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PRESS REVIEW.**(Home Affairs).**

By v. MAY.

Recently the question has cropped up time and again in our Press, why it is that the youth of today shows so little interest in public life and in political problems. An article which has just appeared in the "Schaffhauser Nachrichten" makes the following remarks on this subject:

Our politics have become remarkably free from all tension. The policies practised, it is true, are undoubtedly better than their reputation and they achieve many a public task, somewhat sluggishly perhaps, but carefully and conscientiously. But what they lack is alternatives, real alternatives, all those discussions regarding guiding ideas, in accordance with which the problems of the human and the state community are taken in hand and solved. Our political ideas, impregnated as they are by practicality and compromise, possess broken wings; antipodes are brought together. It is alleged that Social Democracy has become bourgeois in character, and the Liberals do not deny having borrowed certain things from the arsenal of Social Democratic postulates. A retrospective survey of the last twelve years recognises, for instance, the retrenchments brought to bear in respect of war economy and war legislation as being the guiding theme of Swiss post-war politics; the reversion to type of the State, which had grown to be over-powerful during the war period, was accomplished quite simply, thanks to the democratic system of Referendums practised in our country. But where is the Party to be found which could boast that it had accomplished this necessary reversion to former conditions as a result of its guiding principles, in order that it might become the guiding thread of the Party's political actions? . . . Political ideas are growing paler, their contours are becoming obliterated and their effective power is becoming weaker. Perhaps that is the reverse side of the practicability now possessed by our policies, a tribute to the pace of our times, which demands practical and, above all, rapid solutions. Perhaps this development is inevitable, and yet, with it there also vanishes from politics that element which formerly proved the most attractive to young people: the ideal, and an energy inspired by ideals.

An attempt at a brief diagnosis — so the "Schaffhauser Nachrichten" continues — leads to a

conclusion which must cause us to moderate a perhaps too severe judgment of the "political lack of participation" on the part of the younger generation. This lack of participation is due, undoubtedly, to a great extent, to the effects of rapidly changing circumstances, which no one can avoid entirely and which push many a conception and rule, which has been handed down to us, into the twilight of questionability. Regarding to what extent the fading away of the ideal contents of politics is bound up with a "fault", it is for the older generation to proceed first of all with an examination of conscience in order to find out whether, and how, they themselves administered their ideal possessions and heritage, and how they passed them on. Moreover, it would prove a delusion were one to try to explain the relative lack of participation in practical politics as being simply a lack of participation on the part of the young people. Those holding an office, and whoever prepares himself for the bearing of responsibility in public life, are observed far more and more closely than is imagined generally. Less, perhaps, in regard to the slogans and precepts which they utter, and more in regard to their behaviour as men. . . Here we might do well to mention that the power of a living example has a great effect even in times of spiritual unrest and in times of idealistic aridity. It offers the representatives of politics and of public life the chance to prove their worth in changing circumstances. But, it also raises a question of conscience for all those who complain of "the lack of participation on the part of the young people in public life."



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