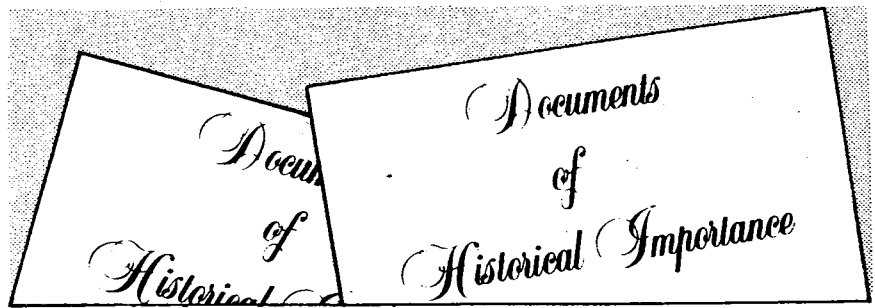


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PURPOSE IN THE YOUTH SERVICE

by Bryan H. Reed

Chapter 12 of *80,000 Adolescents*, published by George Allen and Unwin, 1950, and based on a study of young people in Birmingham undertaken in 1948.

After two years and over spent in the visitation of some hundreds of youth organizations in our city our main concern arises from the lack of purpose and direction in the Youth Service generally. 'Our aim in this club', as one leader told us, 'is to keep young people off the streets and give them a good time'. Yet another leader, when invited to tell us his aim, looked completely bewildered for a moment, and then turned to one of his helpers with the question: 'What are our aims, Bill? Have we got any?'

We have made clear earlier that we fully recognize the positive values of the recreational activities in which young people engage in most youth units, but only rarely have we met groups of young people who have been drawn into association with one another because of any common conviction or shared purpose.

The problem of course is one that concerns the community as a whole, for the lack of purpose which has become apparent in so many of the youth organizations we have visited is only a reflection of the life of the total community of which young people are a part. This fact, of course, underlines the argument of our tenth chapter, that the only adequate training is that which is offered in the setting of a total community which is itself an embodiment of the values and truths which are commended to the young.

It is inevitable that one should contrast the present situation with that which obtained during the war years, when boys flocked in their thousands into the pre-Service organizations and the girls refused to be ignored and demanded similar opportunities for themselves. Both boys and girls joined Youth Service Squads and Messenger Corps, while magnificent and valuable service was rendered in many ways by Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. The Scottish Youth Advisory Committee said, in 1945:

The opportunities which war has brought into the lives of the young have provided a vital element which was lacking in pre-war years and may be lacking again — a sense of over-riding common purpose which has inspired them to the effort of preparing themselves for a future near enough, big enough, exciting enough, and general enough to appeal greatly to their imaginations. It is the spirit engendered by this sense of purpose which has helped to fill the ranks of the pre-Service organizations and also of the voluntary organizations which have offered suitable forms of training and service. Youth needs banners, adventures, crusades, and the war has provided them. Peace in the past has not produced any comparable stimulus.

In England and Wales the Youth Advisory Council said:

We are convinced that our young people will respond to the challenge of the post-war world just as courageously as they have met the challenge of war, if only they can be offered as careful and as thorough a training for citizenship as they are now given for battle.

The Council hoped that further consideration would be given above all, to 'the discovery of a post-war purpose for our young people which will evoke from them in peace time the magnificent devotion which they showed in war.'

It cannot be said that we have found that 'post-war purpose'. Did not William James say, indeed, that 'the problem of modern society is to find a moral substitute for war'?

While we would deplore any suggestion of a 'nationalized' Youth Movement under State direction, we cannot fail to contrast the Youth Movement in Britain with that in some continental countries, where young people have shown themselves eager to share in the rebuilding of the nation. In 1946 a United Nations War-Damage Sub-Commission, on a tour of inspection in Jugo-Slavia, discovered in the heart of Bosnia a railway, 55 miles long, being built by young people of Jugo-Slavia and of neighbouring Balkan countries. This enterprise was so successful that it was followed by a larger project — the building of a railway, 150 miles long, from Samac to Sarajevo. Some of our own European students suggest that perhaps the work of these Jugo-Slav young people was not as spontaneous as has sometimes been assumed. However this may be, we in this country do not want any more railways, and the kind of service of which we are in need is much more humdrum and unromantic. We have, perhaps, often been told what is needed, but the challenge has not been put in such a way as to win the understanding and response of youth. Perhaps there was a moment, on 21st April, 1947, when H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth, in her 21st birthday broadcast from Cape Town, dedicated herself to the service of the great Imperial Family to which we all belong, and invited us all to join her. We are not aware that any attempt was then made to enlist the association of young people with the Princess in her self-dedication, or to show them practical ways in which that dedication could be made effective.

THE QUEST FOR A POST-WAR PURPOSE

It may be that some of our readers are beginning to wonder whither the argument of this chapter is leading. Are we suggesting that the State should give direction to the activities of our many and varied youth organizations? And if not the State, from where else could such direction come? Do we really wish to indoctrinate our young people with any political or religious creed? Have we not been warned against the evils of inculcation? Do we wish to force a precocious development? Is it not better that young people should spend the week-end cycling or playing football than marching in

coloured shirts behind military bands? In France, we are told, young people are so politically conscious that there are no less than four political youth hostels associations, and youth hostellers are to be seen marching in political processions and shouting party slogans. Is it not better and less dangerous that young people should be more interested in the probable promotions to and relegations from the First Division than in the rival ideologies of Sir Oswald Mosley and Mr William Gallacher? Those young people who sometimes disturb the political peace of London's East End would be more healthily occupied were they playing football on Hackney Marshes. We do not forget that in some countries, youth movements have been used to crush independence of thought and to nurture a fanatical faith in false creeds. We wonder, however, if we are so afraid of the dangers of dictatorship that we have become distrustful of any kind of leadership at all. The fact that leadership can be abused is no condemnation of leadership itself. Is it unfair to suggest that the great need in the Youth Service in our country today is of more inspired and more inspiring leadership? There is no youth organization in this country now whose leaders have been accorded the kind of devotion that was given to Lord Baden-Powell.

We have been warned of the danger of using youth movements to inculcate young people with our own beliefs. It seems to us that there are few youth movements which stand in this danger. On the contrary, many youth leaders are so afraid of the dangers of 'indoctrination' that they even conceal from their members any religious or political beliefs of their own. Other leaders are so uncertain of their own beliefs that they are quite unable to offer direction to their members. In some clubs it is a rule that 'religion and politics are barred'.

We cannot believe that youth is well served by this neutrality, or that it is outside the duty of the youth leader to train young people to become free and responsible citizens of a liberal democracy.

Writing just before the outbreak of the second World War Mr T. S. Elliot said:

It is my contention that we have today a culture which is mainly negative . . . I do not think it can remain negative, because a negative culture has ceased to be efficient in a world where economic as well as spiritual forces are proving the efficiency of cultures which, even when pagan, are positive; and I believe that the choice before us is between the formation of a new Christian culture, and the acceptance of a pagan one.

Ten years later Mass Observation conducted a survey of popular attitudes to religion, ethics and politics among young people living in a London Borough, and in the preface to the report the general conclusions suggested by the survey are summarized in these terms:

The majority of people are open to exploitation by any resolute opportunists with any ideology, because people are looking for something to believe; the explosion or disintegration of orthodox beliefs has left a vacuum which will be filled, and will be filled by worse if it is not filled by better . . . the creation of faith in democracy is not less urgent than the creation of faith in purposive living.

We wonder if these two phrases, 'the creation of faith in democracy' and 'the creation of faith in purposive living', may not suggest the direction in which we should look for the motif which should inform the activities of youth movements, and which we have found so often to be lacking. These phrases, of course, would need to be expressed in much more precise and concrete terms if they are to win the understanding and allegiance of young people. The Scottish Youth Advisory Council, in the 1945 Report from which we have already quoted, said:

The warfare which has encompassed the globe for the past year is, in large measure, a conflict of conceptions of society. Totalitarian philosophies are hard and clear-cut, easy to apprehend, easy to teach to the young. Our philosophy has . . . remained vague and unstated except in catch phrases. There are strengths in this vagueness which we do not deny. But there are also grave weaknesses in it, especially with the young, and, most especially of all, at this juncture in our history.

We are far from suggesting that the Youth Service should be perverted to political ends, or that we should commit young people to any particular pattern of society. We do suggest, however, that whatever form the structure of our society may take in future, it should be based upon those ideals of freedom, courtesy, tolerance, justice and brotherhood which have been evident in the best moments of our history, but which even yet have been only partially embodied in the organized life of the nation, and the maintenance of which is in peril.

There cannot be as much adventure in fashioning a society inspired by such ideals as there is in meeting the stern demands of war, but the peril in which we stand, if less immediately apparent, is no less real. Writing in *The Boy* shortly after the end of the war, Mr W. McG. Eager said:

We have just emerged from a heroic phase, in which democracy was vindicated by men who scarcely knew that they valued it. We have passed into a time of fiercer testing, in which our task is plain. It is to give boys not only training in, but love for, democracy, because it is the fairest form of society, which can only be maintained by the virtue of the men and women who compose it.

We wish that youth leaders, whatever their individual religious or political beliefs, and acting through their own various organizations, through the National Associations of Youth Leaders and Organizers, or through the Standing Conference of National Voluntary Youth Organizations, could unite in setting before their members the ideal of a democratic society. The future shape of such a society is by no means pre-determined, but must be worked out by those who are now young. Is it not possible to persuade young people that we in this country are attempting something that is in every way as praiseworthy as what is being accomplished in Jugo-Slavia or anywhere else — that we are not tagging along behind other nations, backward in our industrial, economic, educational or cultural life, but still leading the world along untrodden paths towards a newer, fairer and more wholesome society? One recalls a passage from Mr J. B. Priestley's *Linden Tree*, where the Professor says to his daughter Marion, who has married a wealthy Frenchman:

Call us drab and dismal if you like, and tell us we don't know how to cook our food or wear our clothes — but for Heaven's sake, recognize that we are trying to do something that is as extraordinary and as wonderful as it is difficult — to have a revolution for once, without the terror, without looting mobs and secret police, sudden arrests, mass suicides and executions, without setting in motion that vast pendulum of violence which can decimate three generations before it comes to a standstill. We're fighting in the last ditch of civilization; if we win through, everybody wins through.

We believe that it should be possible, not only to give young people some understanding of the nature of our achievement, but also to convince them that the service of their lives — to use the phrase of the late Earl Baldwin — is as urgently needed today as ever in our history.

We have already suggested that any ideal which is to win the understanding and allegiance of young people must be put to them in terms which are precise and concrete. The lives of young people centre round home, work and leisure, and any purposeful living must involve each of these realms.

If the Youth Service is to fulfill the kind of purpose of which we are thinking in this chapter it must provide within itself an experience of democratic living, it must help young people to discover significance in their daily work, it must contribute to the strengthening and enrichment of home life, it must enlist young people in service to the community, it must offer them general training for future unspecified service, and it must provide education in citizenship.

To a discussion of these six requirements we now turn.

EXPERIENCE OF DEMOCRATIC LIVING

The most obvious way in which the Youth Service can train young people for membership of the Democratic State is by giving

them experience of the working of democracy in their own youth groups.

We have discussed in Chapter VII the extent to which different organizations are, in fact, providing training in self-government. Membership of a Scout Court of Honour or of a Club Committee can be true education in democracy. When a boy or girl has learned to listen to the views of others in debate, to accept the ruling of the chair, and above all, to carry out a majority decision with which he personally may be in disagreement, he is indeed qualifying for the larger citizenship which the years will bring. It is not only members of club committees, however, whom the club is able to help in this way. The boy who monopolizes the table tennis table or the girl who fails to turn up for the dramatic rehearsal will soon learn that contemporaries have their own way of dealing with such forms of anti-social behaviour. A club is a society in miniature, and the more mixed and varied its members the more adequately will it offer them opportunities of learning the art of living with other people.

Discussion provides one such opportunity and should have a place in the programme of every youth organization. Democracy is government by discussion. We have already referred to the comparative failure of the uniformed organizations in this connection, a failure which is illustrated by the very inadequate and almost apologetic advocacy of discussion in the newly published *Senior Scout Handbook*: 'The up-to-date idea, it is said, is that discussions should be "occasionally arranged as a part of the programme, i.e. every third or fourth week".' In fairness to the uniformed organizations, however, we would like to recall our earlier judgment that they usually succeed, where the clubs often fail, in developing such virtues as social responsibility and loyalty to accepted authority — virtues, the observance of which is absolutely essential to the smooth working of democracy.

SIGNIFICANCE IN DAILY WORK

In an ideal society it should be possible for every man to regard his work as service which he is rendering to the community, so that 'service' is not something that one offers in one's spare time, but in one's working hours. Can the Youth Service help young people to find joy and satisfaction in their daily work? The Youth Advisory Council said in 1942:

The need is to restore to every kind of work that sense of social significance which has largely been lost as machines have replaced men. In a modern society much of what has to be done in factory, field, shop, office or home, is dull. The remedy for this is not to draw social distinctions between one kind of employment and another, but to make all workers everywhere realise the inspiring truth that their work, whatever it is, is an essential contribution to the life and well-being of the community.

This is well said, but how is this desirable end to be realized? In what ways can this 'inspiring truth' be seen by those thousands of boys and girls who earn their living in repetitive or semi-skilled occupations in factories or workshops? Here we touch one of the most difficult problems of our modern society. The increased industrial productivity of modern times is being bought at a very great price. Many boys and girls in Birmingham spend the whole of their working life drilling holes in brackets, putting lids on tins, or performing similar repetitive actions. These young people are not unhappy in their work, (90 per cent of Birmingham girls and 86 per cent of the boys give an affirmative answer to the question, 'Do you enjoy your present job?') but it is not surprising if many of them do as little as they can or dare, and work with one eye on the clock. There are many whose attitude to their work is like that of one boy who, shown how he might do his job a little more efficiently, replied: 'What, and put another half-crown in the pocket of the boss? Not bloody likely!' The tragedy is, not that much of their work is monotonous — all occupations involve certain monotony, and many young people definitely prefer repetitive jobs — but that so often no attempt is made to enable young people to see the importance and social significance of the work they do. We spoke to one boy who did not know whether the screws he was turning were destined to become part of a motor car, an aeroplane, or a wireless

set. By contrast, in another factory, a lad whose job it was to attach steering wheels to an endless procession of motor cars boasted to us with obvious pride of the number of dollars which had been earned that day on the assembly line on which he was at work.

We are not qualified to suggest to what extent workers should be given any increased share in industrial management and responsibility, but we do wonder if Trade Unions and Managements are doing all that might be done to associate young workers with their activities. Most of the larger firms offer new young employees some initiation training, but more important than what is said to a young employee before he begins to work is his experience of participation in the life of the firm that may be accorded to him after his work has begun.

The advent of the County College will greatly assist the transition of the adolescent from school to work, and a close association of the Youth Employment Service with the work of the County College should make it increasingly possible to offer young people more adequate vocational guidance and to follow it up with After Care observation. One wishes, however, that leaders of youth organizations would interest themselves more, not only in the leisure-time activities, but in the working lives, of their members.

One local attempt on the part of a youth organization to help young people to discover more purpose in their work was an 'Adjustment to Industry' Course which was held near Warwick in April, 1947. This course was attended by 20 boys who had just left school after receiving vocational guidance and who were selected by the Birmingham Juvenile Employment Bureau. The course was held under the auspices of the National Association of Boys' Clubs, and during the week the boys lived together lectures were given on such subjects as production, the history of industry, safety and welfare, trade unionism, broadcasting, current affairs, and the use of leisure. This course may be regarded as an interesting and valuable experiment, though far too many lectures were given (*seven sessions a day!*) and it is not surprising that inattention and fatigue became evident. Those who promoted the course admit that the subject matter was put too academically, that insufficient use was made of demonstration material and of visual aids, and that much more use might have been made of dramatization.

Young Farmers' Clubs are unique among youth organizations in that their activities centre round the occupational interests of many of their members. The Yorkshire Council for Further Education suggested, in 1945, that similar clubs might perhaps be established for young people who are associated with other occupations such as mining or engineering. This is an interesting suggestion, though it is to be remembered that many young people, like their elders, will want to get away from the associations of work during their leisure hours.

THE ENRICHMENT OF HOME LIFE

The charge is sometimes made that the Youth Service, by drawing young people away from their homes, is responsible for the disintegration of home life. We do not think that this charge can be substantiated, because the number of young people who spend more than two evenings a week at a youth organization is small, as we have seen. It is true that members of youth organizations spend fewer evenings in their homes than do the unattached, but it cannot be assumed that they would necessarily be at home if they were not at the club.

So far from youth organizations being responsible for the decline of home-life it is possible indeed that the free mingling of the sexes in the modern youth club helps young people to choose their life partner more wisely than was possible in the days of the stricter segregation of the sexes. At the same time, we doubt if the Youth Service generally is giving young people all the help it might to prepare them for successful married life.

Asked 'What job in life do you aim to do?' some girls of all ages answer 'housewife', 'have a home of my own', 'get married', or 'become a mother'. Miss Pearl Jephcott, in her study of a hundred working-class girls, suggests that the thought and conduct of the adolescent working girl is completely dominated by her

expectation of early marriage. The comparative lack of success of youth organizations of all kinds in retaining the adolescent girl in membership beyond her middle teens is partly due, in our judgment, to their failure to take sufficient account of this fact.

In 1939 about a third of all women of 20 to 24 in England and Wales were already married; so that her marriage was indeed more imminent for the adolescent than one would suppose from the lack of attention paid to it by some of the agencies which hope to guide her leisure-time activities into profitable channels.

Any organization which wants to hold the allegiance of girls in their later teens will need, not only to satisfy their natural desire to meet men of their own age or a little older, but also to help them to learn all they can about health and beauty, child care, home nursing, cookery and home-craft. We recall how successfully one of our own students secured the interest of a group of girls in the making of a portfolio containing a 'picture' of each room of a house made by cutting out and arranging illustrations of furniture, pictures, ornaments, etc, taken from magazines and catalogues. We would like to make the point that it is as important — or almost as important — to prepare boys for their responsibilities as home-makers as it is to offer such training to girls. The emancipation of women is leading to a change in the traditional pattern of family life, and it may well be that in future some of the domestic responsibilities which have always been regarded as falling within the province of the woman will be mutually shared by husband and wife. There are too many youth clubs where it seems to be tacitly assumed that the washing-up of the canteen crockery is the exclusive responsibility of the girls. Where leaders have succeeded in persuading boys to take their share of kitchen chores, it seems to us that both boys and girls are being put on the way to the discovery of a fuller life of shared interests as husbands and wives.

Is it possible for the Youth Service to make a contribution to the enrichment of the homes from which its members come? Mr L. J. Barnes has said: 'There are some areas in Britain where the entire educational system, formal and informal alike, spends much of its time figuratively on its hands and knees, going round after parents to clear up the psychological mess they have made of their own children.' Mr Barnes adds that this is not the work that clubs and schools are equipped to do, and he speaks of 'the unrewarded fumbling of the club bodies with this problem of influencing the home.'

We would not ourselves take quite such a pessimistic view of the influence of home life upon young people or of the extent to which the Youth Service is bringing a direct influence to bear upon the home. It is unfortunately true that there are many broken homes and many homes which are intellectually sterile, and in such cases the Youth Service has a compensatory function to perform. It is difficult to see what a youth organization can do for the broken or loveless home from which some of its members may come, but it can certainly make a contribution to the home that knows nothing of books, hobbies, or intelligent conversation. Mother is interested in the cakes Mary made in the club cookery class or in the frock she cut out in the dress-making group; father has many questions to ask about Tom's visit to the Scout Jamboree in France, or John's visit to a coal-mine with the members of his club. Both mother and father will sometimes forego their visit to the pictures or the pub when they are invited to the annual Open Day or to the show in which both Mary and John are taking part. Both may hold the club leader, Scout Master or Brigade Captain in high esteem. He will be consulted, very often, about all kinds of domestic and family problems. He is less busy than the doctor and more familiar than the parson.

A large number of youth units in our city report the existence of Parents' Associations. In the main, however, the activities of these associations appear to be limited to occasional whist drives or dances in aid of the funds of the unit with which they are associated. Other units arrange occasional 'Open Nights' or 'Parents' Evenings', when members provide a P.T. display, a concert or an exhibition of club handicrafts.

More important, however, than any influence the Youth Service may have upon the homes from which its members come is its contribution to the quality of the homes which they themselves

will establish. The extent of this contribution will depend, not so much upon classes in homecraft or cookery, or upon discussions on decoration and colour schemes, but on the nature of the personal relationships fostered in the club and on the qualities of character nurtured among its members.

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Whatever success may attend any effort to lead young people to see their daily work as a contribution they are making to the community, we fear that those whose work is unskilled, monotonous or repetitive will not easily be persuaded to accept the idea that their work is a service to other people as well as a way of earning a living. For many of them we may be compelled to the conclusion that any inspiration for purposeful activity will largely have to be found in their leisure time. We wish therefore that youth organizations made greater efforts than they commonly do to encourage their members to give service in their own neighbourhood. One Birmingham leader said: 'We are catering for a type of boy or girl who has a long way to go before he will do this'. This leader may have been right, but on the other hand it is possible that young people would give more if more were asked of them. We do not suggest, of course, that community service is entirely absent from the activities in which members of youth organizations engage. One large industrial club has a scheme whereby each weekday evening six members visit crippled children in hospital, where entertainments and film shows are given and hobbies like model aeroplane making are encouraged. The club has recently acquired a second-hand car which it proposes to use to give patients Sunday outings into the country. A 'hospital fund' has been opened to raise the £100 a year which will be required to run the car.

The following are representative of service projects which have been promoted by youth units in Birmingham:

Red Cross and St John

- Domestic help in hospitals and nursery schools.
- Library collection for hospitals.
- Assistance to senior officers with First Aid duty in cinemas and theatres.

Girl Guides and Rangers

- Summer holiday spent preparing a camp site for physically handicapped Guides.
- Money raised for charities by carol singing.
- Church cleaning.
- Shopping and gardening for old people.
- Collection of rose hips.
- Christmas good turns.
- Blankets knitted and sent to lepers.

Scouts

- Christmas breakfast to old people.
- Salvage collections.
- Blood transfusion service.
- Harvest camps.

Boys' Brigade

- Money raised for leper hospital.
- Flag selling.
- Handwork for church bazaar.
- Distribution of harvest festival gifts.

Girls' Life Brigade

- Adoption of Chinese war orphan.
- Clothes and food sent to Germany.
- Bibles sent to Norway.
- Baby minding.

Youth Clubs

- Entertainment of people from overseas.
- Mending toys for nursery; entertainment of children from Cottage Homes.
- Percentage of subscriptions regularly set aside for good turns to folk in need.
- Boxing display to patients in hospital.
- Sunday school teaching.
- Breakfast to blind people.
- Knitting for displaced persons.
- Furniture repair for old folk.
- Bombed site cleared to make children's playground.
- 'Tin Night' (No members allowed in without a tin of food to be sent to Germany).
- Car park constructed on waste land adjoining club.

The above examples are intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive, but less than half the leaders to whom we spoke were able to think of any community service rendered by the members of

their organization. Our comparative failure to enlist the devotion of young people in service to the community is all the more regrettable when one remembers that youth is naturally idealistic and capable of great self-sacrifice. In the course of our own investigations in Birmingham we visited one Youth Service Corps whose members were loud in complaint that the only service for which they were asked was help in flag-selling. 'We would like to do something worth while', said one boy, and these words received general assent. We recall another experience of our own when, towards the end of the second World War, we were present at a Youth Rally when the speaker suggested that when the war was over and Europe lay stricken and bleeding, it might be possible for young people to enlist for a year to two years in a Peace Army, so that they could give themselves to works of rebuilding, reconstruction and reconciliation. At the close of the meeting the speaker was almost mobbed by young people who wished to give him their names and addresses, and for months afterwards he was receiving letters from them asking if anything had come of the suggestion. These are the young people who join our youth clubs and sometimes leave them after a few months 'because there was nothing to do' or 'because it was not interesting'.

During and since the second World War many young people have found opportunities of rendering service in connection with schemes promoted by the Youth Service Volunteers. Twelve thousand young people between 15 and 20 years of age joined YSV in war time and gave up their holidays from school and their leisure from industry to assist the national effort. Boys helped to prepare pit-props for the Ministry of Supply, while others were engaged in the salvage of spent ammunition components, and harvest camps for both boys and girls were conducted for the Ministry of Agriculture. Since the war there have been forestry camps in the Lake District, farming camps in many parts of the country, and several camps to help improve play-ground facilities in certain places in Scotland. Sports grounds have been laid out in the devastated towns of Normandy, while some young people have gone to Vienna (in connexion with *Jugend am Werk*, a Youth Organization sponsored by the Vienna City Council) where boys have helped to lay out public parks and children's playgrounds, and girls have given assistance in day nurseries and infant feeding centres. An older organization which offers similar opportunities is the International Voluntary Service for Peace, the members of which are sometimes popularly known as the 'Pick and Shovel Peacemakers'. During the summer of 1949 also, some 700 students and young workers of both sexes took part in reconstruction work in war-scarred countries as far afield as Japan, attending 15 work camps sponsored by the World Council of Churches Youth Department.

The Boy Scout and Girl Guide Movements have always laid great stress on service, and while it is easy to poke cheap fun at the Boy Scouts' daily good turn, there must be few of us who have not benefited at some time or another from this excellent institution. In the Girl Guide Movement even Brownies at seven years old are taught to darn, to sew on buttons, to make tea, to clean shoes, to tie up parcels, to light fires, to fold clothes, while at the same time they may be encouraged to send some of their precious sweet ration to invalid children in a sanatorium and to save 'ship half-pennies' or 'bun pennies' with which to purchase flowers for old people. This emphasis on service runs right through the whole organization. We visited one Birmingham Ranger Company which has produced no less than 43 Guiders during the last 21 years, and whose proud boast it is that every one of the 20 girls at present in the company is rendering definite service of some kind. All this, in our judgment, is magnificent, and it is just because this work is so good that we deplore all the more the failure of this movement to retain more than a small proportion of its members on into adolescence.

It is not uncommon for boys in our great public schools to be encouraged to make a contribution in manual labour to the beauty of the school's immediate surroundings. The boys of one such school took charge of a local monument, cleaning and repairing the railings surrounding it. They rebuilt drystone walling for local farmers, and even restored some broken carving on nearby historic buildings. During the war they ran a boys' club, organized salvage campaigns and did an immense amount of agricultural work. They

are now building an open-air theatre.

Projects of this magnitude might be beyond the reach of any individual youth club, but not impossible for a group of organizations working together. If Youth Councils could be set up, as we have suggested, in each of Birmingham's 33 areas, these Councils might well be invited to carry out a survey of their own districts. Such a survey might reveal needs which could be met by personal service given by young people and it might also suggest ways in which members of youth organizations could add to the amenities of their own neighbourhood.

We suggest that it might be a major duty of the LEA Youth Officer and his colleagues (working in close co-operation with the Town Planning Committee) to provide leadership and inspiration of this kind. If members of Brigades, Scout Troops and Youth Clubs are to work together in this way, leadership cannot come from any one of the voluntary organizations — it must come from some co-ordinating body. We suggest that an Authority's Youth Officer should be a man who is in the truest sense a 'Youth Leader' — one who is able to offer young people the kind of leadership for which many of them are looking in vain, and to which, when it is given, they are often eager to respond.

If, as we have suggested in Chapter VII, certain standards were asked of clubs before they became eligible for recognition and assistance from the Local Authority, this readiness to offer service to the community is one requirement that might be included.

TRAINING

We wish we could think that all youth organizations could be regarded as pre-Service units in which young people were being trained for all kinds of unspecified responsibilities and duties in later life. Those who plan such training could draw upon the experience of Scouts, Guides, the Youth Service Volunteers, and of the Outward Bound Sea School at Aberdovey. This school was founded in 1941 to train boys for the sea for service in the Navy and in the Merchant Navy: it continues to train youths, not merely for the sea, but through the sea. A wise man once said that every man should be able to swim, to ride a horse, to sail a boat, and find his way by the stars; but the greatest achievements of the Outward Bound School have been not merely in the teaching of such skills or in physical education, but in the realm of character-building. We wish that the opportunities offered at Aberdovey could be made available to many more boys and girls.

Earlier in this chapter we ventured to draw attention to the inadequate treatment of Discussion in the plans of the Scout Movement for its Senior Scouts as laid down in *The Senior Scout Handbook*. It is indeed surprising that there should be little or no reference in this book to mixed activities, to the discovery of significance in daily work, to the importance of the home, to service to the community, or to citizenship generally. We would like to express our unqualified approval, however, of all that is said in this Handbook about character-training through all kinds of physical activity and adventurous expeditions. No one could offer the kind of training of which we are thinking more competently than could the Scouts and Guides. During the second World War the Chief Scout was invited by the War Office to run a school for young potential officers and to see what could be done with ten weeks of concentrated scouting, as the quality of leadership in these young men did not seem to be developing under normal military training. The invitation was accepted and at the Cairngorms in the summer and at West Ross during the winter trainees were first shown how to do things and then involved in positions from which they could only escape without grave discomfort to themselves by putting into practice the lessons they had learned. At the end of the course the President of the War Office Selection Board said: 'You may have produced 75 per cent of officers, but even more important it is that you have produced 95 per cent of men.'

CITIZENSHIP

If young people are to be helped to become good citizens, it is necessary not only to encourage them to give service to the

community, but to become well informed about local conditions and local affairs.

They may come to this study in a variety of ways, through personal experience of intolerable housing conditions, inadequate public open spaces or the shortcomings of a rural water supply. Such inquiries, if they are properly presented and carried out, do not bore young people. There is in fact a good deal of enthusiasm, latent it may be, but certainly present, ready to be called out.

One local attempt to give young people a larger knowledge of the local world in which they live is a Young Citizens' Club, promoted in connexion with one of the city's Evening Institutes. The programme consists of discussions which either precede or follow a visit of observation or a talk from a visiting speaker. Expeditions have normally been made on a Saturday afternoon and among other places visited have been an agricultural college, a hospital, a fire station, an airport, a meteorological office, a general post office, a newspaper office, a telephone house, a gas works, a reservoir and the 'back stage' of a theatre. Among the speakers have been an economist, a member of parliament, an ex-commando officer, a local historian and an international footballer. There are some units in most types of organization in which place is found for this kind of activity, and when carried out it is usually as popular as it is useful. We regret that more such opportunities are not given to members of youth organisations.

RELIGION IN THE YOUTH SERVICE

In all that we have hitherto said in this chapter we have tried so to write that we might reasonably hope to carry the consent of all men and women of goodwill, whatever their individual political or religious convictions. In suggesting that young people should be challenged to play a part in the creation of the free democratic society of the future we have not been unaware of all the evils of State worship and we are not unmindful of the fact that in more than one country in recent years education has been perverted to political ends. We think, nevertheless, that a middle way can be found — indeed, must be found — between State idolatry on the one hand and civic irresponsibility on the other.

At the same time we imagine that many readers will feel with us that the most challenging word remains to be said. The ideal of a free democratic society which embodies principles of freedom, courtesy, tolerance, justice and brotherhood for all, and yet which fully recognizes the worth of the individual, derives alone from Christian faith. It has grown out of faith in the Christian God, and will only be sustained as it continues to be derived from the same source. Many educationists are so afraid of tendentious teaching that they seem willing to allow people to grow up ignorant of that Christian tradition which has shaped the lives of the western democracies, and without which they can neither be understood nor rebuilt. Sir Richard Livingstone has said that we are living on character formed in the past by beliefs which are now shaken or destroyed. It is equally true, we think, that sometimes men are encouraged to 'look for a city', but are not reminded that its only Builder and Maker is God.

In this chapter we have made the plea that the Youth Service should seek to offer its members experience of democratic living, should help them to discover significance in their daily work, should contribute to the enrichment of their home-life, and should give them genuine training for future citizenship. Desirable as these ends are in themselves, however, they can only be most truly realized by those who can live in a truly Christian spirit, and without it they carry within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. Men must believe that the local and temporal pattern for which they work is part of the ultimate design of things. In our own lifetime we have seen more than one example of the dangers that threaten when any mere pattern of human society or when the State itself is allowed to become an object of worship. We do not think we are free from this danger here today. Anxious as we are that the devotion of young people should be enlisted in the service to the community, the more successfully this aim were achieved, the more would we fear its consequences, unless through it and in it young people are led to a deeper faith in God. Professor Herbert

Butterfield, in a recent broadcast, has well said that the Christian religion:

does at least save men from making gods out of sticks and stones, and offering vast human sacrifices to abstract nouns, and running amok with myths of self-righteousness, as people have so often done in the 20th century.

The Youth Service, we have said, suffers from the lack of any clear purpose or direction. The only adequate purpose, we maintain, is one that derives ultimately from religious belief. Any purpose which is merely man-centred will be subject to all the ills which afflict human nature.

In the light of this conviction we would like to make a few comments suggested by what we have seen in our city of (a) Church youth organizations generally; (b) Organizations with a religious foundation; and (c) Other youth organizations.

(a) Church Youth Organizations

It is, of course, in the Church youth organizations that we should expect to find a regular recognition of the truth that religion is of the *esse* and not merely of the *bene esse* of Youth Service. There are indeed many churches in our city with groups of young people who have found in religious faith the kind of purpose we have been describing in this chapter. They have discovered personal significance for themselves, meaning in their daily work, joy in home-life, and their relations with their fellows are governed by their recognition of them as children of God. Fewer experiences during the whole course of our Survey have afforded us as much satisfaction as have several week-ends spent at the Conference House of the Birmingham Youth and Sunday School Union, where we have shared with young people in hard thinking, healthy laughter, and honest worship. We wish, however, that there were more such groups. One of our own students — a young German doctor who had at one time been a member of *Hitler Jugend*, had fought in Hitler's armies and had been wounded on the Russian front, but who is now a convinced Christian, said to us on the eve of his return to Germany: 'The young people in your churches have everywhere received me with kindness and courtesy, but I am concerned about the casual quality of their Faith; they do not give to Christ anything like the devotion which we once gave to Hitler. They do not see the urgency of the present situation.'

We believe that churches in our city fail to offer enough teaching to those young people who are prepared to apply themselves to a study of the Faith. There is, in fact, no danger of too much 'inculcation'. Birmingham churches appear to be giving young people very little systematic religious instruction. The popularity of the Moral Leadership courses which took place in the RAF during the war, and the eager response of many young people to recent conferences sponsored by 'SCM in Schools' suggest that churches have been under-estimating the readiness of some of their young people to accept training. These methods, whose success has been so well demonstrated, might be more generally adopted.

During recent years the churches have opened many youth clubs in which contact is being made with thousands of young people who are without any kind of religious background. We welcome this development, but think that there is a real danger that time and energy devoted in these new directions may mean a diminution of the more intensive training which was given in the past in Bible classes and Study Groups of many kinds.

We have been particularly interested in the activities of the Roman Catholic Young Christian Workers — little 'cells' of half a dozen fellows or girls working in a factory or stores who meet together to discover ways in which a Christian witness can be made effective in factory, trade union, political party or local government. We do not minimize the importance of giving young people opportunities of service within the Church. There is probably no better form of Christian service for the 15-year-old boy or girl than to become a helper in the Primary Department of the Sunday School, provided only that this is combined with attendance at a weekly training class. At the same time churches need to recognize that it is just as important a form of 'church work' to make a Christian witness in industry, in local government, or in politics, and that some young people can find a vocation in one or

other of these fields. It is just here that the Young Christian Workers are making such a significant contribution. Such young people, however, will need training. The late Archbishop Temple once suggested that every church youth club should have its 'witness team' which should be as ready to give Christian witness in other clubs as the football team was ready to meet them on the field. Both teams, he added, would need appropriate training. Many Birmingham church youth clubs give training to their footballers; very few seem to be training their members for Christian witness. We have been interested, also, in some of the 'school-leavers' services' which have been arranged in some areas, when young people have been invited to think of the jobs to which they were going, not only as a way of earning a living, or even as a way of service to the community, but also as an opportunity of Christian witness.

(b) Organizations with a Religious Basis

Under this general heading we are thinking of local units of movements like the YMCA and the YWCA, the Stonehouse Gang group of clubs, and those uniformed units which, though possessing a distinctive religious inspiration, are not attached to any particular church or congregation.

The achievements of this diverse group are so varied that it is quite impossible to make any generalization which would apply to them all. What we have seen of them, however, underlines our own conviction that the two essential requirements for any successful religious education are firstly, Christian leadership, and secondly, the setting of a Christian community. If the Christian Faith is to be communicated to young people of our generation they need above all to come under the influence of Christian people. It is people all the time who are the influencing factor. It was said by the Youth Advisory Council in 1943 that the men and women we require as leaders in the Youth Service are those who are 'proud of their faith, though humble in the practice of it, and who are, besides, capable of transmitting it to others'. We have met many such men and women among the leaders of youth organizations in our city, but their work is often made much more difficult than it need be because the teaching they offer to young people in words is not embodied in the life of a community. When a boy finds that the ideals commended by him by, say, the Scoutmaster, are scorned and rejected by his mates at work, it is not surprising if he says to himself: 'This Christianity may be all right to talk about, but it does not belong to a world like this.' The only way in which to help that boy then is not to offer him moral uplift, but to anchor him in a community the whole life of which is an illustration of the truth and beauty and manifest superiority of the Christian way of life. When then the boy hears a religious talk, it will not be 'a lot of hot air about nothing, but an explanation of something he has met, and the offer of something he has seen'. The supreme task of religious education, therefore, is not that of communicating ideas — even right ideas — to the minds of young people, but rather of introducing them to Christian communities in which they can grow up. In this way Christian truth is communicated, not only or chiefly through the spoken word, but through the shared life. An occasional hour of religious teaching is very slender equipment for Christian living in a world like this, and young people need to be much more deeply involved in the life of a Christian community. One of the most illuminating remarks in Miss Pearl Jephcott's study of a hundred girls was her comment on one girl — almost the only one of the hundred who seemed to evidence any degree of social responsibility, when she said: 'Phyllis leads the kind of energetic and socially responsible life that her home and Methodist upbringing make so normal as to be entirely un-selfconscious'. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of young people today are growing up in homes in which for two or three generations there has been no profession of religion. Their religious needs will not be met by a monthly church parade, or even a weekly Bible class: they need what can only be given by their association with the total life of a worshipping community of young and old.

In stressing as we do, however, the importance of social influences in religious education, we would not forget that it is only too easily possible for young people to grow up in a Christian home and under the influence of a Christian community, and yet never to

become self-committed to Christian values and to the Christian way of life. It is particularly possible for those who belong to the type of organization of which we are thinking in this section to give a nominal allegiance which is not implemented in life. In the last resort the final decision is a personal choice which every man must make for himself. We are concerned that legitimate ways should be found of putting to young people a challenge and appeal to which each must be left free to make his own response.

(c) Other Youth Organizations

We would not wish anything we say in this chapter to seem to suggest that it is only men and women of religious faith who have a contribution to make in the Youth Service, and we would dissociate ourselves most strongly from any attempt to impose a religious test upon youth leaders, but we are concerned that in about 40 per cent of the clubs in our city religious activities of any kind are deliberately excluded. This is sometimes because such clubs number among their members Roman Catholics who would not be allowed to share in any non-Roman religious exercise. It is sometimes because 'our members wouldn't stand for it' — a reason given by many leaders for the absence from their programmes of any educational activity at all (in spite of the fact that many of their members lapse because 'there was nothing to do'). It is sometimes because leaders themselves are indifferent or even hostile to religion. It is very often because leaders who would like to introduce religious education do not know how to set about it.

We believe, however, that it is never permanently possible to evade the religious issue. There are few subjects indeed which, when carried to a logical conclusion, do not involve fundamental questions of faith and morals. It may be, of course, that the leader who is anxious to help his members at this point must come to the religious issue indirectly. With many young people religious education, as we have already said (Chapter XI) must be occasional, opportunist and spontaneous. A great deal of religious education fails because it assumes both the knowledge of a vocabulary and the possession of an experience that young people are without. It does not proceed from the known to the unknown.

If the religious educator knows what he is doing, any and every activity can be a method of evangelism and a means of religious education, because whether he is playing table tennis or discussing the latest film at the local Odeon, he is introducing young people to Christian ways of thinking, talking and living together. The Birmingham club leader who led the thinking of some girls from the art of make-up to personal health, from health to hygiene, from hygiene to sex, from sex to standards of conduct and behaviour, and from standards of conduct and behaviour to belief in God, knew how to do her job.

We invite the churches to consider that our survey has revealed the fact that three-quarters of the youth population of our city is completely out of touch with any form of organized religion. We are convinced that few people in the churches appreciate just how far away from them in thought and outlook these young people are. One group of Birmingham boys went to church one Sunday evening — for the first time in their lives — when a Birmingham footballer was billed to read the Lessons. The Lessons read, they went out — and they did not know that they were behaving in any unusual way. Many of these young people are religiously almost illiterate. In some cases they do not know, for instance, that Christmas or Easter have any religious significance; they may know nothing of Christ except that His Name is a swear-word. To many of them religion is a harmless and irrelevant hobby, like ballet or stamp-collecting, in which certain people indulge; but as for them, they 'couldn't care less'.

But the Churches must care more. The fact must be faced that existing methods have failed to convince these young people that there is either relevance or importance in what the Churches have to say. If the Church is to save its life, it must be prepared to lose it. Some Church groups are far too introverted. They need to go out into the world to meet people where they are to be found. We have visited open clubs in our city whose leaders would eagerly welcome the presence and help of men and women of Christian conviction.

CONCLUSION

We hope that we have said enough to persuade Christian leaders to consider what re-examination of any particular traditional technique, or organization, or time-table or vocabulary is called for if the relevance of what they have to say is to be brought home to young people of our generation. We hope, too, that we have said something that may lead those youth leaders who have not yet found it possible to accept the Christian Faith to examine the implications of their own neutrality. In the present moment of history something much more sure and dynamic than idealism is required. It is possible, with the best intentions in the world, to do a disservice to young people by offering them the good instead of the best.

We reaffirm as we close this Report that unless a sense of

purpose can be found, the Youth Service as we see it today may disguise from young people themselves as well as from the community as a whole the great need in which young people stand. We have only a short span of years in which to train a generation of young people who know what they think and why they think it, and who can withstand the pressures of propaganda. What this country can contribute to the world at this time cannot be given save out of the quality of the individual citizens. Democracy can only be maintained 'by the virtue of the men and women who compose it'. We wish that the Standing Research Committee recently set up by King George's Jubilee Trust, or the Ministry of Education itself, which is happily seeking to establish material conditions of Youth Leadership, would now call together the leaders of responsible youth organizations, to seek how this common democratic task may best be achieved.

CYNGOR IEUENCTID CYMRU

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