

ATTACK ON MY GENERATION
For Grenville Clark in the dark
days of 1940

In March 1939 England decided on military conscription. In May 1940 the ammunition factories took a three day vacation.

The governing class in England has ostracised for the last twenty years every man who protested against the gospel of the easier and always easier way of life, who knew that life in the manhood of the industrial era would become harder and harder on this globe. My best friends in England, five in all, are not used by the government in any adequate capacity. They are all of military age. One wrote in 1923 that the next war would be a way of tanks. That was enough to finish him as a general.

In the fall of 1939 you visualized a peace in terms of the 19th century, at a moment when the economy of the world had become an economy of hemispheres, when the Argentine and Mexico looked to Japan and when the whole economic order believed in by Hull had gone to pot together with the gold buried in Kentucky.

And now, in May 1940, you resurrect the Plattsburg Camps of 1917. In this country my whole generation insists on reiterating the thinking of thirty years ago. Therefore, the country's instincts are against you.

The ROTC needed today to supplement Plattsburg are industrial leader camps. For the last seven years I have tried to convince you, President Conant, Hopkins, etc., etc., that this time the industrialized mankind of this country has to be rebuilt. Behind every soldier ten or eleven industrial workers must stand and work.

And here, as Leon Blum in France, the President talks about unhooking the forty hour week. A Fool's Paradise, President Hopkins insists -- with you -- that we should send the allies every possible help short of war. But he has not an hour to discuss the real issue; the moral mobilization of our industrial workers. Without an immediate influx of the gilded youth of America into the rank and file of farmers and workers, the true menace of the situation is not understood.

Lindbergh, who at least is a child of this machine age, knows that industry is the real problem. He is not human enough to realize that before we can produce, we have to revivify the industrial morals.

You humanists know that officers are indispensable. But you decline to think in terms of the new era of the Iron Man. You follow the pattern of the French Revolution. That is all dead for good. Just as dead as John Simon or Montagu Norman who allowed the City to finance the German armament for the drive to Boulogne. I claim no merit but to have been moulded in my thoughts by the lessons of defeat. For seven years I have tried to cry myself and you awake. If Harvard would recognize six months in a C.C.C. as equivalent to one academic term, it would do the only useful thing. All the rest is paper and wishful thinking. I am sorry if I must anger you now. But I feel that my whole usefulness consists in warning you against the mistakes made by the ruling classes in England and France to think in terms of 1789, in the shadow of a new world.

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy

A t t a c k o n m y g e n e r a t i o n .

In 1917, America went to war; and in 1919, she staid out of the peace. This time, she staid out of the war; and she is going to get stuck in the peace for the ~~ix~~ next thirty years. There is no "do as you please", in Foreign Affairs; and my generation has wasted its freedom of action by letting Senator Nye proclaim in advance what should be the secret of any really living body politic: the future decisions. This is the greatest High Treason ever committed against the life of a great nation; it is the sin against the living God, or if my generation in its helplessness of unbelief, prefers, against the ABC of survival.

You have made worse mistakes than the ruling classes in ~~Fr~~ France and England. How can you expect to get away with your blunders any cheaper than they? My usefulness consists in warning you against these mistakes. I don't claim any other merit but to have been moulded in my thoughts by the lessons of defeat. For seven years, I have tried to cry myself and you awake.

If the American Colleges would recognize six months in the CCC as an equivalent to one ^{or} academic term, if, in consequence of this step, two hundred thousand students would join this mishandled and neglected army of relief, we could hope to rebuild the broken industrial and spiritual morale of American youth. Then, we could begin to reconnect the outlying, unconnected parts of our economy with the main lifestream, by dropping the insulting work projects like picnics grounds, and doing the really vital work. We could, from this reproductive effort, expect the firm financial basis for ~~armaments~~. And with this labor army to appear ⁱⁿ all over the American Hemisphere, we might

finally get 50,000 airplanes.

You, my venerable but absolutely obdurate generation, put the cart before the horse. You shout for 1200 airplanes now when the war is lost. The English declared conscription in March 1939; and in May 1940, their Ammunition factories took a three day holiday. The Canadian airplane scheme was planned to run smoothly in - 1941. Volunteers were sent home during all the nine months of the war, except stenographers.

~~But~~ My generation, in England as well as here, discussed the peace terms after the war, with Luxemburg and Denmark as prominent members of the next League. ~~Today~~ ^{How} you revivify the Plattsburg Camps of 1917. My whole generation insists on repeating all the steps (and fallacies) of ~~that~~ twenty five years ago. ^{You Quernans} They have not been killed in action as ^{were} most of my European contemporaries. And it never dawns on ^{you} them that they perhaps ^{you} have to die ~~themselves~~ ^{you} mentally at least, if this country is to have any future.

The gold lies buried in Kentucky, Argentine and Mexico look to Japan. The Northern Pole is the best road from Norway or Russia into Canada. The economy of the world has managed to bridge the gap between labor, capital, and intelligence everywhere except in America. An economy of Hemispheres is in the making. And you talk about trade agreements a la Hull.

If you do not believe in any change, please consider one simple figure: behind every soldier ten or eleven industrial workers must stand and work. Without an immediate influx of the gilded youth of America into the rank and file of our farming and industrial population, we cannot revivify the morale of production. And without this moral change, we cannot produce.

