

THE WANDERVOGEL—CO-EVOLUTION QUARTERLY, FALL 1977

By John de Graaf

"I had been privileged to walk with the youth of another world. . . the apostles of a wholly new life for young and old alike. . . With their spirit, the old heaven and the old earth - of suspicion and selfishness and hate - will pass away."

— Stanley High *The Revolt of Youth*, 1923

The words sound like those of a Charles Reich just returned from the perfumed smoke of Woodstock, feverishly bent on extolling the new American counterculture. But they come from the pages of a volume half a century older than *The Greening of America*. I found the book by chance while looking for Wilhelm Reich's *Mass Psychology of Fascism* in a Wisconsin library. Its title, *The Revolt of Youth*, intrigued me, and so I became the first person since 1940 to check it out. I noticed that it had been read with interest ten years after its publication in 1923, then left almost totally untouched. Stanley High (he later became a biographer of evangelist Billy Graham) glowingly records in his little book the youth culture which followed the horrors of World War I. Though he speaks of many countries, it is Germany's youth who receive his strongest praise.

Hindsight brings something profoundly disturbing to High's descriptions. "The youth of the world," he writes, "are pointing the way to the new day which statesmen have failed to bring ... a new internationalism is appearing." In Germany, the "revolt of youth" is "the hope for the future," with a new counterculture rising against the "soulless materialism" of industrial and commercial society. "From every city throughout the land one sees this flight of German youth into the hills and the open country." "Led by a battered assortment of guitars...wearing wreaths of wild flowers, the old guitars gay with blossoms," Germany's young "Wandervogel" (wandering birds) spread love, peace and joy across the land. "Long forgotten festivals were revived in great open air fetes," High writes, "and the back to nature spirit began to appear." Natural camaraderie prevails among these German youths, with freedom of sexual companionship, "the girls in peasant dress," the boys looking "motley."

"Nothing," says High, "is so roundly hated as the imposition of conventional authority and nothing so loved as nature." High describes the co-ops, free schools and folk masses ("there is an inexplicable reaction against conventional Christianity") of the German youth movement, with a clear belief that the Golden Age of humanity is dawning. And there is more than a touch of glee in his observation that these young Germans are openly apolitical. "The political interests are tending to disappear, the great spiritual forces are on the ascendancy," he writes. "Always the members stood against any political alignment."

High remarks in passing that some observers suggest these pacifistic, happy-go-lucky chaps might soon be militarists once more, bound for the battlefields of "another war to win again a place in the sun." Not a chance, he says. The greening of Germany has taken deep roots, and the youth movement is "too spontaneous and free from the direction of the forces which would be most interested in such a development to give adequate basis for alarm." Yet, sixteen years later, young Germans unleashed the horrors of their blitzkrieg upon the world for the glory of Adolf Hitler.

BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

I could not help, in reading *The Revolt of Youth*, noticing parallels between High's young Germans and our own counterculture. But, like Charles Reich, High seemed so starry-eyed and his observations so devoid of any historical perspective, that it would have been easy to write the similarities off as coincidence had I not looked further into the German countercultural phenomenon. The parallels only hinted at in *The Revolt of Youth* are broadened and strengthened by more thorough investigation.

During the final quarter of the 19th Century, Germany underwent a vast and rapid process of industrial development. Its population left the countryside for mushrooming urban centers dominated by the smoky pall of heavy industry. Fueled by a providential bounty of resources and state economic intervention, this sudden and enormous economic boom produced a materially comfortable populace, including a prosperous middle class, and writes H.W. Koch of the University of York, "compared with the standards of other Western countries, the working classes too had little to grumble about, at least from a material point of view."

But, York adds, "It was precisely this rapid thorough-going industrial and technological change that was to be a major factor in producing a new air of unease among youth . . . However, in the main, the growing wave of arguments against industrial modernity possessed more of the character of an emotional outburst than a rational analysis of the condition of society. And in that emotional reaction against industrial modernity lay, besides much else, the origins of the German Youth Movement, and ultimately, in its most perverted form, of the Hitler Youth. It was an enthusiasm which rejected the rootless objectivism of the intellectuals and the matter-of-fact methodology of the natural sciences, since theirs — so it was alleged — was the responsibility for the ugly factory system which had once again reduced the free individual to a state of impersonal servitude."

In 1896, the Wandervogel youth movement was formed, with the children of suburban Berlin setting off for the woods in retreat from a life which, however prosperous, had lost its meaning. These youths, many with long hair, were joined by various other groups of young Germans who sought in some way to protest the staid and boring life of their parents. The leaders of this movement, which grew rapidly in the early years of this century, were visionaries, ideologically pacifistic and internationalist, however much they detested the practical politics of the German Social Democratic Party. Perhaps the foremost among their leaders was Gustav Wyneken, who promoted the concept of a "Jugendkultur" (youth culture) free of the pernicious influences of commerce and the German state. It was Wyneken who keynoted the huge gathering of thousands of German youth at a mountain called Hohe Meissner in October of 1913. "Above all things," Wyneken said in his passionate denunciation of war and prophetic description of Nazism, "we detest the unfruitful patriotism which immerses itself in words and emotions, which at the expense of the historical truth, derives its enthusiasm by looking backwards."

But the young people who cheered Wyneken that rainy evening knew nothing of history, nor of the techniques of brainwashing. The only war worth fighting, Wyneken had said, would be one to abolish the old bourgeois commercial society and bring a better world into being. Sadly, for the young Germans, it was just such a war the industrial masters of their nation would convince them they were fighting, as only ten months later, in August of 1914, they marched to the trenches and the graves.

AFTER WORLD WAR I

Despite some early successes, defeat shattered the exultation of the young Germans in the First World War. And as their uniforms lost the power early victories had brought, they turned increasingly to mysticism - the search for power external to the objective world. "In 1917," writes Walter Laqueur (whose *Young Germany* is probably the definitive work on the subject, at least in English), "there was another rediscovery of the wisdom of the East; soon everybody was talking about Taoism, Zen Buddhism, karma, etc." The intellectual heroes "pioneered in the discovery of the Eastern soul."

After the ignominious German defeat, with reparations due the victors and rampant inflation pauperizing the German populace, a mood of pessimism — the thought that not just Germany but the West, and all Western civilization, had failed — swept the country, exemplified in Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, published in 1918.

The mood of despair and mysticism was widespread. "Germany of 1920," writes Laqueur, "was the heyday of Dada and occultism, when all kinds of curious sects spread and prophets of the most fantastic causes found a ready response." Many German youths joined the "new religious and occult sects whose prophets grew like mushrooms" after World War I. The popular magazine *Free German Youth* devoted numerous articles to Taoism and the Bhagavad Gita.

The general upswing in the German economy and relative prosperity which lasted from 1924 to 1929 lessened the mood of mysticism among young Germans and reawakened a more practical, though non-political, countercultural response among middle class youth. The movement, much in the style of Wandervogel, sought to escape industrial society by means of a return, in small groups, to nature and the adventurous spirit. Its activities provided great emotional experiences. Meetings included singing, storytelling, readings discussion of movement aims and an emphasis on "personal" problems. It attacked the materialism, sterility and lack of ideals of German society, but hoped these could be overcome by "the power of all-embracing love" and the "Inward Way" to enlightenment. Change people, the German counterculture believed, and then society will change. "The youth movement," Laqueur stresses, "was anti-political" and "tried hard to avoid political commitments." Regarding politics, the most often repeated phrase was a clear expression of the dominant sentiment: "Our lack of purpose is our strength."

The post-World War I German counterculture did seek new institutional arrangements however. After 1919, there was a campaign to establish communal colonies in the countryside which lasted for a few years. Students formed co-ops to provide the necessities of life at lower cost. And the German Free School Association battled the "Prussian spirit" of authoritarian rote learning which prevailed in the public schools. The group's founder was Gustav Wyneken. "We feel unfree and hampered," wrote Wyneken in his paper *Der Neue Anfang*, "in the family circle, where we are never taken seriously and where older people never appreciate the needs of our body and soul. We will no more stand the buffoons of the desk who compel us to sit bent over our books... who hammer their nonsense into us in a mechanical and soulless way. We will no more go back and perish in that prison which people call 'school'." Wyneken's schools preached equality of the sexes. Forty percent of their students were Jewish.

Moreover, and like our own counterculture, German youth again tended to pacifism and internationalism. The widely-read journal *Junge Menschen* "combined pacifism with a general appeal to life reform," writes Laqueur. "Life reform" meant such things as whole foods diets, exercise, and in some cases, vegetarianism.

A favorite author of the period, as with the American counterculture, was the erudite and imaginative Hermann Hesse, who had left Germany for Switzerland in 1919. His widely-read novels, *Demian* (1919), *Siddhartha* (1922), *Steppenwolf* (1927) and *Journey to the East* (1932), dabbled in psychoanalysis, Eastern mysticism and romantic criticism of bourgeois society. Though a philosophical socialist, Hesse maintained and encouraged distance from the world of real politics. "I am unable to join any opposition movement . . . because I regard the injustices of the world as incurable," he wrote. "I have no taste for politics; otherwise I would have become a revolutionary long ago . . . Humanity and politics are essentially incompatible...The less able I am to believe in our epoch and the more arid and depraved mankind seems in my eyes, the less I look to revolution as the remedy and the more I believe in the magic of love" — so Hesse spoke for the ideology of the German counterculture.

The sensuous wanderings and philosophical ideas of Hesse's *Narcissus and Goldmund* (1930) correspond more closely to the ideals of Wandervogel than to the realities of the Middle Ages, where they were to have taken place. "Money and a settled life," thinks the young protagonist Goldmund, lead only "to a drying up and a dwarfing of one's inner senses." "How lazy, spoiled and fastidious these fat burghers were," he thinks. "Oh, the roaming life, freedom, the heath in the moonlight, the animal tracks peered at attentively in the gray-dewed morning grass. Here in the city, among the well-established burghers, everything was so easy and cost so little, even love. He had had enough of it. Suddenly he spat on it. Life here had lost its meaning."

Clearly, Hesse and many other humane writers and leaders like him, could see the dangers of fascism on the horizon. *Narcissus and Goldmund* contains a thinly-veiled prophetic warning about the dangers of anti-Semitism in the story of Goldmund's meeting with the young Jewish girl Rebekka, whose father has been killed in a pogrom.

ENTER THE NAZIS

What happened to this idealistic, emotional, humane and internationalist counterculture which moved observers like Stanley High as our hippies moved Charles Reich? It did not survive the onslaught of the Nazis. "Of the factors responsible for the rise of Nazism, none was as important as the depression," writes William Allen in *The Nazi Seizure of Power*. The collapse of the world economy after 1929 left people looking to the extremes — Left and Right — for solutions to the economic problem. In July of 1931 the major German banks began to close as U.S. banks began calling in loans made to Germany. Thousands of German workers were idled by unemployment. And as welfare costs rose, tax sources dried up, resulting in a fiscal crisis of the state. Corporate profits taxes in 1932 yielded only half the revenue they had in 1931.

"The despair of the unemployed," Allen writes, "not only terrified and repelled the middle class, it also destroyed the self-confidence of the workers," and "the general economic situation rendered the Socialists helpless. With thousands of workers waiting for every job, a strike would have been impossible."

During this period both the Communists and the Nazis gained at the expense of the ruling Social Democrats. Workers gravitated to the Communists, the middle class and the industrial elite to Hitler's NSDAP. The Nazis appealed to the middle class as arch enemies of Marxism. They even attacked the German cooperative movement as "Bolshevistic" and were aided by merchants in crushing it. Economic troubles hit the lower middle classes — shop keepers, artisans, teachers, civil servants — and "the specter of white collar poverty became a reality." Both Nazis and Communists proposed greater government intervention in the economy to end the depression, but the Nazis gained the support of all sectors except the industrial workers by playing on fears of class conflict and the Russian bogeyman — Bolshevism. "Most of those who joined the Nazis did so because they wanted a radical answer to the economic problem," writes Allen, but not one involving class struggle. "The NSDAP was first and foremost an anti-Marxist party," seen by Germany's middle classes as patriotic, antisocialist and religious, yet radical. The Nazis' "best drawing cards," adds Allen, "were religion and nationalism."

Hitler's rhetoric welded the suffering lower middle class to the rich by promising order and singling out a scapegoat for the economic crisis — Jewish financial interests, and by extension, Jews in general. And the Nazis did not neglect the emotional yearnings of German youth. Hitler talked of a mystical community, the "Volksgemeinschaft" populated by "the folkish, organic, God fearing man." Poetry, music and art played important roles as fascism emphasized non-rational needs for spiritual unity. "Fascism," writes University of Wisconsin historian George Mosse, "claimed to re-establish the true creativity of man which had been stifled" in modern society."

"The Social Democrats failed to comprehend the nature of the Nazi appeal," adds Allen. Communist intellectuals' like Wilhelm Reich and Ernest Bloch warned that the Left was not relating to the psychological yearnings of youth, that the Nazis had taken over the spiritual and Utopian realm, and that this fact would be decisive. Their warnings were largely ignored.

HITLER'S COUNTERCULTURE

Hitler did not simply steal the whole of the youth movement away from its earlier humane aspirations through his appeals to the folkish and organic. He despised the pacifism and internationalism of the movement and leaders like Wynken. Nazi opinion generally was that the youth movement did more harm than good. But Hitler formed an alternative youth movement which won adherents because it copied the trappings and rhetoric of the earlier counterculture, while adding a strong dose of Nazi discipline and ideology. Meanwhile, he sought out the older leaders of the movement for persecution and imprisonment. Many fled. Most simply acquiesced to the Nazis, responding as people who still retained too much humanism to be guards at Auschwitz, but who did not dare to fight Hitler either. Because they had so long been unconcerned with practical political questions, they were impotent when disaster struck.

The Nazi rhetoric of the "organic folk" did serve to win the allegiance of thousands of former members of the German counterculture. "People who had been radical pacifists after the First World War now suddenly became eager to have a second go against England," writes Laqueur. By the mid-thirties all that was humane in the German counterculture was gone. Hitler ruled supreme. The deluge had begun. The words of love and peace, of brotherhood and innocence, died in the bloody ditches of the Second World War.

SOME GENERAL PARALLELS

I want to separate the parallels between the demise of the German counterculture and the rise of Nazism and our own situation into some general categories.

First, economic depression was the soil in which Hitlerism took root. The Weimar Republic, which Hitler abolished in 1933, was, according to Hungarian scholar Mihaly Vajda, the purest form of liberal democracy ever to exist, providing power to the classes of German society in rough proportion to their actual size, and achieving a great deal of social legislation of benefit to the poor. But the depression threatened the German class structure as it exacerbated the struggle over shares of a dwindling economic pie. The victory of Nazism aimed at and achieved a suppression of the working class in the interests of the wealthy and middle classes.

Faced with a threat to its power and profits, the German bourgeoisie was willing to let Hitler toss democratic pretense aside. According to T.W. Mason, the leading industrialists opted for fascism "for the sake of their own further economic development. Their desire for profit and expansion was fully met by the political system" of fascist dictatorship, while at the same time, "the Nazis captured the allegiance of the troubled and confused middle class." The economic powers that be, the German experience suggests, will not refrain from casting democratic principles aside when they feel threatened.

The U.S. defeat in Vietnam at the hands of an unexpectedly powerful liberation movement, terribly weakening U.S. capital's ability to secure areas for investment and resource extraction in the Third World, coupled with our growing economic problems of inflation and unemployment and our urban fiscal crises, provide similar soil and necessity for parallel anti-democratic efforts on the part of our own corporate rich. Watergate and wiretapping schemes have indicated a new willingness to forget democratic pretense in the interest of assuring stable relations of power. FBI provocateurs planted weapons and encouraged bombings as part of the COINTELPRO operation to destroy the American left. Similarly, in Hitler's Germany the Nazis staged "discoveries" of weapons to justify repression. And then as now, "the newspapers reported whatever they were told by the police."

"EXCESSIVE DEMOCRACY"

An ominous sign of a growing anti-democratic sentiment among American corporate strategists is a volume called *Crisis of Democracy*, recently published by the Trilateral Commission. Trilateral is a group of corporate heads, bankers, academics and public officials from the U.S., Western Europe and Japan, formed by David Rockefeller of the Chase Manhattan Bank to encourage cooperation among the world's leading capitalist powers. A chief concern of the Trilateralists is the "crisis of confidence" in business and government on the part of the American public, as revealed by popular opinion polls. This crisis is coupled with a desire for increased participation by average Americans in government decision-making, and demands on the Federal treasury to serve the interests of low and middle-income people, not only the rich — demands for tax justice, for example.

These two "crises" are extremely frightening to Harvard professor Samuel Huntington, a Trilateral academic who was formerly an architect of the U.S. air war in Indochina. Huntington calls this new concern for social and economic justice "excessive democracy" in his Trilateral report, and suggests that

popular democratic rights, including freedom of the press, will have to be curtailed in the "national interest" — that is, in the interest of the current economic status quo. What these worries on the part of Trilateral strategists suggest is a forthcoming corporate attack on democratic principles and the living standards of average Americans. If the people do not accept a program of austerity for themselves and vastly increased profits for the corporate elite, then democracy has become "excessive" and a new system is needed. "It will be a hard pill for most Americans to swallow," editorialized Business Week in 1974, "the idea of doing with less so that big business can have more." But the people must be made "to accept the new reality." And if they do not?

Secondly, as Hitler used the Versailles Treaty, which the victorious powers imposed on Germany after World War I, to play on the Germans' sense of being unfairly treated, so does the U.S. corporate elite emphasize U.S. defeats in the United Nations and OPEC price increases to play on Americans' sense that we are a generous people who get nothing for our favors. And the Pentagon continues to warn of Soviet arms buildups as a justification for its own steadily increasing "defense" spending, aided by a new and powerful lobby of hawk politicians and old line labor leaders, which calls itself the Committee on the Present Danger. Of course, this kind of expanding militarization has its Nazi parallels too.

SCAPEGOATING

Meanwhile, there are dangerous scapegoating portents in the air, including singer Anita Bryant's crusade against homosexuals. According to Laqueur, part of the Nazi attack on the German counterculture consisted of accusations of homosexuality. The current anti-gay campaign has reached dangerous heights, particularly in Minnesota where I live. Here a demagogic, right-wing Democratic legislator named Florian Chiemelewski has introduced legislation to put convicted homosexuals into concentration camps.

The leaders of the anti-gay campaign are in general religious fundamentalists whose cause has surely been aided by the dogmatism of the "Jesus Movement" which has flourished among former members of the American counterculture. This Jesus Movement is similar to the fundamentalist Protestant youth groups or "Bible circles" which flourished in Germany between the two world wars. These groups were particularly susceptible to Hitler's anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism. By 1931, Laqueur estimates, more than 70 percent of these "Bible circles" were openly pro-Nazi. One of the groups associated with today's "religious revival" among the young, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, builds its entire ideology on a fierce anti-communism, with some help from the South Korean CIA. Such scapegoating movements, blaming homosexuals or communists or Jews for current economic and social problems, can escalate rapidly in their appeal if they are given support by corporate interests which feel a need to use them. "Abstract anti-Semitism," writes Allen, "in the form of jokes or expressions of generalized distaste was prevalent in Germany approximately to the extent that these things exist in contemporary America."

New upsurges of open Nazi and Ku Klux Klan activity — Nazi bookstores in San Francisco, Cleveland, Chicago, stormtroopers in Minneapolis, a KKK rally in Plains, Georgia, etc., — are also frightening, but an American fascism is unlikely to win many adherents by copying such discredited symbols as the swastika and burning cross. Such groups were quite active in the U.S. in the thirties without winning a mass following. An American fascism would have its own symbols. It would probably rely more on sophisticated media manipulation than naked terror.

ANOTHER DISTURBING PARALLEL

Sadomasochism appeared among the bitter and increasingly impoverished German middle classes as a confused, unconscious response to their impotence in shaping the real conditions of their lives. A barely conscious knowledge of their own impotence led the middle classes to a kind of masochistic self-hate which, as is usually the case, was also projected outward at targets presumed to be even weaker — the Jews, or for German men, the female population. These impulses were fertile soil for the cult of the male warrior hero which the Nazis promoted.

A similar phenomenon appears in contemporary America, especially among teenagers who see no productive and fulfilling work possibilities on the greying economic horizon. Increasingly, "youth culture" in the United States is becoming attracted to violence (often sexual in nature). The repressed rage against barely conscious impotence is expressed in the aggressiveness and machismo — as well as the pounding dissonance — of contemporary hard rock, and in the violence at performances given bloody birth at the 1969 Altamont Festival ("the day the music died" in the words of Don McLean).

One sees in the new teenagers a "counterculture" influenced more by aggressiveness than by the pacifism of the sixties, bred on a steady diet of police shows, with no memory of the horrors of Vietnam. It is clearly a subculture ripe for fascist manipulation. As German pacifism was a response to World War I, so ours was a response to Vietnam. The young people who marched eagerly to war for Hitler had no memory of World War I. Similarly, in our society, teenagers suffer from social amnesia where Vietnam is concerned. And what is not remembered may well be repeated.

MISTAKES OF THE GERMAN COUNTERCULTURE AND POLITICAL LEFT

The mistakes which surely played a part in the rise of Nazism and the destruction of a German counterculture so like our own can be summarized, it seems to me, as an inability 1) on the part of the counterculture to deal with practical political realities, and 2) on the part of the political left in Germany to broaden its appeal beyond working-class self-interest.

The Social Democratic and Communist Parties (the backbone of the German left, however much they were divided among themselves) neglected a concern with the extra-economic questions of personal relations and romantic uneasiness about industrialization. The Nazis were to exploit this. They appealed to intellectuals who had become alienated from or were persecuted by the Social Democrats because of their concerns with cultural questions. "Rather than work to introduce an idealist element to Marxism," George Mosse writes, "many intellectuals turned instead to the literary and aesthetic appeal of the fascist movement." The fascist intellectuals, Mosse says, wished "to solve the dichotomy between 'genuine' nature and modern technology in immediate and mystical ways." "The fascists," he adds, "came to believe that theirs was a spiritual revolution" against the crass materialism of industrial society.

There are of course counterexamples — the Campaign for Economic Democracy which grew out of the Hayden Senate campaign in California is one. Wisely, I think, that movement seeks to unify concerns for a "democratic economy" — the age-old dream of socialists and Marxists — with the new concerns of the American counterculture about "quality of life" issues.

Clearly, even if the economic crisis deepens, the political movements of the Left, in their increased concern with economic issues, must not leave the question of alienated human relations, the "spiritual" realm, to the Jesus Movement and the popular psychologies of the "human potential movement," which ignore economic and political realities and often offer simplistic "changes of consciousness" that glorify the isolated and narcissistic individual. Politics must never be allowed to become cold, mechanistic, and solely centered on 'self-interest' of a material nature. It must concern itself with promoting more humane relationships among people. If the political Left does not do this, it will not appeal to the young.

On the other hand, the American counterculture has in many ways far too closely resembled Wandervogel and its later German offshoots. "Wandervogel," writes Peter Stachura, "aimed to assert youth's longing to be recognized as an entity in itself, and to find an awakened sense of purpose in a society it felt had become too harsh, complex and materialistic. But the Wandervogel possessed no clearly formulated program to solve these problems, and instead channeled its protest through a hazy form of escapist romanticism which yearned for a return to the simplicities of unadulterated Nature and the uncomplicated, rustic life." Moreover, like our own counterculture, Wandervogel never broadened its class outlook, and its elitism offended the working classes. "The Wandervogel's attraction was by no means universal, and throughout its history it remained a mainly Protestant, urban middle-class phenomenon."

Except for the Women's Movement, much of today's organized left still holds so positive a view of the wonders of technological progress that it remains isolated from the growing ecological consciousness and desire for a slower, more simplified lifestyle. The American Communist Party, for example, finds itself caught in the trap of defending the SST and nuclear power (though not plants built by private industry) because the Soviet Union builds both. Most of the newspapers of the left devote little attention to the destructive effects of technological gadgetry on human capabilities (it is only the violence on TV that is criticized), their focus is restricted to technology's unequal distribution among classes. Concerns for changes in diet even, have been attacked by some so-called "Marxist-Leninists" as "petty bourgeois concerns" and therefore not to be taken seriously.

The American counterculture must learn from the German errors. There are signs that many of its "members" wish to broaden their class base, as for example in the drive to open the Minneapolis co-ops to a wider line of foods, including those less "whole" or "pure" that have been contemptuously referred to as "junk" — to bring in people from working class backgrounds with more standardized American diets. I believe such moves are to be applauded. Moreover, it is necessary to counter the sentiment that sees politics as someone else's "thing," or "not what I'm 'into." The American counterculture in the seventies cannot afford to ignore political reality. It cannot escape the reality of struggle and the necessity of developing disciplined and programmatic responses to political decision-making. About the young Germans, Laqueur wrote, "An inability to think in political categories does not prevent people from getting involved in political disaster...Only a political and social movement that set itself in deliberate and radical opposition to the established order could have — though it might not have even then — prevented disaster."

A program of full employment — the aim of the original Humphrey-Hawkins bill — vigorously fought for, would, we must understand, do far more than put people to work and put money in their pockets. Freedom from the deadly fear of being thrown out of work would open new possibilities to people to struggle against repetitive, meaningless work in the production of useless or dangerous articles. There is

only one example of how a seemingly traditional bread-and-butter issue, fought for and won, would provide new opportunities to pursue the more lofty and idealistic aims of the counterculture. That is, however, material for another article.

STRUGGLE FOR A FUTURE

Charles Reich glorifies an apolitical counterculture in *The Greening of America*. Theodore Roszak, in *The Making of a Counterculture*, heaps similar praise on the phenomenon, calling it "beyond dispute" that the counterculture "comprises a cultural constellation that radically diverges from values and assumptions that have been in the mainstream of our society...They are the matrix in which an alternative, but still excessively fragile future, is taking shape ... it looks to me like all we have to hold against the final consolidation of a technocratic totalitarianism." This rivalry between counterculture and old culture, Roszak adds, is "uniquely critical."

Of course, those survivors of the Nazi death camps who can still remember Wandervogel or its successors, Free German Youth and the Bunde, probably would feel that the circumstances which faced those young Germans were as critical as our own, and that today's countercultural response to the horrors of industrial capitalism is not unique, after all. Sadly, neither Reich nor Roszak show any awareness of the pre-Hitler German counterculture, nor do they account for its demise.

The "greening of America," then, is no guarantee of a more humane future, as "the revolt of youth" was not. Such guarantees will come only when counter-culture joints political radicalism to envision and struggle for the future, seeking thoughtful alternatives to the economic and psychic chaos of our society and countering the drift to the totalitarian Right of the corporate powers-that-be. There is no escape to the woods from the great conflict that lies on the horizon.