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ECONOMICS FOR THE MILLIONS

THE idea that economics can be an interesting subject as well as educative, not merely as a professional specialty, but from the viewpoint of the ordinary person, will doubtless strike many readers as improbable. Only the first few paragraphs of an encyclopedia article on economics are sufficient to discourage most people, who set the book down with either an expression of impatience or a feeling of intellectual inferiority. In any event, economics does not get studied seriously by anyone except those with particular professional or personal reasons for "research," and the reason for this is quite plain from the "science" of economics itself.

We are confident, however, that MANAS readers will find the economic thinking of M. K. Gandhi intensely interesting, not only because of its non-technical approach, but chiefly by reason of the fact that it takes for its subject the welfare of man, as distinguished from the wealth of nations. Further, although those who undertake a serious study of Gandhi's ideas on economics will probably begin with the feeling that India's problems are entirely different from those of the Western world, it is equally likely that before they are done with their reading, scores of suggestive comparisons between the two civilizations will have occurred. For it seems evident that Gandhi sought to profit by the lessons that may be learned from Western industrialization: he wanted to avoid, for India, the effects it had already produced in Europe and America.

In this account of Gandhian economics there will be little "system" and few statistics. The object will be to present a few ideas which seem to be the keynotes, leaving it to the reader to pursue the subject further.

First, take the idea of Value. A rupee (worth, say, 30 cents in American money) will buy food for one day for an Indian laborer and his family; it will also buy a cigar for a rich man. From this illustration J. C. Kumarappa deduces a basic principle of the Gandhian economy:

> Therefore, when we take a rupee from a poor man and pass it on to a rich man, we are reducing the human value of the satisfaction that that amount can give; whilst the reverse process where the value of a cigar is made to satisfy the hunger of family for a whole day increases its human value. The satisfaction of human wants in this case has increased the value of the rupee. in the same manner, even our governmental expenses should be so planned that the taxes that are collected from the people should not be used to benefit the rich; but the wealth should flow from the rich to the poor. This, in itself, will enrich the national wealth of the country even though there may be no extra production.

From 1908, when Gandhi first published his *Hind Swaraj* (Indian Home Rule), until his death last January, he preached the doctrine of economic self-sufficiency for India. This had the twofold purpose of defeating the exploitation of India as a market for the British Empire and restoring the original balanced economy of the country through the development of cottage industries. The hand-spinning of yarn from cotton fibres was the foundation of this program. "Spin," said Gandhi, "and you will get *Swaraj* [home rule]." In 1938, thirty years after this idea was first introduced, the All-India Spinners Association was able to report annual production *of khadi* (hand-woven cotton cloth) in volume which was about 70 per cent of the capacity of an ordinary mill, and which gave employment to 24,000 per cent as many Indians as a mill would employ—persons who would otherwise have been idle. And, according to a recent analysis, the program has "created in some 50,000 villages a kind of primitive equalitarian socialism."

It must be remembered that an enormous proportion (60 per cent) of the Indian people seldom has enough to eat. The population of

India is 304 million (and 85 million in Pakistan), which increases 15 per cent every ten years. There is seven-tenths of an acre of arable land per person—a distribution which cannot meet the food requirements of the country without changes in the present system of cultivation. Indians now have a life-expectancy of 23 years. The average annual income is $18, the peasant's income, $15. The typical peasant lives in a grass hut and has no change of clothing.

India has vast untapped resources of coal and iron and potential water-power of 27 million horsepower. It is natural, therefore, that many Indian leaders are anxious to industrialize the new nation. One of the latter has said: "We shall do in our country what Japan did in the fifty years before the last war." This writer (K. Rama Rao in the Nagpur *Times* for June 20) proposes the exchange of raw materials for machinery and other capital goods from non-imperialistic countries like Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Sweden, and from Japan and Germany, and he wants India "generally to become the industrial centre of South-east Asia," as prosperous in that part of the world "as the United Kingdom and the United States are in their own regions."

To this eager optimism which looks forward to a rapidly industrialized India, Gandhi and his followers have opposed the argument that the industrial society tends to be a dehumanized society; that in the West it has led to imperialism and war; and that, finally, even if it be admitted that there is nothing wrong with machinery in itself, the Indian people have not the moral discipline, as yet, to cope with the tremendous social complications which industrialization always brings in its wake. On this question, Gandhi has written:

> Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for all mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and less every day for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a fleabite. And if that is the state in England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialization. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must, if it becomes industrialized—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, *viz.*, that we can find work for our 300 million unemployed, but England can find none for its 3 millions, and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England? The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources—natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pygmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages. And in the course of a few years, the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?

This passage, obviously written before the war, may need a little development for its meaning to be clear. When Gandhi speaks of 300 million unemployed in India, he means the partial idleness of the entire rural population at certain seasons—which his spinning and weaving program was intended to overcome. He is certainly right in speaking of the insoluble problem of unemployment in heavily industrialized nations. Those bywords of the 30's, "overproduction" and "under-consumption," are evidence enough that an excess of manufactured goods over available purchasing power spells depression, unemployment and want for countries like the United States. And the Indian analysis of the British Empire is simple and accurate: England, the "workshop of the world," *must* have foreign markets for the output of her factories, simply to survive.

Gandhi says that industrialization must seek to eliminate competition. A major evil of modern industrial civilization is monopoly, and its

octopus-like offspring in international trade, the cartel. These are means of eliminating competition. War is the final instrument of industrial "progress," by which the "standard of living" of the industrial society is protected. Who can forget the hoarse whispers, before Pearl Harbor, about the Japanese threat to the trade of the United States? The Japanese, it was said, resentfully, do not have our standard of living and can undersell us.

To return to the basic problem in India, what about the relative cost of hand-produced cotton cloth and the product of the mills? A yard of cotton grown in a door-yard and spun by an old woman and woven in an Indian village may be considered to cost a rupee, while the mill can produce it for two annas. This is 30 cents against about 4 cents.

But the Gandhian economist will say this: There are vast hidden subsidies behind that price of 2 annas. First, there was the extensive research necessary to develop the type of cotton required by the mills "long staple cotton"—and this research, a government undertaking, was paid for by taxes. The cotton, after it has been grown, must be shipped by rail to seaports. The railroads and ports were built at public expense—out of taxes. Transport charges do not cover construction and maintenance costs. Under British rule, freight rates were fixed to facilitate low-cost shipment of raw materials from India to England, so that the costs of the Manchester mill were reduced at the expense of the Indian public. British trade, of course, could not proceed without the British Navy and naval bases to keep the seas "safe" for commercial enterprise, and the mill owner pays comparatively little for this enormous cost. One may ask whether, if all the public services contributing to the low cost of the mill cloth were strictly computed and charged to the mill, its yard of cotton, delivered in India, would be as cheap as the village weaver's product. "Khadi," on the other hand, says Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, "can be said to be an honest product as it bears all its own expenditure."

This logic, of course, attacks the economics of imperialism, and another sort of analysis would be necessary with respect to textile's produced in Indian mills. But it could easily be shown that a nation which believes that an industrial society is the "good" society will invariably favor and subsidize industrial undertakings, so that at least a measure of validity remains in the argument. There is the further fact that it will take many years to establish enough factories to clothe all India adequately, while hand-spinning and weaving can be undertaken immediately, at little initial cost, but with countless benefits to individual and village life.

It should be stated that spinning and weaving are not the only handicraft industries in the Gandhi program. Hand paper-making, gur-making (a crude sugar syrup), oil-pressing, soap-making, woodworking and bee-keeping are other activities now being taught to the villagers by the All-India Village Industries Association. Spinning, however, is basic: it is the "discipline" of the national program for self-sufficiency and self-respect. And it is certainly more useful to those who undertake it than the discipline of an army—the daily drill and other elements of military morale, such as field maneuvers.

The Gandhian approach would never allow large-scale industry to usurp any function that could be performed in the village communities, and it would discourage the importation of any consumer goods that can be produced locally, on the land or in the community. A writer in *Harijan* for May 2, criticizing the Government's industrial policy announced in April, observed that while the policy took some notice of the idea of local self-sufficiency—

> the full and far-reaching implications of decentralized cottage industrialism based on the Gandhian ideals of simplicity, non-exploitation, and human values have evidently not been Property realized. It has not been realized, for example, — that industrial

> decentralization on a cooperative basis is the only rational and practical solution in the modern world for the pressing problems of full employment, national defense and industrial harmony between labour and capital. No amount of cry for more production would be effective without making workers the owners of instruments of production in numberless cottage cooperative factories adjacent to green fields and tiny workshops. The only feasible solution of our economic ills, therefore, is the Gandhian formula, i.e., nationalization of key industries and public utilities, and bold decentralization 'of all consumer goods industries. The change should, indeed, be gradual. But a plea for gradualness should not be a device for maintaining the *status quo* as long as possible.

Nationalization of key industries and public utilities is insisted upon for the reason that these operations are impossible without government assistance in one form or another. The people at large pay taxes for the support of all such enterprises; further, large-scale industry inevitably controls the lives of many individuals and ought, therefore, to be a public responsibility.

Headquarters of the cottage industries program to carry out Gandhi's ideas are at Wardha, the Central Provinces, India. There a school conducted by the All-India Village Industries Association trains students who come from all parts of India to learn spinning and other cottage industries, after which they scatter over the land to develop these crafts in the villages. Dr. J. C. Kumarappa is one of those in charge of this educational work, and his small book, *The Gandhian Economy*, reflects the mature thought of one who is giving all his energies to the reconstruction of India from within, on a self-help basis. Following is the sort of commentary to be found in this study:

> The capitalistic system depends for its development on the helplessness of its customers. The more helpless the customer, the more sure it is of its markets. It seeks to kill all initiative in the customer. Indeed, the capitalistic structure is raised on a foundation of the tombstones of consumers' initiative. In cottage industries the principal desideratum is the consumer's initiative; we expect everyone to be resourceful.

The American reader interested in the Gandhian economy will profit by reading this book. (To buy it, send a dollar bill to All-India Village Industries Association, Maganvadi, Wardha, C. P., India.) With it, he should read Ralph Borsodi's *Flight from the City,* Arthur E. *Morgan's Small Community Economics,* and the long discourse of the Indian physician on the needs of the Indian people as reported by Edmond Taylor in *Richer by Asia* (Part IV, Chapt. 4).

The point of this reading is that, altogether, it will result in an unavoidable challenge to many of the assumptions, economic and otherwise, of the Western world. They are assumptions which, we think, need to be reexamined and for the most part discarded. These books help to provide the perspective, both moral and practical, that will make the re-examination intelligent and effective.

Letter from **GERMANY**

BERLIN.—An article in a recent copy of the British-licensed paper, *Die Welt*, casts an interesting light on certain conditions in Germany, today. It deals with the situation at Bergen-Belsen, formerly a big concentration camp, situated between Hamburg and Hannover in the British zone. Near the camp there was also a tank division school, the military barracks of which is now occupied by about 8,000 Jewish people—Displaced Persons. In the old concentration camp live German refugees from the Eastern provinces of Germany.

While in former times—under Hitler—soldiers and slave laborers lived side by side, today, in the same place, Jewish people live in the barracks and German refugees in the concentration camp. Many of the Jews—about 80% of the inmates of the barracks—suffer from diseases which will mostly accompany them for their life. These Jewish people were also encircled by barbed wire, until they removed this wire by their own decision (without permission from the British or German authorities) and sold the wire on the black market!

The German refugees wanted to plant vegetables on the mass graves of victims of the former KZ, but were prevented by official decision. These mass graves were so badly made that shreds of clothes and pale bones of the dead can be seen and stepped on. A proposal to create a grove over the graves and to plant trees and shrubs was discouraged.

What is the conclusion from these facts?

The Nazi barbarism of slave labor has been abolished, the slave laborers themselves are mostly gone. But the underlying causes are not gone; they have only changed. Instead of the brutally fulfilled needs of war production, there are, today, simple want and artificial overpopulation which create the same inhuman effects and demands. The open cruelty against man has changed to a protracted and hidden cruelty: cruelty against the Jews, cruelty against simple people which the course of war has driven from their homes. The barbarism of the Nazis has only changed its face, as can be clearly seen at Bergen-Belsen, and elsewhere. . . .

(I think it necessary to uncover these facts and to make them known to people who are interested in the decent treatment of human beings.)

Meanwhile, the eyes and the hearts of the world are watching Berlin, now beleaguered for the third time during the past ten years. The first battle for Berlin was during the Allied air assault, when huge concentrations of aircraft unloaded their deadly weapons. Next came the frontal attack by the Russians, with all its destruction. And now, with the so-called "cold war," a new and prolonged suffering has begun for Berlin.

It is difficult to keep one's head clear with all this fighting by press and radio, so voluble with loaded arguments, and so silent about the real interests and the real background of this new battle which rages in and about Berlin, and because of Berlin. In the great struggle for power between two huge nations, the population of about 3.25 millions becomes a pawn which is moved about on the field of politics and diplomatic action. There is no refuge to which modern man can withdraw from the field of power politics. Nor, on the other hand, can he fight for his own rights as a human being. He is too weak. He must choose between joining one or the other of the two fighting giants, and keeping neutral, without hope for the success of his own cause.

The solution for this desperate situation can only come about from the coincidence of three developments which move toward the same point and are related to each other: (1) The development of bigger contradictions, which finally become unbearable for everybody; (2) the development of similar experiences among all people and nations, enabling them to organize

effective cooperation; (3) the development of human action based on moral principles, which has its fundamental stimulus in interest in man himself—not in power politics, mass production, rearmament, and so on.

But today, totalitarianism is still the main foe of mankind. Here lies the biggest danger for all of us. Human action, therefore, will first be directed against this menace—without forgetting the potential totalitarianism in the present adversaries of obvious totalitarianism. Fortunately, the totalitarianism which now seems so strong in its actions is actually weak in its, core and in its future.

Totalitarianism will break down at last. The task for human action will still remain, until the populations of the big cities of the world are no more regarded as the pawns on the field of power politics.

That is my steadfast opinion.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

MAN AND ERA

BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH has honored Winston Churchill. There was evidently no doubt in the minds of those who weigh the ingredients calculated to suit American reading tastes—BoM judges—that Churchill's War Memoirs made "a natural." *Life* magazine also, has just finished serializing Volume One, entitled *The Gathering Storm*, and when both *Life* and BoM extend themselves simultaneously, we have in hand something that will impress the great reading public.

In reading *The Gathering Storm*, one may be reminded of Frank Capra's *The Best Years of Our Lives.* Everything that is conventionally staunch and necessary and true either happens or is reflectively stated as a matter of belief by somebody. If Mr. Churchill's respectful readers unaccountably find themselves feeling as though they were in a familiar sort of vacuum, this is only because there are really very few things in the modern world as simple—i.e., staunch, necessary and true—as the things Mr. Churchill and a lot of other people would have us believe in.

The staunchest thing of all about Mr. Churchill's Memoirs, actually, is his frank egoism. Nor is this comment intended disparagingly. Mr. Churchill tells us that he has always been able to see world events clearly, that. his actions during the most difficult periods of World War II were impeccably correct, and that he is the most able chronicler of the history of the times. Mr. Churchill is not a fool for saying these things, nor is he inaccurate for the very many men who accept the major premises of his personal philosophy. Churchill has always been an astute politician, able to calculate to a nicety the proper moves in a balance-of-power struggle between the nations. In comparison with the peculiarly shifting pacifist sentiments of Ramsey MacDonald and the Messiah-of-Peace complex of Neville Chamberlain, Churchill's was the most consistent perspective. Churchill has never been confused by alternatives. His world was primarily that of empire and military preparedness. He saw no alternatives. The world was run in a certain way and would continue to be run in that way. As statesmen and businessmen made mistakes, the seeds of world conflict would inevitably develop and have to be dealt with in the traditional way. Churchill was the great realist of World War II. He accepted the dicta of circumstances without shock, rebellion, or frustration, because they were all a part of THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS. Egoism, incidentally, belongs in that world and is thoroughly justifiable, there. The idealisms incident to the war, whether Gandhi's or anyone else's, were out of place. The man of the hour was the man who had mastered the art of Acceptance of the Status Quo.

For all these reasons, it is extremely difficult to comment helpfully on the details of Mr. Churchill's book. *The New Yorker* for Aug. 10 did a sophisticated job of review in calling special attention to Mr. Churchill's elaborate preparation for popularizing his autobiography—and incidentally brought to light an instance in which he deleted and changed certain remarks about Russia, recasting the passage to suit better the present official British-American line. But poking fun at Churchill leads us nowhere. He is a whole era as much as he is a man—an era which needs comprehensive understanding rather than either scorn or admiration. As a statesman, he personifies nearly every one of the conventionally commendable traits. We do have a feeling, however, that W. C. availed himself of the last historical opportunity to impress people with those traits. The traditional assumptions and the traditional lives of soldiers and diplomats are somehow unable, today, to encompass the social contradictions and the political confusions which the twentieth century continues to generate.

COMMENTARY
THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT

EVEN if a friendly critic had not mentioned it, we should feel inclined to admit that last week's lead article, "The Agricultural Revolution," was packed too full of facts for the comfort of the reader. A general impression or conclusion was difficult to obtain.

Returning, then, to the complex subject of the 160-acre limitation: Here was a problem requiring the maximum of candor, yet which has been confused by evasions almost from the beginning. Insofar as one can generalize at all, it seems that the problem has been seriously enlarged by the aggressive activities of pressure groups representing the large landowners and by the initial evasiveness of the Bureau of Reclamation. For reasons of expediency, apparently, both sides at the outset avoided an honest facing of the problem—a policy which inevitably frustrates the democratic process, for how can the public form an intelligent opinion, unless at least one side in the controversy provides unbiased facts?

The Central Valley Project was originally a State undertaking. The California legislature passed the Central Valley Project Act in 1933, but because of the enormous expenditure involved, aid was sought from the Federal Government. No one seems to know why the effort to secure WPA funds was unsuccessful; in any event, by 1935 representatives of California were asking the Federal Government to take over the Project and late that year the President approved its construction. In allocating funds, he specified that those funds "shall be reimbursable in accordance with the reclamation laws," which meant, among other things, compliance with the 160-acre limitation by those receiving Project water. This is the unequivocal meaning of Federal Reclamation Law, in force since 1902.

While both the specialists in California irrigation and the officials of the Reclamation Bureau must have understood the meaning of this phrase used by the President—a phrase which appeared repeatedly in subsequent appropriation acts applying to the Project—almost no public mention of its significance occurred between 1935 and 1943. Instead, California spokesmen let it be understood that there was no serious objection to Federal control of the Project—the main thing was to get the water flowing. The Reclamation Bureau, likewise, did not publicize the effect that the 160-acre limitation would have on California farm lands. Both sides obviously wanted the Project, and quite possibly both were waiting to introduce a "get-tough" policy when it was further along toward completion.

Then, about 1943, the ugly truth came out. The Bureau declared it would enforce the 160-acre limitation and the big farmers began their revolt. Congressional committees listened to long harangues and looked at competing arrays of statistics. One set of figures, supporting the Bureau's position, exaggerated the "bigness" of California farms by including large areas which by no stretch of the imagination could be transformed into good agricultural land by the Central Valley Project. To the statistics-happy but persevering layman, this method of persuasion seemed a grave mistake, for if Department officials will color their facts to “prove" a point—upon whom, in so complicated a controversy, can the ordinary citizen rely?

Opponents of the measure, in turn, laid great stress on the assertion that the 160-acre limitation cannot be enforced. Senator Sheridan Downey, of California, who wants the 160-acre limitation repealed, claims that he bows to no man in his yearning to help the small farmer, or the veteran who wants to begin a new life on the land; but, he says, technical obstacles make the application of the 160-acre limitation to California lands impossible. This, at least, has been the major emphasis of his argument, continued through numerous hearings. (On this point, one wonders how soon the "technical difficulties" would be worked out, if this meant more profits for the

large farmers instead of a threat to the unity of their holdings.)

Here, we leave the problem to our readers. It is, we think, the natural fruit of a desire to "put something over," in place of attempting to meet a difficult situation with impartiality and cooperation. The factional attitudes are now mature, the interest-groups consolidated. While the outcome of the national election in November may "settle" this particular issue for the time being, the *type* of problem which it represents will remain. It is, basically, a problem of human attitudes, of honesty and moral consistency—matters that most men suppose have little practical bearing on the social issues of the day. Yet, in our opinion, social issues are composed of little else.

CHILDREN
. . . AND OURSELVES

SINCE we have been discussing moral education, it seems necessary to give further mention to problems relating to "sex." We do not particularly like to do this, since we share with others the feeling that "sex" shouldn't need to be talked about; and it shouldn't, we think, ideally, for none of its difficulties is ever solved by discussions limited to that subject. Nevertheless, a great deal of talking will have to be done before this very fact is realized, particularly in relation to education.

It is significant that the word morality, to the average person, immediately suggests relationships between the sexes. Though there is no "special morality" for sex any more than for any other department of human living, there may indeed be subtleties in regard to all emotional involvements, calling for the application of moral principles in a very subtle and delicate manner. Perhaps we do have, here, the number one moral situation. People probably think of morality as inevitably dealing with "sex" because it is the habit of religion, particularly of Christianity, to curb physical desire through employment of threat. But there can be no morality in any sphere of human activity unless there is first provided a rational basis for principles of morality in general. Nor does the emotion of fear allow us to grasp any principle. Why, of all the "commandments" of churches, have those demanding restraint of the fleshly appetites received the widest attention—and the greatest excitement in fulmination—from the pulpit?

Morality, in these terms, apparently, consists almost entirely of fearing and therefore *not* doing certain things—an influence just as degrading psychologically to civilization as to the child. Christian culture, for instance, since the days when its moralizing attitudes were first consolidated, has been obsessed with matters of sex, for negation leads toward obsession. No matter with what sincerity the man of the church proceeds as an educator, it will be difficult for him not to convey this spirit of negation in respect to all "desires." His objective, that of teaching restraint of the purely selfish or animalistic impulses, may be a constructive one, yet if he relies mainly on prohibitions, he will fail to allow the conscious moral sense of the child to develop. The fearful moralist is apt to be distrustful of the choices which the child might make if frankly given all of the alternatives of conduct. If he believed more strongly in *moral man,* the moralist would not moralize; he would simply state his credo and await the result. But belief in the Original Sin makes him feel that men are pre-ordained to drift in the "wrong" direction.

This philosophy will support a medieval theocracy, but it will not support democracy or the brotherhood of man. These latter rely upon a trust in the inherent integrity of the free human spirit. A specific moral superiority of Eastern culture over Western lies in the fact that the former traditionally shows a truer perception of the psychological rule that men can neither be moral nor teach morality if they moralize to others. But in the West, "God-fearing" educators have always felt that "sex education" is an extremely simple matter; "sex " is evil, and that is that.

One school of thought affirms a position opposite to that of the traditional Christian, yet apparently thinks, also, that sex education is a relatively easy matter. In a Town Meeting of the Air (held at Claremont College, July 13) on the subject, "Should we teach sex education in our Public Schools?" the speakers for the affirmative held that "competent" teachers are often better qualified for an impersonal approach to these matters than tongue-tied parents unable to communicate with their adolescent offspring. But is there not an unconscious assumption behind this view—namely, that sex is largely a biological matter to be best unfolded by a laboratory mind?

Some teachers may be better qualified than some parents to create the confidence that leads to free questioning, but the large classes of secondary schools make nearly impossible the sort of friendly communication that is desirable. It is amazing to us that advocates of more sex education in the schools should pass by so lightly this difference between the home and the school, in view of the seriousness of beginning such discussion without first assuring the opportunity for further interchange, sometimes at a very personal level. If there were *good* teachers for every three or four children, we might then expect parents to do an even better counseling job or leave this task to the schools. But that is not the present situation.

It is true, of course, as the affirmative side in the Town Meeting debate argued, that children are going to learn various facts concerning sex somewhere, and that it is simply a question of under what auspices the initial smattering of data begins to accumulate in the child's mind. If the source of peculiarly warped information is another child, as is usually the case, that source *can* be reached and the character of its influence altered beneficially, even if home circumstances are themselves sometimes responsible. If the teacher of a normally populated class room strives to be percipient, he or she may be able to suspect those few from whom the first boastful talk of "inside information" on sex comes and try to establish relationships of intimacy and confidence with them, so that an opportunity will be provided for revision of whatever attitudes are resulting in pornographic gossip. Every parent, moreover, may consider the needs of his child's playmates, as well as the needs of his own child, and seek to establish a relationship of confidence with the "neighbor's child" in the interest of all the young people in the environs.

Such thoughts can be constructive accompaniments to the feeling on the part of many that the details of biology should be presented to the individual child only when that individual child *calls* for the information in some way or other. If a classroom of pupils loved and trusted the wisdom of a teacher sufficiently to *ask* for discussion of adolescent problems, the arguments for "sex in the classroom" would be thoroughly valid.

FRONTIERS
A BILLION ACRES

WHEN the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth in 1620, their first act to provide for their future economic security was to steal the seed corn of the Indians, which had been carefully stored in underground pits for preservation until the next planting season. Devoutly sure that a benign Providence watched over their destiny, the Pilgrims offered prayerful gratitude to their God for guiding them to the spot where the Indian corn lay hidden. But with or without the help of God, if it had not been for the Indians, the Pilgrims probably would have all died off in the first year of the venture. Farming in the New World was not the same as caring for a tidy English garden, and the instruction from the Indians in the growing of corn was vital to the survival of the colony. As a matter of fact, over the centuries, the, contributions of the Indians to American farming have aggregated to more than half our present agricultural wealth. The white man, according to Edwin L. Walker of the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles, has not developed in America a single important agricultural product from its wild state (excepting, possibly, guayule), while the Indians developed more than 20 major crops.

But neither the Pilgrim Fathers nor their descendants who drove the Indians from the country ever thought of being grateful to their early benefactors, who were treated, at best, with barely concealed contempt. What right had these heathens to respect from Christian Englishmen? The day of Thanksgiving, early set aside by the Colonists for special communication of appreciation to their God, might better have been devoted to reflection on their immeasurable debt to the Indians. Instead, the help the Pilgrims accepted, and the lands they took, simply impressed them as their due, for were they not, in Governor Bradford's shy phrase, "ye pure & unspottyed Lambes of ye Lord"?

The view of the English settlers toward the rights of the Indians, as occupants of the land, is effectively expressed by the participants in a Milford, Connecticut, town meeting in 1640:

> "Voted, that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; voted, that the earth is given to the Saints; voted, that we are the Saints."

Endowed with this sturdy faith, the Pilgrims, like the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, recognized no serious obstacle to appropriating Indian lands, as soon as their military strength would permit. Procedures were various, but the basic pattern was nearly everywhere the same in principle. The Indian conception of land-ownership was that the land belonged to everybody. The idea of a private right vested in the land was unknown to them. *Use* of the land gave a kind of title, but no one could acquire broad land rights permanently, nor could land be "sold," in the manner that the English were accustomed to buying and selling it. When the Indians accepted trinkets or beads from the white settlers, in exchange for vast areas of land, they had no idea that they would be forever dispossessed of its use. Sometimes land was acquired without any transaction at all, as when a party of Pilgrims asked the Indians who owned a desirable tract on Cape Cod. The Indians replied that nobody owned it, meaning "everybody," and the Pilgrims announced, "In that case, it is ours."

Today, a hungry Navaho trying to support his family on the Reservation—admitted by the U.S. Indian Commissioner to include "some of the worst lands in the United States"—might puzzle his mind, if he could read history, over the contradictions between the profession and the practice of the great American Democracy which traces its ideals back to "the Pilgrim Fathers." For in about 300 years, the Indians of North America ceded almost a billion acres of land to the people of the United States, with little or no significant departure from the method of exchange originally established by the pious first settlers of New England.

Most recent example is the expulsion of four hundred families of the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation, in North Dakota, from lands they had lived on for three generations land guaranteed to them by the Government of the United States "forever." These remnants of the Sioux nation had the misfortune to have developed farms and a livestock industry on rich bottom lands that are now to be flooded by Missouri River water backing up behind the Garrison Dam—a vast project of the Department of the Interior. About 155,000 acres of Indian land will be inundated, and last year the War Department offered the Fort Berthold Indians in exchange a tract of similar extent, but far inferior in resources—much less river bottom and timber, less irrigable acreage, and poorer in minerals. The Tribal Business Council rejected the offer in December, 1946. Then, last May, the Indians signed a contract with the Government accepting a cash payment for their lands. It is said by critics of the Government policy that the amount paid is less than half the value of the Indian holdings. We have no way of determining the measure of the injustice in this forced sale, but even if the $5,105,625 given to the Indians is generous, the transaction is still one more illustration of how the "march of progress" continues to uproot and push aside the Indians from their country and their homes.

The Navahos provide the best current illustration of the impersonal cruelty of this historic process, for they, unlike some other tribes of Indians, are rapidly increasing in number, while their natural modes of gaining a livelihood, through a combination of causes, are being destroyed. The Navaho Reservation is made up of about 25,000 square miles in New Mexico, Arizona and Utah, said to be the most eroded land in the country. Sheep-herding has been the major support of the Navahos for generations, and today, due partly to a necessary Government program of grazing restriction, this source of income is disappearing. A report on the Navahos made to the Commissioner of Indian affairs last January stated:

> While it has been estimated that it takes 250 sheep per family to survive on a bare subsistence basis, there are only 129 families out of a total of 9,334 [depending upon agricultural income] having between 201 to 300 sheep. Families having less than 100 sheep each number 6,134.

The Navahos are now the largest Indian Tribe in the United States, totalling about 61,000 persons. This represents a population increase of 600 percent since 1868, which has brought about a serious decline in living standards. According to Secretary Krug of the Department of the Interior, the Navaho Reservation, even under maximum development, can support only 35,000 persons "at a minimum subsistence living." The average family income is less than $400 a year. There are 24,000 Navaho children of school age, but school facilities for only 7,500. In 1868, the United States pledged itself in a treaty with the Navaho Tribe to provide a schoolhouse and teacher for each 30 Navaho children. The Government is now more than 500 schools behind in its program of education for the Navahos. Last year Clinton P. Anderson, Secretary of Agriculture, pointed out that while arrangements were then being made to increase the food supplies to the German people from 1500 calories a day to 1800 calories, the Navaho diet averages less than 1200 calories a day. According to doctors on the Reservation, most of the patients admitted to hospitals are suffering from malnutrition.

The present crisis in the lives of the Navahos was recently brought to public attention by a series of articles in the Denver *Post.* The Hearst press picked up the lead, and soon, as Carey McWilliams suggests in the *Nation* for July 17, the plight of the Navahos was turned into an "isolationist" argument for help to "native Americans" before proceeding with the reconstruction of Europe. This was followed by a counter-blast in the Los Angeles *Times* (non-Hearst), in which a staff writer, Ed Ainsworth, suggested that the economic problems of the

happy, carefree Navahos had been much exaggerated, and that, actually, the efforts of a Department of the Interior consultant to introduce consumer cooperatives among the Indians was a wicked plan to "sovietize" the Navahos. That non-political communal ownership of the land was the foundation of Indian culture for centuries before the white men came to America doubtless would not interest the Los Angeles *Times*, which, instead of giving an intelligent evaluation of the plan for economic rehabilitation of the Navahos, chose to minimize their tragic need for the purposes of a new "red" scare. (MANAS readers are invited to write to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for a copy of the report, *An Industrial Program for the Navaho Indian Reservation*, to learn what was actually recommended for the assistance of these mistreated Americans.)

Finally, some basic facts about the American Indians: Today, they total about 400,000—half the estimated 800,000 living on the continent at the time of Columbus. Contrary to popular impression, all Indians are American citizens, and have been, since 1924, when Congress made them so by law. While Arizona and New Mexico withheld the right to vote from the Indian residents of those states, last July the Supreme Court of Arizona ruled that reservation Indians may vote, disallowing the contention that Indians are "wards of the Government" with respect to their right to the franchise. A similar action is being brought in New Mexico. Actually, the "guardianship" feature of the relationship of the Federal Government with the Indians involves mostly the carrying out of contracts made with the Tribes, under which services are rendered by the Government to repay for the loss of their lands. Under the law, an Indian is as free as any other American citizen.

Since the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the Federal Indian Service has been honestly attempting to undo, by whatever means seem possible, the crimes of the United States against the American Indians. But a Government bureau is limited in its benevolent activities both by Congress and by public apathy. The attack of the Los Angeles *Times* on the Bureau's plan for economic aid to the Navahos is a case in point. More than 80 years ago, when the Rev. H. B. Whipple, Bishop of Minnesota, went to Washington to appeal for reforms in the Indian policy of the nation, he received this indirect reply from Secretary Stanton:

> "What does the Bishop want? If he came here to tell us that our Indian system is a sink of iniquity, tell him we know it. Tell him the United States never cures a wrong until the people demand it; and when the hearts of the people are reached, the Indian will be saved."

This answer, we think, still applies.