

# CEPAL

## Review

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Gert Rosenthal

*Deputy Executive Secretary for  
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# C E P A L

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## University youth

# Thinking about youth

*Carlos Martinez Moreno*

In addition to the works of a more specialized kind which ECLAC's Social Development Division has produced in connection with International Youth Year, there are others which examine the reality of youth from a global standpoint. One such is this article, in which the author, a distinguished Uruguayan intellectual who died recently, puts together some thoughts which reveal certain hidden facets of that reality. The sections presented here are only a few parts of a larger work and may be seen as a modest tribute to his memory,

The article begins with a consideration of university youth, its attitudes and its almost always critical and non-conformist role, and it then moves to the usually impenetrable topic of the languages of young people and their significance as a means of communication with the rest of society. It then takes up the topic of the relationship of young people with politics, which leads to a discussion of indifference and rebellion as typical forms of youth conduct. Then, in the section entitled "Outline of the anomalous", the author reflects on juvenile drug addiction and delinquency and then deals with some of the beliefs and forms of organization of today's young people, especially those which have emerged in the trade-union and political fields which, in conjunction with the universities, contain the seeds of a positive change in the direction of Latin American societies. The final section is intended to underline the decisive role of education in the development of youth.

The universities were always centres for the dissemination of culture in Latin America. They were so from the colonial days and they have served as focal points of knowledge, bases for the extension of culture and distinguished homes for the families of political liberalism: San Marcos in Lima, San Carlos in Guatemala, Córdoba in Argentina. Through all the changing times they have held prestige and suffered persecution, in settings which have not ceased to be elitist (the dream of a university for the masses is still an unrealized and disturbing dream in Latin America). In Ecuador, one in six young people is illiterate and one in six young people attends university. Of course, the university as an institution is not responsible for this polarization; but it would be just as untrue to assert that it has always been able to avoid polarization and fulfill an historic role as a balance and fountain-head. In a world fraught with every kind of violent feeling and cruelty that would be to have asked the impossible of it, and of course it has not been achieved.

University reform has been a rich, complex and difficult process in Latin America. And the political events of the expression of the civic sentiments of the student body and of the affirmation of an independent outlook have militated—in different ways—for a radical separation of the programmes and government of the university, setting them apart from the institutional centres of government power; and these events have been reproduced time and again, with a rich multiplicity of content and certainly of intention. The universities of Latin America—a sector small in size but determinedly active in the continent's urban settings—already have their history and their martyrs and their victories. The first and most famous victory was the reform of the University of Córdoba, Argentina, in 1918: this became a kind of model for successive movements, even though today, as is natural, it has been left behind somewhat (but not forgotten) by the passage of time. Exactly half a century passed

between the Córdoba reform and the killing of hundreds of young demonstrators in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City in 1968; this event has passed into history linked with the Indian and more usual name of the site, which is Tlatelolco. The tragedy of Tlatelolco is still an unstaunchable wound in Mexico's public life and in the relations between the political authorities and the universities. The rebellion of French young people and students which spread from Nanterre to Paris and was much more famous than Tlatelolco in the global context caused only one student casualty in a remarkably rash episode. De Gaulle could witness, expectant, undaunted and majestic, the unfolding of the beautiful poetic slogans of the French 68, "power to the imagination" and so many others, sprayed on walls in the Sorbonne, and in the suburbs and the provinces; and he could wait until the first crack appeared in the movement (the famous alliance of "workers and students, united and onwards") before moving against it with all the weight of his prestige and smashing it down. The French 68 has often been compared with the much bloodier days of the Commune in 1878. Thiers is a tiny figure beside Charles De Gaulle, and the adolescent Arthur Rimbaud was a protagonist much more bruised by the events than the autumnal Sartre; the approximate historical accounts have something inevitably contingent about them and they measure the differences with greater clarity than the possible similarities. The "workers and students" slogan has been invoked on many other occasions; in Uruguay's struggle for the university law in 1958 it was one of the reasons, after some ninety-odd years of continuous Colorado rule, for the first rotation of the country's traditional political parties in power. But in actual fact this was more the result of the proselytizing imagination of the student and political leaders than the fruit of a profound conviction on the part of the workers. It is a refrain shouted by young students when they demonstrate and collect funds to help the workers in their labour disputes, but it does not issue with the same fervour from the mouths of the genuine workers, to whom the students still seem marked with the stigma of an incurable elitist paternalism. It belongs to the realm of desiderative formulas rather than to that of social reality.

It would not be right to interpret these remarks as criticism of the student movement, branding it as chimerical and schizophrenic, not even in those societies which —under pressure of constant frustration— seem to urge young people towards chimerical and schizophrenic behaviour, not to mention the fiercest resentment. No. With all the defects and uncertainties inherent in its search for self-identity and growth over the harshest of terrains and beset by the most pressing needs for action, the university —through the efforts of its young people and indeed of its teachers— has been the most constant, at times the only source of living culture in our societies. For decades the upper class has taken refuge in anachronistic reading-matter which gives it an air of staleness which may perhaps pass for restraint and elegance; and as it sinks in the waters of a crisis which has shaken its foundations and eroded its buttresses, it has been neither dramatic nor tragic, but frivolous; it has abandoned itself to spas and travel and circulated among mansions on the point of collapse, distracting itself with best sellers of compelling vulgarity which have served to pass the time but offer neither enlightenment or drama. Anyone writing a paper on the libraries of the oligarchy in the past two centuries will find a pathetic picture of wasting vitality, of the decline of the spiritual reproductivity of a class. The already antiquated library of leather-bound classics and esteemed French works from the days when it aspired to be seen as a cultivated rather than a merely mannered class has given way to paperback trash bought in the supermarkets of its travels, travels which 80 years ago were made by boat and to Paris but today are made by jumbo to Miami or Disneyland.

In the absence of a tradition of solid institutions, with an original structure, independent and genuinely creative, the universities have had a role which has often taken them far beyond the bounds of teaching and which they have had to perform and play out in the realms of culture. They have thus taken on a central function in an institutionalized culture which in Latin America has had a much broader and less stratified and academic range than in the big European universities founded in the Middle Ages, the bearers of a fundamental continuity

down the centuries (from the thirteenth century to today). And as the universities have been the breeding grounds for the anxieties of youth, especially in the middle and upper classes, through them young people have acquired a cultural protagonism which they have been able to develop only on a more limited and partial scale in other institutions, from clubs to the liberal athenaeums so fashionable among the American intelligentsia of the nineteenth century. In the history of education, artistic creation and political thought, the universities have had their broadest field of action in Latin America. And the young people, who since 1918 up to the present have waged a tireless struggle for a share in the government of the universities, with upheavals which have spread to embrace the whole of civil life and have even affected the very social peace of our republics, obtain in that field an experience of participation which they have not always found in the paths of political life within the structures of the parties and the framework of the State.

In the developed societies the culture and the establishment stand as allies, unshaken by the upheavals of the most critical of transitory periods. And in contrast, given the traditional role of the universities in Latin America as rebels, protesters, objectors and non-conformists, culture and establishment have come to represent antagonistic values in the new world. As a result of this contradiction, young

people have acquired the role of more overt protagonists within a whole society in the throes of development and exposed to a larger number of crises of growth, as has been the case of Latin American society.

The proletarian class has waged an obsessional struggle for its existence, literally excluded from the benefits of culture and the leisure of reading. It has been the middle class, given its most dashing expression by the universities, which has maintained the life and dissemination of a culture for which, by the way, neither the State nor the upper classes ever wanted to assume responsibility.

When we see the encouraging signs and symptoms of a new lifestyle in the trade unions and the other spheres in which young people are now imposing their own youthful stamp, which for years had seemed lost in stagnation and obsolescence or cast off once and for all, it is proper to ask whether—in times not necessarily more sombre than the past which are now emerging in embryonic form—this cause of giving a new reason for faith and existence to young people will find the universities, in good time, no longer so alone and isolated in their boldness as they have been up till now. From the trade unions and the classrooms are springing the shoots of a new and uncertain—at times even shaky—kind of hope. Time and events will tell whether it is possible to await this hope while still remaining young.

## II

### The language of young people

People are sometimes amazed at the limited vocabulary of young people's speech, at the broad and empty areas of silence in which their words fall with constant unspoken appeals to the listener's imagination. Borges commented once that the "you know?", the refusal to State one's meaning taking the form of a proposal to the other person that he should explain or guess at everything for himself, was the most typical

manifestation of the conversational impoverishment of the River Plate region. But very similar comments can be found in Mexico City, offered as criticism of what was called there, in the slang of the city's young people, the language of the *onda* (wave). Young people talk, in fact, with the support of the crutch of a wealth of clichés, stereotypes and stray coinages of unknown origin and familiar effect.

Of course, all this depends initially on the cultural levels of the young person concerned, be he an illiterate from the countryside or a university student from the town. But it is not unusual for the countryman to use the lively expressiveness of earthy language, the proven effectiveness as means of expression of idioms and proverbs and colourful phrases which do not have to be thought up because they are indelibly recorded and form part of a folk culture. The anthropologist Lombardi Satriani has recorded sayings —sometimes in dialect—of an unfailing expressiveness among Italians in the south of the peninsular (Sicilians, Calabrians, etc.) from very direct, basic and unliterary cultural strata. All of us, given a little patience and listening, can acquire a similar way of talking. And in contrast, it is possible to find young university people who express themselves sullenly, with no apparent interest in being understood, with a vocabulary sometimes as crude and limited, if not as inexpressive, as that of an illiterate.

Linguists usually argue that in the case of young people this fact implies an act or gesture of mistrust of language, of the expressive values accepted by the majority of people. The young person who deliberately speaks badly and does not do so (or does not think he does so) out of lack of culture or mere shyness is often rebelling against language as a weapon of control, an instrument which invests some with power over others. In the age and status war, in which we are all suspected of using our gifts with an eye to power and aggression and with the intention of dominating or imposing ourselves on others, a young person who is reluctant to take the opportunities of expression offered by language is mistrustful of communication itself and of the yokes and servitudes which may derive from it. Especially when he comes from a very inarticulated and uncultured background, without skills or power, he is certainly trying to ensure the inviolability of his world or the world of his values, to which he is bound; and he does not want that world to be questioned by others, especially older, more cultivated, gifted or powerful people.

Quite apart from this element of being an adjunct to poverty (as it might be put in forensic language), when the young person prefers to use speech in such a way that he cannot be reached

through it, there is certainly an intention to play down the emphatic and criticize the overstated or the gushing as being immodest or intrusive. The teacher who, after fighting against his pupils' dumbness or unsociable verbal poverty, gains their confidence and manages to "make them talk" —and the expression is hateful, for it evokes the determination of the interrogators at police stations or in the "cells" of the Investigation Department— is usually astonished to find that once its enveloping cloak of apparent sullenness is removed, this language proves to be, as an expression of thought, much more versatile and rich than he had previously been disposed to believe. This fact is usually attributed to the intergenerational age gap and the differences in the respective situations, rather than to differences of cultural level. However, it is sometimes the least cultivated person, the one who has least education and attracts least attention, who in fact expresses himself in the richest and most fluent vein and with least restraint or ambiguity, as far as his ability permits. The least smart, the least wary, the most open and ingenuous, the one with the coarsest and most basic reactions is often the most eloquent, for he has never thought of using language as a defence system to shelter or hide behind. And, except in areas where it is obviously impossible for him to express himself because of inadequacies of vocabulary, the frankest person is usually the most eloquent and wordy. A dose of shyness or indifference about expressing oneself usually lies behind the silence of young people, or in more extreme cases, which psychiatrists usually describe as symptoms of moral insensitivity or anaesthesia, behind the absolute vacuity or neutrality of feeling which is the attitude of the speaker to the impression that he may provoke in the listener.

In the slang or jargon (what the grammarians call thieves' cant) of the urban criminal world —and the criminals are not exclusively or predominantly young but they do include young people— the cryptic effect of the modes of speech is due to the use of a language of the persecuted and hunted, a language of the malefactor hounded and oppressed by the authorities. This language changes its skin every so often, as a fugitive's dodge, to escape, to make himself unintelligible to the investigator and

thus to evade him. Becco has written about this many times, and Gobello has edited several dictionaries of thieves' slang. And in the speech of our big and chaotic cities literature is usually expressed in similar modes, although perhaps not with similar intentions (for outside the criminal sphere language is used for communication and not for concealment). Perhaps the key lies in the fact that it is an attempt to communicate with some but not with all. In a novel which had a great success some five years ago in Mexico—written by a young poet, homosexual and drug addict, Luiz Zapata—the language is so impenetrably cryptic that when the critics asked for the keys to its understanding, the author himself answered that it was "the language of the Sanborns of the Colonia Roma" of those days. In other words, to understand properly the story of *Adonis García, el Vampiro de la Colonia Roma* (1979) one was required to be up in the jargon spoken in one of the many cafés or meeting places in the city at a given period. The text of another young Mexican story-teller, Castañeda by name, requires an understanding of the slang used by political

criminals in one of the prisons, in which the author had been held for a while. It would not therefore be going too far to say that the language of young people is segmented or split up into hundreds or thousands of slangs (for there are also the languages of the universities, the factories, sports, the jet set, etc.). This diversity of modes, forms or styles of communication indicates or suggests a panorama of neurotic fragmentation, of non-communication, the isolation or shipwreck of youth in a fearsome and largely unknown sea (fearsome because unknown, unknown because fearsome). When it is remembered that there are more than three thousand recorded languages and dialects spoken in Latin America, in addition to many unrecorded in dictionaries and not accepted by the academics, it can be seen that in this chaos the possibility of communicating with a young person, as a claim to be communicating with all young people, simply does not exist—it is a chimera. In our need to transmit a message to the youth of Latin America—potentially to all young people—we must not lose sight of this unavoidable reef.

### III

## Young people and politics

Is it true that today's young people are indifferent to politics and show no interest in knowing about politics and even less in being involved in it? The observer hears this said very often, at the same time as he thinks he is witnessing evidence of the opposite.

Leaving aside the usual reservations (there are many kinds of young person, depending on the setting in which he has grown up and been trained, on the education he has received, on his occupation or lack of occupation in the environment in which he moves), it is very important in this case, more so than with other topics, to agree on the meaning of the terms—on the language.

It has been said that a young person is by definition a *parricide*. In other words, he has the feeling of having been deceived and cheated, caught unawares in his original innocence and made to accept outmoded or discredited values, he is wary and mistrustful and refuses to accept the standards and categories extolled or revered by his parents' generation. This kind of allegorical or symbolic parricide is found in literature, in music, in hobbies and amusements and also, of course, in politics.

But this is not just a generational reflex. Too many upheavals and too many injustices, too much suffering and too many great historical frauds have taken place for this disappointment

and withdrawal of young people not to be entirely credible and justified with a vengeance. A young person lives, beset by impulses that are both uncontrollable and sincere, between commitment and non-commitment, between what he believes in and what he denies, between the extremes to which he gives the support of an ardent faith and those which he rejects with no less fervour. In this pendulum movement the young person is largely explained. Firstly, it is characteristic of youth to form these opinions primarily from the standpoint of moral reproach, of ethical authority and censoriousness. A State or a situation or a society declined or collapsed or was smashed at a given moment, at a point which it is thought can be accurately defined. The young person sets out to find those responsible for this disaster among its claimed victims. Zavalita in Vargas Llosa's *Conversación en la catedral* expresses his inner defeat by subsuming it in the misfortunes of Peru under the Odrfa dictatorship. But young people feel no sympathy for the Zavalitas, nor are they inclined to believe them; the person with most to complain about can be, in his way, a culprit, an accomplice or abettor. His discouragement or cowardice may have caused many disasters. Young people do not believe in the beaten, although they can extoll martyrs: Zavalita is not a legitimate object of commiseration, but Che Guevara is exalted by young people as a hero or martyr. There is no contradiction here. There is a kind of charisma of death which gives this kind of authenticated hero a unique place in the pure devotion of the young. The defeated hero has fewer niches now than formerly, now that experience has shown that Cuba and Algeria and Viet Nam were possible and that it was feasible to begin to build something on these stones. But begin to build what and how?

A young person commits himself to what he believes in, but he repudiates with equal thoroughness what he does not believe in. In Spain it is usual to talk of "pass-ism" as an attitude found primarily among young people. They revise retrospectively the history which they were unable to experience and, as a result of this analysis, they say: "if this is democracy (or if this republicanism, etc.), then I pass", as if they were handling counters in a game. This is called

"pass-ism" —a state of mind and a mental attitude: wash your hands of what you do not believe, mark out positions and then proclaim your opposition to anything that might have some claim to your acceptance. It is a strange ideology (it would be better to call it the mould of a debunking ideology) of apathy and alienation.

A young person feels a need for absolutes and in his search for them he is willing to sacrifice the blessing of life itself. In this search the possible counts for little and is sacrificed on the altars of the absolute. In his need for absolutes a young person usually reads offbeat and revolutionary thinkers, such as Marcuse. And in this same need he will enlist as a guerrilla and in direct actions, which are less suspected of compromises, impurities and deceits than formal political action —even when this action is taken by the Left.

In a situation fuelled originally by youthful enthusiasm for the person and Bolivian crusade of Che Guevara —a romantic episode crowned by extremes of martyrology that can stir the imagination and arouse young people to action— the preaching of the French ideologist Régis Debray (today an adviser in the Government of Francois Mitterand) had a passing but intense vogue among young people through his treatise *Revolution in the Revolution*. That this pamphlet should have been issued from the official Cuban printing office shows how two clearly separate tracks can come together at one point and become blurred. That point, clearly, is now past; but it has certainly left its imprint on the outlook of people who were young in the 1960s. At that time those young people experienced, fleetingly but passionately, the incarnation of the absolute in themselves; and they took the absolute to its utter limits.

This demarcation and this gap mean condemnation and dismissal of the traditional structures, and of everyone who wants to make the young person into a *client*, a passive or recruited follower, a number to be counted but not to be taken seriously.

In this sense, obedience to a monolithic party discipline, for example, disgusts young people; it hardly ever earns their blind acceptance and often meets with their suspicion. The old image of the traditional political club ("*el clu*", as it has



been called) has now been irremediably discredited. But it is not politics itself that is discredited, rather the way of making politics. It was sufficient, for example, in Uruguay in 1971 that these ossified and worm-ridden forms should be replaced by others stemming spontaneously from the working-class movements for it to be realized that it was not that young people wanted to stay out of politics but rather that, up to then, they had not been given the means of joining in. Given the complex cogwork of State control in today's world, the political club may well be an unavoidable evil in the relationship between citizens and institutions. Aldo Solari once demonstrated this clearly in an article published in the Gazette of the University of Montevideo under the title *Requiem por la izquierda* (Requiem for the Left). But although the club may be inevitable, the young prefer to ignore it, distance themselves from it and express their moral repugnance of it and absolute indifference to it. It might be acceptable to defeated and mendicant spirits which have no difficulty in submitting in exchange for the advantage which they expect to gain from their dependence. The young person —youth is an age of the spirit and the mind as well as a biological age— does not want to deliver himself up to anyone, at any price. If later, as he grows older, his whole political outlook changes, then he may think differently. But at that moment he will have ceased to be young.

Today's young person has a very clear memory of the punishment he received for his practical jokes and harmless digs. And he gains a kind of elemental wisdom from the memory of his setbacks, drawing on the experience of all those times he has been cheated. It is also true that young people often *get* involved in desperate adventures in the knowledge of what they are, with a kind of blunt indifference to risk and death. Even allowing that the murder of thousands of disappeared persons in Argentina may have other explanations much less redeeming for the murderers than the explanation of a supposed masochism on the part of revolutionary youth in Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s, it cannot be denied that some senseless and preposterous adventures under arms imply a kind of romantic suicide wish, of

the kind which shaped the tragic destiny of the "*Montoneros*" and led to the torture and crimes which they then suffered.

After the flood tides of history come the ebbs, after the *corsi* the *recorsi*. Disillusioned and deceived by an overly ambitious plan which excludes, rejects or exterminates them, young people have recently begun to put their constructive energy into projects concerned with what is decently possible, bringing to them many acts of individual bravery which can achieve them a place closer to the great ideological explosions of history. This has included the self-management enterprises and the experiments with agrarian and urban co-operatives in Latin America. They have been fed by a community outlook, anarchic in spirit, which mistrusts the panaceas offered by the State and limits itself to seeking a more modest immediate and attainable salvation, safe from the deceitful wholesale promises of the leviathan of this century, the State. Co-operativism, in places where there exists a minimum of social homogeneity to make it viable, has written pages and fought battles which are not to be disdained in these times.

Some of this has produced, without doubt, a new configuration on the Left, far removed from what has come to be called "traditional communism". A kind of grassroots communism, acrat or libertarian, in which can also be seen a survival of some of the theories of Trotsky. These forms of grassroots communism, often nationalist, acrat or libertarian (acrat without any dogma from the Second International, in a way acrat without knowing it, just as Monsieur Jourdain spoke prose in *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*), are the ones which inform the mixture of theory and practice of direct action, for example in the E.R.P. in Argentina or the M.L.N. in Uruguay. These are youth movements, sometimes drawn from the Marxist ranks, sometimes from the nationalist, with a clear residue of disillusionment in both cases, and with a coincidence of views which might have been seen as diametrically opposed a few years ago. In no way are we talking about groups which embrace masses of young people or which can speak for the characteristic and definitive feelings of youth in any of the known cases. They are apt to deviate towards terrorism or to live the terrorist life by preference, as in the case of the

Baader-Meinhof gang; and in many ways they show clear symptoms of mental disorder in their adoption of absolutist or radical attitudes similar to the ones which once defined the nihilists under Tsarism or the anarchists at the time of the assassinations or the fanatical gangs of Muslims or Jews today (mortal and irreconcilable hostility is no obstacle to similarity or even copying).

These groups, made up of young people, are also led by young people (Daniel Cohn Bendit,

Rudy Dutschke or Red Rudy, Andreas Baader and Ursula Meinhof, the IRA bosses, etc.). The same principle of homogeneity contrasting with the senility of the established political leaderships operated in Sierra Maestra. These young people are not of course all young people or even, numerically, a very large proportion of young people. But in some areas they have played the game for everyone and played it for all its worth, and their claim to represent everyone cannot be denied.

## IV

### Indifference and rebellion

It is not true, therefore, that young people have indifference as a general or dominant characteristic, and indeed it would be absurd to try to examine them in such terms. But a gallery of youth would not be complete without a portrait of the indifferent. Indifference can be confused with taciturnity or insanity and with gratuitousness and amorality. They are perfectly discernible background features but, in reality as in art, they can occur in areas of rich, complex and indeed rough graining.

The indifferent ones, who provided the title for one of the novels of Alberto Moravia, attract much attention among young people, who are dominated in many cases by the *angst* of originality, by the neurotic anxiety of singularity which can also lead to heroism, crime, vice or suicide. We are all familiar with this character in literature: he is the perpetrator of the gratuitous act in Gide and he is Meersault in Camus's *The Outsider*. He is Eladio Linacero in Onetti's *El Pozo*, which introduced in 1939 a kind of moral indifference which some people attached to our urban lifestyle in Latin America and which actually has more to do with Céline than with the Montevideo or Buenos Aires of the 1940s.

But we are not talking about the indifferent as a character but as a living creature found among our young people. We are not talking about Meersault, who kills the Arab because the

sun at the beach bothers him, but about the juvenile delinquent in Montevideo who, behind the wheel of a stolen car, knocks down and kills a fireman just to hear the noise his helmet makes as it hits the ground; we are talking about the Algerian girl Albertine Sarrazin, handed over to adoptive parents who do not understand her and launched on her own adolescent initiative into prostitution, assault, robbery, prison, love and finally death—a route covered in only 29 years of life, leaving us three autobiographical novels, testimonials of an unmistakable narrative talent and moral (or amoral) tone. We are talking about heroes or antiheroes like Elvis Presley, young and drug-addicted and adored by young people who would like to be like these myths; all within a kind of strange, strident and ambiguous juvenile communion; we are talking about John Lennon, the most talented of the Beatles, who was murdered by one of his fans, one of his admirers, in a destructive impulse of the most equivocal of cults, an Erostratus who wants to become one with his idol through the bond of his crime, in an act of consubstantiation and empathy, of superimposition of identities. The malefactor, the homosexual and the drug addict are not merely types invented by the creative urge, but creatures—victims, victimizers and witnesses—of flesh and bone, living in a time when all their voices are raised as

one because they think there may be a place where they will find the truth of so much suffering or any truth which may have something to say and reasons to be heard. It is the mood of the times, that is what it is called.

The Greeks believed that the chosen ones of the gods died young. But neither Raymond Radiguet nor Alain Fournier nor, before them and more important than them, Arthur Rimbaud thought themselves chosen ones of the gods, yet all three of them —the first two in the 1914 War and the third in the torture of a martyrdom which he carried in his own devastated centre and which led him to write *Une saison en enfer* before he was 18 and to keep silent for the next 20 years, until the mutilation of his body and his horrible death in a Marseilles hospital— were consumed in the flower of their youth and at dizzying speed. The violence inherent in their destinies was to bring them to the scaffold, for having raped women in the case of Chessman or for having stolen a rubber band in childhood like the deserter in Enzensberger's story.

There is a pathos of violence which these young people inflict on others or suffer themselves but which is —in all cases— equally gratuitous and liberating and inexorable and tragic. This violence is often the other face of true violence, its dynamic alternative or its all-consuming apotheosis.

When the behaviour of young people is viewed from outside, it sometimes seems to take the form of hysterical violence, when they applaud, when they sing, when they are amused or even when they are only laughing. But we rarely stop to think that this daily violence might be the purgation of a sick world (of a sick body) infected with inequality, injustice and hypocrisy, crippled by this ossified and counterfeit system which seeks shelter (or protection) in institutional stagnation. And just as the worst form of terrorism is State terrorism, the worst form of violence is perhaps not the violence inflicted by young people on society but that which society inflicts on the young. Some of this is found in the metaphor of society as a carnivorous flower in the delightful anonymous fable of the French May 68. Young people who usually seem to us to be gratuitously and unexpectedly violent are often perhaps only

turning back the violence with which society batters them, with which it rejects them, and with which it coerces them.

They flaunt their protest and their rebellion in the face of this violence. The rebellion, the non-conformity, their protests, the deceits that insult them, their deception, their failure: their disillusionment. Disillusionment, that demythologizing word (or debunking, which is the same thing). Psychologists call adolescence the age of rebellion, the age of protest and also the age of vulgarity. It is the age when every man symbolically kills his father, the age of parricide, of the definition of sexual identity and, by sublimation, of the assumption of spiritual independence, of personal identity and sometimes of artistic creation. It is the age at which so many young people (especially in the towns) buy and decorate those horrible jackets, covered with slogans, which they display with the pride of self-worship and innocence, of arrogance and rejection. 'What is refined about bad taste is the aristocratic pleasure of giving offence', Baudelaire once said. It is out of this kind of feeling that they wear these jackets, in a perhaps multivalent and equivocal gesture: or as an exercise in deception about themselves (first supposition), or to make people laugh at their own ridiculous and helpless situation, or to express through black humour their own loneliness and non-belonging, their lack of supports in life.

Adolfo Bioy Casares wrote some years ago a short and memorable fantasy, one of the most melancholy and caustic novels ever conceived about the everyday urban life of one of our Latin American cities, in this case Buenos Aires. The book was called *Diario de la guerra del cerdo* (Diary of the Pig's War) and the horror invented in it concerned the ineluctable and mysterious slaughter, decreed and executed by young people against the old, in the suburbs of the city. It was a kind of dramatic illustration of the law of those days, implemented in the night on the street corners of the suburbs. The unbearable and insidious evil which this fantasy expressed, with a rhythm like that of a secret and slow-moving trial by ordeal, was assuredly heralding other misfortunes, concerning which there is no proof that they were inflicted by the old on the young, but they were inflicted by somebody on the

young, with a violence and lack of discrimination and a frenzy which Bioy's cautious, mature and civilized work could not have foreseen. The disappeared persons of Argentina, the thousands of young dead of Argentina are a response by life to art, to paraphrase Wilde. Bioy Casares could never have imagined it.

The upsets of recent years in Latin America (revolution in Cuba, urban or rural guerrilla warfare in other countries) have opened the way to generation gaps and break-downs in the lives of family groups, to the extent that it is possible to talk without exaggeration of an allegory of *flicide*, with equal justification as in the case of the parricide discussed above. And psychologists, essayists, analysts and psychotherapists have found in this situation a rich vein of human reactions relating to problems of cohabitation between spouses, conflicts in the relations between parents and children, etc. The reactions of the parents to the behaviour and decisions of their children, to

their acts and decisions of a political nature, range from the extremes of the blindest and most painful disapproval, incomprehension and rejection to the most rigid emotional forms of sublimation and surrender and total unconditional acceptance, with all the consequences which these two states of mind produce.

In the case of young people who adopt radical political attitudes —sometimes these social groups remain in their usual places of residence, sometimes they have had to go into exile as a result of persecution— they usually exhibit the symbolic features of *flicide*, such as the excessive exaltation of the importance of the young in the relations of the family group. The allegory of Saturn devouring his children, painted by Goya, and the inverse but equally macabre allegory of young people killing their parents illustrate with horrifying effect the processes of self-identity of thousands of young people at this time in the life of Latin America.

## V

### Outline of the anomalous

There is little to tell about the virtuous young person, or his story is boring and unexciting for the reader. But contemplation of the abysses of vice —to put it melodramatically, in the style of the supposition itself— Is much more interesting and will clearly attract more readers. This is how the notion has spread among imaginative and unthinking people that young people are particularly depraved or perverse, particularly cruel, particularly sadistic. Nobody tells the story of respectable women, as Amado Nervo would say. That story simply does not exist.

The generic term "malefactor" is sometimes used to describe people who live close or adjacent to the criminal zones, from vagrancy and begging to illicit trafficking even when not directly criminal; however, since we have all had the importance of drug addiction hammered home to us, it occupies centre stage.

The young drug addict is a symptom of a genuine social problem and he should not simply be lumped together with other miscreants, even though frequently, out of the necessity created by his addition and the compelling drive to obtain the means of procuring the drug, he may commit criminal acts: he robs to buy it, he assaults to buy it, and he kills for it, or perhaps merely engages in dealing as a means of financing his vice and his dependence. Criminologists and toxicologists distinguish between the venial and relatively harmless forms (such as smoking marihuana) and the destructive and hard forms (such as the taking of heroin, the crudest and most expensive drug); in the long term, and especially for the young, both habits begin to erode, damage and destroy the personality and even life. The young drug addict, unless he recovers on his own account or receives treatment, will eventually be lost. And his

parasitism and dependence, his tyrannical and vicious subjugation can drive him into other forms of misdemeanour and crime. Although marihuana and poppies are grown openly in the fields—not to mention the hidden corners of the cities—the consumption of the drug is not a problem for rural youth, except for those who are involved in its production, who in any case are few in numbers. It is, however, a problem for vast sectors of urban youth, including young people in the universities and from the upper classes. Through imitation, through social contamination, and also through forms of neurosis or unbalance which city life generates in many young people, it is in the urban areas that the concern over drugs takes on the dimensions of an alarming problem. People who study these facts scientifically point to the effects of other causes (problems ranging from the family situation to the actual mental make-up of the subject) and to the elements of novelty, imitation and snobbery in the formulation of many habits which subsequently cannot be eradicated.

In many instances there is clearly an initial element of protest, rebellion and self-assertion, in this case through the adoption of a misguided practice. The young person who smokes marihuana is seeking not only a fleeting refuge in his tiny beatific paradise but also means of communion and sociability, paradoxically in an oasis of shared isolation in company. Young people form alliances and create bonds—with which they know they are separating themselves, in an insidious way, from other young people and investing themselves with the prestigious aura of "the damned"—when they get together to share out the cost and divide up a pile of marihuana cigarettes. And the sublimation of this status of excluded, proscribed and damned persons, which heightens and stimulates the fantasies of many young minds, prompts them to proclaim on the walls of the universities and sometimes to scribble—in negation—on the edges of political posters which speak of other revolutions, "Marihuana rules!" or "Pot rules!", to use their term.

In many cases of juvenile drug-taking there are radical problems of loneliness, of a thirst for communication accompanied by an inability to communicate, in a society which has failed to

create myths, at least in the eyes of the young; this gives them a feeling of anxiety, of being shut in by an enveloping mist from which there is absolutely no way out.

All this often takes place within the framework of a related mythology. Marihuana is smoked in conjunction with the reading—among initiates—of usually bad and immature poetry written by themselves, or very often submerged in a sea of music—usually rock—in the gloomy and deafening setting of a discoteque or, more cheaply and modestly, with the ears glued to a juke box. In such cases the act of drug-taking is merely part of a rite, a detail of an exclusive and possibly aggressive cult which, in its purest form, is solipsistic, segregating and silent. This cult also has its gods, who participate or have participated in the whole paraphernalia of this kind of religion.

Not all young people, or even a majority of them, take drugs. The evil is found most frequently in the towns and, paradoxically, in social strata which have a decent level of education and even enjoy relatively sophisticated cultural standards. In the socially and economically poorest classes the practice is found less often, although the regrettable evil of its "democratization" must be closely watched: in addition to being less destructive, marihuana is also more easily obtainable than other drugs, and in the universities, which in some towns are tending to become mass environments, it is the most widespread. Accordingly, drug addiction among the poor (who sniff glue and get high on the vapour) could give cause for concern if it were to increase. In any case, all these practices call for education measures directed at young people and designed to speak to them persuasively and truthfully, without giving rise to fears and moral stigma, without treating these practices as Satanic acts, which has proved counter-productive, not to say useless.

So-called juvenile delinquency has brought forth from the experts hundreds of meditations and thousands of pages. One of the theories no longer discussed today is that this is a question of criminality of external rather than internal cause. In other words, the effect of the environmental factors and the disorderly conduct which they prompt in young people prevail over the motivations, impulses and

stimuluses found in the subject's own psychological make-up. Lombroso's speculations about the born or atavistic criminal are today undergoing thorough revision, although they are not entirely discredited. In any event, in this intractable sphere we must still think in terms of sanatoriums and hospitals or shelters rather than of prison or reformatory. We are dealing with sick people and in some cases with mad people, and not with persons guided by their own free will (and this notion of pure free will is dangerous and inconsistent in many cases) and therefore responsible for their actions. In the cases which, for the sake of simplicity, may be called normal, a young person's delinquency seems to be influenced much more by forces external to himself than by internal ones. The external is more decisive, stronger and intractable than the internal in the case of a young person who is still not fully formed but is exposed to the influence of so many distorting impulses.

Despite this, there is no discussion in our countries—in the majority of cases—of any other more practical expedient than court proceedings and imprisonment; as if these evils were caused by too much freedom and must be opposed, dialectically, by the barriers of prison. Prisons in Latin America and throughout the world are horrible places. And in the case of many occasional or accidental delinquents, juveniles or even adults, they function merely as a segregated depository, if they are to be measured by the notion of confinement; and as emporiums of crime, if they are to be measured in terms of the development of many criminal careers which originate and are acquired and consolidated in the vices, experience and knowledge furnished by the first spell of imprisonment. Criminal statistics show this in the high recidivism rate. For this very reason, many criminologists are in favour of replacing short terms of imprisonment, especially for first offences, with other treatment.

But society reacts to its anxiety and its perception of the need for social protection. And in its own expression of this anxiety and in the opinions of its press and the statements of its parliamentarians society calls for heavier sentences and more draconian severity in prison

conditions, every time it is stirred up by the evidence of a crime (or a crime wave). It would be too much trouble to go to the causes. The first and most elemental of the forms of social peace is rooted in the locking-away of the guilty: the longer the term, the better; and it then turns out that the period of imprisonment serves as a launching pad to a criminal career for people who have erred only once. Popular sentiment feels that if there is crime—and a society cannot be without it, as Durkheim said—"the Criminal Code is to blame", because of its leniency or mildness; the Criminal Code and the law, because of the opportunities which, according to this flight of the popular imagination, any flexibility or liberality of treatment gives the criminal to repeat his offence. It is an immovable, ignorant and primitive mental fixation, which does not yield to proof to the contrary or to the statistical numbers or to the arguments for sentencing to suit the individual. Increasingly harsh prisons, prisons in perpetuity, are demanded by popular sentiment, so that people can feel that they are protected and can immediately stop thinking about the matter.

It is paradoxical that this ignorant belief in the beneficial effects of prison is found among the least favoured masses of the population, who ought logically to be the ones to have least faith in prison and should feel that it had been imposed on their lives as a concrete and sombre threat, as they are the ones most exposed to its rigours. The poor and lowly have an irrational sense of seeking their own security—in the midst of their deprivation and poverty—in the punishment and repression of others. Many people *believe* in prisons, seeing them as existing to guard us against other people, without noticing that throughout history prisons have always been overflowing with inmates from the working classes, who are the members of society least capable of avoiding, when the time comes, these most indiscriminate, disturbing and unjust forms of oppression.

This whole outlook is mistaken in practically all circumstances, but it is much more so in the case of juvenile delinquency. Mariano Ruiz Funes once asserted that the child was a pre-social and amoral being. And this description can often be applied to adolescents and young

people, even though strictly speaking they have ceased —biologically— to be children. In some of our countries the press and careless thinkers once invented an ineffable expression: they spoke of "infanto-juvenile" delinquents (after some years this term ceased to be used, and nobody claimed paternity for it, but the laws —meanwhile— had been enacted). Periodically the need is urged to lower the legal age-limit from which the perpetrator of an act can be held responsible and brought before the court. The rehabilitation of minors in reformatories convinces nobody; nor does the State, compelled to consider other needs and theories of security, have the money to spend on correctional institutions, on experiments with treatment in the family and other measures which the

scientists invent but which have no effect at all in persuading the ignorant. To lower the age of criminal responsibility means to advance the clock for many potential but preventable careers of crime which are nurtured in the prisons. But there is a conditioned social reflex, even among the humblest people, which feels that it is only possible to breathe and rest easily if other humble people are under arrest. And in recent years, with the vogue for the militarist doctrine of national security, the planning, equipping and building of more and more prisons has been raised to the status of official policy. The fact that these new, harsh and more rigorous prisons are intended for political prisoners, including large numbers of young people, offers an increasingly gloomy prospect.

## VI

### How young people organize themselves and what they believe in

How do young people come together and what do they believe in? In whom do they believe and how do they relate to each other, what do they talk about, what do they write, what do they read, what do they do in their free time, and how do they amuse themselves?

We have been sketching in some of the features of all these topics in the foregoing pages. But some conclusions must be drawn, amidst the disorder inherent in a largely spontaneous and, in tribute to the nature of the subject, always free meditation.

There are some healthy patterns to be discerned and affirmed. Alfred Sauvy spoke some time ago about "*la montée des jeunes*", the ascent of the young. Although he was commenting mainly on certain demographic arguments and figures on the average age of the population —figures which differ in degree for youth from country to country in Latin America but are predominantly high and vigorous (Sauvy was talking about France in the post-war

period) — the ascent of the young in the age table has social and political implications of the greatest importance.

One in five of the inhabitants of Latin America is young, and this fact has very obvious implications for the future and the present which must be taken conscientiously into account in our final recommendations, when we reach the point of summation. But, meanwhile, what are these young people like (not just how many are they), how do they behave, in whom do they believe, what do they believe, how do they relax at leisure, what do they chat about, what do they write about, what things do they read about with greatest concern and deepest interest?

We have referred to a young and distinct style which the young —when they have the culture level and the education that will secure them a hearing— try to affix as the stamp of their specific presence. Youth is a topic which passes with age, as the sceptics sarcastically put it. They have seen pass by, they say, generation

after generation of young people whose purpose was invariably to change the world. But then these young people have matured and then they have aged and have yielded to the so-called dictates of a more realistic, resigned and melancholy prudence. And the world has changed too, but for reasons of its own needs not for reasons connected at various times with the needs of these successive generations of the young. Every age has the vanity and the conceit—the mistaken egocentrism, we might say—that it is a different age, in which the masters of the world toy with the option of unleashing the forces of the atom with such unscrupulous cruelty, might actually be that age of crucial decision which so many earlier ages, in their time, have thought themselves to be. Let us look, then, at the young, in this antechamber of our promised extermination. Their placement, tragic perhaps, does not suffice to make them better or worse. But let us agree that it does help to present them as qualitatively different.

There are signs of this change, moreover, and they are not necessarily of such catastrophic origins or such negative import. By an easily explained paradox, recent sufferings and hardships have produced some satisfactory fruit. This is true, as we have already said, of the new outlook of young trade unionists in Latin America. While the stagnation and ossification in official favour have perpetuated aged trade-union leaders in power and temporarily closed the door on new ones, those other spheres in which trade unionism has been tempered in the fires of rejection, trials, reverses and persecution have responded with young leaders, just as political and working-class as the older ones but more flexible and independent and with a more perceptive and less routine sense of the value of labour discipline. The style of these new leaders is easily distinguished from the rigid party stance and actually owes much to the traditional working-class leaders of a few decades ago, times of comparatively greater prosperity.

Similar things are beginning to happen in the leadership of the political parties struggling to overcome the disaster of decades of military dictatorship in several countries of Latin America. This necessary renovation of the political ranks is propelling into the institutions and government of our countries students of the

social scene such as Dante Caputo and of science as Dr. Manuel Sadowski in Argentina or legislators with qualifications from other fields, such as the distinguished Brazilian essayist and sociologist Fernando Enrique Cardoso; all this helps to counteract the effects of the many disastrous years and can strengthen the faith of our young people, who have been so discouraged by the repeated evidence of the true worth of politics in our republics. And a very similar change of outlook seems to be emerging among student leaders.

Not all the leaders coming forward from the ranks of the political opposition are obviously young at this stage of the process of transformation in America. But the renewal taking place in Argentina and Brazil is indicative of a novel and healthy reaction, and similar developments can be expected, in the more or less short term, in other countries such as Uruguay, Venezuela and Peru.

The words *message and commitment*, all the rage a few years ago, are today semantically threadbare and must be replaced, for it is the words themselves and not the ideas they stand for which have grown old. Under these and other names the "grassroots Christian communities" operating in Brazil with the approval of the Church and with the protection of its prestige, and the so-called "*comités de base*" (grassroots committees) which have taken the place of the party clubs (and rehabilitated their tarnished image, in Uruguay in 1971) can be suitable places for young people to meet, without monitors of any kind, in the same way as they meet in student clubs and workers' or professional groups, or even at sports and cultural centres, which were under suspicion in the times of persecution but now, in comparatively calmer times, can begin to revalidate their existence.

Young people have torn off many straitjackets in recent years and they have slipped out of others, almost without the adults noticing. Institutions such as writers' workshops and arts-appreciation courses exist discreetly, one might say almost stealthily, and they sometimes start up in private homes made available for this purpose. Opportunities for young people to discuss with each other their experiences and reading, not to mention the first



fruits of their own writing or of their apprenticeships in music and painting, can come up anywhere and their spontaneity and lack of organization may be only apparent; such opportunities help the young to be themselves, far from the protective concern of adults and the oppressive eye of the harsher régimes. Here too there is no need to advance the clocks. A new generation flourishes and develops from the moment when it finds its own place and persuades everyone else of the necessity of its existence, like the branches in the structure of a tree. Pindaro said that the generations of men are as the generations of leaves. A young person can come to exist naturally (and without affectation) as a *naif* and he can follow his path from innocence, gaucheness and imitation and from the sway of his peer groups. The arts schools (literature, painting, engraving, music) are not bad in themselves; they could become sterile, however, if they fall into affectation and lose their former authenticity and originality in the snares set by an increasingly cunning officialdom.

What do young people read and what do they write? Mainly poetry, say their teachers and the experts. Not because the genre seems to them easier, although up to a point it is, and perhaps in a sense it is the most unrewarding as well: in view of the number of people who feel called to write poetry, it must be the place in which there will be fewest of the chosen. A middling storyteller or a plodding essayist may feel called to fulfil a function, to occupy a space, and may consider himself legitimized by this requirement. A poor poet is a superfluous item in society and if a young person he will be haunted by the phantoms of creative idleness, frustration and failure. If there are more poets than novelists and playwrights, it is due mainly to the fact that a young person who launches himself into the adventure of his first attempts at writing feels himself watched, hemmed in and actually haunted by thoughts of uncertainty and death. And the commitment to poetic creation, although qualitatively the most intense and demanding, has the advantage of confronting the briefest and most clear-cut challenges, the nearest terminal landmarks. When he discovers the essential inadequacy and disappointments of these beguiling spells, he has often advanced so

far that the feeling of discouragement does not stop him from continuing: he is at the point of no return, like an aircraft taking off. The alternative is revolution: and revolution is as rare, if not rarer, in a youth or in a mature person as it is in a society.

And meanwhile, like actors about to go on stage, young people prepare themselves by reading and writing (or painting and, as in all vocations, censuring, belittling and destroying). Every generation feels itself naturally called upon to say what has never been said before and in a way in which it has never been said before. Paradoxically, it starts by trying to say it in derivative and imitative ways. For the youth of Latin America in the 1940s it was Lorca-ism, in the 1960s it was Neruda-ism; later César Vallejo came to fame, like a timeless peak in his sly capacity for skeletal nakedness, suffering and asceticism. For the moment, the space of this generational succession, which Julián Marias has shown to occur at intervals of 15 years, has seemed occupied by big dominant names, as big and as dominant as the ones mentioned above. But greater patience and thoroughness then reveal the names of the avanguard, who are actually the ones who first take up the baton and then pass it on to others. They are the ones who stitch together the continuity of the years which underlies all the surface games.

Young people surrender devotedly to a fashion, such as the fashion for protest songs; and governments usually play their necessary card in this game by prohibiting it. The protest song is a gesture of refusal to be strangled and it expresses an uncontainable and torrential current, in which transience, repetition and staleness count for nothing. In the critical times in which it appears, the protest song has an almost insurrectional force; in the mouths of the young, like *La carmagnole* or the *Internationale* in their time. A protest song which has become routine or academic or has found official favour is a contradiction in itself. But experience shows that these contradictions are not impossible and that, when the weave is reversed, they can regain all their significance.

Like the underground satire and the Russian *samizdat* of today, the protest song has been a means of reacting against a suffocating atmosphere, and against conformity and the

official writ of irreversible and irresistible opinion sought by the authoritarian régimes. The anonymous emergence of the epic lays in the Middle Ages was often not very different in its origins.

A protest song takes the road of dissidence and tries to make it into a militant passion. Among all the mode of conscientious objection and the opportunities for developing a feeling of popular rebellion, the so-called protest song is the one preferred by the young; this is easy to understand in view of its emotional and conceptual content, which is translated into the simplest and most accessible terms, and of its aura of communicating a message and the facile infectiousness of its verbal and melodic forms,

all of which implies factors working as inducements to expression of a need for communication felt almost to be a matter of life and death in the harshest and most repressive times. Once a society has reverted to more liberal modes of expression, the protest song has served its purpose and can give way to other folk forms. But it will not thereby cease to exist, although *it* may assume in its renovated form a quality of more joyful exaltation and a less belligerent and disputatious tone, as has happened in Spain today. In the hardest and most repressive times the people will find a way and a method of expressing many of its truths and it will listen to the true exemplars of its history, that same history which it disregards in happier times.

## VII

### The education of young people

*Participation, development and peace* declare the placards about youth and the goals of its mobilization. Participation and development and participation in development are actually two minimum and fundamental objectives. Unless there is greater participation by young people in the life of our societies, little or nothing will be achieved in the way of effective social progress. It is certainly into these moulds that the contents must be poured. Because to make young people participate more means in turn providing them with better employment prospects than at present and, to that end, bringing into general use education practices and systems that will facilitate the attainment of these goals of greater integration. At the very heart of any policy designed to achieve the greater participation of young people in the life of our society lies the need to equip them better, to make them better skilled and to encourage their own real competitiveness. And this means making our education systems universal, truly so and not just in words, so that they reach the greatest numbers in all areas (rural and urban),

without their expansion being achieved at the price of reducing the standards and requirement. The introduction of a genuine revolution in education systems thus lies at the root of all possible achievements. In the case of secondary education the requirement of total universality is linked with a sound, real and not unrealistic principle of the obligatory status of education. This implies a State policy which, without prejudice to the choices available to the student and the responsible members of his family who are inseparable from his upbringing—his parents— places in the State's hands the implementation of a policy which attacks the problem of drop-outs at its roots, for this is the reason why courses are not completed, the bases are not established and, in a well-intentioned social education, the costs of the system increase and it falls victim to the waste that goes hand in hand with its ineffectiveness, so that in the end it fails in its purposes and in the very truth of its social philosophy and technical content.

The effective universalization of secondary education is indissolubly linked with the realism

of its plans and its degree of feasibility and with the need for it to be used to achieve what society wants and specifies, once it has been determined what society wants, how it wants it and why and within what limits it specifies this want. In an interlinked social system, an education policy which does not take into account the employment prospects offered by society to young people serves only to waste the time of young people; it will come to grief in calculations about the duration and cost of courses and will generate frustration after having called for the effort to be made.

And in higher education this realistic attitude to social possibilities and factors and to the levels of employment that society can provide must be the cornerstone of a serious education policy, well thought-out and carried through to completion: to train an excess of anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists for a society which then lacks any possibility of giving them jobs is to indulge in what Alejandro Alvarez once called, in an inimitable expression, "manuscript progress". It would be the same as pouring experts in librarianship into a society in which there were no books.

This unflinching realism —realism about the content of education and its natural uses in society— is an essential element. In the liberal European tradition (more specifically the French tradition) of our higher education, devised for another society, the evils of an artificial encyclopaedism have been cultivated to excess, without any possible correlation with the actual situation. In fact, this disproportion and excess, with a low real rate of return, has created the excessive cost and duration of education, together with the drop-outs (everything is connected), the failings of a State system of social planning, and the disorientation, uncertainty and failures in the careers and lives of many young people. To want to create humanists and professionals at the same time and virtually in a single system and with one and the same education plan inevitably means not creating either acceptable humanists or good professionals and leads to the collapse of the system at unsupportable levels of expenditure. To get to the heart of the matter in an attempt to clarify the aims and objectives is absolutely the

first priority —the task of establishing the cornerstones and pillars of an education system. If this system is ill founded, all the rest will fall, with all the eminent dangers to society and to the individual lives of hundreds, of thousands of young people which that error of forecasting and calculation will entail.

In plain language, then, greater participation and greater development —greater participation in development— means more effective and universal education systems rooted in the most realistic social ground, with a clear understanding of the social factors which have condemned to chaos so many generous but Utopian, chimerical and unrealistic education policies.

The other goal, the third and last one stated on the placards, is so basic and convincing that its five letters spell out the progress or the destruction of the world, the fuller attainment of the social objectives or, in its grossest form, the end and ruin of everything: it is stated in the word *peace*. It is the main word with which young people can declare themselves to be in credit, for —having advanced less far than the adults and the old along the path of life— they are the ones with the widest margin of natural credit with which to continue living.

Lasting peace, a basic condition of any progress, is determined by the extent to which confrontation between the two superpowers can be avoided. Because if in the situation created by their atomic weapons that confrontation should take place, the next war will have to be fought by mankind with flint axes, as somebody put it. Assuming that there will still be some representatives of mankind left on the planet to do so.

Up to now, in the preparations and the strategies (deterrent ones, let us hope) and in the pretences of this long cold war, stoked up at the experimental level but played down in other fields, all the protagonists other than the two actors cast in the leading roles have no other task than merely to listen and look on. And all the discussions in international conferences and organs, apart from the mouthing of obstacles, vetoes and prohibitions, more verbal than actual, are designed to prevent the simple real possibility of a threat of this kind materializing.

And there are no other guarantees except those based on the wisdom of the contestants and on the calculation that each of them must have made concerning the minimum booty that will

fall to them in the end of the world. *Peace* is not therefore merely an anxiety of youth. Peace is nothing more and nothing less than the sole option of survival left to the world.