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Land Revolution in India

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THE GREEN

A WORLD-WIDE EFFORT FOR DECENTRALIZATION
AND RURAL REVIVAL



REVOLUTION

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The Great Migration— Country To City and South To North; Can A New Call Reverse The Trend?

The drift to cities is not news. Since the turn of the century, farmers have been moving off the land in increasing numbers. Farm machines — tractors, multiple plows, planters, cultivators, huge harvesting combines, hay balers, etc.—have taken the place of hired workers or farm-family children. Percentage of farmers has dropped steadily from 65 to 40 to 15, and now, only 6% of the nation's population lives on farms of 100 acres or more.

Recently, one phase of this drift has become news. That is the great exodus of two million Negroes from Southern farms and plantations. Half of these (during 1961-65) went to New York City and the other half to Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles. In 1965, of a total of 21 million Negroes in the United States, nearly half (47%) lived in Northern cities.

Economic Pressure

Now, in 1968, economic pressure in the South is so strong that Negroes are actually being driven out. They are asked to go away — any place — get lost. Arriving in the festering center of some large city, they are economically and educationally unprepared for it. A man who has spent his life in cotton, tobacco and peanut fields is poorly equipped to cope with life in industrial, urban areas.

The Nov. 21 and 22, 1967, issues of the *New York News* pictured the crises and the despair in Negro families newly arrived from the South. Effects on children are particularly severe. One Negro mother said, "My seven-year-old is all mixed up. One minute he wants to be a policeman and shoot down all the niggers who cause trouble and the next he's going to kill a white man one day."

Children ignore their homes; they live on the streets; they join the riots. Why?

"We've had enough," they say. "They push you so far and you can't let it go further. In Alabama they kept us down with guns. Here they say we're 'free.' But if we try to act free they pull their guns anyway. . . . Back in Marengo, Ala., we were quiet, obeyed the 'bossman' — we were taught to wait until heaven for our kicks. Here they teach you that equality stuff — Washington and Lincoln — how they freed us. Then you look around and you see what a lot of lousy lies they peddle you."

Asked why they get involved in riots that destroy their own neighborhood, a Boston youth replied: "First, it's not our place. Whitey owns the place. He soaks us for rent. We're trying to get ours, and when we hear of a fight we run to it. . . . Sometimes I think I'd like to be a cop . . . but I know they keep their eyes on us, and won't do a thing for us but shoot us."

Thousands of Negro families now realize that their Northern sanctuary has turned out to be little more than a different kind of hell.

Get Back to the Land

Now a very new emphasis is seen in newspapers, radio and TV. Editors are saying, and quoting government officials (particularly Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman) and sociologists. In effect these people are saying, "cities are defunct," problems can't be solved in cities" and "much of the answer for poverty,

Negro migration, etc., is to get people out of cities." A full column in the *New York Times* of Jan. 7 called for a reversal of migration: Get People Back to the Land.

This, of course, is called good news by Green Revolutioners. But we know that with this reversal must come other and deep-

Self-Help Is Order of the Day

A very interesting organization has created and developed three bus lines, owned and operated by Negroes, in the Watts area of Los Angeles. It is the National Economic Growth and Reconstruction Organization, or NEGRO, and is headed by Dr. T. W. Matthew, of Interfaith Hospital, Jamaica, N. Y.

NEGRO raised over \$250,000 by selling bonds in denominations of 50c to \$10,000 for the buses. They serve Watts residents (who seldom own cars) at a cost of 20c a ride within Watts and 25c outside the area. Since bus lines are often holdup victims, some people recommended plainclothes men with guns on buses for protection of drivers.

Dr. Matthews said, "I am emphatically opposed to shotgun riders. Needless killings will take place. . . . I am also critical of plans (by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) for massive civil disobedience, especially for Watts. It is unfortunate that Dr. King continues to use yesterday's techniques and thereby wastes the very important talent and influence that he could provide in helping the Negro people move into a new era of self-help and production. We must all move from protest to production, to pride, and then to partnership with all people."

Members of Brooklyn CORE To Flee Ghetto For Farming

By M. J. Loomis

Members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Brooklyn are preparing to abandon the city. Disillusioned by bitter fights with the city administration, the police, the antipoverty program, school teachers and moderate Negro leaders, the activists have decided to head for a simpler rural life.

"We will buy our land, settle and till the soil," said Robert Carson, 32, director of Brooklyn CORE. "We want to get away from the ghettos and their calculating exploitation that leaves our people drunkards, narcotic addicts and prostitutes."

On a recent trip east, I talked with Mr. Carson by phone. He told me, "We've rethought our position. We've looked at people in history who have attained freedom. Always they have had land. We haven't had this opportunity. The government never made good on its promise of 40 acres and a mule to every freed slave after the Civil War. We've made a down payment on a hundred acres down South, and we hope to settle on it by spring of '68."

As to response, Mr. Carson said, "We think it is great. To our last direct mailing, we had 13,000 replies. People want to go with us, and people want to help by

er changes. There must be fundamental and basic land reform. Access to land must be easier and fairer. Land must be seen as "given" — a gift of Nature, not produced by man and therefore not subject to speculation, exploitation and withholding from those who want to use it. All who have this point of view can do their bit to bring it into the thinking of officials, newscasters, reporters, editors and educators.

Write those letters and articles; help get this viewpoint added to the back to the land travel. Include description of The International Foundation for Independence, which has as its goal the low-cost lending of funds to enable farmers and primary producers to secure land and develop their communities.

Sabotage Laid To India's Leftists

By Dec. 14, when the harvesting in West Bengal, India, had only begun to get in full swing, some 110 clashes between peasants and police had been reported. Many of these were fomented by the Socialist Unity Center, an extremist party claiming to be the only real Communist party in India.

The United Front of the Leftists, whose leader is Jyoti Basu, had been ousted by the Indian Government in November. Mr. Basu continues to urge peasants to resist police who come to rescue "landowners." This action, of course, the Government considers sabotage, and is the source of further difficulty — conflict similar to that in Vietnam.

All of which is more evidence that failure to deal with the land and rural problems will create more bloodshed and war.

A Counter Program?

I asked him, "Is yours a counter-program to black power and a militant black revolution?"

"No," he said. "In the past we have been dike-savers, when we should have allowed the dike to overflow. People in this country seem to understand only violence. But we in CORE are interested in survival. We have agreed on a change—we will return to the position of our forefathers. We will go back to the land. We don't care to make any money. We only care to survive. Instead of wandering around hopelessly in Northern ghettos fighting the landlords and the power structure we will till the soil from sunup to sundown."

"What is your position on land tenure; do you favor land ownership, or trusteeship? Are you familiar with the teachings of Henry George?"

"We haven't gone deeply into this matter. We do have a committee studying land economics, and I think they are in touch with the Henry George School of Social Science."

Wishing them well, I offered to send them material on our new tool for social change, The International Foundation for Independence, and he said he would welcome it.



MIGRATION from a Southern sharecropping region to a Boston ghetto is little more than moving to a different kind of hell. (New York Times photos)



Independence Foundation Looks Ahead; Borsodi On Fifth Trip To India

"This is my living and my dying sentiment, independence forever." These words from Daniel Webster greet you from a wall of the new, simple and pleasant office of the non-profit International Foundation for Independence, at 163 Water St., Exeter, N. H. Also there is the Foundation's symbol, a globe with a banner inscribed "Humanitas," and on another wall is William Lloyd Garrison's "My country is the world, my countrymen all mankind."

A small group has worked hard for the past year to implement these goals. IFI trustees and signers of its charter—Ralph Borsodi, Robert Swann, Harriet

Greer, Mildred Loomis and Porter Sargent — together with Gordon Lameyer and Erich Hansch, met in Exeter on Friday, Jan. 5, to hear reports and consider plans.

Financial Picture

As is usual for a new organization, and particularly one that introduces new concepts in financing (in this case a non-profit structure with a commodity-based money), response has not been large. Organizing expenses have been covered and IFI's revolving fund for loans (in a Luxembourg bank) stood at \$900 at the year's end. To this was added \$1,500 during the meeting, and next day in the mail a \$5,000 investment came from a reader of *The Green Revolution*. Other

Land Revolution In India

Most people in India are landless tenants. In a year of crop failure, they must borrow at excessive rates (35% to 80%) from money lenders to pay the rent. Some never get out of debt. One source indicates that most of India's land is in the hands of 3% of the people, with 97% landless and dependent.

Vinoba Bhave, a leader in the Gandhian movement, has for years stressed trusteeship of the land — has asked landholders to share their land in the Gramdan, or village-holding system. He asks landowners to give at least one-twentieth of their land to Gramdan, to be released from village trusteeship for some family to use.

One report indicates that some six million acres have come under Gramdan in this way. This seems large, but is but a small percentage of India's land. Bhave wants a nonviolent revolution in land use, but people are growing restless and are sometimes violent under the pressure of poverty and land monopoly. If the revolution becomes violent, he says, "it still must come: a violent revolution in land would be better than continuing under present oppression."

IFI Could Help

The International Foundation for Independence could assist the peaceful land revolution in India and elsewhere. It would do this by long-term, low-interest loans to farmers and villages, for buying land and incorporating it in the Gramdan movement. The IFI was suggested to Indian leaders early in 1966. They are hopeful that its funds for loaning will grow soon to such figures as to become a real factor in rural India's peaceful change to independence and village land-holding. Socially concerned persons everywhere can have a part by investing their savings in the International Foundation for Independence, 163 Water St., Exeter, N. H.

STATEMENT FROM BANK OF LUXEMBOURG

"As I understand what you propose, Mr. Borsodi, it is to do what government aid has failed to do. Government aid has built infrastructures — big irrigation dams, big steel mills — in the underdeveloped nations. But it has built no substructures for all this. This is what it seems to me the International Foundation for Independence is proposing to do; provide credit to the masses of farmers and villagers who have so far been neglected. It will be a pleasure for us to help you in this." — Joseph Leydenbach, President, Banque Internationale a Luxembourg

gifts and investments have been arriving from a recent mail campaign.

Mr. Swann, field worker, reported that several church denominations and some Foundations are becoming concerned about investing money in socially oriented corporations. He has interviewed several who look fa-

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A Black Or Green Revolution?

A flood of unsolicited mail comes to School of Living, including much from dissidents and the "resistance," and it is useful in portraying today's scene.

Among these items is a 16-page *Crusader's Newsletter*, from an American Negro, R. F. Williams, who is now in Peking. In the December, 1963, issue of *A Way Out*, we reported, under "Sex and Economics in North Carolina," Mr. Williams' struggle for sharing by Negroes of a municipal pool, and his conclusion after patent unfair jury decisions

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