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Reel
163

Box
59

Folder
840

Youth and this Troubled Age, 1951.

763
YOUTH AND THIS TROUBLED AGE

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For 200 years during the 16th and the 17th centuries wars of religion raged in Europe. They were dreadful wars which tore the continent of Europe apart, and I am sure that the young men and women of those generations, witnessing the nigh-universal chaos and destruction about them, must have despaired. Their world seemed so chaotic and so futile. The peoples of Europe were fighting over religious dogmas. On one side were the angels, and on the other side were the devils, the enemies of God and of mankind. And all the ruthlessness and all the unspeakable brutality which go with crusades were unleashed in Europe. The evil in man was sanctified by a holy cause. It is estimated that the countries which were represented in the Holy Roman Empire, which entered these struggles in 1618, had a population of some 25 millions, and 30 years later, after the Thirty Years War, those same countries had a population of 13 millions. Europe was devastated; its economic and cultural life was shattered; and I wonder how a young man or woman, living in those days of death and terror, felt about their future, their place in the world. I wonder how many of them asked themselves what they were living for. I am sure that many of them came to doubt the very value of the religion in whose name these bloody, seemingly endless and brutal wars were being waged. And then the war spent itself, exhausted, decimated. These same people signed the Treaty of Westphalia which established the rights of religious minorities, which established the principle of religious toleration and freedom in Europe, a principle which mankind had to achieve, but unfortunately, achieved it in the hardest possible way. And new and broader horizons opened up for men, and the mission of true religion - that is, the spiritual and the ethical and the universal mission of religion - was not undermined. The aberrations of religion suffered. Religion itself was basically a unifying force, teaching brotherhood - that remained.

A definite gain and advance was registered, unfortunately, by this terrible and prolonged war - a definite gain for the idea of religious liberty within a system of religious cooperation.

Now, in the last 200 years, in the 18th and 19th and the early 20th centuries, Europe and many parts of the rest of the world were devastated by wars of nationalism, as destructive - even more destructive - than the wars of religion. The principle of national self-determination had been denied. The rights of small peoples were disregarded. One nation after another sought to establish a monopolistic rule and domination of the whole of Europe, and the whole of the world, for that matter. And these numerous wars of nationalism culminated in the two terrible World Wars, and in the years which intervened between 1914 and 1945. And I am sure that the young men and women of these generations, witnessing the frightful slaughter of millions of human beings and the ruin of cities and countries, were also terribly bewildered, terribly troubled, and asked themselves, what about us? What about our future? What about our place in the world? What have we to look forward to?

And is not this thing called nationalism and this thing called patriotism intrinsically a painful, harmful thing?

Then came the peace which established the right of the self-determination of peoples, the principle that all nations, small or great, are entitled to independence, to sovereignty, to security. Then came the dissolution of empires and the two great international efforts at universal peace, the League of Nations and the United Nations.

And here, again, following the slaughter and the destruction of generations, new horizons opened up before mankind. The idea of Nation was not discredited, or loyalty or patriotism, but nationalistic aberrations, chauvanism, conquest and domination by one people over other peoples, exploitation of the weaker peoples - that received repudiation, formal repudiation, at least, and a definite gain and advancement was registered for mankind - the idea of national independence within a system of international cooperation, national governments and international organization.

Now, in neither instance was the gain complete or has it remained unchallenged. But great land-marks were erected for mankind, and mankind is not likely to retrace its steps.

We have now entered another cycle of conflict, and the youth of the world is again confused and greatly troubled. The struggle today resolves itself around the issue of the new economic forms which our society is to take, and this struggle is expressing itself in bitter opposition between the democratic technique for achieving these new forms and the dictatorial technique. The democratic capitalist and socialist world today is arraigned against the dictatorial communist world. And they now seem to be marching to war again. In fact, the preliminary battles are already taking place in Asia. Young men are being drafted into the armed services. They are being uprooted. Their careers are being disturbed, and they are not at all clear in their own minds why and wherefore and what it will all lead to and what lies beyond. And in common with the rest of their fellow citizens they are aware of the enormity and the destructive potential of a new global war in an age of atomic bombs and guided missiles and jet propulsion and biologic warfare.

What are the opportunities for young people today for happiness, for normal life, for pursuing their careers? And even if there is no war, the fear is that the long preparation for war is making the citizen more and more subject to the state and to bureaucratic control, and is putting more and more power into the hands of the military, is curbing more and more the liberties of the individual citizens, and is confronting men and women today with the doleful prospect of the gradual transformation of a free democratic society into a garrison-prison state, a society which will be dominated by the military and by the police.

Now, what can we tell young people today? In all fairness and in all honesty? Should we play down the realities of the situation, the dangers, the grim prospects? I believe that that would be a clear disservice to young people. Should we proceed to be-dazzle them again with the glamor of some new crusade? I believe that they will not be taken in by it. The desolating results of the last two crusades are not unknown to them. Quite apart from the fact that a military crusade today against Com-

munism will prove one prolonged agony for all peoples which will be involved in it, and will result in victory for neither side, and can in the end achieve no more than a "live and let live" arrangement which is quite different from what the crusaders are after.

In my humble judgment it were far better to speak to young people today quite frankly and honestly. They and we are living in very dangerous times. It does not help the situation at all to put all the blame for the conditions in which we find ourselves upon the other fellow. We, too, are not entirely without blame or responsibility, and so are some of the other democracies of the world.

There is something very naive as well as very sinister in this effort to divide the world again into two parts, one made up of saints - that is, ourselves - and the other made up of sinners - that is, the others. This is usually the prelude to an apocalypse of political madness and violence.

These are dangerous times and they became disastrous times and catastrophic times. There is no guarantee against war. There is no guarantee of victory in war. And there is no guarantee of an orderly and peaceful world to follow, even a victorious war. The last two wars has amply demonstrated these unpalatable facts. But it is not yet too late to avert war. And these our young people ought to bear constantly and daily in mind. It is not yet too late to avert war, and youth, as well as all other people, but especially youth, for they have the most to lose - youth must mobilize against war. The young people today should not join in the clamor for war. They should demand of their government to explore every possibility for coming to an understanding, every possibility - to ignore not a single possibility and forego not a single possibility in the name of prestige or face-saving.

There is a war build-up going on right now in our country, a psychological build-up. The propaganda sluices have already been opened. And our young people in self-defense, in defense of their right and their heritage and their future and their

careers should not permit themselves to be swept into the emotional maelstrom which is now being whipped up - in the press, in the radio, everywhere! We are still not at war with Russia. War is not inevitable. It is not true that we must destroy Russia or Russia will destroy us. It is not true! The two must and can live in the same world. And youth, intelligent youth, is not helpless. If ever a sense of "what can I do about it?" takes hold of our young people, they are lost! They can do much about it singly and collectively. They can make their wishes known and felt in the circles of government. They must speak up and make their representatives in Washington in Congress and the Senate and the State Department and the White House aware of a growing dissatisfaction with this disastrous foreign policy which is rapidly leading us on roads which I believe that the American people, young and old alike, do not wish to travel.

And in this new cycle of struggle for new social and economic forms, our world need not go through the horrors of the religious wars, of the 16th and 17th centuries, or of the nationalist wars of the 18th and 19th and early 20th centuries. We should learn from these horrible tragedies which ravage mankind the futility - the futility of attempting to solve fundamental human differences by war! Both those prolonged conflicts, the religious wars and the nationalist wars, ended not in victory but in compromise, in involuntary but inevitable concessions, not in victory for either side! And the new forms and variations which emerged were those which neither side really anticipated or quite welcomed.

If war comes - that is, global war - then no counsel and no hope which we can offer young people will have any relevancy or any meaning. It will all be hollow and transparent pep-talks. For no one knows what lies at the end of that road. But if war can be averted, as I believe that it can be averted - and this is the time to avert it before it is too late - if war can be averted, then the young people of our day have less reason to be concerned about their future than the young people of almost any of the past generations. The vistas opening up before youth today, in my

opinion, are quite limitless and the horizons opening up for them are marvelous in their sweep and beckoning to every stout heart and to every adventurous spirit. I should not be afraid of being a young man today. America has not reached its last frontier in any field of economic enterprise or invention or the exploitation of its nigh-limitless resources. American inventive genius and technological skill will continue to open up almost indefinitely new continents of industrial activity, new reservoirs of power and wealth, exceeding even the amazing achievements of the last few decades - electronics, atomic energy, and amazing technological progress.

And unless we squander our wealth in quixotic adventures all over the globe, the American people need never face penury or want. On the contrary - its wealth will increase abundantly. And if social legislation and labor legislation would keep pace with the production of wealth, there will take place progressively among our people greater and fairer sharing of that which is produced, a great equality in the enjoyment of wealth of all our citizens.

America will always have use and need and always welcome brain and skill and industry, and opportunities will always abound not to become millionaires - America does not need millionaires, nor does one need to be a millionaire to be happy and to fulfill himself completely - but it offers the opportunities to live comfortably and to do the work in the world that one wants to do. And America will find the way to end the cycles of economic depression and to assure a more stable form of economic life for its people.

If our country can remain at peace, its free institutions will not be endangered and its free way of life. By staying free here and building here a model free society we shall be making our major contribution to human freedom everywhere. As in the past! Other peoples kindled their torch by the light of ours, but we did not have to carry it to them. By practicing what we profess here - a free, truly free, tolerant life among our people, by building up a successful free society here - we shall inspire other peoples all over the world to do likewise, to exert themselves to achieve

what they wish to achieve in terms of self-government and freedom.

A few days before Thomas Jefferson died, he said of the Declaration of Independence, of which he was the principal framer:

May it be to the world what I believe it will be (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all), the signal of arousing men to burst the chains under which monkish ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of self-government.

By militarizing ourselves, to save democracy abroad, as we are beginning to do, we may convert ourselves into a very efficient anthill or very efficient bee-hive of activity, and lose the one precious element which alone can save an industrial society from such a fate - namely, freedom!

But for these overhanging shadows of war, our young people would be able to face their future in high hope and confidence and look upon this age and this day as a challenging one - a wonderful age in which to live. And therefore, they should fight with all their might and main against all the forces today in our country which are making for war, and at the same time, they should prepare themselves for tomorrow assuming that there will be no war - they should prepare themselves with maximum knowledge and maximum faith - maximum knowledge and maximum faith.

For though the future is rich in promise, it will abound also in grave problems. The world will continue to seek new forms, to meet new needs. It will not stand still, politically, socially, economically, religiously. There will always be strains and tensions as these new forms are reached out after, even where they do not lead to war and they need not lead to war. It is not by easy ways that men reach the mountain heights. It never was.

And young people today should cultivate their hearts, their minds, their spirits for the coming age. A strong faith for the future in themselves, in America, in mankind - a strong faith and an open mind, not a closed mind, not a doctrinaire mind - a strong faith and an open mind and a friendly, cooperative spirit will help them in the days to come. Cynicism, dogmatism, egotism will prove severe handicaps to them in the

kind of a world in which they are living. If you add faith to knowledge, you build better than you know. And a friendly spirit will be at home in that cooperative society towards which all of mankind is tending. Fifty years from today America will be quite different in its economic forms than it is today. It's bound to be, and so will every country be different. Mankind is moving in the direction not of stamping out the individual, not necessarily in terms of destroying capitalism and individual enterprise, but it is moving steadily and irresistibly in the direction of greater cooperative enterprises among men. And in that kind of a society which is emerging all over the world. The man of strong faith and the open mind - the elastic, the flexible mind - and the friendly, fraternal spirit will have a better chance to survive and to succeed than the mind which is rigid, petrified in cynicism or in dogmatism or in selfishness.

And finally, religion will help our young people if they turn to it. It will help to strengthen them and fortify them and inspire them for the tasks which lie ahead.

After analyzing in 1937 the ravages of national sovereignty, the Marquess of Lothian quoted the words of an Oriental scholar who declared "that all the real achievements of Western civilization, the respect for human personality, the humanitarian movement, the abolition of slavery, individual freedom, the emancipation of women, the ideal of moral purity, the concept of social reform, the rise of democracy, the assault on war, the idea of the League of Nations, have all derived their greatest support and their greatest driving power from those who have drawn their courage and inspiration and devotion to God and man from the eternal springs of the Bible. Now, this is history, not necessarily sermonic. This is history. And if we are going to move forward into a new age and a goodly age, much more free from wrong and injustice than the present age, free from the recurrence of war, it will come as the result of a spiritual revival among men of good will everywhere, and especially among the youth of the world. A return to the basic and to the eternal doctrines of religion.

The 19th and the early 20th centuries sought to build a great society on a materialistic philosophy which was not only behind Communism, but even behind the actual practice and way of life of the great democracies, even though they did not profess officially allegiance to any materialistic interpretation of history. And this has led mankind to the morass in which mankind finds itself today.

And so I would urge young people today first, not to permit themselves to be dumb, driven cattle led to the slaughter - to speak up, make their voice heard for peace, for honorable adjustments and compromises made necessary by the situation and the realities of our day; and then to prepare themselves by a return to the fountainhead of religious inspiration spiritually, morally, for the great tasks which will lie ahead in a peaceful world, if we are to have a peaceful world. And to do so in absolute confidence and high faith, for a great future awaits mankind, the future beyond the ken and beyond the imaginings of the prophetic spirits of our race; a marvelous future awaits mankind and awaits America if only we can avert the disaster of war.