

IV

Youth, Sex, Family: The Quest for New Life Units

Chairperson: Tamás Szentes

Co-chairperson: María Angeles Durán

Reporter: Jean Casimir

Zinat Tofiq, *Youth and New Ways of Life in Iran*
 Bruno Ribes, *Economic System and Generational Crisis*
 José Ramón Torregrosa Peris: *Youth Unemployment and Socialisation*

The conflict between generations is part of contemporary common sense, though it is usually described as a phenomenon of every historical period. Yet there is a sense in which the particularity of youth culture in the 1980s is acknowledged, though usually in negative terms; the aggressiveness, violence, challenge in that sub- or counter-culture is what is generally emphasised, especially in the mass media. The consequent debate centres often around concepts of 'respect', 'discipline' or 'order' – as if 'today's youth' had suffered some corruption, a negative influence which had hitherto been kept at bay. The causes and explanations revert in general to simple psychological categories, or to ill-defined references to the lack of structural restraints in contemporary society, an excess of sexual or personal freedom and an idealisation of the tighter family structures of the past.

Undoubtedly, the extended family of pre-capitalist society – which was fundamentally an economic unit – has given way with the globalisation of capitalist production to a smaller unit of social reproduction – the nuclear family. The process is not only visible in the industrialised world, but is equally true of those peripheral societies where it has been one repercussion of the integration into the world capitalist system – which has been the central concern of much of the foregoing discussion. And it is that general process of economic globalisation and metropolitan hegemony which

provides the basis of explanation for the so-called generational crisis, in so far as 'youth' is a socio-economic category whose collective characteristics derive from its relationship with the society.

That is the perspective from which each of the three papers presented in this final section approach the question of youth and the counter-culture. For Ribes and Torregrosa Peris, the focus of that socio-economic identity is work; social integration occurs through work, and as the values of a productive system are internalised, achievement in and through work becomes a personal objective, the central column of personality. In the past, as Ribes discusses in his extensive presentation, *continuity* has been a central element of social cohesion – a sense of history derived from the projection of society into the past and the future. That historical sense has been a key mechanism of maintenance of societies, providing authority and legitimation for the dominant class in society. Through work, social maturity (adulthood) has come with social integration, and with inclusion in the labour force – with the family at its heart as a mechanism of transmission.

Both Torregrosa Peris and Ribes, however, take as their starting-point the breakdown of those structures – the disappearance of history into a permanent and alienating present (Ribes), and the incomplete process of socialisation which leads to an interrupted personality construction (Torregrosa Peris). And, as Ribes demonstrates, this is true not only of youth, but also of other marginal groups (the elderly, for example), as well as adults themselves. The fundamental cause is unemployment, non-integration into the labour process or separation from it, and the absence of values and norms of individual development which are not directly connected with the individual's role in the production process and in the historical continuity of society. Thus the generational crisis, the conflict between generations, and of youth with society, are the product of the broader economic crisis with which the present volume is concerned. The alienation of youth, drowned in a monotony that offers no relief or hope, represents the internalisation of social effects; to that extent, the common-sense view is partially correct – but it is a dangerous partiality. For the solution lies not in repression – in an acknowledgment of the inevitable and structural character of unemployment and its effects – but in two, linked, directions. First, to identify and recognise those elements of youth culture which point to the structural character of the problem, as well as those aspects which suggest contestation and resistance – a challenge to the values that have caused this 'social degeneration' to which Ribes addresses himself, and implicitly to the form of economic organisation that has produced alienation as a logical repercussion of its narrow search for profit through exploitation. Second, and building upon those "elements of altercation" (Ribes), a socio-cultural alternative should emerge from the analysis, one that reconstitutes the historical sense of 'being and overcoming', placing human beings back at the centre of the process of change as its sole protagonists. The discussion of the situation of

the young employed by Torregrosa Peris serves to render specific the more general analysis and to particularise the strategy for change.

Zinat Tofiq, in an examination of the role of youth in Iran, suggests that the Iranian Revolution offered just such a break in the process of social construction, and that the new society that emerges from it will be disproportionately influenced by youth, whose quantitative presence in Iranian society is greater than elsewhere. And, according to Tofiq, the effect will be to push that revolution in a radical direction – the consequence of the influence among the young of radical and revolutionary groups which grew up and took root in pre-revolutionary Iran, and among students exiled by the Shah's regime.

In *Youth and new ways life in Iran*, Zinat Tofiq argued that "the future cultural profile of Iran will be less influenced by past or present than by the

TABLE IV.1

	Iran	Europe	USSR	USA
Crude birth rate/ 1000 (CBR)	41	18	17	19
Total fertility ² (TF)	6.3	2.7	2.5	2.9
Gross reproduction rate (GRR)	3	1.3	1.2	1.4

TABLE IV.2

Age structure of the Iranian population

Age groups	No. (1000s)	% total population	% working pop'n
Less than 10	10658	31.7	—
10–14 years	4302	12.8	18.7
15–19	3609	10.7	15.7
20–24	2809	8.3	12.2
25–29	2106	6.2	9.2
30–34	1702	5.1	7.4
35–39	1623	4.8	7.1
40–59	5086	15.1	22.1
60 and over	1767	5.2	7.7
TOTAL	33662	100.0	100.0

nascent culture being shaped by Iranian youth", in the first place because of Iran's high birth and fertility rates, which produce an age structure radically different from that of the industrialised countries – as Table IV.1 shows.¹

Today, those between 10 and 29 represents 38 per cent of the populations, and those between 15 and 24,³ 19 per cent of the total (see Table IV.2).⁴ Within ten years, today's young people will comprise 46–70 per cent of the working population, and they will be the majority culture of tomorrow. "The youthfulness of the population prevents the formation of what Halbwachs⁵ calls the 'collective memory', essential to the smooth running of societies. So a society like Iran is open to revolutionary, quasi-total cultural upheavals."

Further, Table IV.3 shows that the youth population is diverse and not made up only of college and university students.

TABLE IV.3

Characteristics of Iran's youth population: 1976: %

Characteristics	Age			
	10–14	15–19	20–24	25–29
TOTAL Rural	51.7	46.6	45.4	47.2
Urban	48.3	53.1	54.6	52.8
Male Married	0.2	6.5	39.0	77.1
Unmarried	99.8	93.5	61.0	22.9
Can read and write	85.8	74.1	65.8	57.6
Cannot read and write	14.2	25.9	34.2	42.4
Attending school	79.6	44.3	11.0	2.5
Not attending school	20.4	55.7	89.0	97.5
Employed	14.0	45.5	77.5	89.7
Unemployed	3.1	6.6	7.8	5.5
Economically inactive	82.9	47.9	14.8	4.8
Professional, technical, managerial workers	—	0.9	5.6	8.8
Clerical, sales and services	4.0	7.9	13.9	20.4
Agricultural workers	56.3	35.0	22.1	24.2
Production workers/Others	39.6	56.2	58.4	46.6
Agriculture	42.1	31.4	20.8	22.8
Mining and industry	52.4	47.0	35.2	36.8
Services	5.5	21.6	44.0	40.3
Female Married	1.3	33.7	77.3	91.4
Unmarried	98.7	66.3	22.7	8.6
Can read and write	61.2	47.8	35.2	27.2
Cannot read or write	38.8	52.2	64.8	72.8

Table cont.

Attending school	54.5	25.7	5.8	1.6
Not attending school	45.5	74.3	94.2	98.4
Employed	9.3	13.0	15.3	14.2
Unemployed	1.5	2.7	2.7	2.2
Economically inactive	89.2	84.3	82.1	83.5
Professional, technical, managerial	0.1	6.2	29.7	32.6
Clerical, sales and service	3.1	4.8	12.5	15.1
Agricultural workers	18.2	17.7	12.6	13.0
Production workers/Others	78.6	71.3	45.2	39.3
Agriculture	3.0	2.5	1.0	0.9
Mining and industry	81.6	60.2	22.9	18.8
Services	15.4	37.3	76.0	80.3

Under the old regime, youth lacked a consistent, all-encompassing ideology; each group of young people had its own particular problems. Many underground opposition groups existed in this period with Islamic, nationalist, Marxist or liberal orientations, though the omnipresence of the regime's security forces limited their activities. Yet even then, observers noted a yearning for ideology among Iranian youth.

Many Iranian students abroad were organised in political-ideological groups, whose activities gained momentum as the regime approached its fall. As a result, the concerns of youth "shifted from the specific to the universal, from questions of housing, education, pay, etc. to the question of capitalism, imperialism and nationality". It was these allegiances that determined the attitudes of youth.⁶

The groups that won an influence among young people, within Iran and abroad, can be grouped under various headings. First, *militant orthodox Islamic ideological formations*, which embraced large numbers of youth, particularly from the poorer social strata. The largest of these is the IRP (Islamic Republican Party), which dominates the Majlis and the bureaucracy and carries the major weight in the post-Revolutionary institutions like the Islamic Courts, the Revolutionary Guards, *Jihadi Sazandigi* (the Holy War for Reconstruction), Islamic associations in factories, government offices and the civil service in general. Other organisations of this Shiite fundamentalist type include the *Fida'iyyana Islam* and the newly formed *Mujahidini Inquilabi Islami*:

Members and sympathisers of these groups believe in the strict implementation of Islamic precepts in every aspect of life, rejecting all cultural

manifestations of Western civilisation in that they represent an alienation from the (Islamic) self. This implies the reimposition of religious penal law, the revival of religious practices like daily prayer and Friday public prayer, fasting, Islamic dress – including the veil for women – separation of males and females in school, etc. For them, the aim of the Iranian Revolution is to eliminate alien, imported life-styles and 'return to the root'.⁷

More heterogeneous, but sharing a firm belief in Islam and favouring the separation of Church and State⁸ are the *non-orthodox Islamic formations*. The Movement for Freedom, for example, an offshoot of Mussadiq's National Front, favours Western-type constitutional democracy, while advocating compliance with Islamic justice. "Members of this organisation played a prominent part in the first Provisional government, but were later criticised as moderates by both fundamentalists and Marxists. They remain popular, and have several prominent members in Parliament – but they seem to have little following among youth."⁹ The Movement of Revolutionary Muslims of Iran is further to the left; but it is the *Mujahiddin* whose heroic record seems to have earned them significant youth support.

Their reinterpretation of the Koran on lay questions seems very close to the Marxist idea of the common ownership of the means of production;¹⁰ they are fervent advocates of 'participatory democracy' and 'councils'. The Orthodoxy, however, accuses them of eclecticism.

Second, the spectrum of organisations claiming to be *Marxist ideological formations* is widely varied, their discrepancies arising from different attitudes to other communist thinkers and countries. The pro-Soviet *Tudeh* party is the oldest of them; it accepts the 'Islamicisation' of social life in Iran, and gives its unconditional support to the elite in power.¹¹ The largest Marxist-Leninist party in terms of votes is the *Fedayeen*, which also had a heroic record under the old regime:

It has gradually abandoned guerrilla tactics and adopted open, mass activity, hence the recent split between the Ashraf Dehqani group and the Fida'i (Guerrillas of the People) Minority. The majority advocates friendship with the 'socialist camp', gives conditional support to those in power in Iran, whom it sees as the representatives of the lower middle class, advocates 'councils' for all administration and production establishments and argues for the dissolution of the existing military structure and its replacement by a non-professional people's army. It has a solid base among Iran's youth.¹²

Other left groups are defined by their hostility towards the 'socialist camp'

and their Thirdworldism. The Organisation of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class (*Paykar*) and two organisations formed after the split in the Mujahiddin, *Razmandi gan* (Organisation of Struggle for the Working Class) and *Vahdati Inqilabi* (Revolutionary Unity for the Emancipation of the Working Class) deserve attention. These groups see the elite in power as representatives of the bourgeoisie, and give priority to the role of the trade unions in mobilising the working class. They have a harder position on the question of nationalities, aligning themselves with local Kurdistan left parties like *Kumili* (Revolutionary Organisation of Workers of Iranian Kurdistan). The *Rahi Kargar* (Workers' Way) group stands between these groups and the Fida'i. Thirdworldist pro-Chinese groups include *Ittihad va Mubarizi* (Unity and Struggle for the Creation of a Working Class Party) and *Randjbaran* (The Toilers' Party). The Revolutionary Workers' Party represents the main Trotskyist current. All the left organisations recruit among school and college students. Yet there are segments of youth that remain unorganised and without an all-inclusive ideology. "The failure to respond to their needs could produce unexpected effects."

Youth is not a monolithic block in Iran; they have mainly been attracted, however, to the three ideological poles described above. All these tendencies are going through a period of gestation. In the life-styles that emerge in the future, it is their frameworks that will provide the foundations – for they are the only ones available.

Bruno Ribes's extended paper set out to consider the relations between *The economic system and generational crisis*; although many of his observations were based on the French experience, he set out to "define perspectives for harmonious endogenous development" on a more general level.¹³

In the opening section of his analysis, Dr Ribes considered the question of age attribution – how 'age' is described socially. "The individual has always been located in time." The determination of age, similarly, has a physiological, a psychological and a social dimension. "To describe someone as of a certain age is to assume that an individual has appropriated time as an organic function and a mode of living."¹⁴

In fact, this physiological category is dependent on socially created models. 120 years ago, the ten-year-old who was undernourished and working in a factory certainly did not have the same relationship with his own body as a contemporary child who goes to school warmly dressed and well-fed, even though today's child may live in a stressful urban environment. Further, a number of factors, from nutrition to mental hyperstimulation, have produced an earlier puberty (in three decades, the

average age of puberty has fallen by one year among boys and two among girls), confirming the proposition that the more 'civilised' a society, the more physiological age is overdetermined.¹⁵

The same is true of psychological or mental age; indeed all age attribution has a determining social dimension that "has always aimed at controlling access to this or that freedom, or the exercise of this or that power – school age, driving age, voting age, etc.". From ancient times, and in traditional societies under religious domination, age distinctions have always provided the basis of hierarchy, on the assumption that age was linked to wisdom and experience. Power, therefore, lay with those who could look back over time, who knew the traditions. "Today, this hierarchy, and the principles underlying it, has been inverted."

Age classification varies according to the views of specialists who in turn establish categories or stages of growth in individual development which vary by country, race, culture, etc. Although serious scientists are cautious about age ascription, common sense and social practice identify three *age cohorts*, or groups of age classes – youth, adults and the elderly. Some refer to a fourth category of 'the old', while others make a distinction between children and young people. Yet common sense does not make these finer distinctions, which suggests that they are important above all in their relations to Power. "Brutal though it may be, it is obvious that individuals are classed according to their mode of participation in the socio-economic or socio-political system, rather than in terms of their relationship to time."

It is never clear, for example, exactly when youth comes to an end. Adults define youth "by the fact that it is not yet inserted into active life or the economic system (except as consumers)". Given the length of apprenticeships, or the length of time it is possible to remain at school, youth by this definition could continue even beyond the age of 20. For their part "the young see themselves as outside the economic system, either because they are too young, or because they have rejected its constraints and turned to dreams, Utopias and the pursuit of freedom". The same difficulty exists with regard to 'old age'. Most societies honour the old until their death; in our time, 'retirement' veils the fact that individuals still in possession of their health and faculties are assigned to an 'old age' "defined by the cessation of (official) activity at a point determined by the type of job and the conjuncture, rather than by (actual physical) ageing".

Between youth and age is 'adult life', an age cohort defined less in terms of being than of *function*; the age range 25–65, for example, is no more than an index of productivity. This creates its own confusions; many young people extend their adolescence well beyond 16, for while they do not accept their status as minors, neither are they willing to attain an adulthood that will trap them within the established order:

With the relaxation of mores, there is an inverse tendency among young people to take advantage of their status in order to seek experiences and adopt forms of behaviour which were once reserved to adults in terms of the ruling cultural environment. Today the young, even the very young, have experiences, but not experience – they are dissociated from tradition. But there is no evidence that these experiences or forms of behaviour have any particular effect on personality development.

The ambiguous status of youth leads young people to emphasise what is distinctive about their age cohort while clouding internal distinctions, whether of age, social milieu or even sex. This serves to accentuate *indecision* – “the product of a failed past, an alienated present and an uncertain future” – leading older youth to hold on to their marginality and refuse to be embraced by structures and institutions, though they do not repudiate them totally. They may live a double life, outside the family yet still attached to it, seeking communal forms of living, yet never committing themselves completely:

Young people are ‘free’ – but it is a liberty without hope, bereft of the conceptual tools with which to think out and promote the otherness to which they aspire. For such otherness can only be beyond the pale and at the cost of a dissociation of personality between ‘recovery’ and ‘flight’, between enforced membership of a rigidly organised society and the search for new social forms which cannot be structured and thus remain abstract and imaginary.

The ‘liberty’ of retired people, too, is illusory. The sudden end of their active participation in the world often provokes despair (many old people commit suicide or die soon after leaving work) or accelerates senility. The act of placing someone within a social category often obliges them to conform to the relevant model;¹⁶ some do manage to overcome their new situation and infuse their lives with new value – but it happens *despite* the social model. The retired person, “faced with his own superfluity, and deprived of any role in the economy, as well as the capacity to reform it, the retired person turns his or her attention to his own body. There is no working day or week-end wage slip to give life a meaning. The retired are ‘out of the race’; if they have any freedom at all, it is a *private* freedom.” The advocates of the pension system refer repeatedly to the preceding 30–50 years of work, the “‘age of iron’ that precedes ‘the golden age’”. But adults are not willing to face the questions that arise from such a formulation; they are incapable of imagining a culture not centred on labour, nor are they willing to do so, for they depend for their survival on that culture, though their defence of it is increasingly despairing, apathetic or embittered:

Locked into society, tied to their employer (by the fear of losing their job), their family, their creditors, the adults live by instalments. Their work is less and less personal, less unified in time, and more and more contingent and conditioned in a contingent universe. These are not just stylish formulae; the reality they describe becomes ever more determining. Adults are constrained by the present, trapped within it out of fear of losing their body or their possessions. In these conditions, it is understandable that they are in no hurry to listen to a youth that challenges their security and their power – and that they should be secretly glad to see their predecessors relegated to retirement.

Until recently, the age scale was considered to be a basic social structure, representing a natural progress from childhood to an old age of wisdom and authority. In societies where harmony was the principle of social organisation, where there were neither laws nor police, and justice derived from custom, it fell to the elders to exercise the ministry of conciliation. Where action meant no more than hunting, fishing and gathering, experience was the best guide to the inventory of spaces and practices, to the habits of animals and the rhythm of the seasons.¹⁷

Philosophers have always ardently defended the age scale, since it reflects that progressive view of personal existence and history. The elder of Plato’s *Republic* scorns the ephemeral passions, and devotes himself to the search for the imperishable – Truth, Beauty, the Good. His key function in the State, therefore, derived from his insistence on focusing politics on immortality. Confucius put it thus: “At 15 I study wisdom; at 30 I am certain; at 40 there are no doubts remaining; at 50 I understand the divine order; at 60 nothing in the world can surprise me; at 70 I can follow my heart’s desire without transgressing the moral law.”¹⁸ Until the eighteenth century, the ‘elders’ conditioned all philosophical discourse, cushioned by an established order that conflated age, wisdom and authority;¹⁹ the result was “gerontocracy, traditionalism, the sclerosis of societies, teachings and techniques designed to maintain strict hierarchies, etc.” For this reason, the principle has always been contested, and poets and satirists have consistently questioned the intrinsic wisdom of the old – for there are many who have grown old without growing wise.²⁰

Ultimately, however, it is objective factors that have contributed most significantly to overturning the age scale:

The extension of printing (the Book replaces the Wise Man as the repository of tradition); literacy and the development of education; science and technology (which relativise the existing body of knowledge); urbanisation (breaking down the patriarchal family); democracy (tying the exercise of power to a limited mandate), all come together at the end of the eighteenth century. Youth begins to be spoken of as the bearer of

hope, of promise, with its enterprising spirit, its generosity and flexibility, its openness to the future and its impatience for renewal. Youth is never regarded as capable of taking power – but its virtues are offered as an example to adults and the aged.²¹

Thus the funeral oration never fails to refer to the youthfulness of the deceased. This mythification is more than a mere act of revenge against the pride and complacency of adults. It serves to obscure questions about the meaning of personal life, and to exorcise the spectre of decrepitude and senility that advances with age. Religions and philosophies once offered the compensation of a life after death – a promise of eternal youth. But as these beliefs have begun to crumble, it has become increasingly difficult to present age as life's apogee. To allay the consequent sense of age as a curse, the idea that age can still retain the qualities of youth has gained currency; thus if the old complain, it is because they have not looked to their own rejuvenation, or demanded of society the means to keep them young. This new concept of ageing goes beyond issues of personal existence, and seeks the meaning of society itself. Modern society has meaning only to the extent that it represents transcendence, a process of overcoming; a 'blocked' society is condemned to servitude or extermination. And it is a double transcendence – the young go beyond their elders, while the latter seek ways of gaining recognition for their knowledge and experience of the necessities of survival. "This double projection constitutes the essential diachronic dimension of every dynamic society.":

What is striking about the contemporary world is the diachronic break(down). Paradoxically, the elderly are both spoiled and ejected from power, while the young are looked after as never before, yet still treated with suspicion . . . What marks out the contemporary world is the *apparent inversion of the principle of seniority and the absence of succession.*

Today, the elderly cede to adults the right to supervise their affairs and benevolently serve the succeeding generations within a family circle in which they have become dependants. Older parents may care for their grandchildren, but the relationship with their children is often circumspect, avoiding any discussion of contentious issues. Young people may seek parental advice, but only because they are accessible and not because they possess any special authority; grandparents may seek out the young, and young people gain pleasure from their company – but only when it is convenient, for it is they, the young, who are now in a position of power.²²

There are many reasons why parental authority is questioned; experience is increasingly devalued by the development of science and technology; educational methods are constantly changing so that not only are parents

often unable to help, but they are made to feel inferior. The mass media bring parents and children before the same teacher, but they interpret what they see or hear differently. The range of innovation in all these fields will move parents to fear for their own future, and to be able to offer no reassurance to their children, while the young are equally unable to make themselves understood. For this very reason, according to Gerard Mendel,²³ the Oedipal complex should now be seen as having two phases: the first, up to 4 or 5 years old, when the child seeks to establish a simple, harmonious relationship with mother or father; the second, at puberty, when adolescents must cope with their contradictory relations with "the maternal attributes – Nature, the Absolute, religion – and the paternal – society and its values".

The 'father' has 'failed'; individually, parents have little to pass on but their own insecurity; collectively, they are discredited in the eyes of the young by their complicity in the depredations of their generation (war, injustice, etc.), by the bankruptcy of all ideologies, and by the fatal risks they make humanity run in their pursuit of comfort and well-being. In such circumstances, children no longer identify with their parents, but take refuge instead in nostalgia and 'pure' passivity (sects, drugs, the pursuit of Nirvana), or in paranoia and blind violence.

Within the family, respect for persons may mask the disappearance of the authority-seniority principle; yet today children no longer follow in their father's footsteps. In the last thirty years, science and technology have changed the powers of men and also their vision of the world. As Margaret Mead put it, "Until then the elderly could say 'I've been young but you've never been old'; today the young reply 'But you were never young in my world'. This gulf between generations is new – and it is universal."²⁴

What adults find hard to understand is youth's refusal to follow their parents' belief in the Promethean lunacy of the pursuit of a progress that threatens to be fatal. There has been a breakdown in social diachrony which has provoked, at least theoretically a complete reversal of age hierarchy, undermining thus the foundations of authority – theoretically, because adults have still taken advantage of the age difference to exercise, as a class, a power that is no longer derived from wisdom and experience.

The division of the population into 'mass' age cohorts is disquieting, throwing each inwards upon itself and creating its own distortions. Individual existence has three aspects: social (in work and administration, where common categories are adopted because they yield immediate benefit – i.e. in pensions); private (among friends and family); and associative (the relations with the peer group). "The young are set apart, searching for their identity among themselves and in an *image* of themselves forged both

internally and by society, as much through its advertising as through its ostracism." Psychoanalysts have argued that the image has a morphogenous function; "it can be either alienating or transcendental, leading towards the reflected ideal or into the self, or promoting stereotypes which are abstract and thus contribute not at all to transcendence". The young behave differently when they are together; they have their own discourse, their own rationality, their own logic expressed through parody, defiance or violence – and they celebrate their otherness. Similar organisations and associations unite the elderly who join together to overcome their isolation and marginally "defending their needs and aspirations, demanding respect for their status, their worldview and their specific needs". In response, adults too form an "undeclared bloc", to reinforce their view of themselves as representatives of the normal and normative state of social life.

The associative aspect of existence could become increasingly important among youth and the elderly, stressing as it does solidarity and identity. As the school-leaving age is raised and unemployment increases, the age of entry into adult life could be further and further postponed. The elderly, for their part, experience an increasing isolation from other generations – the combined result of economic crisis, a declining birth rate, a raised life expectancy and the growing problems in financing retirement, as well as of "the unpreparedness of a whole layer of the middle class for retirement, after a life in which they have devoted all their energies to the search for promotion and limited their social life to the immediate family circle".²⁵

Increasingly, "age cohorts will become closed groups generating mutual solidarity". In France today, for example, only 10 per cent of parents help their children financially after marriage; inheritances are rarely given before time,²⁶ and few children care for their aged parents²⁷ – all expect the State to take that responsibility. Ribes asks, "Can a society permit this breakdown of diachrony and ratification of synchrony without itself breaking down?" Does it not foreshadow the *degeneration* of society?"

This, then, is the background to a discussion of generational crisis.²⁸ As society changes, entities are formed with different political, ethical or religious conceptions; "these are called *social generations*". Yet historians have always found it difficult to determine where generations begin and end; "though age difference is as much part of the social tissue as distinctions of sex, social life belongs to the order of duration and continuity – and it is only at that level that the issue can be clarified".²⁹ That generations exist is undeniable, at least at the level of individual consciousness; French writers from 1794 to 1964,³⁰ for example, have insisted on the originality of their particular generation, and political discourses and trade-union manifestos yield the same conclusion. "For the sense of belonging to a generation implies a qualitative relationship with time. Yet each generation has a different time, which Mannheim attributes to a subjective (generational) experience that is impossible to objectivise."³¹ As Julien Benda put it, "the

love of each generation for its own time is a constant in history; it is a form of self-love".³²

Similarly, "each society finds its own rhythm, its own use of time . . . Thus the 'monochrome' time of the West differs from the 'polychrome' time of the Orient. The appropriation of time by a society or social entity derives from a sort of collective psyche which is in turn modelled by that form of appropriation. Each society has its own 'living present' which is difficult to characterise but which is essential for the cohesion of that entity." Western, linear, 'monochrome' time assumes that "something is going on; were it not so, the temporal continuum would appear as a sort of permanent escape". Every society – like the individual and the collective consciousness – seems to need the distinction between generations, as if it served to confirm its vitality and spirit. Age difference is a comfortable reference point in this respect, confirming a divergence between past and rising generations and thus guarding against monotony and uniformity:

Otherness postulates continuity. Thibaudet is right to locate social life in the order of duration and continuity, for this acknowledges that diachrony is essential to the survival of a society and to the distinction between generations – for that distinction can only be located within a spatio-temporal framework within historical duration. In worlds where time, or diachrony, is or seems to be lacking (where social life is reduced to a simple present, past or future, all of which are devalued), each age class must go out to conquer a present, which, enclosed within itself, becomes a closed field of generational antagonisms. Three conclusions flow: (a) to escape the non-sense of the uniformity of time, of monotony, every society necessarily postulates a succession of social generations; (b) social generations are fundamentally characterised by the appropriation of time; (c) temporal (diachronic) non-insertion cannot but engender a deep malaise among individuals and within the social body as a whole.

Ribes then argued that "under the dominant influence of the economic, there is a levelling of time" in which "it is impossible for social generations to appropriate time"; today, therefore, "age cohorts are unable to constitute themselves into social generations" producing what Ribes has called "the phenomenon of degeneration".

Though it is a source of progress, liberation and prosperity, the dominant influence of the economic also has reductive effects,³³ tending to 'commercialise' all dimensions of human existence, drawing them into production and exchange and subjecting them to rhythms of intensification. Economic pressures produce a continuous urgency in individual and collective life that creates powerful imbalances. "One cause of these phenomena is the conception of time that prevails in the economy, where it is generally seen as mere quantity, a resource to be used at will. A society that holds to such a

conception is open to the risk of becoming itself quantified, multiplying its needs more rapidly than its capacity to fulfil them, and veering towards deepening distortion and synchronic breakdown."

"Time is possessed and evaluated; it can be cashed in, shared out, dislocated, sectoralised, 'owed' – or it can be 'free', personal time"; and both are given an artificial value, the latter taken for itself, as capital, and then 'spent' at a profit. The former will be subjected by the employers to a strict rationality, "measured, planned to increase its yield, manipulated, accelerated and finally 'dechronologised' ". The advertisers speak of 'gaining' time (on public transport, for example); political parties argue over time (holidays etc.). Time is the raw material of the economy itself, constantly used and replaced to allow the functioning of the socio-economic system; "it is a constant renewal, a uniformisation that dechronologises personal time". In the same way, the economy drives to control the future; the planners try to predict, if not determine the future, with the aid of a variety of measuring techniques. Though their efforts are constantly frustrated by the intervention of a political and social order and of mass movements (the imponderables of human history), the futurologists have refused to be discounted. "They present themselves as mere 'managers of the uncertain', yet their objective is the *definition, extrapolation and orientation of the future as a function of the present.*"

"The capitalist economy (writes Joseph Gabel – and the same is true of the socialist economy) could not function without eliminating, at least partially, the unknown quality of economic processes, in other words without aligning the structure of a future time rich in (in principle) unlimited possibilities, with a present that has a definite facticity".³⁴ The preservation of the future becomes the norm; it is a matter of 'enduring'. The present 'lives' in the conditional future and the future in the conditional present – thus temporal succession is rigorously demystified.

The general public, and adults especially, collaborate with the futurologists and planners; it is a way of setting themselves outside determinism, defying a future that threatens to compromise their power, their system – and thus their financial commitments, their future job security, etc. "Like the planners, the working masses (partly, at least, through fear) come to accept (if not to celebrate) *the monotony of time.*"

If the distinction between generations is essential to a dynamic society, how can generations be distinguished, or indeed formed, in a society where everything conspires to ensure that nothing happens? At first sight, socio-political events appear to be central in the formation of social generations. In France, people speak of the Generations of 1914, of 1940, of the Algerian War, of 1968. Historians are more cautious: "It is not events that frame generations, but generations that frame events."³⁵ For adults,

who are the principal actors in each of these events, they provide an opportunity to define what moves and characterises a generation. The First World War provides a characteristic example: although army and civilian population never achieved the level of unanimity that is generally assumed to have existed, it is true that war produced a spirit and a level of national cohesion that marked all those who lived through it. When peace came, French society returned to what it had been, its institutional and socio-economic structures intact. The implication is that:

if an event is to have an impact it must (a) reach the population as a whole; (b) evoke a common reaction; (c) be capable of mythification, lending itself at the time or later to a certain idealism; (d) produce a sense of belonging to a time, of solidarity in, identification with and commitment to time. The event is a catalyst of the collective mentality, but it does not create it.

In the absence of such a catalyst, there is a risk that age cohorts will not become social generations.

Yet this example involved only adults and the elderly; further, it concerned only 'happy' events. It is very different when events cause distress or confusion, or are retrospectively viewed with shame by one age cohort (defeat, failed revolutions, etc.). "To the extent that such events divide or tend to be effaced from the collective memory, they *decollectivise* consciousness and break down solidarity. The reaction to such events does not help to forge younger age classes; they are left to find their own structures of thought and reorganise their social system." In contemporary society, there have not occurred the kind of events that tend to "mobilise national consciousness", in part, at least, because when so many things are constantly happening at so many levels, "nothing seems significant enough to mobilise the collective consciousness. In this era of rapid transformations, everything seems contingent, and the mass media are at pains to contribute to this sense of historical relativity. Among intellectuals, this produces an incapacity to assess the significance of what does happen, a confusion between the essential and the transitory, the enduring and the ephemeral, events and The Event."

This multiplication and relativisation of events is partly due to globalisation; we have closer and closer relations with all countries, making it less likely that any event will appear important enough to modify the world balance. Yet events of world significance do still occur – the Iranian Revolution, for example.

In France, for example, that Revolution has had few echoes, for its objectives are not understood, given the consistently negative response of

the press and mass media. In the West it is seen as a questionable adventure in theocracy, totalitarianism and fanaticism; its real circumstances remain hidden from view. The 'reading' of the history of France 1940–45 is provided by the ruling power, under the dominant influence of the economic. The effect is to level the mentalities of the different age classes, inculcating the same tastes, the same pursuit of well-being, and attenuating whatever might shake the population out of their passive consumerism. It seems, then, that monotony is the work of the functionaries of the economic, of power.

Other events, of a socio-cultural type – artistic works, scientific discoveries – do not appear to exercise any determining influence on social generations; they reveal, rather than form, collective mentalities, though they may often leave a deep mark on the spirit of a people. Seeking to define that spirit, Mannheim suggests that it is linked to the feeling individuals have of belonging to a *community of destiny*,³⁶ or what Ortega y Gasset calls *mission*. The concept of destiny is suggestive, in so far "as it is defined as a network of external influences that fashion mentalities". Further, it acknowledges solidarity in time; yet in the end it "evokes the notion of an external constraint more or less passively endured by the members of a generation". That negative conditioning, however, must be set against the positive fact that individuals react to that destiny. "Today, however, the combination of determinisms is such as to reduce individuals and groups to a sense of their total impotence." The result is resignation. The phenomenon is not new; writers have continually criticised the apathy of their contemporaries. In the modern world, the young are soon disabused and their loss of Desire is linked to the decline of those beliefs transmitted by the great religious and socio-political institutions. "We are witnesses to a relative uniformity." Economic systems seek to impose uniform tastes, styles and living conditions, while central states and ideologies (political and religious) seek to produce identical behaviour. "This enclosure within sameness (the diversity is only on the surface) is reductive of social generations."

There is a deeper logic underlying the shared desires of a social generation; every being obeys a double imperative, tied to the rigorous necessities of its genetic 'programme'³⁷ – to perfect itself in pursuit of its own well-being, and to seek out qualitatively superior forms of existence, to evolve towards a *greater-being*. "When species pursue only their immediate well-being, they are in danger of deterioration. To survive they must somehow escape their determinations, transgress their coding, open themselves to the other." There is always a tendency to renewal, to determination (even at the risk of suffering and alienation). If that is true of life, it is equally true of social life, with its tendency towards an "opening-up to the future, a propensity for overcoming. But if that dynamic, that 'logic' is to develop, there are three essential preconditions – collective memory, collective consciousness and collective imagination."

Every social entity is founded on memory, but a memory that is more than the sum of traditions gathered by individuals. It is a 'programme', in the sense that the term is given by information scientists and biologists; it is also a 'collective memory' distinct from the sum of individual memories and particular to each social group.

The distinction between generations occurs first at the level of memory, as Halbwachs was first to recognise: "our memories remain collective and are recalled for us by others".³⁸ Forgetfulness, too, is less a matter of personal disinterest than a function of what others no longer choose to recall for us; "alone, we remember very little" – our social insertion obliges us to recall in response to the demands of that insertion. Just as it is society, or our social group, that determines our memories, so there is a 'generational memory'. The group is the collective bearer of a living history shot through with currents of thought and experiences which have survived through time. What is collectively memorised is thus retained only because it is reproduced, and because we can identify with it – it collectivises and unifies, but only to the extent that a certain number of referential elements and frameworks persist – i.e. family, religion, social class. According to Halbwachs, most groups rediscover their collective memory within a spatio-temporal framework. Thus it is wrong to say that we must transport ourselves out of a given space in order to remember; "it is the image of a stable space which gives us an illusion of not changing through time, and of rediscovering the past in the present. Only thus can we define memory."³⁹ What is true here of individuals or groups remains valid for types or large categories of place like urban or rural structures, or meeting places like streets, squares or churches. "A social generation is defined by the places where it is formed, where it lives and where it meets."

Halbwachs's observations underline the extent to which we are living today through the *reverse* phenomenon, the decline of the collective memory or the impossibility of its crystallisation. In many domains, experience and tradition are no longer valid, and knowledge is being replaced; techniques, technologies and scientific methods are in constant mutation. The family itself has been profoundly changed during the present century under the influence of the economic, notably with the generalisation of working women (from a unit of production the family has been transformed into a unit of consumption, and even this is becoming progressively less the case). All that remains is a formal framework which would appear more and more arbitrary were it not for the bonds of affection that still infuse the relations of the couple and of parents and children.

The same is true for social classes. The fiction of working-class unity

conceals internal divisions by corporate interest⁴⁰ and the result of the systematisation of social relations. The loss of credibility of the great religions, and the declining numbers attending church suggest that the "social frameworks of memory are crumbling. It is certainly a characteristic of our time that the collective memory, where it exists, is no longer a reliving of experience, but the enclosure of the lived within 'models'; tradition becomes 'programme'."

This loss is reinforced by *delocalisation*. Halbwachs could still refer to "Our house, our furniture, the arrangement of a living space that recalls the family and friends we see most frequently in that context."⁴¹ That must seem ironic to the person living in an anonymous, echoing cell in one of our great modern buildings, built to receive furniture in standard sizes only:

If a generation is characterised by its life-style, what style differentiates the three age cohorts today? How, unless he inhabits a new area, without traditions, can any individual recognise himself in urban structures that are prey to the demolition men, or in the regulation blocks of flats, or in streets where isolated pedestrians hurry along, threatened by cars, oppressed by noise, jostled by their fellows who are also in a rush. Memorable places are rare in today's cities; only the cities of yesterday remain,⁴² and they are no longer communities. In the 'delocalised' universe of the urban dwellers that most of us are, how can a collective, 'generational' memory be formed? The past has become a spectacle (a commodity), an object of speculation; it is no longer a reference or a meeting point.

These structures can be overcome, or overturned. But if that is what the young seek to do, they must first seize the present before they can make the future yield up its alternative possibilities.

A social generation is in fact defined by the way in which it appropriates the present. "There is no collective consciousness that does not arise from a collective unconscious, expressed through symbols, whereas the consciousness is articulate around group representations – its plans and projects. Every collective mentality is replete with speculations." Such representation is essentially assimilative (of represented and representing, signified and signifier), integrative (of a system of thought), teleological (giving sense, integrating determinations) and communicated; and even if it *seems* new, it is transtemporal and transgenerational.

A shared symbolism stems from a single 'proof' which bears less on what is expressed, verified or determined than on what is unsaid. The symbol is not of the order of assimilation, but of identification:

it does not give rise to an agreement (always more or less reasoned) but to a *consensus* (always more or less intuitive, and leading to a 'shared

feeling') which refers to something other than what is immediately manifested in the symbol, something present, shared and arising from communion rather than communication. The 'art' of politics consists in grasping the symbols through which a society 'finds itself', or in evoking them – be it the mythical figure of the leader or the sacralisation of this value or that project. Every social entity needs to found its unity on its deepest desires, that irrational 'logos' with which it is infused.

The contemporary world is marked by the obstacles that arise in the path of the formation of a common symbolism, among them the "inflation of representations, which counteracts symbolisation". Representation reduces and impoverishes the real:

What is perceptible in the 'determination' of the sense of a word, for example, is still more rigorously present in the self-projection of individuals and societies. This is particularly true of techniques; knives cut better than teeth (and that is what they were invented for) but they cannot chew, while glasses only carry out a part of the eye's functions. These are still not simple projections; but there follow representations and transfers of representations. Language, reason, science become more precise as a result of these transferred representations. But what is gained in precision is lost in nuance. In the end, a veil falls between what is represented and its reality or original purpose.

This multiplication of representations and their continuous refinement is one characteristic of the modern world; the result is that they are progressively emptied of effect, ceasing to transmit experience but deriving their logic from particular scientific disciplines. As each age class becomes increasingly enclosed within its own narrow rationality, the age cohorts encounter more and more difficulty in understanding one another.

This diversity brings with it, paradoxically, a lack of differentiation between all that remains outside each individual's domain; the corollary is indifference. The multiplicity of news and events, the accumulation of information, the tendency to uniformity, to the reduction of all tastes and aspirations to sameness, are phenomena that have been frequently noted. In a world dominated by representations, it is increasingly difficult for age cohorts to differentiate themselves, to "singularise themselves in a profound way". What is at risk as a result is the future development of a collective imagination within which the common aspirations of a given social generation can be defined.

"The opening-up to the future is lived in the present, but it cannot be realised through a simple extrapolation from that present, for it projects beyond what is actually lived through the exercise of imagination. Collective idealisation is an essential component of all social life and characteristic of

each generation." Desfoche, in his *Sociology of Hope*,⁴³ asserts that a society cannot go beyond collective, oniric, cultural, Utopian, ideological ideations. Dreams – hope – infuse an "effervescent expectation" of otherness, but they also carry a risk of alienation in the three forms in which 'otherness' appears in social life. The first is *alternation*, part of a strategy whose object "is to attenuate the internal tensions within society by organising moments and sectors where society can test and express itself in a positive way". It can be enacted in time (the opposition of work and leisure), in space (where different attributions or properties can be set in motion), or in groups (by belonging to different associations that counterbalance one another). This type of otherness, Desfoche noted, is rooted in "alienation without evasion", or *escapism*. Yet there is always a limit to it, beyond which is a 'trip' that can guarantee no return.⁴⁴

The second form of otherness is *altercation*, "a radical answer to imported messages and institutions, creating its own sphere of operation within a group, a cult, an audience, a circle of disciples or a micro- or para-church",⁴⁵ The seat of such otherness is an opposition at once symbolic and recuperable, but vain in either case. Often such altercation leads to "the installation within a society of a counter-society with a triple power of occupation, compensation and negotiation".⁴⁶ The third form is the *alternative*; "the opposition takes power, and the test of force takes place. The outcome is either defeat, followed by repression, or victory and accession to power."⁴⁷

Desfoche's most important insight is that "imagination and hope are constantly reborn in a society, however false their expectations or perspectives; this attests to the existence of a 'deep logic' which forges the future in terms of a 'necessary otherness' ". In *The Gift of Nothing*, Jean Duvignaud expresses perfectly the dynamism of this presumption:

Civilisations, societies, groups cannot be reduced to the sum of institutions that make them up, nor the mechanisms that preserve them. For an active core, an internal dynamic is at work in all human totalities, however passive they might be . . . In fact, the way in which societies preserve or reproduce themselves is inversely proportional to the force that tends to destroy or question them, independently of the ideologies and representations invented after the fact to understand or efface them.

This creative vitality, this flux, at times submerges groups and people, overturns the patient building up of myths and beliefs, and challenges 'collective memory' and social discourses.⁴⁸ "The imaginary experience of men is greater than their social activity. Something speaks in us that is greater than ourselves, though we barely understand it."⁴⁹

What we see today is the 'relativisation' of the past, the 'reduction' of the

present, disenchantment with the future; the collective imagination has no field of action. It is not that imagination lacks means of expression – it has never enjoyed so many material resources and stimuli; yet it still does not express itself, imprisoned as it is by those forces that conspire to impose 'sameness'. There is hardly any alternation in contemporary social life, only increasingly controlled compensations and evasions ('travel' of all sorts, for example) which tend to become commercialised; leisure is the object of 'recuperation', a time of consumption that becomes the indispensable corollary of production. Time itself is more and more highly organised. Altercation, in the sense of opposition, turns into mere diatribe or demagoguery; in terms of social contestation, it is channeled and never touches the essence.

Finally, there is no longer any credible alternative; the young people who do not run away face "increasing boredom and apathy, sometimes exploding into savage violence", a violence that is "an index of the young's unwillingness to be contained within a suffocating network of institutions, of their abandonment of society". Expatriated from past, present and future, without collective consciousness, memory or imagination, the youth of the contemporary world is degenerating.

Such a situation cannot last for long without exploding into a real generational conflict; it could be provoked by a worsening economic crisis, or even a continuing deterioration, which would have a dramatic impact on retired people. Rising inflation or an increase in the price of essential goods could provoke the elderly into revolt – compulsory retirement would then come to be seen as an injustice to all those who could not live decently on a pension.⁵⁰ The same situation would produce increasing unemployment among young people, driving them ever closer to the point of exasperation. And "everything suggests that a revolt of youth would quickly lose its specific character, detonating a broader social conflict which would embrace a demoralised adult class too":

There is a high risk of social explosion, not between age cohorts, but between social classes. In addition to these external factors, there are internal elements that threaten an implosion in today's society – not 'ageal corporatism', nor a contestation by youth of the powers and privileges of adults (or indeed of the demands of women for equal wages and responsibilities), but rather a slow desertion of the economic system by its servants. In its most common forms – absenteeism, fiddling, etc. – it is not specific to one age class. But among the young it takes on the character of *disengagement*, as casual or temporary jobs outside the large factories grow in number. Eventually, this could put the existing structures at risk.

Yet an open conflict between age classes seems unlikely; youth does not yet

form a united front, and its disengagement is progressive. Between different age cohorts there subsist private and family ties despite the profound transformation of 'traditional' family structures. Disunities are multiplying, yet relations between parents and children of all ages remain vital and complex.

In the end, however, Ribes did not foresee open conflict between the generations – despite their increasing estrangement – because all appear to agree that the solution is not to be found in such a conflict. "What is needed is an attack on that which separates the generations, and prevents them from expressing their own particular 'genius'." As Julien Freund put it, "Today, conflict can only provoke new confrontations or aggravate old ones . . . It seems to be the destiny of every society in conflict to constantly fall back into an unclear, confused state of permanent crisis which irremediably distorts spirits and behaviour."⁵¹

"Yet a crisis can occur without producing conflict, for crisis is characterised, conceptually, by the development of spirits facing contradictory options, subject to divergent demands and constrained to reach decisions in a state of indecision and insecurity." It is *degeneration* that maintains a permanent state of crisis without producing open struggle, i.e. conflict. "Our society lives in a high state of permanent tension, and expends considerable energy simply in maintaining the equilibrium, draining and degrading itself as a result. Each age cohort becomes dislocated, estranged from the others; the result is a crisis of meaning. If the result is not conflict, it is something worse – a gradual desocialisation, a slow debilitation of social spirit."

The problems of youth unemployment, changing attitudes and generational crisis demand urgent consideration; any solutions must be located "within a wider socio-political and socio-cultural perspective, relativising the dominance of the economic and challenging its most pernicious effects – uniformity and monotony". The objective must be to rediscover a "succession of generations", a social life where things "happen", and where age cohorts transcend one another, and to make possible a "reappropriation of time".

Five factors will influence this process of renewal, in Ribes's view:

(i) attention to social values; (ii) the questioning of labour-centrism through the extension of 'free' time; (iii) the re-evaluation of the condition of women; (iv) the transformation of parent-child relations; and (v) a sharpened awareness of the perishable character of humanity, of the fact not of cosmic forces, but of the powers that man has.

Three factors can contribute to the development of a new social dynamic, but only if they are coupled with parallel efforts to revive collective memory, consciousness and imagination. Such research would move in three directions: (i) towards a revision of the politics of space (and in the field of sound,

which for many young people and adults seems to shape the new landscape); (ii) to a re-examination of how a consensus of shared beliefs and desires could operate, exploring more deeply the aims of ecological movements that seek to de-mediate real and interpersonal relations; and the aspiration to explore the invisible ("Malraux argued that the twenty-first century would be spiritual or it would be nothing, sinking into the apathy of well-being or disappearing in an atomic apocalypse provoked by a conflict of interests"); (iii) above all, in search of means to express otherness. "The growth of 'free' time, which is an imminent possibility in the industrialised countries, will provide the opportunity – but it will require a radical revision of educational and cultural policy."⁵²

An initial response to Dr Ribes's invitation came from Jose R. Torregrosa Peris, whose concluding paper examined the question of *Youth unemployment and the socialisation process* in the context of Spain. For in Spain, as elsewhere, the issues raised by the student revolts of the 1960s have given way to the single, central problem of unemployment. In Spain, the unemployment rate of 12 per cent is double that of the OECD countries. Of the one and a half million unemployed, 60 per cent are 24 years old or less and a high proportion are young people still looking for their first job.

Torregrosa Peris approached the question "from a social-psychological viewpoint, establishing links between individual experience and the social structure, the person and the social totality. Further, in relation to the socialisation process, the incomplete, transitional status of a youth that will later acquire a social identity is simultaneously posed." At the individual level, socialisation involves learning to become a competent member of society; socially, it points to the continuous incorporation of new members, their maintenance through time and the guarantee of their reproduction:

The idea of socialisation has implicit within it a radical idea – that the human is only such when he/she is socialised, gaining entry to the symbolic universe of which all cultures are composed. Man is only man through culture. Ontogenetically, socialisation is humanisation within a concrete society.

The socialisation process constitutes the psychological mode of production of a society; biological organisms become social actors, and thus acquire identity. Similarly, "an adequate socialisation is a functional necessity for the social totality, to ensure its maintenance and continuity". Societies, however, are not homogeneous; their internal distinctions in turn influence socialisation. In Peter Berger's words:

All societies possess a repertoire of identities which are part of the consciousness of its members. They know that men and women exist, possessing specific psychological characteristics. Through socialisation, the individual internalises these identities, so that they become the structures of individual consciousness. The objective reality is defined by society then subjectively appropriated, ensuring a symmetry between objective and subjective reality. The extent of symmetry is a guide to the success of socialisation.⁵³

There is a further parallel between the life-cycle and the socialisation process; the growth of the individual is, from society's point of view, an adaptive transition. There is also a parallel between personality development and the social demands placed upon that development. "Certain ceremonies or rituals give social significance to the overcoming of a given stage or period of existence." Even in periods of relative stability the process is full of ambiguities for the individual; "in a time of rapid social change, the social structuring of this transition can become extremely diffuse, increasing the personal and social tensions deriving from the socialisation process itself (rapid changes in family, educational, occupational or political structures, for example)".

The distinction between primary and secondary socialisation is a temporal one; "primary socialisation is the first discovery of reality, and for the child the only option is to accept the world as it is presented by his elders. Yet it alone cannot ensure full participation in social life except in a highly homogeneous society."

The relative autonomy and complexity of each ambit of social life require *specific apprenticeships* to prepare the individual to participate fully in that society. These are what we call secondary socialisation.

The transition from traditional to modern industrial society, with its characteristic division of labour and structural complexity, has made it necessary to establish an institutional apparatus to conduct these apprenticeships, hence the expansion of educational systems in recent decades – though they may also be designed to "preserve youth", i.e. to postpone their entry into the labour market. It is noteworthy, for instance, how rapidly the Spanish authorities reduced the figure for youth unemployment by raising the school-leaving age.

Students of socialisation have focused on immediate family or interpersonal relations; but, if the family is the first mediator in the process, it alone cannot explain its final outcome. That is why psychologistic 'family-based' explanations are insufficient to explain processes whose roots lie outside the family, in broader social movements. Emigration, social mobility, urbanisation, the incorporation of women into the labour force, unemployment, all

sharply affect family structures and relationships, as well as the socialisation process itself. Urie Bronfenbrenner, one of the most respected scholars in the field, has emphasised that "most of the environmental variations in the capacities, actions and conduct of human beings do not derive from the first order [direct] effects within the family, school or peer group, but from the second order [indirect] impact of social institutions like the world of work, public transport or the structure of living areas".⁵⁴

Work is one context of secondary socialisation that is of central significance. From a socio-psychological standpoint, occupational socialisation arises from the personal transformations that occur within individuals as responses to the demands of the social system, experienced as a subjective need for the development and consolidation of a professional sub-identity, a key ingredient of the total configuration of personality in contemporary society. This suggests the hypothesis that *the process of socialisation is incomplete until occupational socialisation has taken place, an insertion into a job considered worthwhile and reasonably stable*. We undergo more or less profound transformations of identity throughout our life-cycle; but if some do not occur at the appropriate moment, later personal development and the possibility of full socialisation will be adversely affected.

Erik Erikson has shown how important is occupational socialisation in overcoming the crisis of identity in adolescence; "adolescence can be seen as a *psychosocial delay* during which, experimenting freely with different roles, the young person may find a space in some sector of society appropriate for him/her. There the young adult acquires a firm sense of inner continuity and social dignity, linking what he/she was as a child to what he/she is about to become and harmonising the *conception of self* with social recognition⁵⁵ . . . the sense of identity, therefore, is the *confirmed confidence* that internal continuity coincides with the significance one has acquired for others, as demonstrated in the tangible promise of a 'career' or a job."⁵⁶

The dilemma for a young person stems from the contradiction between identity and role diffusion; he or she will have to select one from a variety of available roles, which he or she can identify with. If this does not occur, identity diffusion will result. For "it is the inability to find an occupational identity that most perturbs the young".⁵⁷ The confidence that society has a job for them, a place where they can realise themselves in a productive relation with others, is a basic ingredient in the development of young people's personal identity; it is the expression of the need to belong, to be included, to evolve as the self:

There is then a clear analogy between the development of a basic confidence in the first years of life, which derives from a relationship with

the mother, and the acquisition of that *basic social confidence* that derives from an adequate insertion into work . . . The non-crystallisation of that confidence is the beginning of a crisis of social legitimation, and one of the most important existential preconditions for the emergence of youth subcultures, and for their ideological content.

Youth unemployment on a mass scale is a brutal interruption of the socialisation process, and produces an early breakdown in that 'social confidence'. Unemployment is a clear manifestation of capitalist exploitation, whose costs are borne directly by the worker and his family. "In a class society, the dominant class protects itself against the negative effects of the social contradictions of capitalism, making all decisions on the basis of an exclusive criterion of profitability, and seeing labour and the labourer in the same terms. The personal destiny of the worker is thus subject to the variations of a process over which he has no control." For that worker, the loss of his job undermines the structure of reference of his daily life; suddenly he finds himself cut off from the collectivity, against his will and without clear cause. In the absence of clear alternatives, this break is deeply threatening. Initially, it will produce high levels of anxiety. The frustrated attempts to find other work and the prolongation of unemployment will produce more serious psychological consequences, as a number of studies has shown, including loss of self-esteem, a growing sense of inadequacy and impotence, a perception of falling status in the eyes of others, a sense of failure and a resulting loss of ambition, leading to a loss of perspectives and interest, demoralisation, irritability and, ultimately, aggression:

This whole experiential configuration denotes the *beginning of the dissolution of personal identity*, the disorganisation of the personality. It is one aspect of a wider movement through which economic crisis produces social dislocation which in turn leads to a crisis of personality – as Professor Furtado suggested.

Youth unemployment should be considered from the point of view of occupational insertion. Economists usually look at the issue in terms of the 'rationalisation of the labour market', while sociologists consider the question of the coherent articulation of the educational sub-system and production itself. "For us, the key issue is the personal transformations that occur within subjects as a result of demands for adaptation imposed by the social system, and the subjective necessity for a professional sub-identity so central to the total configuration of personality." Among young people, obstacles to that development intrude upon the normal process of identity construction. The experience of unemployment does not merely delay experience, it negates it, suggesting that one is redundant as far as society is concerned. Socialisation produces hope; unemployment destroys it, produc-

ing the deepest of all frustrations – frustration with the self. "It is the whole future existence of the self that is at stake at the moment in life when self-affirmation is most necessary."

In this situation, young people seek alternative paths of self-realisation – not out of curiosity or attraction to the unknown, but as a necessary means of psychological survival. That is what explains the emergence of a wide variety of youth subcultures in which violent or subversive behaviour prevails.

Youth unemployment exposes the incapacity of society to assimilate its own biological issue. As a denial of the conditions for a positive development of personality, "the *psychological experience* of unemployment needs to become *political consciousness*; that is the first condition for the restoration of the wounded personal dignity of the unemployed". Only thus can meaningful and progressive social change be guaranteed; the alternative is the emergence of new 'deviant', 'delinquent' subcultures, and the proliferation of conservative attitudes concerned only with private life, money, and the narcissistic absorption in the self.

Discussion and Report on Section IV

The three papers in this final section, 'Youth, Sex, Family: the Quest for New Life Units', took as their starting-point the impact of youth unemployment on socialisation, the succession of social generations, and the breakdown of traditional cultural structures under this double impact. Dr Jean Casimir reported on the discussion:

Discussion in this section centred on the role of women in society, their relation to their own body and to death, and the dangers of reducing women only to the role of mothers. In analysing the relations between women and the family, it was noted that the family unit is breaking down in both the West and the Third World. In the West, this – in general terms – reflects progress; today, the custody of children could fall to either parent. Similarly, the emergence of single- or multi-parent families could create anomalies, but it could also generate a new communal spirit.

The mother's role in transmitting culture is now passing to other institutions. Within the family, the generally higher educational level of the father and his activity outside the home have tended to efface the mother, and lead children to identify with the father, to the detriment of continuity and the reproduction of national cultures.

Difficulties arose, however, when the question of women as units of social analysis and social action was posed. It was argued, for example, that the role of women in Iran is secondary, while other comments laid emphasis on the role of women in national movements in India, and in the Chinese

Revolution – though it had not led to a greater emancipation of women. In Japan, by contrast, mother–child relations were still defined by the husband. Indeed many revolutionary movements have displayed a remarkably conservative attitude on the woman question. Finally, the decline of the family had had repercussions for the socialisation of children, a process which has now been increasingly transferred to the anonymous confines of creche and kindergarten.

Discussion of the problems of youth, which had been the central theme of the position papers, took a secondary place in relation to the discussion of women:

In the context of social and economic reorganisation and its predicted repercussions for Spanish youth – and analysed within the general framework of a world economic crisis – discussion turned on the relationship between mass unemployment and the process of democratisation now taking place in Spain. In more general terms, concern was expressed as to the inconsistencies that youth is called upon to resolve, who are called upon to fight for their country, but who are not involved in political decision-making in a way that would correspond to the responsibilities with which they are charged in these other areas.

It was agreed that youth today is in search of homogeneity, so that sexual differences tend to become erased, while new means of differentiation are established at the same time, as is evident in the behaviour of the so-called 'bluejean brigade'. In India, for example, it was noted that Youth Power had been an important element in official party policies during the 1970s, in an effort to channel the frustrations of youth and devolve towards them some element of power. It is true that youth leaders have taken on greater responsibility as a result; but the dangers of manipulation of youth cannot be overlooked.

Speakers felt that the problems of youth were often those of an adult generation that had been unable to transmit the vision of Bandung to the younger generation. So the gap between youth and adults could be seen as the absence of a principle of integration. In general, it was stressed that the problem of youth arises from the existing relations within an economic system that recognises only individuals, consumers and workers; in this context, youth unemployment coincides with the breakdown of the family. Are the categories youth, adults and elderly then operational categories for explaining the problems of society? Though they were, attention should also be given to national–cultural characteristics and the differences between social layers.

Notes to Section IV

Tofiq

1. See Statistical Centre of Iran, *Population Growth Survey of Iran, Final Report 1973–6*, serial no. 777 (June 1978).
2. See Thomas Frejka, *The Future of Population Growth* (New York: Wiley, 1973).
3. The Revolutionary Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran has set the voting age at 16.
4. Statistical Centre of Iran, *National Census of Population and Housing* (Nov. 1976) (based on a 5 per cent sample).
5. M. Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris: PUF, 1950).
6. At present it is very difficult in Iran to distinguish cultural from political. Indeed such distinctly cultural activities as saying prayers, attending mosque, fasting, etc. have taken on definite political connotations.
7. For a document on the ideological orientation of fundamentalists, see the Manifesto of Navvabi Safavi, the founder of Devotees of Islam, published in 1950, *Barnayimi Inqilabi Fada'iyini Islam*; for Imam Khomeini's concept of Islamic government see his *Vilayati Faqih*.
8. In this respect we could mention the overwhelming influence of a modern Islamic thinker, the sociologist Dr Ali Shariati. Born in 1933 to a learned and deeply religious family (his father was a well-known commentator on the Koran) he was later influenced by Alexis Carrel (whose 'prayer' he translated) and Frantz Fanon (he is the translator of *The Wretched of the Earth*), with whom he maintained a significant correspondence while studying in Paris during the early 1960s. He died in Europe in 1977. Cf. his work *On the Sociology of Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). See also M. Farhang, 'Ali Shariati on oppression', in *Race and Class*, vol XXI, no. 1, Summer 1979.
9. For the liberal and moderate orientation of Nihzat Azadi see the work of Engineer M. Bazargan (in Persian).
10. For a brief account of Mujahidini Khalq, see E. Abrahamian, 'The guerrilla movement in Iran 1963–77', in *MERIP Reports*, no. 86, March/April 1980, pp. 8–12. See also *Muzigirihayi Siyasi* (Teheran, 1979); and *Didqahhayi Mujahidini Khalq dar Bariyi Qanuni Asasi* (Teheran, 1979).
11. For a history of the Tudeh party, see S. Zabih, *The Communist Movement in Iran* (Berkeley, 1966); and for a more recent account, Fred Halliday, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development* (New York, 1979) pp. 227–35; also 'Tudeh's Kianurion on Embassy takeover: an interview with the first secretary of the Tudeh party', in *MERIP Reports*, no. 86, March/April 1980, pp. 24–5.
12. For an account of Fadayini Khalq, see Abrahamian, 'The guerrilla movement', pp. 5–8, and Halliday, *Iran*, pp. 235–47; see also an interview with a Fada'i leader in *MERIP Reports*.

Ribes

13. These observations will be further developed in a work now in preparation, which echoes research carried out by the Association des Agés, one of whose founders was the CNRS, Paris.
14. On this subject, see G. Luce, *Le temps des corps, rythmes biologiques et stress social* (Paris: Hachette, 1972); and the abundant bibliography of works in English given in V. Geis, *Life Strategies, Human Evolution, Environmental Design* (Springer Verlag, 1978).
15. These themes are at the heart of the work of H. Laborit, notably in *Biologie et structure* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968) and *L'homme et la ville* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).
16. See M. White Riley, 'Age, changement social et pouvoir des Idées', in *Daedalus*, special number on 'Les générations', no. 4, vol. 7, 1978.
17. On this subject, the best documented study to our knowledge is Simmons, *The Role of the Aged in Primitive Society* (Yale University Press, 1945).
18. *Entretiens*, II, 4.
19. Aristotle, *Politics*, I, iv, 7.
20. Montaigne was very honest in this regard; cf. *Essais*, II, xxxviii.
21. As Vigny put it, "A great life is the thought of youth realised in maturity". See too, for example, the *Diary of Du Bos* (22 Aug. 1921) and Gide (26 Dec. 1921).
22. On inter-generational relations within the family, see L. Roussel, *La famille après le mariage des enfants* (Paris, 1976); and A. Pitrou, *Vivre sans famille* (Paris, 1978).

23. In *La crise des générations* (Paris, 1969), a work which takes up what had been sketched out in *La révolte contre le père* (Paris, 1968).
24. M. Mead, *The Generation Gap*.
25. Cf. R. Lenoir, 'L'invention du troisième âge', in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 26-7, March/April 1979, pp. 73-4.
26. Cf. Roussel, *La Famille*.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
28. "The thought of a generation can come to seem to succeeding generations like the expression of a different race": W. James, *Philosophy of Experience*.
29. A. Thibaudet, 'L'idée de génération', in *Réflexions sur la littérature* (Paris, n.d.).
30. As was demonstrated by a survey of the 400 quotations listed under 'génération' and 12 000 under 'âge' by the Institut de la Langue Française, Nancy.
31. K. Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, (n.d.): see chapter entitled 'The problems of generations', and quote from Pinder, p. 283.
32. *La France byzantine* (Paris, n.d.).
33. See E. R. Schumacher's comments on the influence of the economic in *Small is Beautiful* (French trans., Paris, 1978) p. 42.
34. Quoted in A. Gras, *Sociologie des ruptures* (Paris, 1979) p. 87.
35. F. Mentre, *Les générations sociales* (Paris, 1929) p. 452.
36. Cf. Mannheim, *Essays*, pp. 303-4.
37. I have borrowed the term 'the logic of living' from F. Jacob, *La logique du vivant* (Paris, 1970).
38. M. Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris, 1970).
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.
40. Corporate and individual interests which will sometimes show how unpopular certain strikes are, for example.
41. *La mémoire*, p. 51.
42. It is a sign of the times that 'the city' has come to mean the business district.
43. *Sociologie de l'espérance* (Paris, 1973).
44. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
48. J. Duvignaud, *Le Don du Rien* (Paris, 1977) p. 28.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
50. See, in this respect, the dossier prepared by the Association de Agés, *Ressources des retraités*.
51. J. Freund, 'Observations sur deux catégories de la dynamique polymogène, De la crise au conflit', in *Communications*, no. 25, 1976, pp. 107 and 109.
52. These considerations will be further developed in a coming work; see Note 13.
- Torregrosa Peris*
53. Peter Berger, 'Identity as a problem in the sociology of knowledge' in *European Journal of Sociology*, vol. VII, 1965, p. 106.
54. U. Bronfenbrenner, 'A theoretical perspective for research on human development', in P. Dreitzel (ed.), *Childhood and Socialisation* (New York: Macmillan, 1973) pp. 337-8.
55. E. H. Erikson, 'Identity and the life cycle', in *Psychological Issues*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1959, p. 111.
56. E. H. Erikson, *Infancia y sociedad* (Childhood and Society) (Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1959) p. 212.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

Appendix 1

General Report on the International Seminar

James A. Maraj, *General Report*

Bruno Ribes, *Reflections on the Madrid Seminar*

In this session, after Section Reports had presented their individual notes which have been abstracted at the end of summaries of papers on those sections, the General Reporter, Dr James Maraj and Dr Bruno Ribes summed on the proceedings.

Professor Maraj complimented the Section Reporters on their skilful and diligent presentation of the papers and debates, noting that his own General Report was intended "as a report *on*, rather than *of* the meeting".

While I am aware of the necessity to give free rein to the imagination (there would be no creativity without it), I am equally aware that it is a real world we live in, a world of inequalities, injustices, exploitation, poverty and hunger that we seek to transform. Analysis is important – but it is not enough; we must point to paths of action, without necessarily presenting them as panaceas or prescriptions. Like scouts seeking paths through the jungle, those who point out the paths that do not offer a way out contribute at least as much as those who stumble upon an exit. I believe we are now much clearer as to where to look for alternatives in socio-cultural development.

Professor Maraj went on to comment on the high intellectual quality of the papers, in particular the contribution of Professor Furtado, who raised matters that were repeatedly returned to in the course of debate. He had emphasised the complex issues involved in trying to maintain a global view – for it brought us face to face with the question of political confrontations that triggered the arms race, of technological development that is often a spin-off from the arms race, of the closer integration of markets and the emergence of the Third World as a political actor on the world scene. He had also made