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MASONRY AND YOUTH—A CHALLENGE

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There is very little material to be found on the attitude of Masons toward youth in early times, and most of what we do find has to do with orphans, or the sons of Masons. In England the son of a Mason is called a "lewis," and as such he has certain obligations which it is expected he will fulfill. John Brown's "Master Key," published in 1798, gives the following dialogue:

"What do we call the Son of a Freemason?"

"A 'lewis'."

"What does that denote?"

"Strength."

"What is the duty of a lewis, the Son of a Mason, to his aged parents?"

"To bear the heavy burden in the heat of the day and help them in time of need, which, by reason of their age, they ought to be exempted from, so as to render the close of their days happy and comfortable."

"His privilege for so doing?"

"To be made a Mason before any other person, however dignified by birth, rank, or riches, unless he, through complaisance, waives this privilege."

American Masonry has no counterpart of this. Through the years local Masonic units have sought to aid youth in various ways, and some of the efforts were reasonably well organized. It was not, however, until our own generation that a concerted effort got under way to make Masons youth conscious.

BEGINNING OF DeMOLAY

Early in 1919 there occurred a meeting of a Mason and a sixteen year old boy that was destined to set in motion one of the greatest youth movements of our time. Frank S. Land of Kansas City, Mo., met and became interested in a fatherless boy, Louis G. Lower. They spent evenings together, and a close friendship developed. Finally, at the request of young Lower, he was permitted to bring with him eight of his pals. They wanted to form a club, and Frank S. Land promised that he would help them organize their club—a lodge of their own. Frank A. Marshall, newspaper editor and writer, was called upon to write a ritual.

In November of 1919 the name, "Order of DeMolay" was adopted, and since that time the order has grown to be the third largest organization in the world. Louis Lower was the first DeMolay, and the First Master Councilor of that Chapter, sponsored by the Scottish Rite Bodies of Kansas City, Mo.

Most of you must know what DeMolay is and is not. It is not a junior Masonic Order, and membership in it is not a guarantee of future membership in a Masonic Lodge. It is not an order in which a boy's membership is predicated upon his having some relative who is a Mason. Its door will open to any boy or young man from fourteen to twenty-one who will dedicate himself to striving to attain the high moral standards set by the order. It IS a YOUTH MOVEMENT in the broadest and best sense in which that term can be used. It is a MASONIC YOUTH MOVEMENT in that each chapter must be sponsored by some Masonic organization, or by a group of Masons, and the men working with it must be Masons.

DeMOLAY COMES TO MINNESOTA

DeMolay came to Minnesota very soon after it was organized. The first chapter was sponsored by the Scottish Rite Bodies of Duluth, April 23, 1921. There were fifty-two young men in the class. The Duluth Scottish Rite Bodies still hold the sponsorship of that chapter. In June of 1921 the Scottish Rite Bodies of Minneapolis sponsored the "Minneapolis Chapter, Order of DeMolay." The young men on the degree team of the "Minneapolis Chapter" then went to Owatonna in October of the same year and installed the Owatonna Chapter, the third in Minnesota.

From the nucleus of these three chapters, started in 1921, has grown the organization we have today. DeMolay in Minnesota is not as large as it should be: without more support than it has had it is surprising that it has grown so much. It was not until 1942 that the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, after concerted effort on the part of interested Masons, finally voted to permit its subordinate lodges to become the sponsoring body of DeMolay chapters. Since then, in spite of the war years,

DeMolay in Minnesota has progressed with a new vigor. Today there are some 350 Masons devoting a good part of their leisure, and some time from their business and professions, to this movement.

The reasons for the devotion these Masons are giving to the problem of boys and young men are important, for these men are in a very real sense the liaison members between Masonry and youth. To begin with MASONRY is a very important thing to these men: they believe that the fundamental ideals of Masonry are important and worth preserving. They believe, that unless those ideals are preserved, not only Masonry, but all the other things that are symbols of freedom (the church, the public school, the home as we know it), will disappear. And these men know, as you know, that the boy growing into manhood must be given, over and over, the consciousness that these things are an important part of his heritage as an American citizen. He has a right to know that, and has a right to know that you share those feelings with him. He has a right to be brought into contact with the adult world of men who stand for the ideals Masonry represents.

The most obvious proof that the youth of today must carry on our traditions tomorrow is the zeal with which the dictators indoctrinate school age youth, and the care they use in isolating them from any unwanted influence. Lenin said, "Give me a generation to train the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted."

Some of our leading Masonic thinkers have considered this problem for years. I would like to quote from an address given at the Grand Masters Conference in Washington, D. C., in 1940, by J. Chris Nungesser, Grand Master of Masons in Louisiana who had some very pertinent things to say about Masonry and youth:

"It is needless to recite here the conditions affecting youth, and the plight that almost twenty millions find themselves in. I take it, that these are matters familiar to each of us. The real question is, what shall we do, we to whom the present welfare and the future destiny of Freemasonry are for the time being, intrusted."

WHAT MASONRY MUST DO!

"Being first alive to the real menace to youth today, we must use our mighty forces to work ceaselessly in the direction of a complete democracy, by constantly inculcating and instituting into the hearts and minds of youth those ideals and longings which inwardly prepare them for the measures of liberty, equality, free speech and free thought. We must maintain our Order and its ideals in their hearts. We must help them in their hour of need, and by the promulgation of planned programs for directed study, leisure and work, we must contribute to the solution of their perplexing problems of life. We must give them reason to support their faith in us, by demonstrating our ideals of charity, persistence, courage, faith and hope, personal responsibility and opportunity. Above all, we must maintain their faith in God, and instill in them a confidence that no plan is

worthy of their support unless it be in perfect harmony with the Divine Plan."

Most Worshipful Brother Nungesser then posed three questions to the Grand Masters at that conference:

1. "Is the Order of DeMolay serving a useful purpose in connection with the Masonic Institutions? To which he answered, 'Proportionate to the interest manifested.'

2. "Is the Order of DeMolay serving its MAXIMUM useful purpose in connection with the Masonic Institution? To which he answered, 'No, because maximum interest has not been devoted to it.'

3. "CAN the Order of DeMolay serve its MAXIMUM useful purpose to the Masonic Institution? To which he answered, 'Yes, if Masonry renders to it the interest and devotion it is capable of.'"

Have we done everything we can for youth in Minnesota? Three hundred fifty of our brothers are sure we have not. These men feel that what has been accomplished is only the beginning of what could be, and should be, a great Masonic Crusade for Youth. Many of these men are, in varying degrees, aware of something else that is deep in the heart of every one of us—a fear of tomorrow that we are reluctant to bring out in the open and express: a fear that comes from the cold shadows of ideologies inimical to the best interests of free peoples and free institutions. The Masons who are devoting their time to youth know the importance of youth in this struggle. They are not trying to instill into these young men the fears that are in their own hearts and in yours, but they are trying to give them a courage born of the knowledge that the liberties we enjoy are WORTH preserving, and CAN AND MUST BE PRESERVED.

May I give some figures? The Research Bulletin of the National Education Association, Volume 25, No. 4, gives the number of school children in the grades and high school of our public school system as 24,319,000.

In order that we may compare this figure with the number in Communist countries, Brother Senator Thye has just had the following sent from the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress:

Children in Schools of Communist-Dominated Europe

Bulgaria	1,012,800
Czechoslovakia	2,791,150
Hungary	1,214,000
Poland	3,828,000
Romania	1,800,000
Yugoslavia	2,000,000

"Thus there are approximately 12 and a half million school children in Communist dominated areas outside of Russia. These in addition to the 35 million school children in Russia, making a total of more than 47 mil-

lion children in Europe who are receiving Communist indoctrination."

HOW COMMUNISM WORKS

I wonder how many of you know what COMMUNIST INDOCTRINATION really means; how it works. I wish it were possible for us to read together an article by Daniel F. Prescott of the University of Maryland in the January, 1950, issue of the National Education Association Journal, "Two Months Behind the Iron Curtain." You would see how in so short a time as two months the school system in Czechoslovakia had been so changed that the pliant mind of youth was already responding to communism as to an opiate. If the figures above are correct almost three million children in Czechoslovakia were subjected to that indoctrination process. Quoting from the Library of Congress report, "A total of more than 47 million children in Europe are receiving Communist Indoctrination." Almost two for every one we have in our public schools.

Against such numbers, who are shut off from all truth, while being molded by the most diabolical propaganda machine ever devised, what can we do? What do we expect to accomplish with the seemingly small group with which we have to work? I would ask you to remember the conversation of the three craftsmen in the second section of the third degree. I would ask you to recall the reply of Brother George Washington to Lafayette when that general was astonished at the small number of American troops, their condition and their meager supplies. "How," asked Lafayette, "do you expect such armies to win a war?" To which Washington replied, "We fight for Liberty."

I would like to see OUR young men imbued with THAT spirit.

CARDINAL VIRTUES OF DeMOLAY

A youth who becomes a member of the Order of DeMolay is consecrated to do his best to live up to seven cardinal virtues: Filial Love, Reverence to God, Courtesy, Comradeship, Fidelity, Cleanness and Patriotism. These are of the essence of DeMolay.

Some of these "cardinal virtues" are emphasized by special observance on a day set aside, known as an "obligatory day." Such an observance is "Patriots Day." For years Masons working with youth have used the day to remind the boys under their guidance of the patriots of America. It comes as near May 1st as can be arranged. You remember that, many years ago, the Communists seized upon May 1st as an ideal time to appeal to the mind of youth. That was before Communism, an ideal, had become Communism, a political monster, to set fear in your heart and mine. I know that many of you were listening to the news over your radio wondering if May Day was to bring gunfire in Europe, and the precipitation of another war.

Next September will witness the institution of another obligatory day, "My Country Day." It is one more

response to the need of our time. For the Masons working in this movement it creates more problems. Have you ever been program chairman for Educational Lodge? Perhaps you had some difficulty, but it was largely a matter of arranging a convenient time for the speaker. This body has many gentlemen who can speak interestingly on many subjects. But let's get specific: Can you speak to boys, in THEIR language? Can you talk to them about their country for twenty minutes and leave them feeling YOU'RE a great guy, so the country that produced you MUST be? Can YOU do that? If you can, see me after this meeting. Since I am responsible for getting speakers for the Owatonna Chapter I'll select as speaker for our September "My Country Day," one of the dozen or so who come to me and volunteer. Of course, you'll have to come at your own expense. We have no fund for such purposes. Once in a while, if a speaker is good enough, the boys give him something for expenses. They did that for Brother Dwight Havens of Rochester. He had them spellbound in the first five minutes. After he had translated baseball into democracy and freedom, and made some big league players greater heroes than Stalin could ever be to a Russian boy, they would have given HIM the lodge. I only wish I could do with your gentlemen what he did with them. If I could, DeMolay would be on the march in Minnesota as never before, and there would be a new comradeship between Masonry and youth, and—Masonry would get the surprise of its venerable life.

What youth could do for Masonry! If there was no such organization as DeMolay the Masons of Minnesota and the world should make it their first endeavor to organize such a movement. From a strictly selfish point of view nothing that could be done would begin to have the revitalizing effect that can come from an influx of young men into our midst. The boy is father to the young man waiting to become an Entered Apprentice. We are fortunate that we need not exert our energies to forming such an organization; it is ready for us in DeMolay.

Let me interject a few more statistics that may suggest why DeMolay may be important to Masonry in general, and how DeMolay IS influencing Masonry, particularly in Minnesota. Some time ago a survey was made in three Blue Lodges in one state and the results reported in the "Masonic Digest" showed the following age enrollment:

Age 20 to 29..... 27 members

Age 30 to 39.....420 members

Age over 50.....225 members

Now I don't know how many Masons we have in the different age brackets in Minnesota, but I believe most of us will agree with the Past Grand Master who said "Masonry does not have too many old men as members, but too few young men."

I would like you to think for a moment what it is that

attracts young men to our order. Among other things could one of the most important be that we DID SOMETHING FOR THEM WHILE THEY WERE YET BOYS? As the years go on it should become an exception when a young man petitioning the Masonic Lodge is not a Past DeMolay.

Sharon Lodge No. 104 of Willmar, Minn., gives a good account of itself in this regard. The present officers who are past members of the Order of DeMolay are:

- Worshipful Master.....Roy Weatherby
- Junior Warden.....Elmo Chaplin
- Senior Deacon.....Randall Pearson
- Junior Deacon.....Dr. W. E. Anderson
- Senior Steward.....Dr. D. H. Gerretson

Two Past Masters complete the roll; Ralph Peterson and D. C. Anderson. Star in the East Lodge No. 33 in Owatonna, my own lodge, has a degree team to put on the Entered Apprentice Degree to candidates who are Past DeMolays. All members of that team are themselves Past DeMolays, and the brother in the East, and the brother in the West, are Past Masters of the Lodge.

Yes, Masonry has a tremendous amount to gain from youth. And how much it has to give! These boys and young men should epitomize the high hopes of Masonry in a world in which the ideals of Masonry will be needed with increasing urgency, and in which those ideals have to be guarded with an ever increasing zeal.

Are the boys conscious of all these things we have discussed? Of course they are not. Past Grand Master Vernon Gates put it well when he wrote in the foreword to the booklet that some of you have received, "No boy ever joins any organization, engages in any activity, or seeks any experience for the purpose of improving his character." Character, as Most Worshipful Brother Gates speaks of it as a by-product of wholesome activities participated in under competent guidance. But that character, the sum total of all the moral virtues we can instill into youth in general, is the most important armour this nation, or any other, ever had. When we lose that in our young people we are doomed to destruction.

Courage springs from love—a love of something, someone, and a love of freedom. The organization or country that gives it is the parent of patriotism.

Any youth movement sponsored by Masons would have to have as its purpose the inculcation of high ideals, and the creation of ways and means toward that end. The organization available to us is dedicated to that high purpose. It IS important that at the beginning of every meeting a boy open the Holy Bible on the altar and remind his comrades why he does so. It is equally important that, immediately following, another boy lay school books on the altar, reminding his comrades what the public schools mean to youth, and democracy.

MASONRY'S CHALLENGE

On many fronts Masonry is facing the most crucial challenge of its long and venerable history. NONE IS MORE IMPORTANT AND NONE WILL BE MORE FAR REACHING, THAN THE WAY IT MEETS ITS CHALLENGE TO YOUTH. That boy today is the citizen, and the Mason, of tomorrow. That lad who ran across your lawn, and trampled your flowers, could be tomorrow's hero. But he'll be a better citizen, a better Mason, and is more likely to have what it takes to be a hero, if he has a helping hand from you today. If you would know what tomorrow is to be like, look into the heart of the youth of today.

A million and half of our young men have knelt at the altar of DeMolay. It should be three times that number. Seven out of every ten of the young men who have their name in the papers for worthy accomplishment are Past DeMolays. The roster of DeMolay is as important and as impressive in the modern world as the roster of Masonry is in the annals of history.

Brothers, I believe it is important that we do more than watch passively while this Masonic youth movement grows. I believe we should help it grow. It is important work, this work with youth.

The orphans of Fascism and Hitlerism are being indoctrinated with a creed more dangerous than any their fathers ever knew. It is necessary that we match them, youth for youth, with those who carry in their heart the love of the things upon which we base our liberties. Is it anything but natural that you, whose early American brethren were so active in laying the foundations of these United States, would be leaders in this endeavor?

On behalf of the three hundred fifty Masons in Minnesota, and the thousands of others throughout the world, who are giving of their time and money to this cause, I offer you Masonry's greatest challenge—YOUTH.

OFFICERS OF EDUCATIONAL, LODGE NO. 1002,

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