I. THE REBELLIOUSNESS OF YOUTH

The dictionary defines the verb to rebel as to resist or rise up against a government or other authority. The rebel is therefore a person who dissents from some accepted moral code or convention of behavior, dress, etc. Rebelliousness is typical of youth and unusual in childhood. It is not that children are never disobedient, but their conduct has a very different significance from that of the teenager. Before thirteen, the child disobeys through carelessness or in order to refuse something he dislikes. After that age, at fourteen, he disobeys, not because it upsets him to be ordered about, but to protest against the idea of being subordinate to another, as implied in the very notion of obedience. The substance of what he is told is less important to him than the tone of voice of the person giving the orders.

We must distinguish rebelliousness in this sense from obstinacy or stubbornness, from nonconformity or the critical spirit, which emerges in middle adolescence. None of these attitudes necessarily implies any rejection of being subordinate to adults. There is no incompatibility between accepting someone's authority in general and differing with him on a particular matter of opinion, even if the discrepancy is persistent and expressed in a stubborn manner.

Nevertheless, in so far as such obstinacy and critical spirit are an expression of a teenager's desire for independence, they may tend towards rebelliousness in certain circumstances, which we shall outline later on.

Rebelliousness is also different from violence, even though both often appear side by side. Leif and Delay have studied this difference, and they conclude that violence has no object, implies a complete and total break with others and leads to quite gratuitous acts, while rebelliousness, on the other hand, has an objective (to say no to something), does not break definitively with others, is exercised in the name of something (supports some value) and is never gratuitous. Rebelliousness, then, is more human than violence.

Juvenile rebelliousness is not always outright or persistent. It takes these forms only in certain cases, as a result of mistaken attitudes on the part of parents or the harmful influence of the environment. On the other hand, isolated symptoms or signs frequently appear throughout adolescence even when the family or the social background has had no harmful influence on the youngster's personality. Whereas in childhood, any wish to dominate is quite instinctive and childish, "the genuine crisis point or tendency to impose oneself on others begins to emerge with the awakening of the personality, the awareness of being different from others. Hence we find in young people a jealous feeling of being themselves, an exaggerated way of stressing their own importance, mistrust of what others may say simply because those who say it are others and not themselves" (Guardini, 62).

Within the home, this rebelliousness usually becomes acute between the age of fourteen, and seventeen, that is, at the stage, which we have said, is a time of negative attitudes and impertinence. Outside the family unit, rebelliousness against social customs, values and structures appears later and sometimes continues after the age of twenty, as in the so-called student unrest.

2. TYPES AND CAUSES OF REBELLIousNESS

M. Yela distinguishes four types of teenage rebelliousness. The first arises from fear of action and expresses itself in introversion, turning in upon oneself. It is often equivalent to a return to the carefree life devoid of responsibilities
typical of childhood; from this refuge, the adolescent adopts an attitude of silent, passive protest against everything. This is regressive rebelliousness.

The second is an aggressive form of rebelliousness, which, unlike the former type, manifests itself in violence. This is typical of the weak person, of someone who cannot bear the difficulties of daily life and tries to alleviate his problem by making others suffer. The third type consists of going against the rules of society, either out of selfishness and self-interest, or for the sheer pleasure of flouting them. This is transgressive rebelliousness. Finally, there is the progressive type, “which is felt as a duty rather than a right. It is not typical of a person who is frightened, weak or amoral. On the contrary, it is a trait of someone who is not afraid of living but wishes to live in a dignified way, who is capable of bearing the weight of reality but not the weight of injustice, who accepts rules made by others but disputes and criticizes them in order to improve them” (Yela, 64).

Two points are worth stressing here: “the endogenous factor, caused by the proliferation of the rebelliousness itself and the fear of relapsing into the self-centeredness of childhood, and the exogenous factor, which appears when the youngster becomes aware that in order to be a man he has to seek a place in society and, to achieve this, he has to compete against adults. Both contribute to the emergence of inner rebelliousness, conflict, rejection, challenge and reaction against grown-ups who force him to study or to work according to their traditions and who watch everything he does. Hence he has the feeling of being on probation” (P. Orive).

The tendency to reject the influence and control of adults first makes its felt within the family unit. Rebellion against one's parents is the most common and most obvious form, doubtless because their authority is the oldest and has lasted longer than any other. The teenager's first objective, therefore, is to sever his dependence on his parents and cease to be regarded as a child. The rebellious attitude hardens if the desire for independence and self-assertion is met with an overprotective, authoritarian or, indeed, neglectful reaction.

Parents are overprotective when they refuse to admit that the child is growing up and that this process is both physical and mental; they try to prolong his childhood and, consequently, his dependence on them. This makes it difficult for them to trust him, to let him decide things for himself and resolve his own problems, not to talk down to him in a superior tone. Parents too often try to go on being indispensable in their child’s life, and over protectiveness is nothing but a form of authoritarianism in disguise.

AUTHORITARIANISM

There are a number of problems associated with authoritarianism. One of these arises when parents exercise their authority arbitrarily, In other words inconsistently, without reference to valid principles or as if exercising a special privilege: the privilege of being parents and adults. This often leads to contradictory standards, for instance, insisting that the child is old enough to do a certain thing on his own and, at other times that he is not old enough to do the same thing; they tell him to be responsible but yet they treat him as a child. This is the type of authority that lays down the law, because I say so or because I know best. If this is accompanied by methods that humiliate the child (corporal punishment, reprimands in public, insult, etc.), it may provoke an aggressive reaction or feelings of personal frustration, which can aggravate the situation enormously. If parents adopt this kind of dictatorial attitude to their children, it will impede the development of their normal autonomy; they will complain bitterly that they are not treated as human beings but are regarded by their parents as their private property.

On the other hand, disinterest or neglect creates a different problem: in this case no authority of any kind is exercised. The reasons may vary: fear of being regarded as old-fashioned parents, confusing authority with authoritarianism, wanting to have an easy life... Indeed, this last reason, wanting a quiet life, is often the main one nowadays. Despite what one might expect, parents who always allow their children to have their own way also disappoint them and
provoke them to rebelliousness. Parental authority provides an essential form of help for them at a time when they find it very hard to help themselves.

After the age of seventeen, rebelliousness frequently spreads beyond the family unit and develops in association with classmates or friends against the whole of society. The earliest manifestations of this type of rebellion were those gangs of youths, the famous Teddy-boys, who went around committing acts of vandalism. The majority of these young people belonged to quite well off families.

Later on they were emulated by youths in other industrialized countries: the blousons noirs in France, the mambo-boys in Japan, the "raggarre" in Sweden, the "bodgies" in Australia, the "nozem" in Holland... The acts of violence committed by these gangs had no apparent motive; they were simply gratuitous and unprovoked actions: they killed for the sake of killing or robbed for the sake of robbing. Yet, the psychologist and pedagogist discovered a cause: self-assertion through violence was a 'symptom of insecurity' A person who feels secure, with and integrated basis of ideas and emotions, shows no need to assert himself through violence, to make his presence felt in society. He is present and that suffices. Only someone suffering from anxiety or unrest, from an inner conflict, which he cannot resolve, needs to explode, to break out.

Later on, youth protest reached the students' classrooms and there was a period of student unrest. In their case, the protest was motivated by political factors: university students denounced social injustices and criticized the attempts being made to remedy them.

Some of the facts that explain this student unrest are outlined in a description by G. Bonani (1930), which, though somewhat lengthy, we feel is worth quoting. If you want to bring about a student revolt by synthetic means in your laboratory, follow these instructions carefully: take a thousand students... force them to attend lectures in a classroom designed to fit a hundred. Tell them that even if they surmount the hurdle of their examinations there will be no jobs for them. Surround them with a society, which does not practice what it, preaches, which is governed by parties, which do not share the students' ideas. Ask them to think carefully about what is wrong in their society and to suggest remedies. Once they are sufficiently interested in the problem, call in the police to beat them up and throw them out. Then turn up wherever these confrontations are taking place, just in time to express your surprise and bewilderment.

A later form of rebellion was that of the hippies. These protested against society by alienating themselves from it. Behind a justifiable form of apathetic behavior, with brotherly and pacifist slogans, what these young people were really suffering from was spiritual weariness, a loss of hope, which made them flee both from the social reality around them and from their own personal reality. Life in a commune or taking drugs is a form of escapism for young misfits and maladapted youth.

Having attempted this description of some past youth protest movements, we must ask what motives they all have in common. Undoubtedly the main and most common motive is the deep dissatisfaction that young people feel when faced with a society which the simply dislike and this dissatisfaction actually increases the feeling of insecurity they have in the first place. The youth of today protest against everything and consider themselves a generation of failures because the myths of technological society, such as welfare, success and the conquest of power, have disappointed them. The idols presented by their parents are seen to have feet of clay. The traditions of the past have proved inadequate to solve the problems of today.

**Rebelling against material abundance and spiritual poverty**

Basically the youth of today are rebelling against a society of material abundance and spiritual poverty, against the hypocrisy of people who say one thing and do another. They are in bitter disagreement with the adult world and seriously claim the right to set up their own system. Spurred on by the insecurity, which present-day society instills into
them, they try to find security in their own way but this, in turn, turns out to be the cause of new problems and even greater insecurity.

In this regard, we must ask whether youth has always been a period of rebellion and, if so, whether today's situation is more rebellious or less than times past.

Young people have always rejected their independence on their parents and have criticized their world. They have always reacted with hostility to authoritarianism. In a certain sense, these are all symptoms of rebelliousness, but of a normal type and indeed necessary if the individual is to mature and society is to progress. Such expressions of rebelliousness used to last only a short time; they were of an individual type and did not take extremist or radical forms. Starting work at an earlier age, a strong family life and less advanced means of communication were factors that helped to maintain that situation. Besides, there was another special advantage which many societies possessed but which has disappeared today, namely the ability to facilitate the passage from childhood to adulthood in an intelligent and peaceful way. This factor is of considerable importance: The problem arises from the fact that society today seems to have lost, in general or on average, that ability; once lost, the problems' of adolescence spring up more intensely than before. In other words, it is not a problem specific to the youth of today -although there are many such problems- but it has more significance.

We may therefore draw two conclusions: of its very nature, youth is a time of rebellion, but young people today are more rebellious than previously; and their rebellion is more open and expressed more collectively, not because they have changed in any substantive way, but because the society in which they live is different. The rebelliousness of today's youth is rooted in the insecurity of their parents: There is a “screw lose” in the people of today. That loose screw, that insecurity about the shape of their future, in others words, about finding some meaning in society or in one's own life, is what causes the greatest feeling of helplessness in the younger generations... From whatever angle one tries to define the situation of mankind today, it leads inevitably to the absurd (Lopez Ibor, 1966)

It is only because of certain social changes that the desire for independence on the part of teenagers today takes the form of juvenile delinquency; -sometimes seen as a way of adapting - or of a Marxist-life outlook in the case of some young people who are deeply class conscious vis-à-vis the adult world.

We must not forget, however, that some of today's youth are becoming quite conformist; behind the revolutionary language, there lies a bourgeois type of behavior; they protest against social injustice, but they have no objection to unfairness and selfishness in their own lives. Many degenerate into this attitude because they have never had to struggle to get what they wanted; their lives have been too easy in a permissive society with so many prefabricated products. Hence their rebellion is tainted from the outset by the very faults they criticize in adult society; their rebelliousness is illogical and they have simply inherited it. It is easy to see that this false rebellion presents greater problems of upbringing than the authentic type that comes from genuine dissatisfaction.
3. SOME GUIDELINES

On the “subject of juvenile rebelliousness, as on most other subjects, it is essential to have clear ideas before deciding on the best way to help the youngsters concerned.

First of all, there are certain positive types of rebelliousness, which should be accepted and even encouraged. Rebellion is neither to be tossed off as ‘just adolescence’, to be laughed at, to be infuriated by, or to be cried over... It needs to be understood as unpleasant evidence that a natural desire to grow up, to become a self-sustaining individual in one's own right, is being sought, albeit in a very awkward fashion (Gallenger and Harris, 1936).

Secondly, we must distinguish genuine rebelliousness from other attitudes and forms of behavior, which are not rebellious. Far too often a youngster is labeled a rebel simply because he has opinions of his own, says what he thinks or acts in accordance with his own principles.

Thirdly, each case and each situation must be dealt with individually. Youngsters are above all people: being a rebel is something accidental and may have different causes in each case. There are no universal panaceas to cure this problem. Before taking any steps, therefore, we must find out what each individual is rebelling against and why. Rebelliousness within the family, resulting from exacerbated feelings of independence as a reaction to authoritarian parents, is obviously easier to deal with than that which goes beyond the limits of the home, forming part of a wider revolt against society or the adult world in general.

There is no point of trying to deal with rebellion within the family by adopting a condescending or paternalistic attitude. To put on a superior air and say to a child, "Let' have a chat" or to use this stratagem as a way out of a difficult situation is just as bad as not talking to him at all. He needs to be understood and loved without being patronized and he wants to be treated differently from others. Above all, he wants to be regarded as an adult, even though he is not yet one strictly speaking. He will feel that he is being treated as an adult when grown-ups expect and demand of him more than they expect of children. Obviously this attitude is not incompatible with common sense and ordinary prudence, which will not burden young shoulders with weights that are too heavy or dangerous.

He will also feel he is being treated as an adult when grown-ups no longer confine their dealings with him to issuing orders, forbidding things, giving him advice or telling him what to do, but also, and more importantly, listen to him, take his ideas into account, let him act on his own initiative and take him seriously. .

The fact that he rejects the idea of being subordinate to his parents, together with the suggestions we have just made on how to treat him as an adult, may prompt the question whether obedience can, in fact, be demanded of an adolescent. According to the law, of course, children are subject to their parents until they come of age. According to the law, of course, children are subject to their parents until they come of age.

In this sense, therefore, they can certainly be required to obey.

However, legal arguments scarcely provide the best way of influencing children. To answer the question sensibly, we must distinguish between blind, passive obedience and intelligent, active obedience. It is understandable that the former kind should irritate any youngster, for it amounts to his abdicating all use of his own free will; it is a degraded type of obedience, which is quite unnecessary once he has discovered motives for his obedience, once he has decided to do what he has to do freely, because it is right or because it is the best thing. This form of obedience is perfectly compatible with the use of one's own initiative and intelligence in making decisions.

To avoid the danger of regarding obedience as something solely for children, it is essential to try and get youngsters to recognize authority before they agree to submit to it. This approach is closer to the adult approach, which, though obeying laws, prefers to use different terminology to explain why it breaks them. Furthermore, if submission to parental
authority presented to the child as related to his social situation and a consequence of a contract to which he is a party, perhaps he will find it easier to understand.

Rebelliousness outside the family is more complicated and difficult to handle because the factors, which cause it, are partly beyond the control of the parents and others involved. They cannot transform society immediately or on their own initiative by imbuing it with all the values it lacks; while it is true that they can and should influence society for the better, it is nevertheless unlikely that the results of their efforts will affect their own children directly.

One promising way to deal with this problem is to try to get the youngsters to convert their sterile, ineffective protest and criticism, their apathy and violence, into a form of rebellion that will attack the defects and deficiencies of today's society in a more constructive way, approaching them as a challenge for their own improvement rather than as an excuse for an easy life or for continuing with their negative, irresponsible conduct.

Closely related with this point is the importance of not making it too easy for them to achieve everything they want. On the contrary, it is better to create situations in which they will have to make some effort to achieve results; they will learn to value something if it has to be earned, if it requires personal sacrifice and effort.

The object is to get them to opt for the progressive type of rebellion, the constructive, not the destructive type, the kind that feeds on love and not on hatred, that unites rather than divides, that belongs to the new man, exercising his new and still pure freedom, who wants to act so as to make others more free.

An example of this approach might be to suggest to youngsters that they should opt for reflection and a critical sense, and set themselves against the superficiality and monotony of contemporary society. Joseph Pieper (1974) sees in contemplation a questioning of oneself concerning the true meaning of things, and this is a pressing need for youngsters who face a society losing the meaning of individual and community life; it is also one of the major contributions that one can make to the good of those who make up the society. Hence we should encourage them to rebel against superficiality and restore the exercise of the intelligence.

The rebelliousness of youth should be encouraged to swim against the current, rejecting a type of culture based on the separation of freedom, truth and love by trying to unite these three factors in one's own life. It will be all the easier to encourage this responsible, constructive kind of rebellion, leading to the betterment of oneself and others, if parents and teachers can take advantage of the youngsters' excessive energy and channel it towards activities that are fully meaningful for them. At this age, it is essential to find stimulating and interesting jobs for them to do, something that will increase their experience and culture, and get them to carry out some project or help others, and launch them on such activities.

Their desire to be treated as adults may also be utilized to suggest to them something along the following lines: A person has a right to be treated as a grown-up when he acts as one and not as a child, and adults are able to govern themselves, control themselves and assume responsibility for their own development.

If youngsters are to progress towards the attainment of this, goal, specific objectives like the following might be proposed to them:

- They should become more sincere with themselves and try to see themselves as they really are: cease to deceive themselves and attempt to discover their main faults;
- They should learn to control their personal impulses and use them in the service of noble ideas;
- They should discover more ideals and values (fortitude, resilience, courage, fidelity, justice) in living people or historical characters; on discovering each value, they should reflect on it and make concrete resolutions to act according to its demands.