

12-1-1966

A Way Out Supplement No. 1

Mildred Loomis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/greenrevolution>

Recommended Citation

Loomis, Mildred (1966) "A Way Out Supplement No. 1," *Green Revolution*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 12 , Article 11.
Available at: <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/greenrevolution/vol4/iss12/11>

This Notice is brought to you for free and open access by Research Commons at Kutztown University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Green Revolution by an authorized editor of Research Commons at Kutztown University. For more information, please contact czerny@kutztown.edu.

Flight From The City

By Ralph Borsodi

(continued from last month)

In certain important respects our experiment was very different from the ordinary back-to-the-land adventure. We quickly abandoned all efforts to raise anything to sell. After the first year, during which we raised some poultry for the market, this became an inviolable principle. We produced only for our consumption. If we found it difficult to consume or give away any surplus, we cut down our production of that particular thing and devoted the time to producing something else which we were then buying. We used machinery wherever we could, and tried to apply the most approved scientific methods to small-scale production. We acted on the theory that there was always some way of doing what we wanted to do, if we only sought long enough for the necessary information, and that efficient machinery would pay for itself in the home precisely as it pays for itself in the factory.

The part which domestic machinery has played in making our adventure a success cannot be too strongly emphasized. Machinery enabled us to eliminate drudgery; it furnished us skills which we did not possess and it reduced the costs of production both in terms of money and in terms of labor. Not only do we use machines to pump our water, to do our laundry, to run our refrigerator—we use them to produce food, to produce clothing, to produce shelter.

Some of the machines we have purchased have proved unsatisfactory—something which is to be expected since so little real thought has been devoted by our factory-dominated inventors and engineers to the development of household equipment and domestic machinery. But taking the machines and appliances which we have used as a whole, it is no exaggeration to say that we started our quest of comfort with all the discomforts possible in the country, and, because of the machines, we have now achieved more comforts than the average prosperous city man enjoys.

What we have managed to accomplish is the outcome of nothing but a conscious determination to use machinery for the purpose of eliminating drudgery from the home and to produce for ourselves enough of the essentials of living to free us from the thrall of our factory-dominated civilization.

What are the social, economic, political, and philosophical implications of such a type of living? What would be the consequence of a widespread transference of production from factories to the home?

If enough families were to make their homes economically productive, cash-crop farmers specializing in one crop would have to abandon farming as a business and go back to it as a way of life. The packinghouses, mills, and canneries, not to mention the railroads, wholesalers, and retailers, which now distribute agricultural products would find their business confined to the production and distribution of exotic foodstuffs. Food is our most important industry. A war of attrition, such as we have been carrying on all alone, if extended on a large enough scale, would put the food industry out of its misery, for miserable it certainly is, all the way from the farmers who produce the raw materials to the men, women, and children who toil in the canneries, mills, and packinghouses, and in addition reduce proportionately the congestion, adulteration, unemployment, and unpleasant odors to all of which the food industry contributes liberally.

If enough families were to make their homes economically productive the textile and clothing industries, with their low wages, seasonal unemployment, cheap and shoddy products, would shrink to the production of those fabrics and those garments which it is impractical for the average family to produce for itself.



DOGWOODS, the main house on the homestead. One of the wings contains the workshop, the other the loom-room. Designed and built by amateur labor. Even the wiring, plumbing, and steam-fitting were done by what can at best be described as semi-skilled labor. The stonework in all the houses on Dogwoods was put in by amateurs, using a modification of the Flagg method of wall building.

If enough families were to make their homes economically productive, undesirable and non-essential factories of all sorts would disappear and only those which would be desirable and essential because they would be making tools and machines, electric light bulbs, iron and copper pipe, wire of all kinds, and the myriad of things which can best be made in factories, would remain to furnish employment to those benighted human beings who prefer to work in factories.

Domestic production, if enough people turned to it, would not only annihilate the undesirable and non-essential factory by depriving it of a market for its products. It would do more. It would release men and women from their present thrall to the factory and make them masters of machines instead of servants to them; it would end the power of exploiting them which ruthless, acquisitive, and predatory men now possess; it would free them for the conquest of comfort, beauty and understanding.

(continued on page 4)

The Time Has Come For A Third Force In The Explosive World

Part II

The American Problem: 1966

Today the United States is the most powerful and wealthy nation in the world. It is this very wealth and power which tends to breed suspicion, if not hate, among the poorer nations in the world, in spite of the vast programs of technical assistance and A.I.D. which the United States has lavished upon them. These programs have failed at the crucial level of the masses in the villages and rural regions of the developing nations, and even though the principal reasons may lie within the cultural problems of these poorer nations themselves, the United States must pay the price in terms of the advantage their failure gives to Communist propaganda. In each of these countries those workers who are truly committed to freedom and democratic values find themselves caught in the crossfire of Communist propaganda, which disguises itself as the friend of the people, and Fascist propaganda which disguises itself as the advocate of freedom and anti-Communism.

In Vietnam, for instance, if the true forces for freedom and democracy speak out against Communism, they find themselves aligned with dictators like Diem who cannot command the allegiance of the people. This is the problem of men like Thich Nhat Hahn, a devoted Buddhist monk, who has been trying to develop with very little resources a program of self-help and basic democracy among the peasants in Vietnam. But Nhat Hahn does not dare to ask for United States assistance, since to do so would open his program to attack by the Communists who would poison the minds of the peasants against him. The same is true in India where the Gramdan movement, led by men like Narayan, with a history of success in combatting Communism, do not dare ask or accept United States government assistance. It is true in many, if not most, of the underdeveloped nations.

In desperation, then, the United States resorts to force to combat the success of Communist propaganda and takeovers in places like Cuba and Vietnam. But in doing so, it is forced to align itself even more strongly with Fascists like Diem and militarists like Ky, and to fight a guerrilla war in territory where all the odds are against it.

All of these things add fuel to Communist propaganda and help create more Communists, not only in Vietnam but all over the world.

The Indian Problem

Exploitation by landlords and money-lenders and neglect by governments preoccupied with industrialization, are making the masses in the underdeveloped nations—who are peasants not proletarians—desperate. To these desperate peasants Communism makes a compelling appeal. But Communism is an idea, not just a rebellion. Ideas cannot be fought with monetary aid to government establishments nor when they erupt into guerrilla revolution, with massive military aid. A bad idea can only be fought with a good idea; fighting ideas with money and with guns accomplishes nothing; ideas have not nine but ninety-nine lives. The idea of an autonomous village-based society in which the peasants are politically free and economically independent proved, under the leadership of Vinoba Bhave in Hyderabad, that it could make the peasants and villagers give up the idea of a Communist Utopia to be achieved at some far-off date by means of immediate violence and revolution. If the idea of self-help is accompanied with enough rural credit to buy out landlords and to get money-lenders off peasant backs, revolutionary ardor would be channeled into constructive action.

The Republic of India, a free nation but an underdeveloped

one, is typical of the nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America which are on the verge of explosion. In the race for prosperity, the slow growth in the gross national product of these nations is continually losing ground to the increasing birth rate. In India, ever since independence in 1947, there has been a gradual decrease of income per capita, despite the vast American aid and the several five-year plans devoted mainly to developing heavy industry. Every day the poverty of the masses in India and other underdeveloped nations worsens while the prosperity of America and the developed nations improves. With the gap widening between the have and the have-not nations, the world is living on the brink of a dozen Vietnamese revolutions.

No American with a mind or heart can contemplate this situation and ignore it. What baffles the thoughtful and concerned people of America is what to do about it. Ever since America launched the Marshall Plan, Americans have left the question of what to do about it to Washington. But after 20 years of American effort and after 40 billions of American A.I.D., it is time to face the fact that the A.I.D. program has failed to help where help is most needed—among the peasants and villagers who constitute the masses in these nations.

The Real Problem

The real problem in India, in Vietnam, in Mexico, in Brazil and in all the other underdeveloped nations, is rural and agricultural. It is not urban; it is not industrial. 70 to 80 per cent of the population of these nations live in small villages and are dependent for their income either directly or indirectly upon agriculture. Unless the problems of these rural masses are dealt with, nothing which is being done or which can be done in the few big cities in these nations will prevent them from turning sooner or later to revolution as the only hope for ultimate improvement.

Communist takeovers in every one of the nations now behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains—including Cuba with its threat of take-overs in the rest of Latin America—have been made possible by the denial of justice to the masses of people living on the land and in the small towns, and by the neglect to provide them with the credit that they need to acquire land; to end extortion by money-lenders and middlemen; to purchase good seed, fertilizers, and equipment; to build decent homes and enjoy amenities which would bring them into the twentieth century.

Stanley Andrews, who since 1960 has served three times in South Vietnam as an advisor on A.I.D. problems, wrote recently in *The Reporter*: "Perhaps no more than 10 to 20 per cent of American aid has trickled down to the hamlets in a way that the peasants can relate to either the United States or their own government. Most of the aid has benefitted the elite and the upper middle class." American A.I.D., in other words, has failed to help the South Vietnamese who till the soil and work in the villages; what it has done is to help the power-elite in Saigon which lives off the masses.

The Three Plans

Operating today in these underdeveloped nations is not one plan but three plans for dealing with their problems: (1) the American A.I.D. plan, (2) Mao Tse Tung's plan of Communist led guerrilla revolution, and (3) Gandhi's plan for rural renaissance.

1. The American plan can be described in four words: Modernization, Industrialization, Urbanization, and Centralization. But American aid is failing because it is given to governments, which in turn spend most of it on giant projects and on industrial developments in and around

THE GREEN REVOLUTION — 3
December, 1966

big cities. This does not resolve the problem of the overwhelming masses in the villages and rural regions; it ignores the fact that, in the race between prosperity and revolution, A.I.D. cannot avoid being "too little and too late."

2. The second plan is Mao Tse Tung's plan: Revolution. There is no adequate appreciation today of the difference between Lenin's and Mao's theories of revolution. Lenin was an orthodox Marxist; Mao is not. Lenin led an orthodox proletarian revolution. He and his followers advocated and based their hopes for world-wide Communism upon revolution by an aroused, desperate, industrial proletariat. More recently Mao Tse Tung led a successful peasant revolution in China. Mao and his followers are the advocates of peasant revolutions for all the underdeveloped nations of the world. Such a revolution has acquired power in Cuba, and such revolutions are struggling to acquire power not only in Vietnam but in several places in South America. Mao's plan for the underdeveloped nations, then, is peasant, not proletarian, revolution.

3. About Gandhi's plan for the development of a new India, Americans know virtually nothing. The Sarva Seva Sangh was organized by Gandhi himself to realize this plan. Today the Sangh has 20,000 workers in villages all over India. Vinoba Bhave, who succeeded Gandhi, gave priority to the problem of providing land to the landless, first by means of a program called Bhoodan and then by its development into Gramdan. In recent years the saintly Vinoba Bhave has been reinforced by an extraordinary moral and intellectual giant by the name of Jayaprakash Narayan.

(continued next month)

Peace and Goodwill

By Mildred J. Loomis

A friend said she was dropping *The Interpreter* because it so seldom discussed her main interest—world peace. She finds her concern better satisfied in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

If we haven't made it clear in the past, we say it now. We consider the problem of "peace" to be the Problem of the Whole of Life. In our monthly discussion of solutions to the major problems of living we feel we have been dealing, in every issue, with the basic matter of world peace.

I, too, have been a member of WIL and FOR. I still follow these and other peace groups with interest. Somehow they give me the impression of dealing with the fringe of this issue. I miss in their approach a needed attention to basic economic, political and psychological realities. They treat these of course, but not in the interrelated and fundamental fashion that seems to me essential. While our friends feel the School of Living misses the forest for the trees, it seems to me too many peace groups see only a blurred forest. They do not come to grips as I would like to see them with the swamps, the underbrush and the trees themselves in delving into the morass of war and peace.

Take economics, or as the School of Living would say, the Possessional Problem. I've heard many a pacifist and peacemaker speak glibly of the "economics of peace." But rarely can one explain how and why the great monopolies exist, and what needs specifically to be done about them. I do not find their journals devoted to critically analyzing the land problem, the international money-interests, or tariff, as economic causes of war.

Or on the Civic Problem. The

(continued on page 4)

A Way Out
Supplement No. 2