domination of selfish private interests over the interests of the nation as a whole. They attack the big industrialists because "they work only for their own pockets" and pay the election expenses of "representatives" who put the private interests of the industrialists above the common weal. At the same time they attack the party egoism of the Socialists and other parties, which according to these young people, only try to preserve the privileges which the revolution of 1919 gave them, irrespective of the welfare of the whole country. We see here, more clearly than in any other period of German history, the interest and the life of the community set up as the sole standard of measurement, and opposed to the interest of the private individual or a group of individuals within the community.

On the other hand it would be utterly wrong to think that German youth has no regard for personality. On the contrary there never has been such a devotion to the "leader", the personality who sacrifices himself entirely for the welfare of the country. It cannot be compared with the cult of the Kaiser before the war, for German youth today, while giving itself whole-heartedly to its accepted leader, watches him carefully, and if it finds him wanting in unselfishness, if making compromises simply for the sake of remaining in power, it throws him overboard without remorse. Mr. Hitler may discover this before he is many years older.

German youth is hungering after authority. It is obviously not the kind of authority from which young people fled to the woods before the war, authority which ruled by suppression. They want an authority which convinces, which impresses itself upon the world because of its intrinsic superiority and value. Thus, there is a revival of religious feeling amongst certain groups, both Protestants and Catholics, which is most significant, though the groups themselves

may be numerically weak. Whether this revival appears in the form of Neo-Thomism among the Catholics or in an adherence to the ideas of Karl Barth in the Protestant world, it is characterized by an insistence upon the transcendence, the "otherness" of God - "The Churches may be weak and inadequate, the final authority of God cannot be shaken." In the political field the authority of the state is extolled - not the state of today, "built upon the 'liberal' ideas of the West", but the state of tomorrow in which the nation as a whole will find its supreme expression. The nation-state is endowed with mystical qualities which give it the character of an absolute, the expression of the will of God. This is of course nothing new. Since Fichte and Hegel identified Nation and State, the state has had a place of supreme importance in German thought. However, as a result of the war owing to the terrific suffering through which Germany has since passed and which has spared no one, owing to the fact that the individual appears helpless in the face of present-day difficulties, this emphasis on the authority of the state, to which all individual efforts submit for the common good of the nation, has swept the country as never before since the days of Napoleon. This "nationalism" is not confined to the so-called Conservative groups, it is also alive amongst the Socialists and is increasing even amongst groups of the extreme left, in the youth groups of the Communist Party. It is "revisionist", i.e. for a revision of the peace treaties which would give freedom again to the German nation from "financial slavery", and equal rights in the community of nations. At the same time it is on the whole not aggressive nationalism of the pre-war type which is better described as imperialism. Its emphasis is not on more territory (except in the matter of the Polish Corridor) but rather on a unification and strengthening of the German nation from within. Here we come to the most important characteristic of modern German youth.

Before the war Germany was the typical protagonist of class-war theories. The "working classes" stood against the "capitalists" with the intellectuals and the army on their side and no conciliation between the two appeared possible.

It was a fight which was only to be ended by the suppression of one or the other of the opponents. Today the class-war dogmatism while still present has lost a good deal of ground. The army has become an instrument of a democratic state. The intellectuals and the greater part of the middle-classes, the small bourgeoisie, have been reduced to the economic level of the proletariat. This might have meant a recrudescence of the class war had it not been that the "capitalists" themselves, the big industrial concerns, the banks, the transport enterprises had to apply for state aid in order to exist. This led to gradual state control over the whole economic life of the nation, a tendency strengthened by the fact that under the Reparation Clauses the state became responsible for enormous payments to foreign countries which had to be collected from all the existing economic units. Already practically the entire transport system, including shipping, is under government control. Under the system of compulsory arbitration the state collaborates in the fixing of wages and salaries. Fifteen to twenty million people depend for their livelihood on the unemployment allowances administered largely by the state. The banks are increasingly dependent on government help and even foreign trade is passing under its control. Special decrees have made it practically impossible for the individual German citizen to travel abroad, as he has to apply to the national banks in order to get permission to take with him enough money for his travel, a permission which as a rule is only given when it is proved that the journey abroad is in the interest of the country (commercial travellers, etc.). While at the beginning of this development people spoke of "interventions" of the state in the sphere of private enterprise, there can be little doubt that at present we witness the formation of an entirely new economic system which is breaking radically with earlier capitalist traditions. Whether one calls this new system state-capitalism or by any other name matters very little - the main thing is that Germany is building up a collectivist society in which the state acts as trustee for the administration of social justice for everyone. To the mystical national character, with which the state is endowed, has been added the mystical social conception of the state as the "sumum bonum" of social justice.

There is no doubt that hard necessities have driven Germany in this direction. But it is equally true that it is German youth above all which is giving content to the new system. The old ideals of the fellowship of all people, of the organic unity of all strata of society within the nation begin to take shape. Young people are not satisfied with the setting up of a new machinery of state control, but they are seeking with their whole soul a fellowship with all kinds of people of their own and of other classes. For several years for instance students have been working together with young peasants and unemployed industrial workers in summer work-camps and colonies. They have given their services free to build new roads or to cultivate new land, enterprises which would have been uneconomic if they had been carried out by paid labour. The old barriers between the classes are breaking down everywhere. The biggest German student organisation, the German Students' Co-operative Association", is making every effort to open up the university to the gifted of all classes, and has instituted for that purpose loan funds and bursaries, has built student houses and other institutions to make life cheaper for the student. True, there are differences of opinion between the various youth groups as to the best way of government, as to specific measures to be taken, but before the great new ideal of the collectivist society these differences are steadily losing in importance. The young of all parties, which are fighting like cats and dogs, are much closer to each other than the old party heads dare to admit. Germany today is in a fever. She may have to pass through a Hitler dictatorship (not likely!), or a communist regime (still less likely!), but whatever happens the young will come to a common understanding, out of their spirit the new national and social state will be born. It will be neither a communist nor a fascist state, it will be the expression of the will of young Germany to fellowship, of its yearning for national freedom and social justice.

Youth Victorious - Italy - Russia - Spain

Italy and Russia have recently passed through revolutions, the results of which are well known. What is not generally understood is that these revolutions were largely revolutions of youth, or to be more precise that they were carried through by youth, though they were inspired by older leaders like Mussolini and Lenin. Just as is happening in Germany today, youth stood up against what seemed to them worn-out principles, standards and codes. They turned against a disintegrating individualistic society in Italy to proclaim the unity of the Italian nation and the submission of the individual to the supreme authority of the Italian State. In Russia they proclaimed the crusade for the class-less society as against the suppression of one class by the other. In both cases the young differed not only in degree but in substance from the older generation. And in both cases youth was victorious.

The successful revolution made Italy more than any other country a country of the young. Youth is no more in opposition to the institutions of the country, private or public, on the contrary youth has taken full responsibility for them. As far as there is still opposition it is directed against what was yesterday, the young are prepared to defend their state against the dangers which may threaten it within from those of the older generation who have not been won over to the new order, and against the dangers which may threaten from abroad. Their one aim and purpose is to follow the Duce and to live and die for the greatness of Italy. This extraordinary unity amongst Italian youth is largely the personal work of Mussolini. He not only gathered around him an elite of young people whom he entrusted with the highest responsibilities, he deliberately set out to win the loyalty even of those young groups which under the influence of family and Church were keeping aloof or were definitely hostile to the new system. Beginning with the primary schools and finishing with the universities, all those teachers were gradually removed who were not in agreement with fascist principles. All youth organisations which were not fascist were either forbidden or limited in their ac-

tivities. It will be remembered that the closing down of a number of catholic youth organisations led to serious difficulties with the Vatican, which resulted in the toleration of certain limited catholic groups of hardly more than local importance, which had to confine themselves thenceforth to purely religious objects and to refrain from any kind of propaganda against fascist ideas. Thus the field was free for the development of purely fascist youth organisations, which today have become the very basis of the fascist state.

By a decree of the 3rd. of April 1926 the National Ballila Society was launched (called after a little Genovese boy of the 17th. century who fought bravely against foreign intruders). Its object is to aid the moral and physical education of youth, and it has introduced sports and physical training as one of the major activities in the life of the young people. From its very conception it was under the direct control of the Duce. The members of Ballila are generally divided into two branches, one for boys between 8 and 14 years of age and the other for older boys of 14 to 18, these latter are called the "Partisans of the Vanguard" (Avanguardisti); they receive a strict military training, and after the annual ceremonial oath are admitted into the Voluntary Militia; this automatically makes them members of the Fascist Party. Every year some 200,000 young people are thus recruited. Membership in these organisations is voluntary - at least in principle. The advantages offered to members are however such that it is difficult to keep out. Thus former Avanguardisti get their military service in the regular army reduced by three months. More important - since 1926 only former members of fascist youth organisations have been allowed to become members of the party. Every position of any importance in any walk of life, however, depends on such membership. Vast alpine colonies, seaside centres and summer camps are organised, where more than 100,000 Italian children and young people can spend their holidays, free or at a nominal cost, in open air and amongst healthy surroundings. No wonder that there are today well over 2,000,000 members in these youth organisations. But let there be no mistake - it is by no means only material advantages which have

led to this success. The Italian State is a state of the young, and the young mean the oath they take in entering the Ballila: "I swear to carry out without discussion the order of the Duce and to serve to the best of my ability, and if necessary at the cost of my life, the cause of the Fascist Revolution." The Ballila is an organisation exclusively for boys. The girls are organised in a similar organisation the "Giovine Italiane" which, however, is of less direct importance in view of the fact that Italian women play only a secondary role in public life.

Besides these organisations there exists a special organisation for students, the "Gruppi Universitari Fascisti" (Fascist Student Groups) to which between eighty and ninety percent of all students belong. In it the intellectual leaders of the country are educated and are educating themselves. Numerous are the examples of members of that organisation who were given posts of the highest responsibility in the councils of the Fascist Party and the Government immediately after leaving the University. The Government is also making a serious effort by the building of student houses and the creation of large scholarship funds to enable gifted people from all strata of society to enter the university.

Without generalising unduly we can observe certain tendencies of thought in Italian youth on which we have remarked upon when speaking of Germany: the yearning for and the submission to authority which rules because of its intrinsic superiority, the break with individualistic doctrines, the exaltation of the nation-state and the desire for a new social order, a social hierarchy which will place every citizen according to his ability to serve the country.

In Russia as in Italy youth is in the vanguard of Revolution, in Russia as in Italy it is organised to defend and develop the new society. There are Octobrists (boys and girls under seven years of age), Pioneers (7-16) and Komsomolists (abbreviation from Komunistichi-Communist; Soyus-Union; Molodiozh-Youth; aged 16-23). As in Italy the way to the Party leads today largely through these youth organisations. There are other similarities. When the Pioneer takes the oath he raises his hand over his head and says: "I solemnly

promise before my comrades that: I shall steadfastly defend the cause of the working class in its struggle for the liberation of the workers and peasants of all the world, and I shall honestly and unflinchingly fulfil the tenets of Lenin, the laws and customs of the young Pioneers." Again the submission to authority - Lenin instead of Mussolini; again the idea of sacrifice of the individual to the community - the class instead of the nation.

Class is everything, for class war is the way to the class-less society. Children of the "bourgeois" classes, of the intelligentsia find it practically impossible to be admitted to the communist youth organisations. Class loyalty is the first and the last word of the laws of Young Pioneers:

- 1) A Pioneer is true to the cause of the working class - to the tenets of Lenin,
- 2) A Pioneer is younger brother to Komsomolists and Communists,
- 3) A Pioneer is comrade to Pioneers, workers' and peasants' children of all the world,
- 4) A Pioneer organizes children of the neighbourhood and participates with them in their daily life. A Pioneer is an example to all the children.
- 5) A Pioneer aspires to knowledge. Knowledge and ability are the power behind the struggle for the cause of the working class."

The work done in the Octobrist and Pioneer groups is of necessity mostly preparatory - physical training, drilling in Marxist and Leninist thought, educating for service to the working class. The Komsomols, however, fill a definite and very important place in the social system. They are represented on the Central Soviet which passes no ordinance concerning youth without consulting the leaders of the Komsomols. They compose the "shock-brigades", the teams of propagandists, who are winning the individual peasants to join the "kolhozy", the cooperative farms, they set an example to the workers in the factories in increasing the output and handling the work more efficiently, they organize evening courses and educational lectures, they cultivate the Soviet theatre, they are the leaders of the Pioneer

Movement, and in a hundred other ways serve the interests of the revolution. In the Children's Corner of the "Moscow News" there appeared recently a little poem written by a boy which with all its crudeness reflects some of the enthusiasm of a Komsomol.

Komsomol:

A Poem

Organizers of the Kids are we,  
Among young workers in the factory;  
We're for our class, against the boss  
Always fighting, never shirking  
For the workers' cause.

Revolutionary youth in Russia is not working for itself - not even thinking of itself. They starve, they freeze, they work to exhaustion - "for the workers" cause. At present all their energies are bent upon the success of the five-year plan. Problems of technical development, of industrialisation absorb all their thought. Their papers and magazines are full of reports on the progress made, of special efforts accomplished. Everything else has been pushed into the background. If the plan succeeds, as it will in all probability, it will be primarily an achievement of youth which took upon itself all thinkable privations for the sake of future generations.

The break with the older generation in Russia is complete. Maurice Hindus in his book "Humanity Uprooted" quotes the remark of a Russian girl, a student in Moscow University, who in response to a query as to what was the key to the spiritual life of the revolutionary youth, replied "Always remember that to us the world is just beginning." Revolutionary youth has deliberately dammed up the stream of spiritual nourishment that flows into the very soul of the youth of other lands. To quote Hindus again: "Religion, morality, family, nationalism, social justice, all these, as understood in the outside world, mean little, if anything, furnish neither inspiration nor guidance." Apart from science there are no ties between these young people and the life of past generations, they are free, spiritually

unhampered in their realisation of a new world, the one and only world for them. This explains the force of Russian revolutionary youth, their unparalleled devotion, their intransigence. We, for whom the world is not "just beginning," must wonder whether Russian youth will be satisfied for ever with the objects which command all their attention at present. We wonder in particular whether their "plan" will last once they have achieved their objects, once life in Russia becomes easier, once there is leisure again - and if it lasts in what direction it will turn. Will men begin to differentiate again, to see certain human and spiritual values which we cherish, will the religious genius of Dostojewski or Tolstoy assert itself in the Russian people, not in the forms of the old Orthodox Church, but as the fundamental justification for the new social order? It would be foolish to prophesy for there are at present no indications that anything of the kind will happen; nevertheless it is worth while to put the question.

If we speak of "youth victorious" mention should also be made of Spain which has passed through a revolution recently in which youth has taken a large share. It was not a revolution to be compared with those of Fascism or Communism. One might compare it to the "bourgeois revolution" of 1847-48 in Austria, a revolution against the combined absolutism of the Church and the Monarchy, a revolution for constitutionalism and the freedom of thought, a liberal revolution. It originated in the universities which suffered most from the lack of freedom of thought and was carried through with the help of the working classes and their trade unions which felt most keenly the economic misery created by the mistakes of the dictatorship.

The part taken by youth was probably smaller than in Italy or Russia but it was nevertheless an important one. It was through the universities that the liberal ideals first spread in the country. The repeated action taken by the Government against the students, the suppression of liberty of speech directed largely against the universities prove that the Government knew perfect-

ly well from where the danger was coming. It only stimulated the students to new activity; it was one of their number who in 1929 helped to organize the first general strike and was sent to prison for two years.

The revolution was successful - but ever since the new constitution was adopted little has been heard of Spanish youth. Some of them have attained high government positions, but there does not seem to be the general enthusiasm for what has been achieved which characterizes youth in Italy and Russia. The reason is probably that there is no unity of opinion as to what the results are or ought to be. It is becoming increasingly clear that the groups in league during the revolution had different objects in view. The universities wanted a constitutional state, the trade unions wanted a socialist republic. The "liberal" revolution has been successful - will it be followed by a socialist revolution or even an attempt at Communism? Youth itself is divided and only the future can show which way Spain will turn.

In this connection, and to complete the picture, it might be added that the situation in most of the Latin-American countries is very much the same as in Spain. The frequent "university revolutions", which offer an attractive subject for Sunday editions, are practically all attempts of liberal groups to establish constitutional government in countries which openly or covertly are now under the rule of dictators.

### The Rise of the East

Both in India and China it is above all also the student element which commands our attention. Not only are they most articulate in voicing the new ideas and aspirations which mould these countries, but they also hold a decided position of leadership in national affairs. These countries having a low level of literacy, the literate person, even if he is only in the secondary school, stands out as a leader, he is "put on a pedestal as a prodigy by the masses", as a correspondent from China remarked recently.

Their ideas are well known - national freedom in self-government, social reform ranging from moderate proposals for better conditions in industry to communist panaceas. Politics is the element in which they live.

To what an extent Chinese students are in the vanguard of the New China can best be revealed by a study of student participation in all the important political actions of China since the World War.\* In 1919 Chinese students opposed China's signing of the Peace Treaty. So much were they against it that on May 4th of that year they went on strike and continued to strike until the President of China agreed not to sign the treaty because it recognized Japan's position in Shantung. After May 30th, 1925, the students went on strike because the police of the International Settlement of Shanghai fired on Chinese labourers - a significant demonstration of the existing feeling of solidarity between the students and the workers in China. The Nationalist Party was victorious between 1925 and 1927 because the students paved the way for Nationalist troops on all occasions. Jimmy Yen's movement for the simplification of the Chinese writing, the success of which is an essential condition for the spread of literacy in China and a conscious unification of the country, was and is largely a student movement.

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\*For much of the information given below we are indebted to an article "Student Body influences China's Present Policy" which appeared in the "World Student Mirror" of December 26, 1951.

Since the Manchurian situation arose, thousands and thousands of students in secondary schools, colleges and universities have abandoned their studies altogether to serve their country. Six hundred and fifty young people in Peiping, largely students, forced the railway officials to grant them free railway transportation to Nanking, by sitting in scores on the railway trucks in front of the trains. They were determined to demonstrate their disapproval of the present government administration. Students drove Dr. L. T. Wang out of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Students were the progenitors of anti-League sentiment in China through their demonstrations against Wellington Koo and Alfred Sze.

Students also inspired and organized the boycott movement against Japanese goods. They seized the municipal buildings in Shanghai to impose their will upon the Mayor. When it came to actual fighting against the Japanese, students were in the front-line. Japan hoped to succeed within twenty-four hours - it was due to the crack divisions of students badly armed but determined to die rather than to yield - that they failed. If anywhere then certainly in China students are making world history. Mr. Sokolsky, in an article in the "New York Times", has said: "The students of China are capable of the most intensive expression of patriotism and self-sacrifice; they will risk their lives against the muskets and bullets of their own troops; they will abandon their books and play politics; they will form a mass against which, thus far, every government in China has been helpless".

At a time of acute national distress and foreign aggression such as the present, it is only natural that the political idea of nationalism, the ideas of freedom and self-determination, and the readiness to fight for them should be in the foreground. However, the Shanghai incidents of 1925 mentioned before, the work for unification within the country itself, testify to the sense of social responsibility of the student population. This is borne

out by a statement made recently by one of the great leaders of youth in China, Dr. T. Z. Koo, who said: "It is just a matter of years before a great social revolution, precipitated by student opinion, will take place in China. It will not be political in spirit, since its sole purpose will be to reform both the agrarian and industrial situations from the standpoint of the common people and the economic future of the country as a whole".

Dr. S. K. Datta, the great leader of Indian Christians, has repeatedly pointed out the resemblances between China and his own country, the growing affinity between the two nations. In the field of student thought these resemblances are most striking. Not only are the aims put forward by the student groups in the two countries very similar, but they also use in many ways the same methods. There is however a difference in that Indian students cannot look back upon the same record of success which stimulates the Chinese students to ever new action. The reasons for this difference are obvious. The strength of the Chinese National Government cannot be compared with the strength and the resources of the British administration in India. It must be remembered also that owing to the greater number of administrative centres in India and the better communications between them a seizure of power or even an influencing of the authorities is much more difficult. It is therefore not surprising that after the unsuccessful issue of the Round Table Conference, followed by the arrest of all the Congress leaders, many students were disheartened and driven into a dull resistance to powers mightier than themselves, or that they were seized by despair and, abandoning their policy of non-violence, resorted to the well-known attacks on British officials in Bengal and the Punjab. At the same time these occurrences show to what lengths the youth of India will go for the sake of the liberation of India.

The various phases of the non-violence campaign are too well known to be repeated here. There are, however, certain aspects which from the point

of view of our subject require attention. During the great campaign for civil disobedience and for the boycott of British goods much of the picketing was done by students. Numerous pictures were published at that time by the Indian press showing men and women who had suffered from the lathis of the police; most of these young people were students. The mere fact that women students have taken such a prominent part in the movement means that a revolution has taken place in India.

Another fact of the utmost importance is that amongst students the difficulties between Hindus and Mohammedans play a comparatively small role. The President of the National Union of Indian Students Abroad (an organisation set up in Europe to serve the interests of the Indian students studying in the West), which is largely composed of Hindu and Christian students, is a Mohammedan. If we remember that the last Round Table Conference was disbanded before reaching any definite agreement because the Government maintained that nothing could be done before Hindus and Mohammedans agreed on the communal question, we shall appreciate the importance of this fact.

Apart from its political ideals modern Indian youth is inspired by an earnest desire to improve social conditions. During a personal interview I had with Mr. Gandhi lately he greatly stressed this aspect of student work in India: "Our people are doing this work and are touching just about 2000 villages. They are not doing educational work, but are trying to improve the social condition of the villages, by teaching them how to earn money. We are reviving villages on the borderland of starvation by giving them work, we are bringing to them the principles of hygiene, teaching them how to keep accounts, giving them sanitation and teaching them the immense value to the land of human manure." Other parts of the interview made clear that Mr. Gandhi really means youth when he speaks of "we". And it is no accident that the organ which is the mouthpiece of the whole movement is entitled "Young India".

Before leaving the East a few words about Japan about which I have very

little information. It has its scout movement, its Y.M.C.A's and Y.W.C.A's, which do exceedingly useful work of the character well known in America. These organisations exist also in China and India, but what makes Japan different from these two countries is the fact that there does not seem to be any radical youth movement in existence of the kind which is at present transforming China and India. There are of course patriotic societies of youth which enjoy the support of the authorities and which indulge in imperialistic dreams. Their appeal is largely emotional and their ideas are largely borrowed from the older generation. The solution they have to offer for the economic and social difficulties of Japan is expansion, peaceful if possible, by military force if necessary. Though the young people in these organisations are certainly genuine in their convictions they can hardly be described as followers of a youth movement, with its own laws, standing on its own feet. However the story does not end here. From time to time news reaches the West of sudden arrests of students, of "communist" demonstrations on the part of young people quickly suppressed by the police. Lately again students assembled to protest against Japanese methods at Shanghai - and were promptly put in prison. Frequent attempts have been made in the past to form socialist organisations of youth, only to be severely repressed at once by the Government. All this leads one to believe - and witnesses from Japan bear out this idea - that while there are actually no radical organisations of youth, there is a great underground movement in which students and young workers combine to prepare for certain adjustments in the social and economic order. In a country which is suffering from enormous unemployment of university graduates and where the social conditions of the working classes are so bad, how could it be otherwise? The fact that official oppression has driven underground many of the best young people in Japan does not ease the situation, it can only lead to more violent reaction on the part of the young, followed by even more severe suppression. A few years ago young people were sentenced to imprisonment simply on the ground of "dangerous thought",

and students were forbidden to read Karl Marx in order to protect them against contamination! No good can come of such a policy, and the day may not be far off when all the accumulated resentment will lead to a violent outbreak such as may throw Japan into utter chaos.

La Belle France and more about the "young" and "old" countries.

Of all the great countries of the world only France has been omitted so far from our survey. The reason is that France cannot be classified under any of the categories we have established. She is neither a country in transition like Germany, nor is her youth revolutionary as in Russia, Italy and the East. At the same time she cannot altogether be classed with Great Britain or the United States for there is less harmony between the essential ideas of the younger and older generations in France than there is in these two countries. Individualistic like her people she defies all attempts at classification.

French youth is to be found in all camps, in all the various big and small groups into which French individualism has divided the French people. There are Catholic and Protestant youth organisations (even the scouts are divided into Catholic, Protestant and neutral unions), there are party groups of all shades, from die-hard conservatives to red-hot communists and anarchists, there are extreme nationalists and stark internationalists. Anyone knowing French character would expect this. What, however, is essential is the fact that in these groups themselves youth not only goes on the whole farther than the older generation but is even in open opposition oftentimes to the authorities it professes to follow.

Take for instance the Catholic youth. There are numerous organisations which are grouped closely around the Church and which aim at giving a moral and religious culture to boys and girls. Being completely under the patronage of the Church they follow it in all its teaching. Beside these organisations there are however two groups so extreme from the point of view of the Church that they have been banned by the Pope. The one is the "Action Française"

which has many followers amongst students in Paris. It is characterized by an extremely chauvinistic doctrine, by its championship of authority and its appeal to the traditions of the best days of French history and especially of the Monarchy. At the other end of the scale stands the "Jeune Republique", a most active group which is known for its peace campaigns and its efforts on behalf of the working classes, the clearing up of slums and the fight against immorality. It was banned by the Church because the influence of the laity outgrew that of the clergy in it. For completeness' sake mention should also be made of the "equipes sociales" (social teams) of Robert Garric which are recognized by the Church but which are very much to the left. These teams are composed of students and workers, meeting as a study circle from week to week, and having the students give lectures on theoretical matters in which they are competent and workers on subjects in which they have practical experience, to the enrichment of both sides.

When speaking of Protestant youth, we must remember that some of the biggest industrialists in France are protestant and that the protestant members of parliament belong mostly to the conservative parties. Notwithstanding that fact the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Paris has built up a piece of work similar to the work of the catholic "Social Teams" in the industrial suburb of Ivry. In vacation time, and even for a term or so, students go and share the life of the workers, living and working beside them; while others run holiday camps in the country for the city-bred children.

In the purely political field the patriotic youth societies are the most orthodox, i.e. most in line with the political parties to which they correspond. In the groups of the left, however, we notice the significant fact that the young people's organisations are on the whole readier than their elders to go the way of reconciliation internationally even at the cost of a revision of the peace treaties, and that they are more radical in their demands for extensive social legislation. It is also to be noted that there is on the whole a

tendency amongst youth to drift towards the left wing organisations. This is understandable when we realize that 80,000 French teachers belong to a predominantly socialist Teachers' Federation which was the first to initiate a campaign for purging school text-books of all those passages likely to offend other nations or to create hatred against them.

The effects of this peculiar situation in France are two-fold. On the one hand the existing tensions within the various groups lead to ever new discussions of the aim and purpose of the groups and of the policies to be followed. There is an ever new search for a deepened understanding of the principles on which the groups are built which contributes greatly to upholding the very high intellectual standard of French public life. On the other hand the general drift of youth towards the more liberal groups gives us hope that French foreign policy may lose much of its intransigence and that the internal adjustments necessary in the social and economic field will be brought about by a process of evolution.

This is the place to make up for an omission made at the beginning of this essay. In speaking about the United States and Great Britain we contented ourselves with a few generalisations which we felt justified in making because this essay is written for an American audience, which without doubt is au courant of the situation in the two great Anglo-Saxon countries. However, in fairness to the youth of these countries we have to dwell for a moment on some of their tendencies which are not altogether in line with the generalisations made. We said already that there were "dissident" groups. After what has been said about France we might extend this statement by saying, that even where youth is following its elders it is very often against them. Youth may have set its mind on a "return of prosperity" just as its elders are wishing for it, but there may be subtle changes taking place in the mind of youth as to the methods which should be employed, sufficient to create a marked contrast between them and the older generation. This, for instance, is undoubtedly happening, both in the United States and Great Britain, where in all kinds of organisations, such

as the "Y" or Student Christian Movements, great numbers of young people are laying increasingly emphasis upon the necessity for community action, collectivist measures as against the old panacea of individual effort for personal gain. As with the "coming of age" of the United States the memory of the pioneer days becomes dim, and in as much as Great Britain gets unsettled by the economic difficulties the young join even increasingly such frankly "non-conformist" movements as the League for Industrial Democracy or the Religion and Labour Movement in America, or Socialist circles in Great Britain. Equally, youth may be as anxious to uphold the greatness of its country as its elders who have helped to create it. Yet they may dissent again on the question of methods. While many of the older generation may see their only safeguards in a bigger and better army or navy, youth may see its only salvation and the only genuine way to national greatness in arbitration and reconciliation, and may turn against compulsory military training. American youth in particular has taken the lead in this matter - and yet nothing but blind chauvinism can deny that they love their country as ardently as did their forefathers.

#### The International Fellowship of Youth

Our long and extensive journey is coming to an end. As we went along we tried to do justice in our notes to the most vital forces that are moving youth in the present-day world. It will be pointed out that our survey is incomplete, that we omitted to deal with various aspects of the life of modern youth which are important. This is perfectly true. We might have spoken of the desire which exists practically everywhere amongst young people to come into closer contact with nature, to counterbalance the unnatural ways of living in the big cities by organized hiking, and we might have mentioned the numerous "Youth Hostels" which have been founded after the German model all over Great Britain, and in some of the Nordic countries, and which enable young people to get to know their countries at the smallest possible expense to themselves. We might

have dealt with the tendencies, strong in youth, to revive old folk-lore and folk dances. We might have spoken of the movements for prohibition, against smoking, for a purification of literature and of the cinema. We refrained from it because all these movements and tendencies while important in themselves cannot be compared in impact and strength with the forces which we have described and which are moulding a new world.

We might also have extended our survey to more countries. We might have spoken of the determination of Hungarian youth to obtain a revision of the peace treaties and to restore Hungary to her old glory. We might have mentioned the efforts of Turkish youth to aid in the reforms of the Ghazi, Kemal Pasha. We might have spent some time with Zionist youth in Palestine, and discovered that it is youth above all which is building up the new national home of the Jews. However, such an extension of the survey would have yielded little that would be essentially new.

Wherever we turn today we find essentially two forces at work. There is first of all the national idea which with the possible exception of Russia\* inspires youth everywhere. There are certainly sections of youth which are aggressively nationalistic, i.e. their nationalism is directed against foreign nations. This is obviously the case in countries which are fighting for their freedom and their independence. However, the larger part of "nationalist" youth, certainly in the West and to a certain degree also in the East, is not only demanding rights but sees increasingly its responsibilities towards the people of its own country. Here the nationalist idea combines with the other great force working in the world - the idea of social justice, of the "fellowship of all people" within a country. This idea is strong everywhere among youth, though

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\*Experts on Russia maintain that even there the national idea is growing. In view of the artificial isolation of the country, "As the only one which upholds the gospel of the workers' rights", such a development is very likely. It is certainly true that the Soviets have given complete cultural autonomy to the national sections of the country and that Russian school-books appear in some sixty languages.

it may find different expressions in the different countries according to their national genius. Abandoning the idea of uniformity, young people are helping to build up a wealth of new social forms which differ from country to country. In expressing their national ideals in social terms they are ushering in a new kind of nationalism which truly enriches the world and which has shed many of the dangerous qualities of the old forms of aggressive patriotism. In this development only Russian youth stands outside in its hope of a world revolution which would apply in a uniform way the ideas of Marx and Lenin to all countries. It will yet see the day when it discovers its mistake.

In conclusion a few words about the international contacts of youth. Is there an "international fellowship of youth"? Our previous paragraph answers this question in part at least in the affirmative. This, however, does not mean that that fellowship is organized. As a matter of fact the very ideas upon which modern youth builds its actions make the establishment of such an all-round organisation very difficult. The new forms of national thought are divisive as far as organisation goes, even though they constitute spiritually a common bond between youth of all countries.

Yet, while there is no general organisation of youth throughout the world there are numerous organisations which have been founded for certain special objects or which represent special interests. There is the international organisation of the Scouts with over two million members, there is the World's Y.M.C.A. and World's W.Y.C.A., there is the Socialist Youth International, there are international organisations of Catholic youth. They all have their regular international conferences and camps.

Another effort to start an "International Federation of Youth for Peace", uniting "National Federations of Youth" has failed. It resulted in the First World Youth Peace Congress, which was held in Eerde, Holland, in 1928, and in which roughly 450 delegates from some two hundred organisations in 52 countries

participated. It broke up without having led to the formation of an International Federation of Youth, because the leaders present could not agree on the best methods leading to peace. The "International War Resisters" also have had only limited success amongst young people. The reason is probably that youth is becomingly increasingly aware that the way to peace leads through social reconstruction within the various countries, through a slow adjustment of existing international difficulties, and that the direct approach to peace of the War Resisters by refusing military service does not take all these social and international difficulties enough into account.

Of all the youth groups the students are those best organized internationally. There are not less than seven international student organisations. Two of them are religious in character - the "World's Student Christian Federation", which is predominantly Protestant, and the Catholic "Pax Romana". Jewish students are organized in the "World Union of Jewish Students", which is under Zionist influence. In addition there is the "International Universities League of Nations Federation," whose name clearly shows its purpose, and the "International Confederation of Students". This latter organisation tries to unite all students of a given country in "National Unions", and to federate these unions internationally. Its very "generalness" is its weakness which has recently led to a serious crisis within the organisation. The socialist students founded a few years ago an "International Confederation of Socialist Students" which is affiliated to the 2nd International. Finally, the "International Student Service", which was originally started as an organisation of international student solidarity, to help needy students in Europe, and which at present unites students and young professors in all parts of the world in an effort to strengthen the sense of social responsibility on the part of students, and to promote international studies and cultural cooperation between the university youth of all lands.

It would lead too far to describe the activities of all these organisations.

They are manifold and of diverse nature. But, though generalisations are never altogether adequate, there is one thing which all these organisations have in common - they are not propagandist. Youth is tired of posters, pamphlets and minor prophets. Whatever the young people in these international student organisations may be doing - whether they promote the exchange or travel of students, whether they organize international study seminars or conferences, whether they promote student work colonies or social service teams - they are prompted by the desire to find out for themselves where their responsibilities lie and how they can best meet them. Thus when last summer representatives of all international student organisations met to agree on common action in favour of disarmament, they did not work out a big programme for propaganda, but laid plans to promote by every possible means a serious study of the disarmament problem. It was decided to arrange for an exchange of lecturers from country to country in order to enable students to form an intelligent opinion of the problem and the way to its solution. Similarly, when International Student Service called conferences of Jewish and Anti-Semitic students, it was not to pass resolutions condemning this or that group but in order to engage in common study of the difficulties between Jews and Non-Jews, which alone can lead to more mutual understanding and a lessening of the existing tension.

This is one of the most hopeful signs of our times: Youth is beginning to see things not in terms of vague ideals or preconceived notions, but in terms of reality. In a world "out of joint" they begin to understand things in their relation to each other.

WALTER M. KOTSCHNIG