

CADET SLOUCH

by Jim Earle



... "I have the feeling we're being watched!"

Communist Youth of Today Are Bored With Their Credo

PRAGUE (AP) — Communist East Europe's "numbed generation" of youth is bored, bored, bored.

Most of them are just apathetic and nihilistic. But some are searching for ways to express themselves. And frequently their search leads them to Western ideas and culture.

Not surprisingly — for often the sons and daughters of the powerful are restless — it is the children of the Communist leaders themselves who are the most discontented.

"Life is so unexciting, I just can't stand it," says a 20-year-old Czech student.

What is the problem? Both Western observers and Communist writers feel that youth finds Communism dull and without any challenges.

Politically, the revolution is over and there's no kick in joining the party. Other radical activities are banned.

They are discouraged from studying obscure religions and becoming Zen Buddhists like California's Dharma Bums. They can't become beatniks or existentialists. All they hear about is Communism.

Most teen-agers have been hearing about Marxism since they were infants and Communism keeps them busy with its cult. They have to attend meetings and discussions in school, in their neighborhoods, in the factories and workshops. They take part in party-stimulated sport, and are persuaded to attend official films and entertainment.

"It is this monotonous emphasis on Communism which creates the problem," said a Western educator touring behind the Iron Curtain.

"The boys and girls have no outlet for their natural youthful rebellion against authority." The Communists themselves admit it.

"Communism has lost its magic for our youth," the Hungarian periodical Kortars noted recently.

"If I were to suggest they go out and sing revolutionary songs they would think I was off my rocker," admitted a writer in the Hungarian newspaper Ifja Kommunista.

"We are worried about the poor a-political consciousness on the part of our youth," said the first secretary of a North Bohemian party committee.

"We take good care of our children, we spoil them, in fact," said a schoolteacher encountered in a Budapest park. "We teach them our Marxist ideas and then what happens? When they grow up to be teen-agers, they are out of control."

This doesn't mean they become juvenile delinquents, although the Communist press complains periodically of gangs of hooligans.

It appears rather that they are "out of control" of Communism because of their passive attitude toward the ideology.

How do they demonstrate dissatisfaction?

A very small number become

"angry young men." They seek out works by modern Western authors or of controversial Polish and Russian writers, like the Soviet Union's Evgeny Evtushenko, and try to emulate them.

Young artists toe the party line to make a living painting pictures acceptable to the regime. But there reportedly is a great deal of abstract art being created in back studios.

You see evidence of interest in such art, even though it is not on display (except in Yugoslavia). A Budapest museum, for instance, was crowded with teen-agers during a recent exhibition of works which almost approached Western non-representational art.

For the majority of youth, however, the way to independent self-expression appears mostly in copying Western fads and fashions, or putting on pressure for more American jazz.

In the big East European cities, you see girls with Jackie Kennedy hairdos, or with pony-tails, flat-heeled shoes and Paris or Italian styles. You see boys in slim, tight, West European pants with Roman haircuts or beards.

Here and there a pair of original blue jeans and Texas boots (smuggled in by friends?), and in Slovakia, a black-jacketed boy with "I like Elvis" on his sleeve.

"Don't your friends in the party tease you," he was asked. "Why, no," he replied. "We all like Presley."



HOWDY from PARIS, FRANCE

By JOHN DELIZ
To the student in Paris, every day means having to show your identity card ten to twelve times and using a flurry of little tickets and coupons.

Of course, the identity card is a card of honor, for the students are greatly admired and respected in France. This country has made it a point of pride to be regarded as the world's focal point for literature and art.

Many people from foreign countries the world over come to France to study, and the government is very proud of it. That is why they subsidize their schools and scholars heavily.

The coupons and the tickets I mentioned are used to travel on all the buses and subways, to get your meals, and to obtain a rebate on many items from eye-glasses to movie and theater tickets.

When you use one of these little tickets, which you buy at school for these services, you show your identity card which proves that you are entitled to use them. That is why you're always identifying yourself.

STUDENTS ARE CLANNISH

Students are clannish in Paris. They cluster around the section of the Left Bank called the Latin Quarter. This name comes from the Medieval university, the Sorbonne, in which the students spoke only Latin until 1789.

That's when they used to spend hours debating about how many angels could sit on the head of a pin. They used to have these logic discussions in Latin at the local cafes and taverns around this area, so the people refer to it until this day as the Latin Quarter.

The teachers here don't earn much, but their profession is one of the most honored by all in France, as well as the other

countries on the continent. They are criticized very little by the students and parents, since everyone knows that their devotion to teaching has forced them to renounce certain material gains that they will never obtain.

In turn they teach with a great deal of verve and each seems to have a definite personality and style in his classes. Since I've been here, I've never looked at my watch in class once, for the time seems light and airy. They really make you think, and they make you work hard doing much research and writing several papers. But you do it willingly.

CLASSES IN OLD BUILDINGS

This summer session at the Sorbonne has many students from the states, Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, and Wellesley are a few of the schools represented. (Of course, A&M is represented, too.)

The school has many new buildings which are like our new ones at home. But those that our classes are in are the original old structures which are of solid stone. The classrooms are

of wood. They are furnished with benches and long wooden tables for desks. There are four floors and no elevators. The administration probably thought that it would be more colorful to allow the summer session to operate in these hallowed halls.

If you put your ear to the floor, I'm sure you could hear Marie Curie's footsteps, quickly followed by Pierre and many other notables who have attended here.

The classrooms are phitheaters and they little as you walk. I prefer to think the voices of past professors praising

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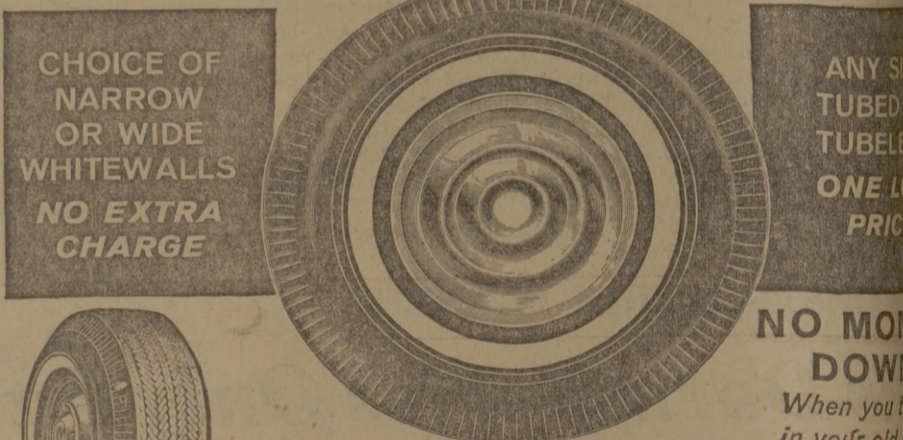
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ROBBIE D. GODWIN EDITOR

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