

of thousands of young souls in danger of being lost for ever, who would not wish to act on our Lord's words: 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth labourers into the harvest.'

H. C. GRAEF.

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## THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

THE youth movement has received an enthusiastic reception from the Press and little adverse criticism has been made. There is, however, much criticism that does not come into print and it is the purpose of this article to examine objections to the movement and to suggest remedies where criticism is well founded.

The prevailing attitude of the objectors is suspicion derived from the national abhorrence of uniform and regimentation together with the example of dictator states and the débacle of British Fascism. But on the whole fears are aroused, not by what the movement is, but by what it may become; to some the exploitation of youth for political ends is a potential danger that may well develop with the extension of central control. This danger is a real one and is bound up with the question of vested interest within the movement itself.

At the moment the activities of youth clubs are somewhat decentralised and organisers are given a free hand. This is good; initiative and individuality can play their part by modifying activities in accordance with the needs of the neighbourhood. Should the hand of bureaucracy fasten down on the movement, control may deprive it of its freedom and elasticity and result in its becoming a soulless and regimented function of the State.

There is no place for social (as distinct from economic) regimentation and control, which are the prelude to exploitation of the individual, the simplest but most dangerous way of dealing with the complexity of modern life. Whatever case may be made for economic control there is none for the control of personality or social behaviour; desirable qualities cannot be inculcated by force.

There are critics who assert that the movement has accomplished little to date, that it has not decreased juvenile delinquency and that no betterment in behaviour has resulted in its members. While much of this criticism is hasty generalisation, we shall see that it has

foundation when applied to the mismanagement of some of the smaller clubs.

More pertinent is the observation that habits of self-reliance, independence and individuality are not realised by communal activity, herd instincts respond rather to direction than to reasoning and initiative. There is some truth in the statement that youth of to-day is lacking in ability to entertain itself. A report on camps held for young people comments on a surprising lack of social accomplishments among the members, a disturbing lack of interest in walks or excursions of interest, and facilities for attendance at the cinema as the sole consideration that determined the enjoyment or disappointment of their stay. This is the price of a materialistic outlook and is something which the youth movement should endeavour to remedy by organising its activities in such a way that members are provided with worth-while hobbies as a refuge against boredom and its attendant evils.

There are those who hold that the movement should be compulsory and attempts have been made to secure compulsion. Not unnaturally these have aroused strong opposition in view of our avowed struggle for freedom, and hitherto they have met with no success. Should youth be forced to serve the State? The State does not so much compel us to do right as prevent us from doing wrong. The individual has freedom of choice, but social security is safeguarded by penalties prescribed. But the penalties are not always administered by the law, sometimes they result from the consensus of public opinion and the individual suffers from his failure to comply with convention. Under such circumstances a lad may be ostracised or otherwise penalised because he is not a member of the service of youth. This is an insidious evil as it sets a stigma on non-membership and is nothing less than an indirect form of compulsion.

Another attempt at coercion is alleged to have resulted from the practice of interviewing young people in an endeavour to induce them to join the movement. But here we must recognise the difficulty of the interviewer, it is his business to secure members just as it is the business of an insurance agent to secure policy holders. Attempts to compel young people to join the movement have arisen because sufficient members have not been forthcoming under the voluntary system, and while this does not necessarily point to defects in the organisation it may well be that the clubs have not been made attractive enough to youth. If this is so, compulsion might appear to some simpler and more obvious than reform from within.

There is some criticism of the value of the activities of the movement. What do young people usually do at these clubs? Their

activities comprise, in the main, various indoor games such as table-tennis, billiards, chess, draughts and cards, together with their out-of-door counterparts—football, cricket, hockey, swimming and excursions. Gymnastics and boxing are common features. Then there are dancing, sing-songs, debates and discussions, talks and lectures. These lists are, of course, not exhaustive, but they are representative of a great many clubs. It is fair criticism that these activities are too recreational and too little cultural or even utilitarian—youth is being entertained rather than improved. What is the purpose of the movement? Its great merit to some is that it keeps young people off the streets. But if that be the sole aim, then the youth club is an adjunct of the cinema and dance hall and no better than either. Having regard to the cost of equipment and the salaries of organisers it may well be asked whether the price is not too high for what is achieved.

If, on the other hand, the movement aims at making the individual a better citizen, then something more than recreational activities is necessary. The value of games in the building of character cannot be denied, but they do not exert a cultural and humanising influence comparable with that of literature, history or music. In other words the clubs must do something more serious and worth while than their present activities, and this pre-supposes a body of organisers of wide cultural attainments whose specialised training enables them to present their knowledge in a way acceptable to youth. It is doubtful if the movement possesses a sufficiency of such organisers; cursory attendance at intensive 'courses' for youth leaders is not the best way to secure them; a period of training and qualifications of the standard of a university degree are essential for those who undertake the guidance of the adolescent.

There must be a balance of recreational and cultural activities, not an undue preponderance of the former merely to attract those who are likely to be repelled by the latter; if the youth club is but an extension of the schoolroom, members will not be forthcoming, academic presentation of the cultural side will not meet with success.

Has the movement come to stay? The surest way to perpetuate an organisation is to create a powerful vested interest the existence of which depends on its continuance and expansion. In the youth movement such an interest is steadily coming into being with the appointment of leaders and organisers at salaries which, though moderate, may be counted upon to increase. Among the applicants are many whose sincerity is unquestioned, but many, too, who have 'great expectations' from the new organisation which they are prepared to use as a means to an end. Were the whole work voluntary and unpaid it would never have attained the rapid expansion that has

brought it to the fore as a social experiment of the first magnitude. At best its mushroom growth would have been replaced by the steady consolidation that has characterised such movements as the Scouts and Guides. State support of these organisations would have hastened their development, but it is questionable whether the inevitable control would have improved them.

Let us clear our minds of cant over this question of vested interest. In our eagerness to discount ulterior motives we are apt to turn a blind eye to the activities of the egoist striving to maintain his position at the expense of others. Some are already casting about in their minds how to continue, after the war, food and fuel control, agricultural committees and the Home Guard. The superfluity of such measures in time of peace does not always weigh with these people; they have lucrative positions to lose, over-zealous adherents of the youth movement have lucrative positions to gain. While in itself a vested interest does not constitute an evil, it is always a potential danger. State aid to an organisation should be administered in such a way that individuals are not encouraged to put self-interest first. Under these conditions the measure of support accorded to a movement is the measure of its value, they determine whether it shall succeed or die.

This question of vested interests is bound up with the question of compulsion and is of importance because sincerity and unselfishness are paramount qualities in the successful leaders of the movement. But another danger arises from some who have little material gain to hope for from the work they have undertaken. And here a word is necessary upon the voluntary and unpaid organisers—the great body of individuals who are managing the smaller urban and rural clubs. Many of these are doing admirable work; there are some who are not. Among the failures are those who, without previous experience or the requisite personal qualities, have light-heartedly and unthinkingly assumed the leadership of a club. These people have not realised the demands such work must necessarily entail, and their enthusiasm is like the seed sown on stony ground which soon withered away. Lack of appreciation of their endeavours, both from club members and the general public, has quickly disillusioned them and in a short time they have lost all interest in the work. Their right course would be to relinquish their posts, but loth to lose face and admit failure they refuse to leave and the clubs under their control soon degenerate into aimless and rowdy gatherings. It is clubs so run that bring the movement into disrepute and cause much of the criticism that emanates from correspondence columns of the local Press.

Where leadership of a club confers exemption from certain civilian defence duties an unsatisfactory position may arise from the individual who is aware of this and prepared to act accordingly. The situation is unavoidable since under existing conditions adequate time cannot be found for both; the exemption, nevertheless, is a definite inducement to the insincerity and self-interest which have been shown to be so harmful to the movement.

These are some of the criticisms levelled against a movement which, though of rapid growth, is still in its infancy and in the experimental stage. Perfection cannot yet be expected, but the greatest vigilance should be exercised lest the organisation be exploited by State control or development along party lines.

F. V. DEMPSTER.

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THE CHRISTIAN FAITH: AN INTRODUCTION TO DOGMATIC THEOLOGY.  
By Claude Beaufort Moss, D.D. (S.P.C.K.; 16s.)

This compendium of theology is to be welcomed as evidence of the interest in dogma which exists in the Church of England and as an attempt to expound it in terms and in a manner accessible to the average Anglican layman. But compression frequently goes so far as to produce inaccurate statements; and, while the author presents the arguments in the familiar manner, Scripture proofs patristic quotations *rationes theologicae*, he often seems to attach more importance to the views of modern scientists than to the theological sources: the story of the fall of man is unhistorical, and no scientific research can discover the origin of sin; Pelagianism is false (an excellent comment on the English Pelagians of the present time is included), largely because 'the discoveries of Freud. . . at least show that there are vast depths of evil in the subconscious mind of man.' Anglicans can best judge whether he fulfils his aim of expounding 'the teaching of the Catholic Church as interpreted by the Church of England'; but if he has succeeded in this we can only be confirmed in our view that the Anglican interpretation is still firmly based on the old Protestant principle of private judgement, leaving each individual to select what he pleases from the vast riches of truth in the care of the Church.

E.Q.