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Youth Protest and the Democratic State: Reflections on the Rise of Anti-Political Culture in Pre-War Germany and the German Federal Republic

by

Joyce Marie Mushaben

YOUTH PROTEST AND THE DEMOCRATIC STATE: REFLECTIONS ON THE RISE OF ANTI-POLITICAL CULTURE IN PREWAR GERMANY AND THE GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT

The "youth problems" that manifested themselves in major outbursts of protest in Western European cities at the beginning of the decade have their roots not in the traditional conflict between the generations, but rather in problems of a more global nature, ranging from structural unemployment to the threat of nuclear war. This paper compares and contrasts current manifestations of unrest among the 1980's "No Future" generation with German youth movements of the 1920's and 1930's. It considers the contributions of these movements to the rise of an anti-democratic political culture and a liberal democratic one during the pre- and post-World War II periods, respectively. The basic contention of the essay is that the generations' real-life experiences with the fascist state militate against a repeat of history; but the author also notes the need for "mutual learning" between the generation presently occupying positions of power and the generation more likely to be found occupying vacant houses in major German cities.

INTRODUCTION

"They look like Hitler Youth, they act like Hitler Youth, only they don't know who Hitler was."

—Rock-concert promoter in Berlin (Die Zeit, July 16, 1982)

Several years have elapsed since political authorities last witnessed major outbursts of violence among youth in a variety of European cities. An eerie veil of political calm seems to have descended upon Brixton and Toxteth, which bore witness to racial unrest during the summer of 1981, and has cleared the streets of Zurich, where unrest focused on the issue of autonomous youth culture centers from 1977 to 1980. That same veil also seems to have smothered the protests of squatters in Berlin, Frankfurt and Amsterdam, following a number of forceful evictions in 1981 and 1982 (Bodenschatz, et al., 1983; Mushaben, 1983). But all is not quiet on the European front, and political authorities would be ill-advised to shrug off those earlier explosions as the product of high temperatures and a case of temporary insanity among proverbially impetuous youth. The "youth problem" has not been resolved; indeed, developments taking place beneath the calm surface should not be underestimated in terms of their long-term political significance.

Public interest and parliamentary attention accorded to "youth problems" over the last few years have been precipitated by the sensationalistic nature of various protest events (Enquete Kommission, 1983; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1982). Numerous academic studies and investigative reports have been presented for public scrutiny; few have produced any concrete political results to date. The more widely publicized (and critically acclaimed) works include: two analyses written by the Swiss Eidgenossische Kommission fur Jugendfragen (1981

and 1982); a study by the West German Federal Ministry for Youth, Family and Health (1981); a survey conducted by the Youth Foundation of the German Shell Corporation (1981); an evaluation conducted under the auspices of the State Ministry for Labor, Health and Social Policy in Nordrhein-Westfalen (1982); and an extensive investigative report compiled by the Inquiry Commission on Youth Protest, convened by the German Bundestag (Enquete Kommission, 1983). What is most striking about all of the studies now in circulation is that each begins with a narrow focus on the "youth problem," but ultimately concludes that the outbursts of unrest cannot be defined in terms of the traditional conflict between the "generations." Without exception, investigators point to the deep-seated case of "postindustrial blues" afflicting the major European systems. Their discussions reveal that the problems _of_ youth are not created _by_ youth, but are in fact rooted in global concerns about economic breakdowns, educational failures, structural unemployment, environmental destruction, and nuclear proliferation -- in short, they relate to the future of the human race.

The "youth dimension" inherent to problems of a global nature rests with the perceived decline in opportunities for social and economic integration, as well as with the younger generations´ troubling lack of identification with the existing structure of democracy. Official concerns with the problems of integration and identification have given rise to a number of speculations as to the "extremist potential of youth" (Infratest, 1980). It has moreover led a mixed bag of political authorities, social workers, academic researchers and journalists to look for parallels between the German youth movements of the 1920´s and 1930´s, the mass mobilization of the 1940´s, and the adolescent protests of the 1980´s (Schlicht, 1980).

The purpose of this essay is twofold. Its first objective is to look back

to the evolution of those earlier youth movements in Germany, and to their unique, albeit problematic contributions to an anti-democratic political culture during the first half of the twentieth century. Having devoted the last three years to research on the patterns of youth and leftist protest in the Federal Republic, I am all too conscious of the fact that those who study history will not necessarily be spared the fate of repeating it. Nevertheless, the second aim of this essay is to dispense unceremoniously with the notion that a new generation of Hitler Youth is waiting in the wings, and that German authorities must crack down on youth or risk a rerun of the nationalistic crisis of the 1930´s and 1940´s. The essay rests on the premise that each generation makes a contribution to the process of social change, and that these contributions, though cumulative in their effects, are also qualitatively distinct. It moreover argues that changing socio-economic conditions generate new mechanisms and new agents of political socialization, thereby altering the political consciousness and the nature of each generation´s identification with the political system in which it finds itself. Finally, it advances the hope that "generational learning" is not a one-way street, a process by which the established cohorts hand-over to the successor generation the keys to unaltered political institutions steeped in pre-ordained values merely for veneration and safe-keeping -- such would virtually ensure social stagnation, if not democracy´s very demise.

The essay begins with a brief depiction of the changing roles and functions of "youth" in modern society, and considers why youth has become a topic of such intense <u>political</u> discussion. It then summarizes historical developments and highlights politically significant aspects of the <u>Wandervogel</u> and <u>Bunde</u> movements during the pre-World War I and Weimar periods. The third section considers the role and lot of Hitler Youth, as a prelude to the

comparison with youth activism in the 1980's, found in the fourth section. The concluding portion of the essay looks to the links between "youth" and "protest" and "democracy," based on the findings of the critically enlightening studies cited above.

As to the representativeness of these findings, it is virtually impossible to provide a "head-count" specifying the proportion of "youth" that identifies with or actually participates in various forms of protest. Many refuse to take part in organized surveys, anticipating negative personal consequences for responses that are not system-konform and distrusting the motives for data collection (e.g. Berufsverbot). The fact that 31.3 percent of one major target sample refused to answer questions on the subject of political extremism attests to the inadequacy of existing quantitative measures (Infratest, 1980). The studies already cited have sample sizes ranging from 90-100 to 2,000-3,000, which are used to project a protest contingent encompassing anywhere from 10 to 20 percent of "youth" (loosely defined as those aged 12-23 in Nordrhein-Westfalen, or 14-25 in national studies). The purpose of this essay is to examine the substantive concerns behind youth movements, rather than their numerical strength.

YOUTH AS A POLITICAL VARIABLE

In passing through the stages of advanced industrialization, it appears that in most Western societies, "what began as a response of confused perplexity -- caught in the pat phrase, 'the generation gap' — became over the years, an intense and intensified struggle" (Hall and Jefferson, 1982:71). The struggle came as a result of the growing tensions between youth's demands for greater self-determination and the desire to shape its own future, on the one hand, and the establishment's efforts to regiment and direct youth in accordance with its own perceived needs and future vision of society, on the other. The

intensification of the struggle has stemmed in part from new opportunities for expression made available to youth, as well as from a growing awareness regarding the contradictory nature of the futures envisioned by the generations on both sides of the gap.

During the post-war eras, the complex interaction of structural variables, changing socioeconomic conditions, life-cycle effects, and growing state concern about the actions of impetuous youth contributed to the formation a "new socialization type," with its consequences for the political education of youth (Brusten and Malinowski, 1983; Ziehe, 1975, 1982). According to this "new type," the interactive effects that have thus far transformed the societal framework, in which youth exchanges its not-yet for real-adult status, have produced moreover changes in the personality structure. It is the latter, Ziehe (1975) argues, that lies at the root of youth's identification and motivational crisis, not an isolated event or personal experience. This crisis, now so complex in its origins, has increased the likelihood that the conflict between the generations will be intensified still further, because it is a crisis that is being prolonged.

The term "youth" has undergone a signficant amount of "conceptual stretching" following the advent of industrial society. Across the decades, society has sought to mitigate the potentially disruptive effects of a recurrent state of generational conflict by promoting the prolongation of the earlier life-cycle stages, i.e. through the expansion of the educational system or, ultimately, through measures aimed at redefining the social functions of youth. As this essay illustrates, however, the prolongation strategy has generated many new problems. In the post-industrial era, youth no longer constitutes merely a "transitional phase" in the life cycle. Consequently, the question of how best to effect its integration into the

adult order has become more complicated and difficult to answer.

Early political and social integration is deemed desirable, while economic integration has been postponed, in light of recurrent unemployment crises. The "young" participants in the squatters' movements, the unemployed who have turned to alternative parties and projects, the "youth" marching off to join Baghwan and other religious sects, range from 15 to 30 years old. Legally speaking, many are actually young adults, entitled to full membership and equal status within the system. Their status is to a large extent undermined by their continuing financial dependence upon the resources of the family or the state. Dorre and Schafer thus have found it useful to speak not of youth, but of "post-adolescence." The reference is to those individuals who have reached a point in the life cycle where the desire for status recognition, intellectual, sexual and political self-determination directly conflicts with their continuing economic dependency (Dorre and Schafer, 1982:25).

Prolonged adolescence has precipitated a growing sense of marginalization that derives from the relatively higher rates of unemployment afflicting those who would enter the labor market for the first time. It has resulted moreover in a tendency among the young to view integration as an all-or-nothing proposition. Lacking the resources for an immediate gratification of their own material needs, post-adolescents are not inclined to contribute to the legitimacy of the system by pledging their loyalty free of charge. The integration process is thrown out of synch, which makes it necessary to find ways of integrating the integration processes. Last, but not least, another effect of the prolongation strategy often overlooked is that youth now has <u>more time</u> to reflect critically and to confront collectively social problems and perceived injustices. Extended schooling provides access to more

information, unemployment points out discrepancies between the theory and praxis of equal opportunity, and involvement in alternative projects sets up an emotional antenna that directs identification inwards rather than outwards.

Youth unrest does not necessarily assume the form of street protest and open rebellion; quieter, perhaps even more creative manifestations are found in the search for new lifestyles and values. Giesecke (1981) attributes the rise of a youth movement (as distinct from activities orchestrated by adults for youth) to the younger generation's inability to find a home for its own goals in the existing institutions. Due to their "spontaneous" character, youth movements lack an ideological foundation, but this does not preclude conscious efforts to bring about improvements in the human condition by developing organizational forms of their own.

The political options available to youth, questions of voting age aside, are not unlimited. The first would be to resign oneself to the existing distribution of politics, "letting politics be politics." Alternatively, a post-adolescent may instead concentrate his/her political energies on a particular theme (e.g. exploitation of apprentices, environmental protection); or s/he may look for consensus within a small group and adjust personal-political needs to that particular niche. Other alternatives would be for teens to adhere fervently to parental convictions, or to fill a perceived void by seeking explanation and political direction in universal ideologies or membership in radical organizations. The final option is either to engage in active protest, or to drop out of the system altogether (Enquete Kommission, 1983). Each alternative poses a different set of problems and dilemmas with respect to eventual social integration.

With the further prolongation of youth, the "normal" socialization processes may be rendered inadequate. A stronger peer orientation outside of

family and classroom results in a process of youth-socializing-youth, whereby cohorts begin to develop their own language and their own rules for interpersonal behavior. Parallels between the Wandervogel of the teens, the Bunde of the twenties, and the squatters of recent years are found in the emphasis all three place on a search for emotional community, paying little homage to things intellectual -- more important is the common experience of what social scientists have since diagnosed as "alienation" (Giesecke, 1981; Laqueur, 1962). Peer-group integration signifies a desire to reject the emotional rigidity, perceived over-regimentation and the routinization found especially in the schools; it further gives vent to resentment against adults' monopoly over the knowledge and physical resources necessary for survival, which enables them to dominate and control the allocation of social values.

The larger question yet to be posed with respect to twentieth century youth movements in Germany is whether or not each occurrence ought to be interpreted as an isolated phenomenon, as a historical subject, or rather as a representative of the needs and problems afflicting society as a whole during a given era. In the final analysis, "what youth are searching for in a youth movement or youth association depends on what the surrounding society offers to them or withholds from them, and ... the balance between emancipation and safety, or alternatively, social integration" (Giesecke, 1981:212). Evidence suggests that these movements have reflected the great and problematic issues of the times; in each case, what started out as non-political groups could not avoid being drawn into direct confrontations with the institutional establishment over political values. Laqueur (1962) argues that the early youth movements presented a microcosm of a Germany in the throes of modernization. Rare were the political and intellectual leaders born between 1890 and 1920 who were not themselves directly involved or heavily influenced

by Wandervogel and Bunde developments, the same generations who would preside over the mobilization of Hitler Youth. It is the very generation which fell victim to the mass socialization experiences of the 1930's and 1940's that has had to seek explanations for youth's disaffection during the late 1960's and early 1980's. I turn now to the experiences and expressions of protest that shaped each of those generations.

FROM RAMBLES TO MARCHES: WANDERVOGEL, FREE YOUTH AND BUNDE MOVEMENTS

From the day it was conceived, on November 4, 1901 in the backroom of the Ratskeller Steglitz, the movement of school-age wanderers who would explore the German countryside and stimulate a revival of folk music and culture was slated to become a "splendid failure" (Laqueur, 1962:237). In contrast to other industrializing states, Germany at the turn of the century had yet to complete a bourgeois revolution; it had failed to experience the triumph of liberalism, and remained anti-capitalist at heart. Substituting for a positive identification with the state was an unflappable sense of personal duty to Kaiser and Reich; systemic reforms traditionally had been imposed from outside or above.

The initial outbursts of Germany's "angry young men" were not so much an act of political opposition, as they were a protest against a lack of warmth, emotion, vitality and idealism felt by the children of the privileged middle classes. No appeal was made to working-class youth; the movement's founders sought no attachment to parties, churches or other adult-dominated institutions. They advocated a return to the golden values of Germania, to romanticism, medievalism, folklore and poetic love. "Rambling" was to become their unique art form that enabled them to grow better acquainted with each other, as well as with the Vaterland; this resulted in a kind of "organic" identification that two decades later would become volkisch, then racist and,

ultimately, fascist. Their one concession to adult society was to have themselves legally chartered, beginning with the "Wandervogel, Committee for Grade-schoolers' Rambles." The dual identification with peers and with nature provided an opportunity for creating their own spiritual and physical Lebensraum. Their affiliations were consciously apolitical. In short:

> If lack of interest in politics could provide an alibi from history the Wandervogel would leave the court without a stain on its character. However, it has been realized for a considerable time that lack of interest in public affairs is no civic virtue, and that an inability to think in political categories does not prevent people from getting involved in political disaster (Laqueur, 1962:48).

As the associations grew in number and in size, the Wandervogel experienced pressures to conform to public expectations, e.g. to provide for the exclusion of girls or at least for a strict segregation of the sexes. The ramblers' camps were certainly no den of free love; more often they served to sublimate the stirrings of juvenile libido by denying the boys an opportunity to find their way to girls -- perhaps a bit too successfully. Rumors of homosexuality abounded later, but were not openly discussed. With the exception of a few major scandals, public authorities and concerned adults "preferred to call a spade an agricultural implement" (Laqueur, 1962:62).

The Social Democratic Party and the Trade Union Congress were taken by surprise 1907-1908 when apprentices and working-class youths also began pressing for an autonomous organization. In contrast to the middle-class Wandervogel whose loose associations were devoid of political purpose and expressly focused on comradery and communication, proletarian youth favored a tighter organizational structure to promote solidarity among exploited

apprentices and other economically disadvantaged groups. They accepted the very non-romantic, rationalistic and capitalistic tendencies rejected by the Wandervogel, based on their own desire to take advantage of existing opportunities for social mobility, rather than await the socialist utopia projected by their adult comrades. Party elders, on the other hand, believed there could be no specific "youth interests" that would not be accurately and automatically represented by the "parent" organizations. Caught up in this internal struggle, proletarian youth had neither the time nor the resources necessary to embark on carefree treks through the countryside. Consequently, there was little overlap between the two spheres of youth activity -- problems of confrontation and polarization would arise as the youth movement acquired a national character, along with a national roof organization after World War I.

The Wandervogel movement became more "ideological" as its first generation of leaders grew up and went on to the universities, where they joined the newly created Academic Freischar (Free Corps) or affiliated themselves with the increasingly nationalistic fencing fraternities. Many eventually moved into the teaching professions, granting them an official role in the youth socialization process. The young ramblers' model spread to Switzerland and Austria between 1910 and 1913, at which time local and regional leaders decided to form a loose confederation for all Wandervogel groups called the Free German Youth (FdJ). The FdJ provided the formula for self-determination, expressing members' desire to act "at their own initiative, on their own responsibility, and with deep sincerity" (Laqueur, 1962:31). Federation leaders were immediately faced with their first major political controversy regarding the questions of "racial purity" and Jewish membership raised by the Austrians. The Wandervogel understood themselves to be a GERMAN movement and were thus somewhat ambivalent on the issue, although

radical anti-Semitism was publicly professed by one explicitly right-wing group led by adults, the paramilitary Jungdeutschlandbund. After 1912, the Wandervogel did become part of a general groundswell of right-wing nationalism, but the FdJ decreed officially that the exclusion of Jews from their ranks was to be decided on a case-by-case or regional basis.

The Wilhelmian state maintained a low profile during the movement's formative years. Its decree of January 18, 1911 formally recognized that it had an "unshirkable duty" and that Jugendpflege (youth cultivation) presented a "national task of the first order" (Giesecke, 1981:63). The decree established a fund of one million Marks for the purpose of subsidizing existing youth organizations, including the Boy Scouts, sports clubs and church-affiliated associations. Prior to World War I, the state had no offices or organizations of its own specifically focused on "youth issues." Hence, the autonomy that various youth-based groups enjoyed in establishing their own goals, activities and membership criteria was substantial.

The character of the Wandervogel movement was affected directly by developments at the Meissner Festival of 1913, and by the formal split that occurred during the Marburg gathering of 1914. At issue was whether or not youth had a right to its own culture and to organizations independent of adult control. The split was manifested in the formation of "right" and "left" wings. It was a time of social as well as movement transition; anti-Semitic sentiments rose in response to a perceived cultural crisis. The glorification of the past soon was fraught with misgivings about the future, feeding the realization that "happy life" was not an historical given in Germany. As war became imminent, the desire to lead a heroic life grabbed youth's imagination.

The years 1914 to 1919 witnessed the dramatic political transformation of youth organizations. The war experiences of young conscripts and volunteers

contrasted sharply with the leisurely rambles and comradery that had preceded them. For the most part, youth did not question the righteousness of the cause and fell into line as a matter of patriotic duty. The FdJ was affected more directly because of its older membership; of the 14,000 Wandervogel who saw service on the front, one fourth never returned (Laqueur, 1962:97). Those who did return brought with them a sense of the "real democracy" that had played itself out in the trenches, when the struggle no longer relied on military ritual but depended upon the "community" that formed between the leaders and the led, where obedience to the end was voluntary, based on the commander's ability to earn the respect of his comrades. The trend towards radicalization took root among those who stayed at home, as they began to anticipate that theirs would be a unique mission in the postwar period:

> The emergence of a strong extremist right-wing camp in the youth movement during the First World War was not an isolated phenomenon -- it coincided with the general polarization in German politics. The war, and to an even greater extent the immediate post-war years caused a radicalization both on the Left and on the Right. Among the latter, the official patriotism and national ideology of Wilhelmian Germany was found wanting; state, church and other institutions were thought to be too complaisant, not active and vital enough (Laqueur, 1962:109).

Youth's task would be to provide the vitality necessary to stir the institutions into action behind the national cause.

From 1919 to the mid-1920's what remained of the youth movement was afflicted by discord, drift, and indecision. A level of group activity was maintained, but it adopted a new style and acquired new content. The Wandervogel movement ended, the Bunde phase commenced. The former had never

assumed that its mission was to change the world, even though it criticized society's lack of warmth and community in a general sense. The society that it had hoped to improve had been wiped out of existence. The new system replacing it under the Weimar Constitution posed an immediate threat to the power and privilege vested in the conservative establishment. The labor movement was also reluctant to welcome the new order, greatly disappointed that the war had resulted not in the triumph of socialism, but "merely" in the creation of a parliamentary democracy. Neither the Catholic nor the Evangelical Church provided active support, although both tolerated the Weimar order for a time.

For a youth unsocialized into its logic, values and practices, a parliamentary democracy left too many variables undefined, too many parameters undetermined. Youth sought to reorient itself by relying more heavily on a military style of organization for its own activities. Reconstituted as the Bunde, youth groups substituted the model of the crusading knight for the Wandervogel's romantic image of the vagrant scholar; a disciplined marching style supplanted the carefree ramblings.

Wilhelmian Germany had failed to provide a stable ideological orientation, but its collapse stimulated growing material insecurity among the upper and middle classes after World War I. This led to an identity crisis that carried over into the personal sphere and intensified fears about "the future." For a brief period, many sought refuge in a return to private forms of cultivation (sports and theater), the rudiments of a political ohne mich movement. What little breathing space or legitimacy the Weimar state might have enjoyed at its inception was soon chipped away by an unending sequence of economic crises and industrial displacements. War expenses and subsequent inflation wiped out the savings of many members of the middle class, denying them economic security as they approached old age. Small business owners whose

assets had been tied up in goods rather than in capital emerged somewhat intact, but they now faced pressures on two new fronts: from organized capitalism with its trend towards cartelization, on the one hand, and from organized labor whose affiliate parties were now represented in the Reichstag, on the other. Post-war recovery found Germany enjoying almost full employment by 1922. Its first experience with mass unemployment was not long in coming, however, affecting not only blue-collar workers, but the traditionally more secure salaried employees as well. The number of unemployed rose from half a million to three million well before the onslaught of the Great Depression; strikes and lockouts were common occurrences. Putsch efforts, the French occupation of the Rheinland and the humiliation of the Versailles Treaty put the nationalist ball in the right-wing´s court.

The environment confronting youth was one of great normative, social, political, and economic insecurity. Their organizations were unable to escape the political polarization and internal militarization of society at large. The Wandervogel´s desire for a return to a romantic, pre-industrial haven was superceded by a "new practicality" geared toward coping with, rather than escaping from urban conditions. The goal of self-actualization was displaced by the individual´s loss of security and the need to find strength and identity in Gemeinschaft (community). The confederation of Free German Youth was destroyed by the need to take a stand on political questions for which it had no base upon which to build a political consensus. On the right, the Jungdeutschenbund began to lobby and to participate directly in the activities of the German national Volkspartei.

The dilemma posed by the increasing polarization that plagued the youth organizations as well as the national Reichstag owed to the fact that there existed few, if any, accurate conceptualizations (much less a minimal

consensus) as to the meaning of democracy in the Weimar state. Democratic values and procedures, along with the divisiveness of party competition, had been scorned as the products of "Western civilization" and "bloodless formalism" throughout the Wilhelmian era (Giesecke, 1981:83). The new order was viewed by most as a set of formalistic rules for creating power relations devoid of any recognizable organic or substantive logic. The confusion as to the true meaning of democracy worsened, for want of a body of active supporters who could outline its political advantages. Within the youth organizations themselves, a multitude of interpretations made it impossible for previously apolitical adolescents to acquire a consistent ideological orientation. This orientation deficit meant that the new Republic could offer even fewer possibilities for identification with the state than the "old" system had. It moreover intensified the longing for a Volksgemeinschaft. For the younger generation Weimar became the symbol, if not the source, of depersonalization and isolation in a world of artificially created political relations. There were more advantages to be derived from a reliance upon the personal interest demonstrated by the leaders emerging out of one's own peer group than were to be found in being directed by an elected politician unknown to most.

The new groups were much more tightly organized; they sought to make their values and tasks binding on all members, hence their categorization as Bunde. There followed a proliferation of organizations, about 1,200, whose total membership ranged from a few dozen to 60,000 between 1919 and 1938 (Kneip, 1974). The Bunde were a representation of male society par excellence, complete with paramilitary exercises, uniforms and discipline. Each was divided into small units, arranged hierarchically according to age groups. Recruiting members from the elite secondary schools and universities, the

Bunde rejected co-education because of its potentially "softening" influence on males. The associations that did permit limited female membership were never intended to provide girls with comparable opportunities for developing their emotional, spiritual and physical capabilities. A consolidation of groups occurred in 1925 under the German Freischar (Free Youth).

The Free Youth Movement brought a measure of standardization to bear on these groups, which saw themselves as a quasi-alternative to the official political culture. They neither recognized a plurality of interests in society, nor did they consciously pursue a resolution to class struggle. Rather, they expected the development of the Volksgemeinschaft to follow its own dynamic. Scouting organizations as well as church-affiliated groups began to emulate the model. The Bunde were openly anti-democratic and became progressively more anti-Semitic. They placed their hope for the nation

> in a Fuhrer, not in functionaries, in the integration of the individual based on personal relationships within the Volksgemeinschaft, not upon the particularities of parties and interest groups, on the common heritage of all Germans even beyond the borders of the Reich -- which the Jews, for example, could only disrupt (Giesecke, 1981:91).

The Fuhrer principle, along with the self-imposed discipline and the exclusionary nature of the group served the orientation needs of the younger generation by taking responsibility away from an anonymous society and incorporating it into the flesh and blood of one of their own.

This is not to argue that adults made no effort to project their own longings for Gemeinschaft upon youth. The implicit political responsibility of youth -- not yet corrupted by the selfish influences of vested interests -- would be to pull the Volk back together. The sentiment was shared by left and

right-wing groups both inside and outside the movement. The Republic, in other words, neither waged its own full-scale campaign to win the proverbial hearts and minds of youth, nor could it effectively undermine pulls in the other direction. The youth movement itself remained divided along class lines.

Socialist and communist youth groups were more politically supportive of the Republic and tended to adopt parliamentary principles for internal decision-making. Females fared much better among the leftists, especially in the communist youth organizations, where ideology dictated an emphasis on equality and emancipation. The unresolved question was whether youth who were not yet eligible to vote within the party could have political interests distinct from those of the adult organization. A majority of the latter continued to view the former as "little comrades" to be schooled in "struggle" (by hanging posters, running errands), with the expectation that those between the ages of 18-20 would become full-fledged members. Socialist efforts to recruit new members directly out of various youth groups compelled both churches and the other parties to pursue similar recruitment tactics.

By 1926 the largest and most successful of the _Bunde_ was the _Deutsche Freischar_, which was divided over the question whether to remain a youth movement or to become a real political organization. The Free Youth rejected Communism for its narrow sectarianism and lack of concern for culture; but it also disliked the nascent National Socialist Party for its lack of concrete ideas on socioeconomic policy and its predilection for foreign policy adventurism. The one functional innovation during this period was a move by the _Jungmannschaft_ to combine youth activities with political education.

The socialization experiences shared by adolescents within the _Bunde_ were already rather intense; at impressionable ages, they became actors in a closed, small-community context which afforded an opportunity for more or less

total identification, especially after the early 1930's. Authority roles, traditionally conveyed through parent-child and teacher-student relations, were supplanted by a Fuhrer-follower orientation. The position of the leaders in these youth groups was somewhat schizophrenic. Not significantly older than those for whom they were responsible, the youth-Fuhrer welcomed the chance to hold on to those leadership positions as long as possible, which allowed for the development of a strong ego. At the same time, they were likely to experience significant status discrepancies, having not yet been fully accepted into the world of adults; they would therefore have a special stake in maintaining the autonomy of their own organizations. They would provide a natural recruitment pool for the SA and SS under the Third Reich.

Theoretically, it is debatable whether or not youth groups must be viewed as inherently "anti-democratic" for refusing to conduct their affairs according to parliamentary rules of the game. One could justifiably argue that rules which have been designed for the purpose of ordering society as a whole would not only be dispensable in small-community settings, but that they might actually induce divisive rivalries and group-dynamic struggles for power. But in order to function effectively, it seems that a yet-untested democratic order would require a greater degree of security and sense of self-worth than existed among actual and prospective participants under the Weimar regime. It was therefore not completely irrational for the Bunde to project their authoritarian vision on to a state in which the parliamentary process only exacerbated the sense of national insecurity.

Too late, the Weimar government realized that the future course of a rapidly expanding youth movement could not be left to chance. By 1927 about 40 percent of the country's 9.1 million youth were enrolled in organizations under a national roof, the Reich Committee of German Youth Associations.

Totalling 3.6 million members, these associations encompassed about 56 percent of the male and 26 percent of the female adolescent population (Giesecke, 1981:140-41). The state's intervention, primarily through financial subsidies established by the Reich's 1922 Law for Youth Welfare, was justified in terms of: postwar reconstruction needs which called for the services of a strong and healthy youth; a desire to counteract mobilizations by leftists among working-class youth; the hope of strengthening the "love of fatherland" and identification with the "German being" after the humiliation of Versailles, in order to overcome the crisis of political polarization; the concern about increasing "hooliganism" among youth (alchoholism, drug abuse, sexual activity, etc.); the attempt to bind youth to traditional values and to stress the importance of social control over self-expression; the need to ensure a more effective distribution of state resources for youth, in light of a deepening economic crisis, and to promote the exercise of the state's responsibility to protect youth against exploitation and abuse at the workplace. In sum, the government was hard pressed to effect the complete integration of youth into a socioeconomic system that itself was falling apart at the seams. As ineffective or unsubstantial as its own efforts may have been, Weimar indirectly made it possible for the idea of publicly organized youth work to triumph over a self-directed youth movement. Paradoxically, a constitutional order that was intended to infuse a historically authoritarian political culture with the principle of self-determination gave birth to the most totalitarian system of governance witnessed in the modern era. Politicized by the inefficacy of that order, the younger generation could not foresee,

> that under social conditions arising from modernization, there was no humane alternative to a democratically constituted state, for

> there had been no direct experience with what fascism actually was. In any case, for many people the impression, therefore, was that things could only get better, and if this were only possible in the context of a new Volksstaat, one which ostensibly only the Hitler movement was willing to pursue in a politically active fashion, then many saw no reason to save a democratic state constitution which had brought most of them only material need and anxiety about the future (Giesecke, 1981:183).

The experience with something much worse would serve to reverse that impression.

HITLER YOUTH AND THE FASCIST EXPERIENCE

With over 40 percent of the nation's adolescents enrolled in formal organizations at the end of the 1920's, the panorama of youth activities no longer could be classified as an autonomous movement. If one accepts the characteristics referred to earlier in this paper -- spontaneity, lack of specific ideological orientation, diffuse emphasis on, but absence of a concrete plan for an improvement in the human condition, perceived opportunity for "self-actualization" through self-determination -- the youth movement ceased to exist prior to the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. It was replaced by programs, if not specific policies for youth, subsidized and eventually controlled by adults; coordinating bodies were created at municipal, district and county levels, although the state assumed no personnel costs. Insofar as the institutionalization of youth support for Hitler was a keystone in the foundation laid for a dictatorial political culture, its generational contribution to postwar society is not to be overlooked. To the degree that its total integration and acceptance of the Reich disqualifies it for considerations related to youth protest, its treatment here will necessarily

be limited.

From Hitler's perspective, the vitally important function ascribed to increasingly militant youth associations was

> to prevent the development of any concrete belief in freedom among the sons and daughters of what should have been the Weimar Establishment. . . .Middle class boys and girls, in their period of adolescent rebellion, might have been expected to react against the older generation by espousing the cause of democracy. That they failed to do so was largely due to the fact that their emotions and enthusiasms were captured by a movement which smothered any intelligent doubts in a welter of vague racist metaphysics (Laqueur, 1962:xxi-xxii).

Hitler evinced little direct interest with regard to the specifics of youth's contribution. It was Goebbels who recognized the mobilizational potential of the youth movement subsequent to the creation of a Jugendbund of the National Socialist Workers' Party in March, 1922. The first association met with little success outside the South. It reemerged as the Hitler Youth (HY) at the party's second founding congress in July, 1926 (the first having been dissolved after the failed Bierhaus Putsch of 1923). The year 1930 saw the creation of the Bund Deutscher Madel (German Girls' Youth Organization).

In order to attract the attention of already organized youth, a new group had to provide a platform that was nationalist in content, radical in approach, and hopeful with respect to its chances for eliminating a dominant source of material insecurity, adolescent unemployment. Unemployment for those under 25 rose from 732,000 in March, 1931 to 1,036,696 in July, 1932. Only one fourth of those qualified for university studies found places; over 120,000 were without apprenticeships. The HY gained national attention when

close to 100,000 members (15,000 of whom were female) "enthusiastically" paraded for seven hours in front of the Fuhrer-to-be at their Youth Congress in Potsdam, October 1-2, 1932 (Koch, 1981). By November of 1932, over 4.75 million were already organized in 117 Reichsjugendverbande (Giesecke, 1981: 159-63).

In March, 1933, the Deutsche Freischar voted to join the Hitler movement, following a radicalization of its membership due to the economic crisis. Other groups, including Protestant youth, quickly jumped on the bandwagon, so that by 1934, HY membership lept from 100,000 to 3 million. Boys and girls were divided into two age groups (10-14, 14-18) in four separate organizations. The HY adopted the model of "voluntary work camps" developed by the Freischar in 1925 as a form of occupational therapy, the number of which rose from 450 in 1933 to 1,977 camps in 1936; by 1939 an additional 1,750 youth corps were active in agricultural areas (Blohm, 1979:226; Giesecke, 1981: 194).

The rule of "voluntary association" was dropped officially with the promulgation of the December, 1936 law introducing the principle of "state youth," all of whom were now obliged to join the HY. Not very rigorously applied at first, it was reinforced by a second law in December, 1939, requiring all youth between 10-18 "to do service" in the HY projects. The last of the resistance groups were eliminated by the time of the autumn mobilization. Those whose early contact with the youth movement dated back to the Wandervogel, who subsequently had availed themselves of a chance to move up the organizational, albeit national-socialist hierarchy, would soon experience their second global war in a single lifetime.

In summary, it appears that the rise of a Nazi Youth Movement owed not to a carefully planned and consciously orchestrated initiative by the party

leadership. Rather, it was the self-image and search for a national identity that induced formerly autonomous youth groups to append themselves to the first available alternative to Weimar, in this case, Hitler. The Party was able to impose the _Fuhrer_ principle and to use this mobilization to its own advantage by presenting itself as "young" in the struggle against the "old" Republic. A new movement with the unity of the nation at heart was perceived to be free of the corruptive influences of capitalism, on the one hand, and class struggle, on the other. The HY cleverly could attack competing youth associations for factionalizing _das Volk_. The significance for youth after 1933 rested not so much with the "mass" character of the movement but with the realization that they were a new generational type, capable of mobilizing and socializing millions in their own likeness. In addition to the "ennobling" effect they experienced through the adoption of the "heroic soldier" image, many welcomed the "career opportunities" that opened within the HY organization, as well as the prospects for moving into responsible positions within the elite SA and SS corps. For the non-elite, the promises of full employment brought on by the war economy were equally comforting in an environment of overwhelming material insecurity.

The mobilization of youth under the Nazis did nothing to promote a sense of personal responsibility. The paradox inherent in the type of socialization it promoted was that it was profoundly apolitical; the ideology consisted at best of racial hatred, chauvinistic rhetoric, and blind activism; it denied the value of personal experience and made duty its own reward. The struggle for national unity, paradoxically, did not permit solidarity (the latter presuming that the weakness of others is to be ameliorated in the perception that each and every member of a community could be struck by the same fate). The Thousand Year Reich did not tolerate for long the existence of an

autonomous "youth culture"; as was the case with pre-World War I cohorts, puberty was cut short, sex roles were predefined, and legitimacy was something the state accorded the individual on the basis of his or her absolute willingess to obey. "Not emancipation, but rather integration was the mass need of this generation, long before the Hitler Youth made it the obligation for all youth" (Giesecke, 1981:176). Undeniably, the young generations of the twenties and thirties made a significant, if self-destructive contribution to the creation of an anti-democratic political culture in Germany during the first half of the twentieth century. At issue is whether their counterparts of the seventies and eighties are capable of making an equally significant contribution to the preservation of a democratic culture in the second half of the century.

NEW SYMPTOMS AND SOURCES OF YOUTH UNREST

The sociopolitical environment, as perceived by the younger generations of the seventies and eighties, is characterized by a significant degree of physical insecurity and normative bankruptcy. It is a world that places unfettered economic gain and technological perfection above personal growth and the preservation of nature upon which society's existence ultimately depends. In this respect, the root causes of youth unrest in recent years closely parallel those which spurred adolescents into actions during the first two decades of the 1900's. The parallels do not stop here -- i.e., the desire to create an autonomous youth culture, high unemployment rates among those under 25, and the search for a new <u>Lebenssinn</u> ("meaning of life") that finds no slot in the existing framework of values, institutions, and rules for behavior transmitted by adults. In addition to comprising the "classical preconditions" for the development of a spontaneous movement, these similarities prove that the conflict between the generations and their debate over "the right way to live"

remains one of the epochal, fundamental problems besetting modern society.

But the differences between the generations of subsequent eras are equally striking and politically significant. Youth activists of the twenties, thirties and forties saw themselves charged with a special mission; they envisioned a glorious future for the new, unified German nation that they would help to create. In contrast, restive youth of the seventies and eighties give voice to an Endzeitstimmung (Doomsday-mood), as they anticipate Germany's eventual annihilation by the superpowers; hence, theirs is a vision of "No Future." At given points in historical time, youth activism may serve as a catalyst to social rebellion or cultural revolution; at other times, it may contribute to political stabilization and institutional innovation. This author and others have suggested that there is a cyclical pattern to the processes of protest and political change (Mushaben, 1985; Tarrow, 1982). But cyclical is not equivalent to circular: hence, my contention is that, having moved along the historical path from the Wandervogel, to the Hitler Youth, to the era of the "No Future" generation, Germany faces little likelihood of a return to the totalitarian culture of the thirties and forties. The dividing line is the Germans' real-life experience with democracy's "alternative," the fascist state.

Four fundamental changes in the condition of youth argue against a repeat of history, owing to the nature of post-industrial society. Along with a gradual redefinition of the social functions of youth, the "image of youth" has been radically altered in the public eye because of a tremendous increase in the number of opportunities for airing and exposing social grievances. Given the postwar revolution in communications technology, no youth movement, present or future, can hope to escape the critical scrutiny of the media, or the tentative probes of legion academic researchers, psychologists, and

educators whose careers are based on "youth." Still extremely sensitive about its past crimes and its present international image, the Federal Republic avails itself of the media as one would a thermometer, for the purpose of checking the national temperature (e.g., the TV airing of the Bundestag's Inquiry Commission hearings on youth protest). The potential for miscommunicaton has also increased (e.g., film clips showing violent confrontations between squatters and police rarely accompanied by accounts of the real-estate speculation deals that have given rise to takeovers and evictions). Given the investigative if occasionally insensitive nature of the journalistic beast, Germans will never again be able to claim that they knew not what was being done. The media have become the political watchdogs, as well as the new primary agents of socialization at the national level.

A second dramatic change in the environment relates to the much praised/much cursed expansion and reform of the educational system that occupied the public through the 1960's and 1970's. The prolongation of youth has not resulted in a prolongation of "carefree-ness." Extended years of schooling no longer constitute a psychological or social moratorium for adolescents, a time for sorting out one's interests and scouting out career opportunities. Education at all levels is viewed as work, associated with a large measure of personal "stress." From youth's perspective, middle-class adults (facing greater competition and frustration at the workplace) have projected status insecurity on to their children. The "pressure to succeed" begins in grade school, because only the right grades and the ability to beat out one's classmates will ensure access to the limited number of university places and even scarcer elite career openings. The gap continues to grow, between the ambitions inculcated in these youngsters, the qualifications they actually acquire through the system, and the bleak economic predictions

treated so diffidently by those in power. Equipped with more knowledge and with greater direct access to the experiential world of adults (through education, media and films), today's younger generation believes it is entitled to be highly critical of that world which continues to exclude it from the benefits of post-materialism.

The third post-industrial development that distinguishes the social environment of youth during the earlier decades from the current setting relates to the welfare state. The miraculous economic recovery of the fifties and sixties brought an unprecedented degree of affluence and a marked improvement in the German standard of living. Under the Social Democratic Party-Free Democratic Party coalition (1969-1982), the social-welfare state provided for by the Basic Law expanded rapidly; the current generation views free education, the national health insurance system, subsidized housing, transportation and culture as socioeconomic givens. As the Inquiry Commission has determined, today's adolescents assume that those who take advantage of the "social net" _need_ to do so, and it is moreover their _right_ to do so. The majority indicate they would _prefer_ to provide for themselves, however (Enquete Kommission, 1983:179-80). In light of pessimistic economic projections, they are unable to pin their hopes on future compensation for their present inability to participate in material consumption. The state's apparent efforts to relieve itself of financial responsibility for youth welfare (by cutting back on teachers or eliminating scholarship funds) undermines the legitimacy of the state, especially when coupled with youth's direct exposure to the monopoly of physical force _a la_ Weber at demonstrations.

German youth could find grounds blaming outside powers for the economic troubles and major political tensions besetting the nation (France in the

1920's and 1930's, the USA and the USSR in the 1980's). Unlike the Wandervogel and Bunde cohorts, however, this generation is horrified at the suggestion that these problems might be resolved by the (re)creation of a war economy -- for technological and strategic, if not for historical reasons. The presence of nuclear weapons on German soil renders it a "ground zero" in the event of even the most "limited" superpower confrontation in Europe. The destruction of two world wars has left its psychological as well as its physical imprint on modern Germany, evinced by the growing numbers of young males who refuse induction into the country's defense forces, now some 50,000-60,000 per year (Mushaben, 1984). Rather than calling upon the state to defend its honor, these youth are turning their back on the system. What has been designated a "youth problem" really bespeaks a different kind of crisis: In the face of an external threat, "a political order which because of a lack of opportunities for identification with it, is not seen as being worth defending, finds itself in a crisis of legitimacy" (Enquete Kommission, 1983:12).

Notwithstanding the many complaints about youth's appalling lack of historical knowledge (Der Spiegel, 1979a, 1979b), much of the graffiti attributed to young "street artists" does reflect an awareness of Germany's traumatic past: "Better to occupy empty houses than foreign lands!" "Better a friendly subway than a friendly submarine!" "Rather a demonstration by democrats than a nation of Nazis!" "You are everything, the Volk means nothing!" (Appuhn, 1982; Hau, 1982)

Specific incidents of youth protest are too numerous and too diverse to be rechronicled here (Aust and Rosenbladt, 1981; Buscher et al., 1981; Dorre and Schafer, 1982; Haller, 1981; Howald et al., 1981; Mushaben, 1983). More important are the common dimensions emphasized in the recent investigatory reports cited at the outset of this paper. Most findings indicate that the

outbursts that occurred between 1977 and 1981 are not a mere continuation of the late sixties' protests -- goals, motives and tactics all differ to a significant degree. The more recent protests have a spontaneous, highly emotional character rather than an ideological focus; participants militate against any clear-cut organization. They lack, in essence, the political party and system orientation of the late sixties which made it possible and necessary for student activists to conduct their "long march through the institutions," at the same time they engaged in extraparliamentary opposition. The youngest generation has drawn a number of important lessons from its predecessors, however (Mushaben, 1984).

In general, the protests of the eighties are a function of youth's particular sensitivity towards societal problems and its own perceived economic vulnerability. Further, it rests on an awareness of the crass contradictions that exist between adults' emphasis on consumption and materialist values, and its own lack of vocational training, job opportunities and earning potential. Finally, the lack of transparency that characterizes political decision-making, the harsh police treatment and judicial sanctions brought to bear against young demonstrators, as well as the objective failure of government policy in specific problem areas (e.g., housing and education), have contributed to cynicism regarding the state's desire to engage in a genuine "dialogue" with youth (Roos, 1982). A "squatters' council" in Berlin summarized and articulated these sentiments in a letter to the Bundestag, when it refused to participate in the inquiry on "youth protest" in 1981: "You can't turn the young ones into patients when it's the system that is sick. Massive preparations for war, the permanent risk of radioactive contamination, the exploitation of the Third World, pollution everywhere, legalized speculation with our living space, lying politicians, these are the symptoms

of the disease we are combatting" (Enquete Kommission, 1983:34).

On the surface, youth seems to shift its protest energies rapidly from one theme to another. There exist several distinct groups who evince different degrees of protest potential, as reported by the Inquiry Commission whose interview sample included: (1) squatters; (2) members of agricultural communes or urban cooperatives; (3) environmental and peace groups ("Ecopax"), including those with religious affiliations; (4) participants in the "alternative culture" scene; (5) the young unemployed; (6) non-politically motivated protesters, such as the punks; (7) the "silent majority" living at home; (8) inactive youth from rural areas. One could add to the list (9) young alcoholics and drug addicts (Heckmann, 1982), and (10) members of religious sects who engage in "passive" protest (Berger et al., 1982). Not to be ignored is a small pool of right-wing radical post-adolescents (von Staehr, 1982). Divisions notwithstanding, each group attests to important substantive connections among the various sources of discontent, and is likely to engage in "sequential" protest, depending on situational variables (Enquete Kommission, 1983; Jugendwerke, 1981).

The major sources of insecurity are two-fold; the first is the threat of nuclear war which sets the whole world at risk; the second is structural unemployment which imperils the life chances of the individual. Among the two million plus registered jobless in the FRG in 1982, 34.3 percent were under 25; over 60,000 of the total held academic degrees (Schlicht, 1982:233). Figures for females and the offspring of foreign guestworkers are almost double those for young German males. Younger people, according to surveys, do not reject the need for personal effort and "achievement" per se, but they do call for a transformation of the conditions under which they can be expected to perform. They demand a redefinition of achievement along more "human"

lines, to be measured in terms of personal growth, solidarity, creativity and self-determination at the work place -- not only in terms of profit. The willingness to engage in violent forms of direct action has been overestimated, or at least overplayed by the media (Enquete Kommission, 1983:47ff). Youth is cognizant of a tremendous gap between the official homage paid to the concept of "peaceful" protest anchored in the constitution and the state's reaction to such protests (e.g., using high-powered water hoses against a religious service at the Frankfurt airport runway site). They do not appear to question the state's right to a monopoly over the use of physical force but would have its exercise legitimated in proportion to the threat at hand. Squatters who become violent during an eviction are engaging in a final defense of what they interpret as a constitutional right, the protection of private property! Those who contribute to the threat of nuclear annihilation meet with state acquiescence, but those who blockade sites to prevent its occurrence are subjected to criminal prosecution. Insecurity is reinforced by the lack of a clear balance between "law" and morality, with young people associating themselves primarily with the latter. What is legal is not necessarily "legitimate."

The practice of democracy presupposes a society disposed towards toleration. Historically speaking, Germany has had little positive experience with the construct of an open society which would enable it to seek a balance between the stability it craves and the vitality it needs. The pattern has been one of integrating the new into the old, rather than gradually replacing the latter with the former. The Third Reich was an extreme case of efforts to impose uniformity and consensus on a fragmented society. The squatters of the eighties, in stark contrast, are unique in their efforts to tolerate and cope with any one who seeks assistance and solidarity in their midst, no matter how

socially undesirable (i.e., "the dregs" and addicts). They have demonstrated a willingness to look conflict in the eye and to talk in their "councils" as long as necessary to reach a consensus. Their behavior reflects a belief that no one should be left to struggle alone. In contrast to youth of the 1920's and 1930's whose overidentification with mainstream values pushed the system to its logical extreme, the present generation argues for an acceptance of social pluralism. It identifies not with an abstract national community, but with a concrete neighborhood community. The post-adolescents reject outright the notion of a single future vision venerated by the youth of earlier decades.

The lack of "system affect" that is emerging among the younger cohorts may prove more difficult to cope with than the outright rebellion of the late sixties. Student activists of that era spoke a language political authorities could at least understand. The lines were drawn between those who wanted to maintain a capitalist order versus those who advocated a socialist system. Despite their sporadic, harsh critiques of specific political developments, the young today are interested in <u>no</u> particular system. These youths are problematic for authorities because they have passed the age where attempts can be made to socialize them back into the mainstream: they are out of school, have moved away from home, have cut themselves off from the establishment media, refuse induction and eschew pressures to conform at the workplace.

CONCLUSION: YOUTH PROTEST AND DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

Citizens' belief in their own ability to influence policy outcomes based on established democratic processes has declined significantly in all Western states; hence, the need for supplementary participatory and watchdog organizations, ranging from ombudsmen and women to "citizen initiatives," to

PAC's and alternative parties. One sentiment young protesters of the eighties appear to share with former sixties's activists is that a parliamentary democracy worth preserving is also one worth expanding. Elections that occur at four to six year intervals do not provide an adequate opportunity for political expression, given the critical consciousness, the level of information, the organizational skills, the experiences with "unconventional participation," and the immanence of threats to the environment perceived by growing numbers of Germans. As "expert witness" Hans-Eckehard Bahr has pointed out, "the democratic composure and the national identity of citizens are ostensibly not only to be secured through their participation in the material wealth of that society" (Enquete Kommission, 1983:118). Established institutions need to incorporate a new dimension of politics which has been called up by protests initiated in the late seventies -- namely, Betroffenheit, the feeling of being personally affected by political decisions and therefore personally responsible for their outcomes. A lack of trust and confidence in the system expresses a dissatisfaction with the style and methods of decision-making, as well as a rejection of the behavior of opportunistic political actors (including the Greens, to some extent) who are interested in dialogue "only as long as the cameras are present."

Although many are still too young to vote, adolescents are already turned off by the self-interested entanglements of political officials (such as the Flick affair involving cash payoffs to high-ranking government offices); they reject politicians' responses (or lack of) to specific themes like nuclear energy and NATO deployments. They scorn the pseudo-competition and shadow-boxing typical of the conflicts between the established parties; they resent the unwillingness of politicians to confess when they have made mistakes (regarding housing policy and real estate speculation), and to own up

to their dependence on major economic interests. Equally serious are the charges that elected officials refuse to listen to and learn from shifts in public opinion and the views of dissenting minorities -- for other than tactical purposes. Politicians are seen as reluctant to narrow the gap between themselves as "policy professionals" and citizens at the grassroots level. Dialogue is defined by authorities in a way that fails to recognize the validity of the other side's concerns: "the state talks, youth listens."

My participant observations of the protest scene in the Federal Republic lead me to concur with the findings of the various investigatory commissions: The lack of interest in politics among the young and the degree of distrust directed at politicians only will be resolved when the "skeptical generation" can be convinced that it has the chance -- and the power -- to shape its own future. At this point, a few additional state appropriations for affordable urban housing, job creation programs, youth culture centers, along with a general amnesty for once-violent demonstrators and changes in the testing process for conscientious objectors, will not suffice to ensure a positive identification with the system. But neither will integration efforts succeed <u>without</u> these measures. Youth is tired of being presented to itself through the media as a pathological subculture that exists outside of society. The real question is not whether post-adolescents are "dropping out," but whether or not they will be permitted to find space for alternative lifestyles <u>within</u> the existing sociopolitical framework.

As Joseph Huber testified during the Bundestag hearings, the founders of the Federal Republic created a pluralist society, and now they need to live with it. Protest should not be viewed as something to be stamped out, but should be interpreted as a warning signal and self-correcting device essential to the preservation and revitalization of democracy (Enquete Kommission,

1983:269; Huber, 1982). It becomes the state's responsibility to find a way for the generations to live side by side in mutual respect, not one at the expense or exclusion of the other.

The key to bridging the gap between the individual generations "is not adaptation, but the exchange of experiences, the mutual ability to learn" (Hermann Glaser, Enquete Kommission, 1983:315). The generation currently holding the reigns of political and economic power in the Federal Republic still has the Great Depression, the Nazi seizure of power, defeat and reconstruction as its primary points of reference (Burger, 1983) -- and thinks of itself in "postwar" terms. Forty years after the collapse of National Socialism, youth are beginning to see themselves as another "prewar" generation, a condition they have in common with their counterparts at the beginning of the century. Insecurity led the <u>Wandervogel</u> and <u>Bunde</u> elements to reject the principles of democracy spelled out for the first time in the Weimar Constitution. Among youth protesters of the eighties, insecurity has evoked demands for self-determination and the concretization of democratic rights that have been outlined a second time in the Basic Law. One would hope that by now, the experiences with the latter would have begun to supercede the memories of that earlier, unsuccessful democratic experiment.

Political culture in the Federal Republic has undergone a significant transformation since 1945, as evidenced by the final, official word on the subject of youth protest articulated by the Inquiry Commission in 1983:

> The real issue is how to confront in an open, non-violent and non-prejudicial manner [the themes] formulated by the protest movement. What we should require ourselves to do in this confrontation is to open our eyes, our ears and perhaps even our hearts (Gerhard Schroder, Enquete Kommission, 1983:457).

No Bundestag vote on the final report was recorded. As of 1984, no far-reaching political actions with regard to its specific recommendations have been undertaken. One wonders how long it will be before the next alarm is sounded in the form of a new youth movement.

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