

A MESSAGE TO AUSTRALIAN YOUTH

By the EARL OF TANKERVILLE.

N.B.—The following is the text of a message to the Democratic Federation of Youth (Australia), written by Lord Tankerville: —

"In these troubled and rapidly changing days, there appears to be emerging, with ever-increasing distinctness, two fundamentally opposed points of view.

The One

"The one, which I think characterises the outlook of the age now passing away, feels that one should give (or even force upon) 'the other man' the sort of government and conditions of life which one thinks will be good for him. To this outlook belong the reformers-of-others, the improvers of the nation, the creators of Utopias, and the planners. They believe that 'good' government (according to their particular ideas about the word 'good') is better than self government. Their point of view carried to its ultimate conclusion—though a majority of them in the so-called democratic countries would doubtless hotly deny it—is Dictatorship; beneficent perhaps, but none the less Dictatorship. To them, the 'Nation,' the 'group,' the 'system,' seems a reality, and is thus of more importance than the individual. Their outlook renders them incapable of seeing that 'the other man' is really no other but oneself-looked-at-from-the-outside.

The Other

"The other, which characterises the outlook of the age now beginning to come into being, the *real* youth of the world (whether young in body or old), feels that one should find out and let 'the other man' have the sort of government and conditions of life which he wants—so long, of course, as 'the other man' minds his own business and does not interfere with the similar freedom and peace of his neighbours. To this outlook belong all those who *really see*— *not* 'say'—that the welfare of their community, their nation, and of the world they are bringing into being depends upon the individual (that is, oneself) and his ready acceptance of personal responsibility within the group or the organisation of which he is a member. They know that *true* self-government, though no doubt more difficult efficiently to organise than any other form, must be better than so-called 'good' government; because 'good' is a purely relative term, and, in respect of government, can only be measured by the degree of satisfaction of individually expressed desires which it affords to a majority of those governed. They see that there is no such thing as a nation apart from the individuals who compose it, and hence that the stability and welfare of the nation depends upon the well-being, happiness, and freedom - to - choose - a - desired -line-of-action of the individual. They see that organisation and systems were intended to serve and not to rule the individuals who co-operate within them. Their point of view, carried to its ultimate conclusion, is *Real* Democracy—that is, freedom-in-security *for the individual*; freedom for 'the other man', because he is, in fact, oneself.

Choose

"So, to the Youth (of whatever age) of Australia and elsewhere, I would say: 'Decide first to which of these two points of view you really belong (for it will become increasingly difficult, and, finally, impossible to be a mixture of both); and, having *really* decided, you cannot then fail to *act*. At this critical juncture in history your decision is of extreme importance, and will affect not only your own generation, but the lives of men and women for many generations to come. If you belong to the one outlook, you will finally lose your battle—I hope soon; but, in losing, you will win the understanding of how unrealistic, and therefore how stupid, that outlook is. If you belong to the other, you will win—perhaps soon, though not without a tremendous struggle. But win you most certainly will, because you will have behind you the whole force of the most fundamental urge in human nature—the urge to be free; that is, to be fully conscious, fully responsible, and, in winning, you will lose that sense of thwarted, ineffectual existence; you will lose the clogging encumbrances of out-of-date habits-of-mind-carried-for-ward-into-present-action.

" 'Which is it to be, then? Good luck, whichever way you choose.' "

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