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THE CONCEPT OF
WELFARE STATE
& INDIA

by
BRIJ GOPAL GUPTA

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"The Concept of The Welfare State & India"

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"Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom."

—*Edmund Burke.*



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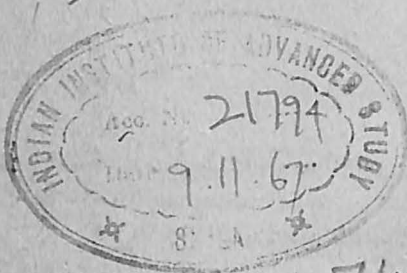


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PREFACE

'WELFARE STATE' has captured our imagination. It is the intellectual and general talk of the day. Jeremy Bentham used to say, "when we have words in our ears we imagine we have ideas in our heads", and Welfare State, accordingly, has been called many things and many things have been called welfare state. So-much-so that even the politicians of all our political parties, with their conflicting ideologies and programmes, are agreed on at least one concept.....they are all ardent supporters of the welfare state. The Directive Principles of State Policy in our Constitution, pointing the way to desired action, aim at the Welfare State. The Five Year Plan follows suit. Congress—the largest ruling party in our country—is also firmly wedded to the concept of the welfare state.—'Welfare state', automatically trumbles out of the mouths of the Socialists and communists and even communalists. Now the concept of the welfare state is both abstract and concrete, theoretical and practical, idealist and materialist, very old and entirely modern, and it ranges from a mere sentiment to a precise programme of action. It is a kind of bloodless revolution in economic and social thinking, a basic change of concepts, not only of what is right and what is wrong, but what would work and what would not work. Hence it is more than imperative for one and all to know about the development, real meaning and problems of the welfare state.

If we look back at the historical development of the welfare state we find that today the state looks after family welfare because the family is unable to do so itself. This has been demonstrated amply in the last one hundred and fifty years. But how has this come about? If one goes back to the early periods of man's

development, when he lived in small self-supporting tribal communities, one finds that families were able to look after themselves. No member was ever unemployed for example, and, barring natural calamities like droughts and floods, families usually managed to put enough food by to keep alive the old and sick unable to work .

Within the last twenty or thirty thousand years trade has developed. This exchange of products led to specialization, and the separation of an increasing number of people who were cut off from any direct production of food. Related to this is the gradual growth of towns and the quite different life led by townspeople to that led by their tribal ancestors.

Although social protest is an ancient phenomenon, yet the modern movement for social reform dates from the industrial revolution because the last four centuries have seen the growth of capitalism as an economic system. With this has come worldwide economic inter-dependence, a vast multiplication of the world's population and trade-cycles. Against these things, and all their consequences, individual families are unable to battle.

On the ideological side, may be mentioned Jeremy Bentham and the utilitarians with their well-worn slogan the greatest good of the greatest number; in the early nineteenth century—and to people like T. H. Green, J. S. Mill, the Webbs, and others in the latter half of the century who were fundamentally individualists and democrats and were provoked when the Industrial Revolution disappointed the facile optimism of the earlier philosophers with their individualist creed, which had in the early part of the century been a doctrine of reform and liberty, became largely a bulwark of re-action and privilege. It was increasingly realized that if democracy was to grapple with these new problems with any success some way had to be found of reconciling a true

individualism with the new function which were being thrust upon the state. Even Sir Winston Churchill, the British Conservative leader, wrote to his friend J. C. Spender as back as 1907 : "No legislation at present in view interests the democracy. All their minds are turning more and more to the social and democratic issue. This revolution is irresistible. They will not tolerate the existing system by which wealth is acquired, shared and employed... They will not continue to bear, they cannot, the awful uncertainties of their lives. Minimum standards of wages and comfort, insurance in some effective form or another against sickness, unemployment, old age—these are the questions, and the only questions by which parties are going to live in the future."

On the practical side come the growth of the trade union movement, the various factory acts and labour and social legislation introduced in practically all the countries of the world.

The United Nations sums up its conception of the welfare state in article 55 of its character :

".....the United Nations shall promote :

(a) higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development :

(b) solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems ; and international cultural and educational cooperation ; and

(c) universal respect for, and observance of human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

This short monograph reviews its history, both as an idea and as a practical development and distinguishes it from socialism as well as collectivism because even socialist and collectivist states may be as far from a welfare state as any rugged type of capitalist state. It deals with the possibility and feasibility of the intro-

duction of the welfare state in India. In the concluding chapters, it considers some of the economic, political and social problems that the Welfare State has raised elsewhere (with special reference to the United Kingdom).

My sincerest thanks to those whose arguments and phrases without number have been digested with or without acknowledgment.

Mahatpura, Mathura (U. P.).

1953.

Brij Gopal Gupta.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION:

What is a welfare state :

A good deal of misunderstanding and confusion is in currency on account of the circulation of a lot of ideas about the real meaning and implications of the Welfare State. It is being ballyhooed to the house tops. There are a hundred definitions of a welfare State, and a thousand Sects of Welfare economists and Welfare politicians. It is therefore in the interest of clarity, to start with a fairly rigid definition of the Welfare State. Dr. Mark Abraham defines: "Essentially it is a community where state power is deliberately used to modify the normal play of economic forces so as to obtain a more equal distribution of income, in this way ensuring for every citizen a basic minimum real income irrespective of the market value of his work and of his property." Professor Lewis Mumford calls this 'basic communism'.

Thus a State cannot claim itself to be a welfare state, just because it may have undertaken some progressive measures which immediately or remotely, directly or indirectly conduce to the betterment of the people. Since from this point of view, any State which emerges out of its narrow shell of security functions of the Police State, and which interests itself in the implementation of progressive measures for the amelioration of the condition of the people would claim itself to be a welfare state. Moreover, on such a superficial basis, there would not be much to distinguish between one state and another in the world of to-day.

Therefore, "technically", observes N. R. Sarkar, "the determining factor of a Welfare State lies in the avowed assumption of certain basic responsibilities by the State in regard to providing education, sanitation, medical relief, and means of livelihood to the people and correlation thereof with the means of production of national wealth. Both are to be viewed in a dynamic ratio. Some of these functions are so fundamental that they have come to be the characteristic feature of any modern state, whether it call itself a welfare state or not. There are, however, some special responsibilities as of unemployment insurance, social insurance, old age pension etc., having a cradle to grave sweep, which transcend the traditional concept of the state functions and focus the special features of a welfare state as such."

Obviously, this is a new concept of state functions because it is a compromise between the all-devouring functions of the Communist State, on the one hand, and, on the other a Liberal State in which private initiative and enterprise is given free play in the belief that it will contribute to the maximum happiness and would also furnish an independent solution of numerous responsibilities which the state might otherwise be required to undertake.

State and its functions .

The late U. S. President Roosevelt, commenting on the State and its functions, put it concisely :

"What is the State ? It is the duly constituted representative of an organized society of human beings, created by them for their mutual protection and well-being. 'The State' or 'The Government' is but the machinery through which such mutual

aid and protection are achieved. The cave man fought for existence unaided or even opposed by his fellow man, but today the humblest citizen of our state stands protected by all the power and strength of his Government. Our Government is not the master but the creature of the people. The duty of the State toward the citizens is the duty of the servant to its master. The people have created it; the people, by common consent, permit its continual existence.

“One of these duties of the State is that of caring for those of its citizens who find themselves the victims of such adverse circumstance as makes them unable to obtain even the necessities for mere existence without the aid of others. That responsibility recognized by every civilized nation.....

“To these unfortunate citizens aid must be extended by Government, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of social duty.”

The 19th Century View :

Such a view of the function of the State and the rights of the citizen is comparatively new, and even as recently as a hundred years ago would have been generally regarded as outrageously revolutionary. In the middle of the nineteenth century the dominant Adam Smithian opinion among the social and political theorists was that society is merely an agglomeration of isolated self-regarding individuals; that the greatest sum of human happiness would be achieved if the state stood aside and left individuals free to pursue their self-interest; that the only links between men which had any value were contracts which they entered into in their unhampered pursuit of self-interest, and that ‘every law is an evil, for every law is an infraction of liberty’. The three grounds presented for the general rule against government activity of a positive kind in the economic field were: (i) in this

field, individuals know their own interests better than government can ; (ii) individuals operate more ardently and more skillfully in pursuit of their own interests than government can or will operate on their behalf ; (iii) governmental intervention means coercion, either directly or indirectly through taxation, and coercion involves 'pain' and therefore is an evil. Mandeville sums it up concisely in his paradoxical contention that private "vices" (private "interests" would be a saner word) will tend to the public good. Adam Smith advocating non-interference by the state and making self-interest the very life force of society wrote : "The uniform, constant, and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition, the principle from which public and national, as well as private opulence is originally derived is frequently powerful enough to maintain the natural progress of things towards improvement, in spite both of the extravagance of government, and of the greatest errors of the administration. Like the unknown principle of animal life, it frequently restores health and vigour to the constitution, in spite not only of the disease, but of the absurd prescriptions of the doctor."

The owner of property was free to use his resources as he thought best, and the man whose livelihood depended entirely on the wages he could earn by his labour was equally free to obtain from employers whatever he could extract from them in single-handed negotiation. The outcome, only too often, was that a minority enjoyed enormous possessions and incomes while many others spent their lives in almost unrestricted destitution and squalor because bargain in the labour market is not between equals but an exchange in Marx's words "between a money-bag and a hungry stomach".

Social conscience as a driving force :

While the world grew rich with unprecedented rapidity, the

wealth tended to accumulate in the hands of a somewhat limited few. The rank and file, although living in comparative affluence compared with their former status, still remained poor. In the defence of the new system a great literature was created, among which Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy*, Herbert Spencer's, *Social Statics* and the *Man Versus The State* and Bastiat's *Harmonies Economiques*, should be especially mentioned. Notwithstanding the intellectual triumphs achieved by each of these able defenders of the new order, abundantly supported by hosts of lesser lights, the accumulative unfortunate effects of excessive economic freedom became too pronounced to be any longer ignored by the various states. Thus wealth, under liberalism was not distributed in any proportion to the human cost of production. But the truth was that the perfect liberties which existed before the factory and social legislation of today was passed made life into an undescrivable torment for large sections of the people. That torment proved that unbridled liberty of this kind is a cheat—It is not liberty but the blackest tyranny.*

A series of literary luminaries pointed out the defects repeatedly. Ruskin opposed this unbridled pursuit of self-interest in his *Unto This Last, Fors Clavigere*; and *X Munera Pulveris* and stated that property and economic activity existed to promote the ends of society. Carlyle also belonged to Ruskin's group and his indignation on the economic conditions are to be found in his

*Mr. W. F. Onkeshott gives the following facts in his book, 'Commerce and Society', about the changes in the social structure of Great Britain :

Late 17th century :		Mid-twentieth century :	
Employers	14 per cent	Employers	4 per cent
Employees	34 per cent	Employees	90 per cent
Independents	52 per cent	Independents	6 per cent
	100 per cent		100 per cent

essays on *Chartism* and *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, and *Past and Present*. Another member of this type was William Morris, an artist who supported socialism because he hated the ugliness of industrial England. "Competition is for people a system of examination and for the middle-class an incessant cause of impoverishment and ruin", commented Louis Blanc. Even Robert Burns exclaimed :

‘Man’s inhumanity to man,
Makes countless thousands mourn’.

Thus the crude individualistic or the jungle doctrine, which during the greater part of the nineteenth century masked the significance of the opposition between the two principles of individual rights and social functions by the doctrine of the inevitable harmony between private interests and public good, was attacked, breached, and finally overthrown because it was experienced that people pursued self-interest to the point where they cripple the lives of their fellows and that many citizens are so hard-pressed that if left to their own resources they will be unable to resist such conditions. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions is not to be found. Few would now profess adherence to the compound of economic optimism and moral bankruptcy which led a nineteenth century economist to say : "Greed is held in check by greed, and the desire for gain sets limits to itself."

The Factory Acts in many countries stepped in between master and man to define some of the conditions under which workers could sell their labour and employers could extract profits from their machines. In the name of humanitarianism the Factory Acts put a limit both to freedom of contract and to the pursuit of self-interest.

Perhaps equally important was the introduction by State of

free and compulsory education. The social import of this was that all members of society, irrespective of their rank or income should at State expense, be endowed both with the right and the duty to acquire sufficient learning to be able to participate in the discussion of public affairs.

Theory of the new society :

The theoretical justification for the battle against poverty and for the use of state power to end destitution was first systematically enunciated at Oxford. There during the 'sixties and 'seventies, T. H. Green, Professor of Moral Philosophy, delivered his *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*. He taught generations of students that :

“the life of the individual was absolutely dependent upon the life of the community, and that a scheme of thought which regarded the liberty of the individual as something distinct from the welfare of society, was entirely false. The individual depends on the community for all that makes life worth living ; the community must therefore secure for the individual all the conditions necessary for his full spiritual development.....The State exist to secure ‘a good life’ for its members, not merely to prevent them from suffering concrete injuries. Liberty is not the absence of restraint, but ‘a positive power of doing and enjoying something worth doing and worth enjoying’.....The man who is enslaved by poverty is no more truly ‘free’ than the man who is locked up in prison. The true function of statesmanship is to produce a community in which all the individuals shall so far as is possible, be capable of living and free to live, a good life.”

From this doctrine it was but a short step to what Beatrice and Sidney Webb called ‘guaranteeism’, ‘the policy of securing to every individual, as the very basis of his life and work, a prescribed national minimum of the requisites for efficient parenthood and citizenship.

Wars and depression as aids :

Over the next thirty-five years two world wars and the international and intra-national depressions turned the theories of philosophers and the calculations of politicians into realities. The two wars accustomed people to a state apparatus, which in the interests of society as a whole, limited and changed the rights and obligations both of labour and property ; they developed and trained an army of civil servants familiar with the arts and processes of regulating the ordinary man's life in detail ; they taught all sections of the community to turn to the state for solutions and instructions.

The shock of the Great Depression, jammed in between these two experiences, led many to believe that a return to 'normality' meant a return to unemployment, insecurity and poverty, and that these evils could only be banished, as they had been during the wars, by an extensive exercise of State Power.

Welfare State Vs. Collectivism :

Having defined the welfare state in positive terms, it is now necessary, in the interests of clarity, to go on and say what it is not. Welfare state is not collectivism and it is also not socialism. Each of them is a separate and distinctive body of doctrines and practices and neither is inseparably linked with the welfare state.

Collectivism is a piece of governmental machinery which, probably unavoidably, emerges as a means of dealing with the problems created by size. In any large city, for example, certain services can be provided efficiently only when a central body assumes responsibility for their execution. In the second half of the nineteenth century it emerged almost spontaneously in Britain as the only means of coping with many of the problems of urban life created by the Industrial Revolution and by the rapid growth of population. Its advocates and architects were usually practical-minded business men who often had no time either for humani-

tarianism or for socialism. The early Fabians admittedly regarded Collectivism as the quickest route to democratic socialism, but they were not necessarily sound in this assumption. Sidney Webb, the arch collectivist of our time, described in the 1880's the first fruits of collectivism with perhaps misplaced irony when he wrote :

“The practical man, oblivious or contemptuous of any theory of the social organism or general principles of social organisation, has been forced, by the necessities, of the time into an ever-deepening collectivist channel. Socialism, of course, he still rejects and despises. The individualist town-councillor will walk along the municipal pavement, lit by municipal light and cleansed by municipal brooms with municipal water, and seeing, by the municipal clock in the municipal market, that he is too early to meet his children coming from the municipal school, hard by the county lunatic asylum and the municipal hospital, will use the national telegraph system to tell them not to walk through the municipal park, but to come by the municipal tramway, to meet him in the municipal reading-room, by the municipal museum, art-gallery, and library, where he intends to consult some of the national publications in order to prepare his next speech in the municipal town-hall in favour of the nationalization of canals and the increase of Government control over the railway system. ‘Socialism, Sir’, he will say, ‘don't waste the time of a practical man by your fantastic absurdities. Self-help, Sir, individual self-help, that's what has made our city what it is.’”

Since then collectivism has expanded from the Municipal to the national level, but still many of its advocates and planners are, quite consistently, opponents of ‘guaranteeism’. The essential and problems of the collectivist states are those connec-

ted with the difficulties of planning. Collectivism is essentially a method of social organization rather than an end.

Welfare State Vs. Socialism :

Similarly, socialism is not to be confused with the Welfare State. Definition of socialism have varied from time to time, but two concepts have remained constant throughout its modern history—the emphasis on equality and on the evils of private ownership. We can presumably take as authoritative the statement of faith and policy to be found in *Labour and the New Society*, and in ‘*Marching on*’ (Labour Party publications) where in we find : “We reaffirm our belief that the earth’s resources should be employed in the service of the community and that this can be assured only if it is the community which commands their employment.” And, “Justice demands that fair shares should be the national rule. Everyone should have equal rights and opportunities.” The main features of modern socialism, as summarized by Louis Wasserman, in *Modern Political Philosophies and What they Mean*, are: (i) an attack on the prevailing mode of production and the distribution of income under capitalism; (2) a rough blue print of the processes of a socialist economy; and (3) a plan of action to effect the transformation.

Walter Lippman, in his book, *Good Society*, realistically observes:

“Collective property can be readily administered for the benefit of a class. There is no magic in title deeds. There is nothing in the act of transferring the ownership of productive capital to the community which offers any guarantee whatever that the official managers will not enrich themselves and exploit the community. On the contrary, collective ownership is entirely compatible with the division of society into hereditary

or appointive castes. What is there in the principle of collective ownership which precludes a distribution of income in which the political administrators take a lion's share? There is nothing, and anyone who thinks there is should read Plato's design for a communist society composed of stratified social classes.

“Surely it is plain that to vest the legal title of residual ownership in the community has no necessary connection with the beneficial use of the property by the whole community. If it did, there would be no such thing as militarism in armies, bureaucracy in government departments, as profiteering by corporate officials and controlling minorities, as legalized raids on the public treasury. It is because soldiers, who do not own the army, develop special interests of their own that we have the phenomenon of militarism. It is because officials use the government services as a vested interest, though they do not own it that we have the phenomenon of bureaucracy. It is because corporate officials and financiers and minorities use corporate property for their own benefit, though the residual owners are the shareholders, that we have the phenomenon of corporate mismanagement.

“The legal title does not even indicate how the property is to be administered for the beneficial advantage of the residual owners. Yet the whole promise of socialism rests on the assumption that property held in trust for others will be administered faithfully and wisely in their higher interest.....the Socialist naively argues that if all property were held in trust for all, the property would as a matter of course be administered in their highest interest.”

Security for all :

Thus, the distinctive problems of socialism are those created by the communal ownership and control of the means of pro-

duction (nationalization), and by the attempt to pursue and maintain material equality throughout the population. The socialists are thus driven to the fallacious conclusion that if worldly possessions were 'equally' distributed, men would cease to struggle for more than their equal share. They also overlook the fact that by equalizing money incomes the pain and pleasure of the effort expended cannot be equalised and even if opportunity is equal, then achievements will be unequal. For ability is not equal and if ability is equalised—say by putting a good farmer on poor land and a poor farmer on good land,—then opportunity would not be equal. The Welfare State admits the practical fact that a formal mathematical equality in the division of wealth is neither practicable nor desirable. The kind of society which it desiderates admits of a certain degree of inequality, but the inequality will not be acute. It streamlines the various structures of the society. It is a mixture of three different kinds of production economics, co-operative economics, private capital economics, socialist economics, working almost in competition with one another to see which could best promote the welfare of the people, and which could offer people the best kind of future. It protects the wage earners against unfavourable conditions of work and against inadequate wages. It protects consumers by preventing the establishment of industrial monopolies, by maintaining free competition among business enterprises, and maintaining standards in the character of the goods which are produced and sold. It also creates systems of taxation which, while providing abundant revenue for the uses of the government in undertaking and maintaining state control, will at the same time act as an adjusting force in the distribution of wealth. It is a way of living. The state lays down the rules of the road. It realizes the fact that there can hardly be the precious little freedom, precious little safeguard against arbitrary power, precious

little spice and variety, in a collectivist society in which there is one employer and only one property owner. It makes judicious use of taxation as a vehicle of social control. Thus it aims not in a spontaneously harmonious free enterprise, but rather in a deliberately constructed competitive order by erecting around the competitive order a system of laws and institutions within which it may be made to work the right way. Therefore by contrast, the problems of the Welfare State spring from the attempt to provide everyone with the security of a basic income; this can be provided without the nationalization of industry, and without expanding the degree of collectivism unavoidable in the day-to-day life of a community containing millions of people. Professor Harvey Peck sums it up: "Welfare Economics, then, is economic theory in the light of ultimate values. The ultimate values are not measurable by any quantitative standard. It is a matter of better or worse, rather than of more or less." The Welfare State, therefore, is in a nut-shell compatible with a Congress or a Socialist Government in India and with either a Republican or Democratic Government in the United States or a Labour or Conservative Government in U. K.

Chapter II.

INDIA AND THE CONCEPT OF WELFARE STATE

Pre—Independence era :

The 'Welfare' concept is not new to India. It is as old as the hills. The ancient Hindu joint family system is probably the best and cheapest form of all sorts of health, unemployment etc., insurances that human ingenuity has ever devised. In it, the earnings of all the members are put in a common pool out of which the needs of every member—irrespective of his age, ability and sex—are met. The family provided in case of illness and incapacity due to old age. It also supported the dependants when the father died. Thus corporate good and commonweal were the basis of Hindu society. The State also conducted welfare activities on a limited scale. The ancient kings (Ashoka being the most conspicuous) planted trees on the roadsides to provide shade for the weary travellers, dug wells to provide water, erected temples for the salvation of the soul. Education was provided free to the deserving. Many great and ancient Universities (notably Nalanda and Taxilla) were financed purely out of donations from State and private sources. Eminent *vaids* and *hakims* (country doctors) have always given free medical services through the ages, making their living by fees received from the richer members of the community. In the days of famines the State started its construction works to provide employment for the employed. Even state granaries were opened and grain distributed free to the hungry. The king was supposed to be entrusted with the welfare of the people*. But all these spasmodic

*It is not to widely known that His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore holds the State as trustees for the Padmanabhaswami (deity) of Tiruvantapuram (Trivendrum).

welfare palliatives (which were mostly curative and not preventive) instead of depending on the rights of the public depended upon the whim, the state of digestion, and the degree of enlightenment of the monarch.

The things changed with the advent of the British. The corporate good and common-weal of the old yielded to individual struggle, mutual competition, unending conflict. This was followed by unscrupulousness, dumping, a debased liberalism duly tempered by bureaucracy and occasionally spiced by welfare measures in the later years, coupled by a national moral land-slide. This was the state of affairs when the British left India on 15th August 1947, after dividing the Indian sub-continent into two countries, viz., India and Pakistan (to maintain balance of power), and thereby creating the staggering problems of refugees, defence revalries and disruption of the balance in economy for both the countries which diverted their attention and resources from the introduction of the welfare state.

Post-independence era :

Our independence made us the sole arbiters of our own destiny. The very basis of the organisation of the State was radically changed. It gave us a chance to think in terms of a new social, political and economic order. India's First Five Year Plan puts it concisely: "The aim of social service in the past was essentially curative, and efforts were directed towards the relief for the handicapped and the uplift of the under-privileged sections of society. It is now essential to maintain vigilance over weaknesses and strains in the social structure and to provide against them by organising social services. The aim of all social work now has to be the gradual

rehabilitation of all weak, handicapped, and anti-social elements". These and other equally good and lofty aspirations crystallised in our Constitution's Directive Principles of State Policy, which are an integral part of our constitution, and point the way to desired action. They lay down :

(i) The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life. (Sec. 38)

(ii) The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing :—

(a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood ;

(b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good ;

(c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment ;

(d) that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women ;

(e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength ;

(f) that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. (sec. 39).

(iii) The State, shall within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want. (Sec. 41)

(iv) The State shall make provision for securing just and human conditions of work, and for maternity relief. (Sec. 42)

(v) The State shall endeavour to secure, by suitable legislation or economic organisation or in any other way, to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full employment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to promote cottage industries on an individual or cooperative basis in rural areas. (Sec. 43).

(vi) The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. (Sec. 45)

(vii) The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. (Sec. 46)

(viii) The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medical purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health. (Sec. 47)

Welfare activities in India :—

The welfare activities in India enveloping State assistance to education, measures adopted for promoting public health, community development projects and the Five Year Plan and others of a like nature account for a considerable percentage of total revenue of Central and State Governments. The following table, which includes irrigation, education, medical and public health, agri-

culture, veterinary, cooperation, industries and civil works is illuminating :—

**Total Revenue Expenditure and Total Expenditure
on Nation-building Departments.**
(Rs. in thousands)

Year	Total expenditure on nation building Depts.	Total revenue expenditure	Percentage
1937-38	27,17,91	77,70,11	34.98
1938-39	28,71,08	80,51,72	35.66
1939-40	29,75,66	83,34,16	35,70
1940-41	31,27,36	88,29,43	35.42
1941-42	33,40,35	95,92,21	34.82
1942-43	29,24,92	96,51,74	30,30
1943-44	41,04,90	1,47,32,93	27.86
1944-45	52,04,37	1,92,59,62	27 02
1945-46	53,41,59	1,82,17,65	29.32
1946-47	66,00,00	2,04,54,07	32 26
1947-48	75,11,78	2,12,43,88	35 36
1948-49	1,00 15,77	2,50,71,66	39.95
1949 50	1 30.70,70	2,90,57,40	44 98
1950-51 Budget	1;32,08,76	2,84,28,88	46,46

Five year Plan & The Welfare State :

Five Year Plan—our first effective instrument to better our lot states the State object and programme of welfare :

“The object of social welfare is the attainment of social health which implies the realisation of such objectives as adequate living standard, the assurance of social justice, opportunities for cultural development through individual and group expression, and readjustment of human relations leading to social harmony, A comprehensive concept of living standards

will include shelter as well as normal satisfaction of family life, enjoyment of physical and mental health, opportunities for the expression of skills and recreational abilities, and active and pleasurable social participation. The achievement of social justice demands cooperative and concerted effort on the part of the state and the people. These objectives are to be achieved mainly by revitalising the nation's life by creating well-organised and active regional communities in rural and urban areas to work cooperatively for national development. Such decentralised community groups will release national energy, extend the scope for leadership, and help to create initiative and organisation extensively in the remotest part of the country.....

“Some of the important social problems like poverty, ignorance, over-population and rural backwardness are of a general nature and, in varying degree, they are influenced by factors like squalor and bad housing, mal-nutrition and physical and mental ill-health, neglected childhood, family disorganisation and low standard of living. For a long time, society has remained apathetic to these conditions; but with the awakening of political consciousness and the enthusiasm of organizations and workers to improve social conditions, there is a possibility of developing programme which could gradually remedy the present situation. The economic programmes of the Five Year Plan will mitigate these problems to some extent, but the gains of economic development have to be maintained and consolidated by well-concieved and organised social welfare programmes spread over the entire country.”

The Plan further discusses the principal social welfare problems relating to women, children, youth, the family, under-privileged groups and social vice. It suggests: “some problems of women have to be dealt through social legisla-

tion but other problems pertaining to health, social education, vocational training, increased shelter, and assistance to the handicapped or maladjusted call for programmes at the community level”.

The Plan stresses on the necessity of welfare work and accordingly lays down :

“Traditionally the family has been left largely to its own resources to deal with most of its problems although in some cases it may be assisted by the larger community groups (such as caste) to which a family may belong.....Family responsibilities have now to be borne at a comparatively younger age by the head of the small family than happened in the joint family. This creates the need for greater guidance and assistance in dealing with family problems. The increasing complexity of the social situation and handicaps arising from physical disability, ailment or unemployment render it more difficult for the family to provide a sense of security to its members. This fact suggests a number of problems which, along with other problems such as divorce, desertion and treatment of mal-adjusted members of the family, need to be studied carefully if welfare agencies are to develop suitable methods of treatment for guiding and assisting those in need.

“There are a number of under-privileged communities such as the Scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and other backward classes including criminal tribes. The problems of poverty, ill-health, and lack of opportunities for development affected them to a larger extent than any other sections of the society.”

The Practical Possibilities of the Welfare State In India:

Experience has revealed more than once that the choice of a State is severely conditioned by circumstances as to how far it

should go and at what point of time it should undertake more and more direct responsibilities than what it must. The provision of a satisfactory national minimum postulates an adequate fund from which that minimum must be paid. Now for a hard-headed realist, with the Indian productive capacity being what it is, the concept of the Welfare State is only a long-term' objective to be realised gradually by stages because 'welfare measures benefit the poorer sections of the community by a redistribution of income. The possibility of increasing national welfare through such palliative is, after all, limited by the size of the cake and also by the fact that too much redistribution kills the incentive to production. Moreover, more taxation, especially more direct taxation, will mean less savings while any increase in indirect taxation will raise prices and provoke demands for higher wages. It does not help to argue that the number of pieces into which a cake can theoretically be cut is infinite-take half and there will always be half-because beyond a certain point the "half" which remains is only of academic interest and is of no practical utility. Sardar Patel was right in his wry assessment that "we have only poverty to distribute". "To abolish riches would not be to abolish poverty", observed Paley. Even in the highly industrialised country like England, there is considerable controversy on the community's capacity of bearing the cost of social welfare as embodied in her latest cradle-to-death scheme of national insurance, and much of U. K.'s present economic troubles are attributed, by highly competent critics, to her ambitious and lofty social welfare programmes which keep her cost of living high and reduce the competitive efficiency of British exports. For, obviously, 'social welfare has a cost which has to be borne by the nation as a whole, and the amount of social welfare which a nation can afford at a particular moment of its history depends upon its ability to bear that cost.' "Welfare economic", according to Prof. Peck, "like other theories,

has arisen under conditions of historical opportunism. That is, at a time when production has become very efficient—between more goods or more leisure. When the pressure of economic needs being in great measure satisfied, there is the question of the kind of non-economic activities which should occupy the energies.’

Hence, notwithstanding Mr. Aneurin Bevan, the U. K. Labour leader’s declaration : “Poverty is no reason for injustice. The poorer a country, the more it needs justice”, coupled with the fact that there can be no two opinions about the desirability of national health services and of making a start in that direction, the unpleasant realities of a country where more than fifty million peoples are unemployed and under-employed and that its productive efficiency is the lowest in the world, the very word ‘welfare’ seems a mockery. The Government of India did make a beginning by setting up the Employee’s State Insurance Scheme. The difficulties that have come in the way of making a success of even this limited experiment prove that the ideal of the Welfare State with State responsibility from the cradle-to-grave is still far away.

Instead of blindly imitating the Westerners, and scraping our own and old institutions, we would do well to modernise and renovate the best and the CHEAPEST form of unemployment insurance, social insurance* old age pensions etc., devised anywhere in the world, viz., the joint family system, and which is being constantly undermined and disrupted by the low reliefs in Income-tax Act, the proposed Estate Duty Bill and such other measures. Disruption of the joint family system in India by the

*Social insurance has been defined by Cohon as “that part of the total field of insurance in which the risks or hazards covered result from the inability of the workman either to make a wage contract of a kind which will enable him to maintain a satisfactory standard of living for himself and his family or to carry through his part of the contract owing to physical incapacity.”

ultra-modern without the introduction of free national health insurance and other social services (keeping in view our financial and administrative incapacity to introduce the same) will leave a vacuum and result in chaos. It will spell ruin to the rich and misery to the poor.

Lastly, the national salvation lies in all round increased production and streamlining (and not in abolishing) the structure of the existing social institutions. Of course, social welfare should be promoted as far as is practicable, but the dangers of any precipitate policy must be coldly calculated. Bank Insurance Trust Corporation Ltd., London, in one of its circulars rightly observes. "Democracies have a habit of voting themselves benefits without counting the cost... social services are as essential part of the modern state but let us beware of making out of them a Frankenstein who will ultimately destroy the integrity of our money and the basis of our economic health." We should not allow our zeal to outrun our discretion. "The sound policy for those who believe in the Welfare State", declares the London *Economist*, "is that the state should seek to maintain for its citizens the highest standard of individual welfare that it can reasonably afford and does not undermine the economic efficiency or the political liberty of the citizens."

Chapter III

SOME ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF THE WELFARE STATE

Fallacious classical equilibrium:

A highly simplified, but not misleading, account of the nineteenth century individualistic economy would claim that its dynamics were automatic. On the distribution side people's incomes were determined by the market value of their work and their property; the outcome of this process was that some people were poor and some rich. The poor were driven by the fear of starvation and the hope of comfort to work harder; the rich were enabled out of their surpluses to save and invest in new projects which would multiply their wealth.

Insistent compulsion:

On the production side, the same market forces attracted labour and capital to those industries producing goods which consumers were ready to pay for; simultaneously they indicated to labour and capital that certain industries could no longer pay them a living wage and a reasonable rate of profit and that, therefore, they would be well advised to divert their efforts to other activities. The final outcome was that all the factors of production were moved by an insistent compulsion both to increase the national income and to yield the highest rewards to those who concentrated on giving the consumer what he wanted.

The essence of the Welfare State, is the reverse of this. On the production side part of the nation's resources are used to provide every citizen with certain goods irrespective of whether or not he can (or wants) to pay for them; the criterion becomes

human needs rather than purchasing power. For example, milk is produced for all children without expecting them or their parents to pay a price which will cover the costs of production. On the distribution side all citizens can depend upon a reasonable minimum of income irrespective of whether or not they work and save.

No entire abandonment:

Of course, dependence on the old forces of supply and demand has not been entirely abandoned. Rather, what has happened in this that they now come into play only after the State has provided everyone with a 'ground-floor' of material security.

Now this ground floor of material security is a question of value and people may differ on the scope of this 'ground floor. Welfare is a state of consciousness. Hence welfare is an abstract concept and like so-many other abstract concepts, it eludes definition. We can simply echo Mr. Pignon's views. "Welfare is the same thing as good" (and 'nothing is good and bad in this world but thinking makes it so,' wrote Shakespeare!) neither can we improve upon George Moore's circular definition that 'good is good.'

Lewis Mumford however, resolves this difficulty by stating that "a normal standard consumption" can be defined by biologists, moralists, and men of cultured taste, that the goods necessary to support it can be standardized, weighed, measured and that should constitute the 'ground floor' of material security and that they should be supplied to all the members of the community.

Ground floor of material security :

It is this 'ground-floor' of material security which commentators have in mind when they discuss the economic problems of

the welfare state*. They argue that :

(a) It withdraws from the lazy worker the old spurs which formerly induced him to work diligently and regularly.

(b) It increases to a wasteful point his readiness to throw up his job and seek a new and more acceptable buyer of his skills.

(c) It reduces his readiness to learn new skills and shift to another trade when his old industry is threatened with redundancy.

(d) An unduly large proportion of the nation's manpower has to be diverted to the administration of the Welfare benefits.

Problems of taxation :

"To tan and to please, no more than to love and to be wise, is not given to men", wrote Burke. The money required to finance the benefits of the Welfare State necessitates higher rates of taxation. Such taxation creates the following additional problems :

(a) It deprives the worker of all incentive to earn more than his untaxed minimum.

(b) It makes well-nigh impossible for an ambitious worker to save enough to set up on his own.

(c) It leaves the middle class with no margin for saving and investment.

Effects of taxing profits :

Additionally, the State has to increase its revenue by very stiff taxes on profits, and here it is urged :

(a) Such taxes kill industrial initiative ; no one but a fool is likely to shoulder the risks and worries of new projects when he knows that if he succeeds much of his rewards

* However, some are created by the nationalization of industry and by the policy of full employment, since the author considers them to be aspects of Socialism and not essential parts of the Welfare State.

will be taken by the State; while if he fails the losses will fall on his own resources; the only sensible thing under these circumstances is to 'play safe' and carry on with the accepted routines. Reference is made to the conclusion of Collin Clark, Australian statistician-economist, that the safe limit of total taxation in any country was 25% of the national income and that any attempt to take more than this is so discouraging to hard work, risk-taking and production that it must lead to inflation,

Savings and investment :

The second main body of criticism that might be levelled at the welfare state is that the taxation by which it is financed discourages the hard-working wage earner and checks middle class saving and entrepreneurial initiative.

The first of these is hardly susceptible to precise examination. What we can be sure of, however, is that 'out-of-step' workers in England, have long been kept in check not by the fear of high taxation but by trade union regulations and workshop solidarity; these restraints were effective long before wage-earners became liable for income-tax, and they are probably no less binding today.

As to saving and investment, it is undoubtedly true that, as compared with pre-war days, not saving by private persons is a much reduced proportion of national total personal income. The following U. K. figures are instructive :

Year	Net saving as percentage of personal income
1938	2.8
1948	2.0
1949	1.7

A new freedom :

Some say that the security of a job to the worker resulting

from full employment under the Welfare State gives the worker a new freedom which, more often than not, is freely abused*. "The freedom most valued by the worker is the freedom to choose whether he shall or shall not stay in the particular job in which he finds himself. To hold a job by grace and favour of the foreman is not freedom; to be unable to leave it, however intolerably uncongenial it may be, is not freedom. Long experience of such lack of liberty not unnaturally brings the conviction that to be able to spit in the foreman's eye if one feels so inclined, to call for one's cards at the drop of a hat, is on the contrary all Four Freedoms rolled into one". (Honor Goome, *Lloyds Bank Review*. July 1949). Professor Zweig puts it: "The old incentives, based mostly on fear and want, above all on fear of unemployment, disappear in a fully employed welfare economy. And positive incentives (the carrot) are not always strong enough to replace the stick. The establishment of minimum wage rates, which becomes the rates of the trade, the tendency to peg wages and prices, together with excessive taxation, produce a certain sluggish atmosphere, especially in countries with a traditional psychology and a traditional standard of living." The question therefore boils down to: "will this rise in status and power of the labour be accompanied by a sense of responsibility and self discipline?"

"To speed up production with unrefreshed workmen is a disastrous economic policy. Temporary success will be at the expense of the nation, which, for long years of their lives, will have to support worn-out artisans—unemployables. Equally disastrous is the alternation of spasms of effort with period of pure relaxation. Such periods are the seed-times of degeneration, unless rigorously curtailed. The normal recreation should be change of activity, satisfying the cravings of instincts. Games afford such activity. Their disconnection emphasises the relaxation, but their excess leaves us empty", writes Alfred North Whitehead in *The aims of education*.

Absenteeism :

Closely associated with this new-found liberty is the freedom to take a day off from work when one feels like it. It is obvious that today many people change their job or stay away from work when they would not have done so if they would not have been sure of finding alternative employment. There is already a high turnover of labour in Indian factories. It is considered that a worker availed himself of 2.3 day's holiday in a month and 3.7 weeks in a year. This necessitates the employment of reserve with additional costs to the concern.

Too many civil servants and bureaucracy :

Another charge levied is that the administration of security absorbs an extravagant proportion of the manpower in the civil-service army. In England there were 54,000 civil servants in 1877; by 1911 the figure had more than trebled to 172,000; by 1939 the total was 370,000 and today it stands at 680,000; local government officials have probably grown at the same rate and to almost the same dimensions. Now this enormous army of civil servants it is argued leads to bureaucracy because the gentlemen of the Civil Service bound by convention, tradition, false values, red-tape and bureaucratic fear of irregularity, pedal soft and move at the proverbial snail's pace when the times demand jet-propulsion. The "Career man" in the government is inclined to consider the interests of his career above the immediate problems of any given moment; his cardinal principle being: 'Never stick your nose out'.

Conclusion :*

On the whole, then, it looks as if many of the economic pro-

*Sir Ronald gives the advantages of the British social security schemes: "So far they have been a paying proposition for they have vastly improved the quality of our people. Without them, for instance, we should have been lamentably worse off in this dread war. We could neither have fought so well nor have produced such mighty armaments. The blitz might have been over undoing.

(30)

blems created by the welfare state are at least manageable, and that in some instances they are perhaps imaginary. On the other hand, we seem to have lost some of the elasticity that is necessary for economic progress while at the same time creating among a minority of workers a certain amount of wasteful impatience.

Chapter IV

SOME POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE WELFARE STATE :

Two dangers:

Critics of the Welfare State tend to concentrate on two main dangers:

(a) that its politicians will give themselves over to competitive bribing of the electorate; and

(b) that the electorate will come to prefer security to freedom, and in exercising that preference will divest themselves of all true feeling of political responsibility.

The former danger has been frequently and eloquently expressed repeatedly. When in 1872 Walter Bagehot wrote an introduction to his famous *English Constitution* he showed considerable concern at the possible consequences of the 1876 Reform Act:

“If (statesmen) raise questions which will excite the lower orders of mankind; if they raise questions on which the interest of those orders is not identical with, or is antagonistic to, the whole interest of the state, they will have done the greatest harm they can do.....They will have suggested topics that will bind the poor as a class together; topics which will excite them against the rich; topics the discussion of which in the only form in which that discussion reaches their ear will be to make them think that some new law can make them comfortable—that it is the present law which makes them uncomfortable.....that Government has at its disposal an inexhaustible fund out of which it can give to those who now want. If the first work of the new voters is to try and create a ‘poor man’s paradise’ as poor men are apt to fancy that paradise, the great political trial now beginning will simply fail.”

Party competition --- British Experience:

From 1872 onwards British politicians of all parties have been convinced that their opponents have succumbed to these temptations. At the same time they have dared these same opponents to vote against any measure of their own that could be presented as a step towards the 'poor man's Paradise.'

Certainly British politics at the popular level has, in recent years, been greatly simplified. The Labour Party has established itself as the architect of the Welfare State, while the Conservatives have 'done their best to assure the electorate that they would provide even more bountifully for the working class.' To all of which Labour Party spokesmen have replied in the tone of a conjuror threatened with the confiscation of rabbits. At the latest annual conference of the Party one lonely academic voice suggested that the costs of rearmament might check national expenditure on the social services, but Mr. Crosland was good humouredly ignored by his colleagues.

Is security a bad thing ?

By now the only realistic question is not: 'Have the politicians been corrupted (in Bagehot's sense)?' By and large they have, and we need only ask: 'Does it matter?' Does their present preoccupation with the maintenance and development of the Welfare State menace the political, economic and social health of the nation? Probably not. Once the electorate has been convinced that all parties are in agreement on the abolition of destitution, and of economic insecurity in the worker's life it should be possible for politicians to engage in battles of far greater relevance to our present needs.

What about the second charge—that in their new security the masses have come to neglect freedom and are now indifferent to all political issues except the retention and perhaps expansion of their benefits ?

Security and freedom:

Perhaps the first comment of many workers on this issue would be that only with economic security have they acquired freedom. They would argue that in the past freedom was for the comfortable to use their property and spend their money and abundant leisure as they wished; it now also means, for even the poorest citizen freedom from the full consequences of economic laws; for their security and freedom are almost synonymous.

Public apathy:

Granting this, it is still possible to fear that with the coming of the Welfare State the majority of peoples have lost any vital interest in all other political issues, and that this loss is regrettable. It is certainly true that in outside elections most people have little time for politics and public affairs (with the solitary exception of Switzerland). Most people prefer newspapers which neglect politics. Time and again public opinion polls indicate massive areas of ignorance and error on subjects which are the core of national safety and national prosperity.

Conclusion.

There is abundant evidence to substantiate the charge of popular apathy, but the fault should not be laid to the Welfare State as such. It seems to be widespread far beyond these borders. The blank look, the shrug of the shoulders, the polite and evasive smile merely reflect everywhere the ordinary man's feeling of impotency when faced with the problems of the Great Society. For all the influence he can exercise on them, any interest he might take in the cold war, the price level or the dollar gap, would be merely an exercise in frustration.

By now all these problems have passed into the hands of experts, the planners, and they in their own good time will solve or not solve them. If they need his help they tell him what to

do and what not to do. Perhaps the exhortations and instructions will be backed by explanations and promises, but experience has by now taught him to regard these with scepticism. The apathy of today springs not from a sense of security at home, but rather from life's complexity, international insecurity, and the ordinary man's feeling of insignificance. It is at least arguable that the Welfare activity of the State has been one of the few elements which have mitigated the drift towards political irresponsibility and apathy.

Chapter V

SOME SOCIAL PROBLEMS :

Twin Doubts :

Perhaps the two most frequently voiced doubts about the social wisdom of a Welfare State policy turns on the possible damage to family life and on the deprivations suffered by the middle class.

As to the former of these, it is undoubtedly true that the state has in recent years taken over part of the family's responsibilities both for its young and its old. At this one end of the age scale it ensures that each child should have at least ten year's schooling, and that during that time its diet and health should be in part, the responsibility of State officials. The aged for their part are assured of not only of a pension but also of any supplementary assistance necessary to enable them to live, if they so wish, independently of any help from their children.

Effect on the family :

It is possible that in some cases these benefits have weakened family ties and lessened parents' readiness to shoulder responsibility for the care and upbringing of their children. But against this must be set the fact that in the pre-Welfare State these responsibilities were often too much for the material resources of many parents. In such homes the strain that resulted created a domestic atmosphere of incessant worry and failure, and even resentment ; none of these could have helped to mould a good and happy family life.

A new middle class :

The plight of the middle class in the Welfare State has been frequently described by middle-class writers. The general burden of these accounts is that the heavy taxation necessary to finance social security has seriously reduced the standard of living of the middle class, that the reduction has deprived them of the leisure and economic security and abundance which in earlier days enabled them to lead the sort of life which morally, intellectually and culturally enriched the entire community.

Before the war, in England, there were 900,000 people with gross incomes between £500 and £2,000 a year. The average member of this group had an annual gross income of £760, and after paying income-tax was left with £575—enough to provide for a small car, some domestic help for his wife, holidays abroad and the time and money occasionally to patronize, or even practise, the arts and scholarship.... if he felt so inclined, Today the incomes of this group range from approximately £900 per annum to £3,500; the average is around £1,350 gross and only £1,050 after taxes have been paid; when allowance has been made for the fall in the value of money it looks as if between 1938 and 1949 the real net income of this middle-class 900,000 households has fallen by roughly 20 per cent.

And middle class is fast dwindling even in India—without the advent of the Welfare state. Gilbert Murray concisely puts the typical characteristics of this class: “A keen sensitiveness to the wrongs of mankind and conscientiousness about his own actions were an integral element in his nature..... A strong sense of the difference between true and false, between right and wrong..... He had no doubt whatever about the importance of seeking truth and acting for the public good. He was a free man, and accepted the duties incumbent on a freeman..... not to

be afraid, and to be mean, to care for public causes, to defend the innocent, to protect the weak.'

Conclusion :

But then, one of the main purposes of the Welfare State is to expand, through its educational benefits, the number of people who can shoulder the responsibilities of social leadership.

POSTFACE.

Sir William Beveridge rightly opines that the initial steps towards the Welfare State should be, "directed in the first instance against the giant social evils of Want, Disease, Squalor, and Ignorance and towards the raising of productivity by improvements of our capital equipment." His immediate priorities in programme include :

1. Abolition of Want by Social security and Children's Allowances increasing and stabilizing consumption.
2. Collective Outlay to secure good houses, good food, fuel and other necessities at stable prices for all, and a National Health Service without a charge of treatment.
3. Encouragement and Regulation of Private Investment by a National Investment Board, to rejuvenate and expand the mechanical equipment of the country while stabilizing the process of doing so.
4. Extension of the Public Sector of Industry so as to increase the scope of direct stabilization of investment and to bring monopolies under public control.
5. A National Budget based on the datum of man-power and designed to ensure year by year total outlay sufficient to set up demand for the whole productive resources of the country.
6. Control of the Location of Industry with full powers, including transport, on a national plan.
7. Organized Mobility of Labour to prevent aimless movement, the hawking of labour and mis-direction of juveniles, while facilitating movement when it is desirable.
8. Controlled Marketing of Primary Products, so as to stabilize overseas demand to the utmost.
9. International Trading Arrangements based on acceptance of the three fundamental conditions of multilateral trade: full

employment, balancing of international accounts, and stability of economic policy.

“When the goals set in this immediate programme have been reached or are in sight”, observes Sir Beveridge, “new goals will come into sight. The planning of adequate outlay will continue, but outlay may be directed to new aims of steadily rising consumption and of growing leisure, more fairly distributed and used for the free development of all men’s faculties.”

The advent of the Welfare State has falsified the prophecy of Marx. It has out-gearred the Communist time-table. It is the only answer to communism which breeds in insecurity acute inequality and poverty. The Welfare State fights communism by reforming capitalism. It aims at the creation of a twentieth century liberalism pursuing by new techniques the old aim of human freedom. And today when the world threatened by communism, is skating on thin ice, the safety lies in the speed with which the Welfare State is ushered in.

But there is no short-cut to success. The benefits of the Welfare State, in the last analysis, are to be attained only by sweat of brow and burden of thought. It must be won by a democracy; it cannot be forced on a democracy or given to a democracy. It is not a thing to be promised or not promised by a Government, to be given or with-held as from Olympian heights. It is something that the Indian democracy should direct its Government to secure, at all cost save the surrender of the essential liberties. Who can doubt that the Welfare State is worth winning, at any cost less than surrender of those liberties? If it is not won and kept no liberties are secure, for to many they will not seem worth while. Then, even these ambitious goals are but the foot-hills to be reached. Beyond lie the mountains.



INDUSTRY & AGRICULTURE

BRIJ GOPAL GUPTA

CURRENT AFFAIR PAMPHLET No. 2

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INDUSTRY & AGRICULTURE

By

BRIJ GOPAL GUPTA

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"Industry is a loadstone to draw all goods."

—Robert Butler.



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INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE

A couple of centuries ago America was a wilderness, and Europe was a patch work of village states, whereas today they are the industrial heart of the world, to which the five continents drain their raw materials, and which pumps the finished goods back to the ends of the earth. Their people eat better, live better and have more leisure than any other, now or ever before, in the annals of the world.

Broadly speaking, man can lighten his burden only by making animals and machines work for him and the Western Europe and the Eastern seaboard of North America, have been transformed by the use of energy. They have tapped the capacity of dead nature to do human work; and during two hundred years this discovery has turned them into the workshop of the world. The industry and the wealth of the modern world are the creation of this discovery—that natural energy is at our command and can be made to work for us.

Energy is the source of all wealth and still people comment ‘whether there are riches except factory or factory goods?’ or ‘by bringing energy

to our country we shall be turning India into a machine shop !'.

Let us therefore, start with a few wide comparisons. The amount of food eaten by the people of Great Britain and the U. S. A., on the average, exceeds 3,000 calories a day each. In India the same average barely exceeds 1,500 calories. These being the rough extremes of feeding today : the highest average of calories per head in the world is roughly twice the lowest.

Again, we should roughly match these figures by comparing the extremes of health. As it is difficult to find these put into numbers, so we cannot do better than measure a people's health roughly by their average length of life. A child born in Great Britain or the U. S. A., today can expect on an average to live well beyond 60 or even 65 whereas a child born today in India cannot expect on the average to live much beyond 30. Thus the highest life span in the world now is about twice the lowest.

Even if we cannot make too much of the likeness in range between these two sets of figures, yet there is something in the likeness. How much food we eat, day in and day out, does affect our health and with it our length of life; and

more than this, we know that what a mother eats in pregnancy affects the survival of the new born child. What the figures do throw is the suggestion that the co-relation is closer than we think.

Now let us have another comparison. A ton of coal contains energy enough to produce ideally 10,000 horse-power hours, which is 7,500 kilowatt hours. But in practice it produces nothing of the kind and on the average the energy which we get from a ton of coal amounts to only about 1,000 kilowatt hours. It is this practical measure, which has been termed as 'a ton of coal'. On this scale, per annum per-capita consumption of energy in North America is ten tons of coal, directly or indirectly. In U. K., it is about five tons and the world average is less than two tons, whereas for India the average sinks to a fraction of a ton—less than half a ton. It has been calculated that the daily out-put of work in 1932 from all sources—human, coal oil, and water in terms of h. p. per head was : U. S. A. .557; Canada .544; Norway .316; Great Britain .277; Germany .251; France .181; Argentine. 700; Brazil .026; INDIA .020; China .019; (based on calculations by Dr. T. T. Read in 'American Economic Review', Vol. XXIII, March 1933). Thus the highest use of energy per head in the

countries of the world today is atleast twenty times as great as the lowest.

This big difference is obviously related to difference in industrial out-put and more generally, in mechanisation. But these are cold concepts and the main interest is to relate it to something concrete. How this accounts for the existing difference in the standard of living? Now again a people's standard of living, like its health, is not easily put into numbers. By using a rough and a bit round about measure of real income we can have a fair survey. Real income per head over the whole population of North America exceeds £500 per annum. In the U. K., it stands at about the half of America's and in India the real income per head is much under £25 per year. In spite of the fact that these are round figures, one thing crystal clear is that their range follows closely the range of energy used, e. g., real income per head in North America is more than twenty times greater than in India.

Energy & Food

As a first interpretation, these figures suggest that the mechanical energy which each man in a community uses is closely related to his real income and his standard of living; but that it is

less closely related to his health and his life span. The closer relation to health and length of life is food, not energy or so it seems.

But this first conclusion is a good deal short of the truth and is only skin-deep. The exact size of the figures in these comparisons is almost an arithmetical accident for it is dominated by the fact that there are biological limits to the food a man can eat and the age to which he can live, but there are no known limits to his capacity to use mechanical energy and income. Now, the real crux of these comparisons lies deeper; it lies not in the size of the figures but in their order.

The crux is this : whether we measure feeding or life-span, mechanical energy or income, the countries of the world always come out in much the same order. By all four measures North America and Western Europe lead the world; by all four, the ancient countries of Asia lag far in the rear. All up and down the list, a country rich in the use of energy is also a country whose people live well and long ; and a country poor by one of these measures is poor by all.

Energy & Effort

In short, energy or industry is not a luxury of the western world, which provides it with a

few motor cars and aniline dyes and the current to run television and cinema projectors. In few hundred years, the growing use of energy has raised the life of the people of Europe and North America in each sphere of life : in food and health and leisure as much as in housing and transport and in agriculture as much as in industry. It is energy which has doubled the calories a man in Europe can afford to eat since the Industrial Revolution. A farmer in India barely keeps his family's body and soul together. A farm worker in North America today keeps fifteen others and more, and keeps them twice as well fed. He does it because everything he uses, from the plough to the fertiliser, and from the trunk-road to the agricultural college, is backed and muscled by his command of energy. More than four-fifths of the energy which the Indian farmer uses is his own physical effort. The share of physical effort in U. S. farming is perhaps a third of this.

Industry Vs. The Land

We must therefore rid our minds of the prejudice that energy is the sap of industry and nothing more. New industry is wanted for our under-developed land. While constructing our

multi-purpose projects we should not forget one thing regarding the Tennessee Valley analogy—that the Tennessee Valley had the industries ready-made at the door, to draw on and later to move into the valley; but we have not. We should not fear that industrialisation will turn India into an industrial slum. On the contrary the root interest is to raise our output of food. For we must always keep in mind that we are not only poorly fed but are underfed as well. A poor day's work, a poor crop, this is the vicious circle we have to break. We can break into it only by giving the man on the land more energy which can come only from increased industrialisation.

An industrialised country could do this fairly easily. For example, Great Britain in 1940 realised that she must greatly increase the food she grows herself. For her, it was a simple matter to plough up new land and to get more work done by the shrinking number of agricultural workers. She did it by giving them more machines; in ten years, she has increased her number of tractors fourfold and her combine harvestors twelvefold, and now each man on the land there uses three times more horse-power than he did in 1940. At the same time, she could afford to pay the farmer and the farm

labourer more, and could back them with more fertilisers and new pest and weed killers.

But our underdeveloped country lacks the means to make tractors and fertilisers or to pay for them. We also lack the means to use them. Even our raw materials jute etc., are no longer indispensable; for the West is busily making substitutes. In industry, in wealth and in human health and skill we have to pull ourselves by our own bootlaces and our problem, as always, is to break a vicious circle.

The Construction of Poverty

Throughout India there are too many people on the land. One cannot get high yields while the holdings are so small and the farmer has so many weakly mouths to feed at home. All this would be changed if our country had some basic industries of her own, by way of balance; there would be somewhere for men to go off the land, then the birth-rate would also naturally fall. But the yields remain low with no surplus to invest in industry and the circle remains unbroken. India will remain a poor country so long as she grows her food with no more than 10,000 tractors and 200,000 tons of fertilizers a year. Her yields will remain less than half those in the U. S., which cultivates a comparable area with a tenth of the land workers, but with

2,500,000 tractors and 13,000,000 tons of fertilizers a year. But India will not have the tractors and the fertilizers until she has these industries and she cannot build the industries so long as her yields barely feed her mouths.

The Problem

The problem of meeting each year's growing energy needs in the industrialised countries is largely technical; to find new sources of energy, and to use the old sources better. But the problem in our under-developed areas is altogether deeper. There the need is to break the circle of poverty which holds our agriculture in an iron hoop. We must gain balance, we must get a skeleton of basic industries. Firstly, we need these industries directly to serve and modernize our agriculture. We need machine-shops to make tractors and combine harvestors and milking machines and drills for sinking wells. We need chemical works to make fertilisers and insecticides. And we need those industries which make farm sheds and water pipes and dams and all the things a farmer needs, from the plough to the weather forecast. In all this, we see the relation of the farmer to the industrial workers much like that of the fighter-pilot to his ground crew; they depend on him for their lives, and they alone make him efficient. Roughly, Rs. 4 should be spent to build industries to back each Re. 1 spent

in developing agriculture. And it is really a sad commentary on the Final Five Year Plan that industrialisation has been relegated a back seat. But the silver lining with this is the fact that the decision has been taken for statesmen-like reasons and is one of priority only; the emphasis on industry has been deferred rather than laid aside.

We also need new industries less directly. We need them to make consumer goods; for the farmer will not grow more than his bare family needs unless there is something to buy with the surplus. And we need them to take up the population which must move from the land if agriculture is to increase its scale and its yields. No point is so important and so critical as this last. But for this, we may remain underdeveloped area—as a 'raw material colony', trading our agricultural produce and raw materials for goods and equipment from the industrialised West. If we are to have an efficient agriculture, then our people must have opportunities and skills and an outlook beyond subsistence farming. Industrial Revolution and Agricultural Revolution must go hand-in-hand as they are not competitive but co-operative. One is incomplete without the other. And, then, we should also keep in mind the capital fact that a balanced economy presupposes a balanced society.

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**SOME ASPECTS
OF
INDIAN POPULATION**

By
V. B. SINGH, M.A., Ph.D.
Lucknow University

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IN India today the food problem is being linked with population growth and the old controversy about the Malthusian menace has been raked up again. With it we are being served a very old wine in comparatively new bottles—we mean, family planning. But is India over-populated? Is Malthusianism significant today? Has our population been increasing beyond the optimum point? In the first three sections of this conveniently brief essay—which was considered by Prof. R. Balakrishna, President, 37th Annual Session of the Indian Economic Association, to be “the best documented paper”—Dr. Singh discusses these questions and shows that we are viewing the whole problem from the wrong perspective. In the fourth and fifth sections he examines the views of the Census Commissioner of India and brings to light serious fallacies in his argument. Holding out the prospect of an unprecedented increase in India’s economic potential, Dr. Singh shows the futility of any nation wide scheme of family planning.

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PREFACE

Indian population presents a complex set of problems. Any attempt to deal with it in the short space of a booklet is bound to be inadequate. The view that India is suffering from "over population" has now assumed a semi-official status. This makes it necessary that the various viewpoints should be presented in a concise form for the education of a wider section of the students and the public. The present essay is my humble effort in this direction. It was read before the thirty-seventh annual Conference of the Indian Economic Association held at Agra in December last, and is being printed in its present form with the permission of the Association.

In my conclusions I am supported by the note of "tempered optimism" which Sir John Russell has sounded in his *World Population and World Food Supplies*.

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January 26, 1955.

SOME ASPECTS OF INDIAN POPULATION

I THE CONTROVERSY

The Census Report of 1951 has revived the old controversy about India's population having outstripped her food supply. This, the Malthusian view of Indian population, is as old as Malthus' *Essay on Population* itself, of which Chapter 11 is devoted to "The Checks to Population in Indostan and Tibet."¹ "Since that time disciples of Malthus", writes Professor Davis, "have pointed *ad nauseam* to India as a place where 'the Malthusian law applies'."² /

In 1800 Abbe Dubois wrote: "Of these causes (of the misery of the lower classes) the chief one is the rapid increase of population" and concluded that an "increase in the population should be looked upon as a calamity rather than as a blessing."³ The Indian Famine Commission of 1880 also expressed similar views. In 1882 Baden-Powell remarked that rent relief was being neutralised by the increase in population.⁴ In 1925 Darling told the same tale about the Punjab.⁵ A year after, Professor Vera Anstey cried out: "Where is the Indian Malthus, who will inveigh against the devastating torment of Indian children".⁶ In 1928 Professor Knowles said: "India seems to illustrate the theories of Malthus".⁷ Professor Carr-Saunders also concluded that "large areas" of India were "over-populated".⁸ In the most recent past similar opinions

1. *An Essay on Population*, Vol. I, Book I (7th ed., London, 1914).
2. DAVIS, KINGSLEY, *The Population of India and Pakistan*, (1951) p. 203.
3. As quoted by DAVIS, *Ibid.* p. 203.
4. BADEN-POWELL, B. H., *Land Systems of British India*, Vol. I (1882) p. 346.
5. DARLING, M. L., *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt* (1925), pp. 253, 286-88.
6. ANSTEY, VERA, *The Economic Development of India*, (1949) p. 475.
7. KNOWLES, L. C. A., *The Economic Development of the British Overseas Empire*, p. 351.
8. *World Population*, (1936), p. 275.

have been expressed by several writers. Fairfield Osborne asserts that the internal enemy of India is "too many people for the land to support".¹ Furnas is of the view that demographically India has reached its "saturation point".² William Vogt wants us to believe that "Mother India is the victim of her own awful fecundity. In all the world there is probably no region of greater misery, and almost certainly none with less hope".³ Vogt considered this situation so alarming that in 1948 he went to the extent of suggesting to the F.A.O. that not only should it include contraception programmes in its plans but that it "should not ship food to keep alive ten million Indians and Chinese this year, so that fifty million may die five years hence".⁴ In the post-1941 period A. V. Hill,⁵ T. A. Raman⁶ and John Fischer⁷ lamented that India was over-populated. Probably the unprecedented increase of Indian population by 51 million people in this decade prompted them to do so.

Be it noted that Sir E. A. Gait in his essay on "Population" in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* did not think that India was over-populated.⁸ In the very next chapter of the *Gazetteer*, however, Sir Edward was contradicted by A. C. Roberts.⁹ It is also noteworthy that R. C. Dutt did not consider the population problem important enough to be mentioned in his most celebrated work, *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*. At a later stage, certain economists of nationalist views thought that the over-population theory was propounded by people under British influence, with

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1. Quoted by J. DE CASTRO in: *The Geography of Hunger*, (1952), p. 153.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
 3. *Road to Survival*, (1948), p. 227.
 4. *Ibid.* pp. 281-282.
 5. "Health Food and Population in India," *International Affairs*, Vol. 21, (Jan. 1945), pp. 40-50."
 6. *Report on India*, London, (1943).
 7. "India's Insoluble Hunger", *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 190 (April, 1945).
 8. Vol. I, (1907), pp. 461-62.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

a view to justify the "Do Nothing" policy of the Imperial Government.

In order to see the theoretical justification of the nationalist view we should consider the relationship between the food supply and the number of inhabitants of a given society which is a function of two variables, namely, population and resources. But the advocates of the 'over-population' theory ignored this view. While all attempts were made to show that the population increased in 1931 by 32 million and in 1941 by 51 million, and that these were 'staggering figures', no attempt was made to point out the slow pace of industrialisation and the extremely low per acre yield of India. What is more interesting is the fact that some of these economists had held that the standard of living was rising¹ and "the agricultural production had outstripped population growth".² Yet their prejudice forced them to declare that India was over-populated. Considering this it is not at all surprising that the nationalist writers were convinced that the over-population theory was fallacious; in fact, no better than a "myth" or a "fable".

Explaining the causes of Indian poverty before the World Population Conference in London, Dr. R. K. Das observed in 1927: "The production power of the people has not grown within a century or more, on account of political, social and economic conditions."³ Dr. P. J. Thomas⁴ and Professor D. G. Karve⁵ expressed the view that in India production was increasing faster than population. In 1937 in the course of a paper on "Poverty and Population in India" before the Second All-India Population and the First Family Hygiene Conference in Bombay, Professor D. G. Karve refuted Professor Carr Saunders' view that India was over-populated and contended that her rich natural resources provided the stable basis for

1. ANSTEY, VERA, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-1.
2. MUKERJEE, R. K., "Food Planning for Four Hundred Millions", pp. 17 and 27.
3. Proceedings of the World Population Conference. London, (1927), p. 107.
4. "Population and Production (1921-22)" *Indian Journal of Economics*, Vol. XV, 1934-35.
5. Poverty and Population in India, 1936.

her industrial and technological advancement; which in turn would provide more subsistence than the increasing population would require. He, however, thought that the political independence of India was the pre-condition of this economic prosperity.¹ Similar views were expressed by R. P. Dutt², K. Ghoshal³ and K. L. Mitchell.⁴ The National Planning Committee, in its report on Population while agreeing with the above views, pointed out that birth-control would have to be an important part of the Plan.

From this brief survey it would be clear that there are two sharply divided views on the question of India's population: one group of experts holds that India is definitely over-populated, the other refutes this view and advocates measures to improve India's productive capacity. The theoretical justification of the "over-population" view is to be found in the Malthusian and the optimum theories of population. Hence, before proceeding further, we must examine in brief the validity of these theories.

II THE MALTHUSIAN THEORY

In 1789, that is, more than two decades after the French Revolution, the American War of Independence and the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*, came Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus's famous *Essay on the Principle of Population, as it affects the Future Improvement of Society*. (*The Essay*).

The *Essay*, as is revealed in its Preface, was frankly intended as a political tract against the views of Rev. Daniel Malthus, the author's father, who had a strong faith in the possibilities of social improvement. It was an attack against the doctrines of Condorcet and all those who in Malthus's words believed in "the possible existence of a society, all the members of which, should live in ease, happiness, and comparative leisure; and feel no anxiety about providing the means of subsis-

1. Indian Population Problems, Ed. GHUNYE, G. S., (1938). pp. 19-28.
2. India To-day, (1947), pp. 41-52.
3. The People of India, (1944), pp. 144-46.
4. India Without Fable, (1942), pp. 44-46.

tence for themselves and families.”¹ Thus, the book was clearly meant to undermine the social forces generated by the technological and economic advances in that period. Be it noted that Malthus had a great persuasive power and probably it is for this reason that Professor Bowen writes, “As a publicist, Malthus was enormously successful. He set out to attack the Poor Laws, and he tried to see them repealed. On this subject he converted Pitt who dropped the New Poor Law Bill of 1800”.² No wonder, then, that his book was as simple as it was sensational. The main arguments of the book are given in Malthus’ own words :

(1) “The power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man.

(2) “Population, when unchecked—increases in a geometrical ratio. A slight acquaintance with numbers will show the immensity of the first power in comparison of the second.

(3) “By that law of our nature which makes food necessary to the life of man, the effects of these two unequal powers must be kept equal.

(4) “This implies a strong and constantly operating check on population from the difficulty of subsistence. This difficulty must fall somewhere; and must necessarily be severely felt by a large portion of mankind.....

(5) “This natural inequality of the two powers of population and of production in the earth, and that great law of our nature which must constantly keep their effects equal, from the great difficulty that to me appears insurmountable in the way to the perfectibility of society”.³

The refutations and the criticisms of the Malthusian Theory are well known and may even be counted among the commonplaces of economics. But the ghost of Malthusianism has not yet been laid to rest. There are many reasons for this. A theoretical source of the vitality of Malthusianism is an ambiguity in the formulation of the “Law of Population”.

1. *The Essay*, (First Ed., 1926 reprint), pp. 16-17.

2. *Population*. (Cambridge Economic Handbooks), (1954), pp. 81-2.

3. *MALTHUS*, op. cit., pp. 13-16.

The manner in which it is formulated and expounded leaves it doubtful whether it is meant as an empirical generalisation or as a deductive law and accordingly it is not clear whether its truth is to be sought on the theoretical or the empirical plane. From the empirical and the historical point of view the "Law" is refuted by the almost unlimited possibilities of technological advance. But those who hold the Malthusian theory would not perhaps regard this as conclusive. Against such criticism they seek to defend it as a theoretical truth. This is done in two ways. Sometimes the disproportion between the rates of growth of population and resources is put forward as a law of population growth, and sometimes it is presented from the other side as the Law of Diminishing Returns. Again, so far as the biology of population growth is concerned, we hope it would not be considered cavalier to say that the Malthusian law is definitely superseded by modern biology; in fact, Malthus did not adduce any proof for his theorems on population increase from the technical biological point of view. About the Law of Diminishing Returns, we face the same basic ambiguity. If the Law is formulated on the empirical level, it is clearly related to technological advance, and can have little practical importance if there is continuous technological development. If its truth is to be deductively proved, the law clearly takes, as it has taken in modern economics, the form of what is known as the Law of Variable Proportions. But in this form it will support the Optimum, and not the Malthusian, theory of population.

III THE OPTIMUM THEORY

The Optimum theory of population is probably the second line of defence for the advocates of "over-population". A comprehensive survey of the theory has been made by Gottlieb in the *Journal of Political Economy*.¹ This theory states that the point of optimum population is the number which, along with the given factors (e.g. land, technology, capital and organisation), will give the maximum produce per capita.

1. Vol. LIII, No. 4, December 1945, pp. 289-316.

Any increase or decrease of the population above or below this number will affect the production adversely. It is in the context of this number that the terms over and under-population are used by economists, though they differ regarding the criteria for the measurement of the optimum population. For Imre Ferenczi the criterion is "the greatest economic return per capital";¹ for Adalph Landry "a country is over-populated in relation to another country when its standard of living is lower than that in the latter".² For Wolfe the problem of attaining the optimum is "..... the problem of attaining and maintaining the most productive ratio between population and natural resources. Productivity is to be measured by the per capita income of ultimate consumers of goods".³ Robbins thinks that there is "a point at which population is neither too great nor too small but is just such as to secure a maximum return per head, under the given condition of production."⁴ In the ultimate analysis Dalton also finds "..... that the optimum population is that which gives the maximum income per head."⁵

Thus, it seems that Cannan, Dalton, Robbins, Wolfe and others believe that maximisation of real income is the first approximation to the social ideal of the maximisation of economic welfare.⁶ Accordingly their emphasis is on real income. In fact, Dalton has gone to the extent of formulating an equation to measure the optimum population.⁷

1. Quoted by PATTERSON, An Introduction to World Economics, (1947), p. 192.
2. WRIGHT, F. C., Peaceful Change, Vol. 2., New York, (1938), p. 122.
3. WOLFE, A. B., Population Problems in United States and Canada, ed. Louis I. Dublin, (Boston, 1926), p. 71.
4. ROBBINS, LIONEL, London Essays in Economics, eds., T. E. GREGORY and H. DALTON, (London, 1927), p. 114.
5. The Optimum Theory of Population, *Economica*, March 1928, Vol. VIII., p. 32.
6. Cf. PENROSE, E. F., Population Theories and Their Application, (California, 1934), pp. 65-66.
7. $M = \frac{A - O}{O}$. A is actual number
O is the optimum number and M is the degree of maladjustment.

If M is positive, there is over-population. If M is negative, there is under-population. If M is equal to zero, the population is optimum.

The above views based on income optimum deal with the 'Economic Man' and not the Whole Man. They subordinate the cultural aspirations to the mere material needs of life. Hence, they are based on a partial approach. Thus, Penrose observes: no "single index or series of relatives can supply an adequate criterion . . . of the optimum position (in the hardly conceivable extent that this could be ascertained), The fact is that a number of different series of quantitative data are required, and no logical means can be found for reducing these to a single series."¹ Further Penrose rejects the view that the income optimum and the welfare optimum can be conceived as identical.² He thinks, however, that the income optimum should not be considered as a totally useless approach. Here is the definition of Penrose:

"The per capita welfare optimum population for any area is that population in which per capita income stands at a maximum when it is spent in the consumption of the composite commodity that, in the light of existing scientific knowledge makes a greater contribution to welfare than, in the existing state of the arts, can be made by any alternative composite commodity".³

This concept of welfare optimum has been pushed higher by Professor Radhakamal Mukerjee. He considers that the desirable optimum must be integral: it should be based "on a harmonious co-ordination of the optima in the successive levels of ecology, economy and state in respect of (a) the expectation of life, (b) real income, and (c) personal happiness and self-expression,—all these from the individual standpoint; and of (a) the stability of the economic base and occupational balance, (b) the regularity and continuity of employment, and (c) national security, and power,—all of the latter from the collective standpoint."⁴

1. PENROSE, E. F., Op. cit., p. 72.

2. Ibid., p. 74.

3. Ibid., p. 84.

4. Mukerjee, R. K., The Political Economy of Population, p. 17.

Professor Mukerjee himself, however, remarks that "such an optimum is . . . a mere hypothesis or a social aspiration."¹ Therefore, from the viewpoint of a realisable policy it has hardly any importance.

These theories of Optimum, with their varying emphasis on different criteria, have been subjected to severe criticism on the following grounds.² The point of optimum is a highly shifting point. That in itself is not a fatal objection. But it shifts along several dimensions, some of which are not inter-convertible or reducible to a common dimension, and this is a serious objection to the theoretical validity of the optimum.

Gottlieb tries to save the optimum theory by his doctrine of "broad stability in the optimum".³ This "stability", however, refers to the Western countries only. It cannot apply to the Eastern Countries where Industrial Revolution is not yet complete. With the industrialisation of the East the factors creating "relative stability" in the West will undergo a fundamental change and upset the equilibrium. Then, even in the West the "relative stability" is in relation to present economic organisation, which is seriously threatened from within. Thus, a major change in the given economic organisation seems to be inevitable now. This apart, the utilisation of atomic energy for constructional purposes will unleash unprecedented productive forces which, in turn, will upset the equilibrium.

From the above it follows that for determining the optimum size of population it is wrong to take a single country as a unit. The optimum point for a country must be determined in the context of world population and demographic trends. This approach implies a careful planning of demographic and

1. Ibid., p. 17.

2. See Gottlieb, Manuel, op. cit., pp. 307-8.

3. His main arguments in support of this position are : (i) The fundamental factors which condition the optimum size have been relatively stable in Western countries. (ii) The twentieth century, unlike the nineteenth century, does not require an increasing density of population. (iii) The single and the most revolutionary innovation of modern industrialism—that of cheap railway and ocean going transport—has the effect of raising the economic density of an area. (Ibid., pp. 308-10).

trade policies. It may also be remarked that determination of the size of population is by no means easy and sometimes a population may be regarded as over or under-sized as a result of a fallacious method of computing. For example, the effect of population changes on the income of individuals is by no means easy to determine. It has been observed that, owing to a faulty system of distribution, while the income has gone up, the workers' share has declined.

Thus we find that neither the Malthusian nor the optimum theory can be regarded as the general theory of population in the sense of being applicable to every society at all stages of its development.¹ It seems correct to emphasize the view that it would be better to say that "every stage of development has its own law of population With the varying degree of development of productive power, social conditions and the law governing them vary too."² Such a law can be formulated in terms of the specific form of pressure of the direct producers against the "means of employment" present in a given society.³ Therefore, it is the duty of Eastern economists to formulate a law of population applicable to the underdeveloped countries at their present stage of development. The habit of relying on theories which were propounded in a totally different context ought to be given up now. It is against this background that we propose to discuss in the following section the growth of Indian population.

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1. LORD KEYNES in a footnote to his *Essays in Biography* writes : "Not being a good Marxist scholar, I was surprised when in 1925 I lectured before the Commissariat of Finance in Moscow, to find that any mention by me of the increase of population as being a problem for Russia was taken in ill part. But I should have remembered that Marx, criticising Malthus, had held that over-population was purely the product of a capitalist society and could not occur under socialism. Marx's reasons for holding this view are by no means without interest, being in fact closely akin to Malthus's own theory that "effective demand" may fail in a capitalist society to keep pace with output." pp. 128.
 2. MARX, KARL, *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. XVII-XXVIII (Indian Ed.)
 3. MEEK, R. L., *Marx and Engels on Malthus*, (London, 1935), p. 26.

IV THE 1951 CENSUS

The 1951 Census Report of India instructs us "to limit the number of births (so) that they do not materially exceed the number of deaths and thus achieve a substantially stationary population before our number exceeds 45 crores."¹

In preaching this doctrine the Census Commissioner for India has sought to do no more than give some "statistical proofs" to support the views of the Planning Commission. The following paragraph will give some idea of the Commission's views:

"It is, therefore, apparent that population control can be achieved only by the reduction of the birth-rate to the extent necessary to stabilise the population at a level consistent with the requirements of the national economy."²

The zeal of the Census Commissioner for giving a statistical form to his preconceived conclusions probably explains many of his crude errors and his adoption of "questionable measurements."³

About the rate of the growth of our population the Census Report says: "The population of India decreased by 0.2 per cent in 1891-1900, increased by 5.6 per cent.⁴ in 1901-10 and again decreased by 0.4 per cent in 1911-20. On the other hand during the three decades after the 1921 Census, population increased by 10.4 per cent in 1921-30, 12.7 per cent in 1931-40 and 13.2 per cent in 1941-50. If the average rates for the two thirty year periods are considered, population grew between 1891 and 1920 at the rate of 1.7 per cent per decade, while between 1921 and 1950 it grew at the rate of 12.0 per cent per decade"⁵

1. Vol. I Part I-A—Report, p. 216.
2. The First Five Year Plan, p. 527.
3. DANTWALA, M. L., Population and Agricultural Production in India. *The Indian Economic Journal*, Vol. I, No. 3. pp. 296-301.
4. The rates of increase and decrease are expressed as percentages of the mean population of the period during which the increase or decrease occurred.
5. Census of India, 1951, Vol. I, Part I—A—Report, p. 126.

On pages 134 to 138 of the Report, the Census Commissioner for India gives a pessimistic and rather terrifying picture of our population growth and attempts, though hardly with any success, to make the readers believe that our rate of growth is unprecedented in human history. We wish he had quoted the following telling statements of Professor Kingsley Davis and controverted them:.

"..... it can be stated with some confidence that from 1871 to 1941 the average rate of increase of India's population was approximately 0.60 per cent per year. This was slightly less than the estimated rate for the whole world (0.69) from 1850 to 1940. India's modern growth, therefore, is not exceptional either way, but close to average. It is, however, less than that found in Europe, in North America, and in a good many particular countries.

"..... The total Indian increase during 1871-1941 was 52 per cent. The British Isles during the same period increased 57 per cent, and during the 70-year period from 1821-1891 (more comparable to India's recent history) they increased 79 per cent. Similarly Japan, during 70 years from 1870 to 1940, experienced a growth of approximately 120 per cent, and the United States a growth of 230 per cent.

"Clearly India's past increase has not been rapid when compared with that of countries farther along the industrial revolution. The popular notion that it has been faster than in most modern countries—a notion derived from the massiveness, density, and poverty of the population—is obviously unwarranted".¹ Again, the same author writes: "To be sure, the rate of growth since 1921 (1.2 per cent per year) has not been phenomenal for modern times. The United States population increased 16 per cent during the decade 1920-30. a rate never yet equalled in India".²

Let us, however, not forget that the decrease in the growth of population during the earlier decades, was largely due to

1. DAVIS, KINGSLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-7.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

positive checks. For example, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century there were 34 famines which took a toll of 3 crores and 24 lakhs of human beings.¹ Then during the decade 1911-21 India faced the great influenza epidemic of 1918 which killed about 13 million people. Some lives were also lost in the Great War.

Now relatively speaking, with a better provision for medical services, the control of famine and the control of epidemic diseases (e.g., cholera, small-pox, plague, fevers, dysentery, diarrhoea, and respiratory diseases) the rate of mortality has declined during the last two decades—which synchronises with the Provincial Autonomy and the Independence. Therefore, it may safely be presumed that the present tendency will continue to operate. This is only natural. The Bhore Committee observes: "The rate of decrease in fertility tends to lag behind that of mortality. This was the reason why in the 19th century when a better standard of living and improved health service brought about a marked fall in the death-rate, there was a remarkable increase in the population of Europe".²

This upward secular tendency in Indian Population should not obscure three sets of important facts about India's population. They are: the declining tendency of birth-rate in recent times, low longevity and high rate of mortality.

First, Davis observes: "..... and most important, there is a slight suggestion of a long-run downward trend, The official data are not conclusive, but they do suggest a slight tendency towards decline in the extremely high birth-rate".³ This view is also supported by the recent Census Report. Second, the Census Report says: "The expectation of life at age 10 is 59.0 to 60 in England and Wales, Australia and New Zealand. It is 56 in the United States of America, about 50 in Japan and 47 in Egypt. It is now 39 in India. We continue to retain the unpleasant distinc-

1. WADIA, P. A. and MERCHANT, K. T., *Our Economic Problem*, (1945 ed.), p. 55.
2. Report of the Health Survey and Development Committee Vol. II, p. 48.
3. DAVIS, KINGSLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

tion of having the lowest expectation of life among all the peoples for whom figures are available".¹ Third, "..... we have seen out of 27 deaths of persons of all ages (which occur annually among 1,000 persons in India) 11 deaths occur among children under 5 years of age. This appalling waste of life and maternal suffering, so largely preventable, goes on day after day in all parts of the country".²

As an hypothesis we would like to submit that the observation of Davis about the declining birth-rate may be linked with the growth of cities, middle classes and cultural advancement during the last two decades. With a rise in income and the standards of living, birth-rate tends to decline.³ This phenomenon has been noticed in all those countries which have been fully industrialized. Conversely, high rates of birth and mortality go with low income levels. One of the major causes of this phenomenon is the psychological fact that every man is inclined more or less "to look to his wife and sex intimacy as the only relaxation and recreation in an otherwise dull, drab and unexciting life of relentless struggle to make both ends meet"⁴ Thus India's population problem has assumed a paramount importance, because of the food shortage. The Indian Plan⁵ and the Census Report⁶ both plead for a National Population Policy of which birth control will be a

1. Census of India, 1951, Vol. I Part I-A—Report, p. 187.

2. Ibid., p. 188.

3. J. S. DAVIS in 'Our Changed Population Outlook' points out that "marriage and children constitute an integral part of the real standard of living of most Americans" (*American Economic Review*, Vol. XLIII, No. 3, June 1952, p. 318) yet later he observes with some surprise: "The high level of births in post-war years, in a period of high employment and undreamed-of incomes for the masses of Americans raises a major question." (Ibid., p. 317). He forgets that war has meant postponement of marriage and separation of the couples, therefore, it is but natural that the American masses have tried to keep their 'real standard of living' intact and consequently the birth rates have gone up in the post-war period.

4. India's Population: Fact and Policy, Indian Institute for Population Studies (1950), p. 20.)

5. The First Five Year Plan of India, pp. 522-24.

6. Census of India, Vol. I Part I-A—Report, pp. 207-226.

major part. They are supported in this proposal by Professors Ghosh¹ and Chandra Shekhar.² Such a policy assumes that it would be idle to hope for even a moderate standard of living unless we first substantially reduce the size of our population and efficiently control its future growth. According to this view, any talk of economic development through technological innovations and advance is ridiculous so long as population continues to increase. Is it true in the Indian context? We attempt to answer this question in the following section.

V POPULATION AND FOOD SUPPLY

The march of human civilisation is the record of man's increasing control over nature. This has made it possible for him to attain a higher standard of life. Engels also did not deny the abstract possibility of controlling the number of human beings.³ But the question is: Has our society exhausted its resources leaving no way out except population control? The answer seems to us to be in the negative. As early as 1939 Bernal wrote: "All estimates agree that if the available good agricultural land of the world were worked by the best modern methods, it would provide a food supply between 2 to 20 times the amount required to give the present world population an optimal food consumption".⁴ Sir John Boyd Orr,⁵ and Sir John Russell⁶ have also expressed similar views. The author of the *Geography of Hunger* tells us that even at a conservative estimate there are 16 million acres of land to cultivate, or "8 acres per individual of our present world population. Authorities on agriculture and nutrition, studying the correlation of area cultivated and food supply in the light of modern knowledge of nutrition, have estimated that about 2 acres per person will supply the indispensable elements of a rational diet. Cultivation accord-

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1. GHOSH, D., *Pressure of Population and Economic Efficiency in India*, (1946), p. 109.
 2. *Op. cit.*, also see: *Hungry People and Empty Lands*, (1952).
 3. MEEK, R. L., *op. cit.*, p. 108.
 4. *The Social Function of Science*, p. 346-479.
 5. In his Foreword to DE CASTRO, *op. cit.*
 6. *Food and People*, UNESCO Publication No. 77, London, (1949).

ing to that ratio would use one-fourth of the world's arable land. As yet, the area cultivated has not reached 2 million acres, an eighth of the earth's natural possibilities. Clearly, hunger and famine do not result from any natural law".¹ The same author tells us: "There are some 2 million known species of animals, but only fifty have been domesticated and contribute to our food supply. Similarly, out of the world's 350,000 vegetable species, only 600 are cultivated by man".² Science holds out for men the promise of conquest of other planets; use of sea for cultivation and utilisation of atomic energy for unprecedented constructional works—as the U.S.S.R. is doing.³ Thus, we can see that a peaceful rational policy of international trade and economic development guarantees us food in excess of our requirements. And it is absurd to talk of national self-sufficiency in the context of a world economy.

Let us analyse the present shortage of food in India. During the last ten years our country has imported on an average about three million tons of food-grains annually. Then, on account of the annual increase of population at the rate of 1.25 per cent., our extra requirements are 4.5 lakh tons per year. This shortage, according to Dr. Singh⁴, can be compensated by cutting down wastes, raising production, changing food habits, stopping feasts, killing pests, banning food exports, universalising rationing, consolidating agricultural holdings etc. Professor Davis agrees with Dr. Singh "so far as the existing population is concerned".⁵ Professor Davis, however, thinks that "in the long run (and a not very extended 'long run') his (Dr. Singh's) solution is no solution at all".⁶ In fact, Professor Davis calls this approach "Totalitarian Puritanism".⁷ One might as well have called it a managerial or a shop-keeper's

1. CASTRO, J. De., op. cit., pp. 21-22.

2. Ibid., p. 36.

3. But it is a pity that William Vogt suggests the reduction of Population through atomic warfare. (op. cit., p. 31).

4. SINGH, BALJIT, Population and Food Planning in India, (Bombay, 1947).

5. DAVIS, Kingsley, op. cit., p. 222.

6. Ibid., p. 222.

7. Ibid., p. 222.

approach. But the point is that in the short period this approach does provide a solution to the food problem—which has been made the occasion to dig up Malthus from his grave.

So far as the long period is concerned the food problem should not cause any anxiety if we bear in mind that the per acre yield of wheat in India is lower than what it is in other countries. In 1945 the per acre yield of wheat (in lbs.) in U.S.A. was 1033, in Canada 825, in Italy 843, in France 1006, in Argentine 870, in Australia 762; while in India it was only 671.¹ Similarly the per acre yield of paddy (in lbs.) of India (including Burma) was 805; whereas it was 1,482 in U.S.A., 3,000 in Italy, 2,079 in Egypt and 2,307 in Japan—taking the average production of 1936-39.²

Assessing the technological possibilities of agricultural development in India Burns observes: "There should even be no difficulty in increasing the present average out turn of rice by 50 per cent., viz., 10 per cent., by variety and 40 per cent., by manuring".³ With proper irrigation the yield of wheat can be raised by 100 per cent.⁴

But the Census Commissioner for India conveniently forgets to mention these facts and concludes that our agricultural production can never surpass our population.⁵ He admits that intensive cultivation is disappearing and discusses the declining 'per capita' cultivated land, double-cropped area and the irrigated fields and comes to the conclusion that "During the second thirty-year period (1921-51), however, every one of these three factors declines steadily and was substantially lower in 1951 than in 1921".⁶ But he fails to draw the obvious conclusion with regard to agricultural production. Here it will not be out of place to mention that the correctness

1. International Year Book of Agricultural Statistics, 1941-42 to 1945-46.
2. BURNS, W. Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development in India. p. 55
3. Ibid., p. v.
4. Ibid.
5. Census of India Vol. 1 Part I—A, Report, pp. 206-207
6. Ibid., p. 147.

of Burns' estimate has been proved by the following per acre maximum yields obtained in crop competition in Uttar Pradesh: Rice 4,531 lbs. (Bijnor); wheat 4,465 lbs. (Allahabad), juwar 2,319 lbs. (Jhansi); bajra 4,063 lbs. (Budaun); maize 4,991 lbs. (Meerut) and potato 60,637 lbs. (Bulandshahr).¹ The realisation of such production targets clearly promises a bright future, which is sure to be brighter with the introduction of democratic land reforms which will remove the impediments in the way of introducing improved techniques of production and the march to industrialisation—and this in turn will guarantee a better standard of living.

If the contentions of this essay are correct the question of family planning as a major method for relieving population pressure does not arise. However, in view of the huge propaganda that is being carried on in behalf of the Government-sponsored policy of family planning we have thought it necessary to discuss it in a separate note at the end wherein we have tried to show that family planning on a nation wide scale would be worse than useless.

In conclusion, we would like to plead strongly before the Indian economists what Professor Alvin Hansen said in his Presidential Address to the 51st Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association²: Do not be obsessed by the population growth. Go back to the classical economics and find out the casual inter-connection between economic progress, capital formation and population growth. The best approach is to link population growth with the theory of economic development.

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1. Census of India 1951, Vol. II (Uttar Pradesh Part I)—A, Report, p. 269.
 2. *American Economic Review*, December 1939.
Also see: Higgins, B., "The Theory of Increasing Under-employment", *Economic Journal*, June 1950.

APPENDIX

A NOTE ON FAMILY PLANNING

In the Census Report of India, 1951, the Census Commissioner has given considerable attention to Family Planning and has done his best to justify it. The Planning Commission also admits that "a lowering of the birth rate may occur as a result of improvements in the standards of living"; it feels, however, that "such improvements are not likely to materialise if there is a concurrent increase of population".¹ The assumption of this view is that the rate of economic development will not be higher than the rate of population growth. Therefore, the Plan recommends 'family planning'—a phrase invented to avoid calling a spade a spade.

This decision of the Planning Commission is a departure from the usual practice inasmuch as "an official campaign to teach, encourage, and spread the use of contraception among the general public has been conspicuous by its absence".² An official policy of birth-control is anti-democratic, as was pointed out in 1937 by a demographer at the Paris Session of the International Studies Conference: "..... over-population in the last analysis is the sentiment of a class, of the educated and ruling class.....".³ In a welfare state such an official policy, or anything near it, is particularly objectionable, because it amounts to saying: "if you produce more children, you will get less food. Therefore, produce less children." While accepting birth control as a policy to be followed in future, the Census Commissioner has advocated the reduction of the incidence of "improvident maternity"—defined "as a child-birth occurring to a mother who has already given birth to three or more children of whom

1. *The First Five Year Plan*, p. 522.

2. DAVIS, KINGSLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-26.

3. *Peaceful Change*, Vol. II, pp. 121-22.

at least one is alive".¹ This is the Johnsonian style of saying that the population must be kept stationary. This, however, raises two issues: (i) What are the implications of an official birth-control policy? (ii) Is stationary population conducive to economic growth? We propose to answer these questions very briefly.

The Census Commissioner for India has set before himself such tasks as are usually taken up by a Commission on Population. Accordingly, he discusses the different methods of contraception—both of appliance and non-appliance types. He talks about the rhythm method, coitus interruptus, discovery of indigeneous methods, sterilisation and other, "acceptable, efficient, harmless and economic methods" of birth control. Rhythm method is a biological hoax, as the menstrual cycle is never regular, specially among the undernourished and underfed people. It is also established that the cycle alters according to the degree of sexual satisfaction. Thus, it is an unreliable means of birth-control. Coitus interruptus—the most widely accepted method, due to economic reasons—is recognised to be the major cause of various types of neurosis. This apart, it has never been accepted as a reliable means of birth control. The discovery of the indigeneous methods is a matter of research. Thus, by process of elimination, sterilisation and appliance methods are the only reliable means for birth control at present. An indispensable pre-requisite for these two methods is a high standard of living, both economic and cultural. The pre-conditions for the use of appliance methods and sterilisation are: a certain minimum of education and income, and a certain amount of sanitation and privacy. (The last implies an exclusive room for the pair). Any *serious* attempt to popularise birth control, therefore, must be linked with a scheme to raise the standard of living.

Then the degree of the acceptability of the people can be ignored only at the cost of the success of birth control movement. The Director of Maternity and Child Welfare

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1. Census of India, 1951, Vol. 1, Part I-A Report, p. 217.
 2. Ibid., pp. 221-23.

Bureau, New Delhi is of the view that "a common error among birth control enthusiasts in India is in believing that the women of India are crying out for it".¹ This conclusion is also supported by a Pilot Project conducted by the J. K. Institute of Sociology and Human Relations, Lucknow University. According to the statement made by the Minister of Health, U.P. Government, before the Family Planning Conference convened by the Red Cross Society at Lucknow on September 7, 1954, the results of the Survey are as follows :—

"One thousand and sixty-seven couples were contacted individually, and 902 of them received instructions about the methods of family planning. A follow-up of these cases threw an interesting light on the subject. Out of them only two per cent. adopted the measures regularly, 3.6 per cent. intermittently and the rest 94.4 per cent. did not bother about it after receiving instruction".² It would be interesting to know the status of those who used birth control.

Then the following points raised by Mr. K. M. Munshi, the Governor of U.P., in his inaugural address to the above mentioned conference deserve the most careful attention of the country:

First, "..... No amount of propaganda, as it is going on now, is, in any way, going to substantially decrease the rate of increase in our country within the coming decade, when our battle of subsistence is going to be critical. At the same time, an indiscriminate propaganda for family planning would undermine social and moral inhibitions which have built up self-restraint".

Second, "With this propaganda in full swing, the sanctity of marriage tends to disappear; the family begins to disintegrate, the moral basis of society is undermined. Family planning aids, widely advertised, teach people that restraint is no longer necessary; that promiscuity has no danger; that aids are cheaper than marriage. Irresponsible sex-behaviour, in consequence, acquires the odour of respectability".

1. DAVIS, KINGSLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

2. National Herald, Lucknow, September 8, 1954.

Third, "What is the way out, then? The way is to remove family planning from the sphere of popular propaganda to a strictly medico-health sphere, which the physicians and surgeons as family friends and consultants should take over in the privacy of the consulting room".¹

While expressing our full agreement with the above observations of the Governor of U.P., we would like to emphasise that if birth control promises only meagre chances of the decrease of population in the coming decade when the battle for subsistence will be critical, there is hardly a case for the continuance of birth control as a Government sponsored movement; for, in the future the food situation will be better. It should also be noted that the advocates of birth control easily forget that it will lead to higher longevity, which in turn will bring a greater strain on the food supply. *Purely* from the viewpoint of meeting the food-deficit, birth control is no solution at all. Thus, the conclusion that birth control is not primarily a matter of physiology and propaganda but of sociology and economics—of social and economic values—appears to be inevitable. A happy family, and the desire to have it, have been the greatest incentive throughout the ages for the betterment of society. To restrict it officially is to restrict the march of human progress. Instead of following a hasty policy the Union Government should appoint a commission on Population which will throw light on its various aspects and suggest ways and means for relating the growth of population to conomic development.

1. Ibid.

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By
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POPULATION CONTROL IN RELATION TO FOOD IN INDIA

NEXT to the atom bomb, the most ominous force in the world today is uncontrolled fertility. Despite the fact that a life-time of mal-nutrition and hunger is the lot of atleast four-fifths of Indians, tomorrow India will have some eleven thousands (and the world 68,000) more people for dinner. The following day another eleven or even twelve thousand additional mouths to be filled and so on. In the coming year India will be called upon to feed an additional four to five million people. Very little is being done about the problem, and most people do not even realise that it exists. The unthinking producers of children do not get worried for they believe that with one mouth God also gives a pair of hands. They forget that the mouth starts functioning from the time of birth whereas the hands may or may not function—in the economic sense—for twenty years. These ideas are not new to the students of demography and conservation. As early as 1778, Malthus declared that since population tended to increase faster than the supply of food, there would always be hungry people in the world. Trying to feed the hungry, he pointed out, only made the matters worse, since more people survived to bear still more children. Apart from destructive checks like famine and disease, Malthus saw only one solution—people should have fewer children.

Food shortage in India on a serious scale has been the daily lot of millions of people. Radhakamal Mukherjee, in his book 'Food For 400 Millions,' estimated a food deficiency for 12% people in a year of normal harvest. It is true that part of the shortage is due to partition.* But the partition only hastened and emphasised a problem which—though temporarily hidden was becoming year by year more serious. Partition has been compounded by a series of droughts, locusts, floods and earthquakes. This should not obscure the truth that per capita food has decreased because of population growth. The estimated additional minimum subsistence requirements by 1956, as estimated by the National Planning Commission, is 7.2 Million tons. With the heavy food imports and the two million-ton U.S. food-loan the famine has been averted. Gifts and loans are neither recurring, nor fit for the dignity and safety of the nation. If there is a surer way to national suicide than depending for food on foreign countries in a world threatened by war—one has yet to learn of it. It is signing our own death-warrant. Self-reliance alone is the true foundation of liberty.

The basic cause of all shortages is the disturbed equilibrium between our two fundamental resources, viz., land and its people and the faulty, haphazard, obsolete and wasteful utilisation of both.

Planned adjustment between land and its people is therefore necessary. The only possibility of practical adjustment can come from the people by

* As a result of the partition the country has been left with 72 0/0 of the rice and 70 0/0 of the wheat acreages with a corresponding smaller proportion of irrigation to feed 77.7 0/0 of the original population plus more than ten million refugees.

either reduced numbers through population-control or increased land-yield by extensive as-well as intensive land-use or both. The main characteristic of land is that it is limited and subject to diminishing returns. Use of land depends upon the intelligence of its people. Hence intelligent people are required for sensible land-utilisation.

Population-problem is the basic factor in the development of our biological resources including—men.

India is overpopulated because there is a growing adverse balance between population on the one hand and necessities of life on the other. The annual typhoon of $4\frac{1}{2}$ million babies in an over-populated and hunger-stricken country like ours is neither warranted by the needs of our country nor by the standard of life we are trying to create. A vicious circle of poverty—more children—greater poverty—still more children—still greater poverty is in operation. This pressure of population and poverty makes impossible the full development of human resources. When half the children born never reach the age when they can contribute to the economy of the nation human resources are wasted. Poverty prevents education and this leads to the inability to utilise the arts and science of the modern world. Low living standards retard the accumulation of material resources for public work and industrial development. We should therefore rid ourselves of this cancerous growth by breaking the dismal cycle.

The three alternatives to the surplus population are: Positive checks, emigration and preventive checks. Positive checks like famines, floods and epidemics are ordained by nature to neutralise the uncontrolled prolific multiplication of man and are

unthinkable. Emigration is not possible owing to the discouraging policies and increasing populations abroad. Migration to other planets, which is only a "marginal possibility", is out of consideration. Preventive checks include celibacy, late-marriages and birth-control by use of contraceptives.

Hence population-control and increased production are the only effective and real remedies for national salvation; any other are either impracticable or unworkable.

Ideal population-control includes qualitative and quantitative regulation. Population control should aim at encouraging the intelligents and discouraging the stupid, because if too many people mean misery, the wrong people mean a decline in character, intellect and morality. According to science of heredity and genetics "intelligent parents tend—on the average—to have intelligent children, and parents with low I. Q.'S tend to have stupid ones." Slums breed a dangerous proportion of our children. Population-control should therefore begin with the poorer classes because inferior environment does not permit them to bring up children to the full realisation of their faculties. Eugenics forbids reproduction by congenitals and insanes.

The primary essential pre-requisite to the slowing down of birth-rate is the separation of maternity from sex-pleasures by some sure, harmless and easy method of birth control. Medical research can soon devise a tablet (to be taken by mouth) that can produce temporary sterility so that the twin functions of procreation and pleasure may be separated.

. Better standard of living is also necessary for slowing down the birth-rate. But "death-control"

without "birth-control" will multiply miseries. If India's death rate be lowered to that for Puerto Rico in 1949, without lowering India's birth-rate, India in a single century would fill five earths as full as ours is today.

The population-problem should be soberly tackled by the National Planning Commission, which has practically neglected it, because this matter is serious enough to deserve more objective consideration. A separate National Health Board should be created for propagating information about birth-control and sale of genuine contraceptives at cheap prices.

The Municipal and industrial health and welfare services, maternity hospitals, special birth control clinics (like V. D. clinics) attached to hospitals and public health services should execute the vital work. Voluntary organisations, like the Birth Control League of America, be encouraged. The valuable services of the village communities or 'Panchayats' must be utilised for convincing the rural population of the necessity for and advantages from birth-control and encouraging birth-regulation by supplying contraceptives.

Taxation, with a view to discourage births, will be bitterly resented.

Sex-education will also help population-regulation.

The crux of the population-problem is the capital fact that our ignorant and illiterate peasantry, steeped in conservatism which is so characteristic of an agricultural civilisation, cannot be relied upon for playing its part automatically and change its mental outlook in a short time. Joint family system also hinders population control. Then there are the religious and social prejudices against population—regulation that have to

be demolished. A large family of sons is something to be proud of and greatly desired. Mass illiteracy makes any kind of teaching difficult. Even in the West birth-control information spread only after counter acting deep-rooted religious prejudices. Modern advertising and propaganda will also persuade masses of the ignorant and unhappy people to limit the number of their children by use of the above-mentioned tablets.

But there is a ray of hope. The picture has a silver lining. And the hope is the potential increase possible in Indian agriculture: Today three Indians out of every four make their living from agriculture, yet agriculture is the least productive of all India's occupations. Yields are at present no higher than when Asoka reigned, and total output is little greater than a century ago. But though agriculture remains stationary, the population goes up by 1 per cent every year, and so the standard of living goes inexorably down. India has more acres under cereals than any other country in the world, and in Cotton than any other country except America; but it has to import 2 to 4 million tons of food grains and 75 million rupees worth of cotton. Even then we had to be content with 1500 calories a day each, the diet of the least favoured classes in Germany in the days when hunger shook the conscience of the world. In India, therefore, an increase in agricultural production is truly a panacea.

Agriculture in India is not a business but a tradition and is carried on laboriously and wastefully. The causes of the low yield are the same as the causes of backwardness of Indian Agriculture, and any improvement that leads to agricultural improvement will

automatically lead to higher productivity per man as well as per acre.

Are India's soils, due to centuries of continuous cultivation, exhausted beyond improvement? The Royal Commission concluded that where land is cropped year after year, when the crop is removed and no manure is added, natural gains balanced the plant food materials removed by crops, a stabilised condition was reached, and a low but permanent standard of fertility is established. The Indian farmer, though illiterate is certainly not deficient in shrewdness, intelligence and practical wisdom, and through ages of inherited experience has learnt to appreciate the value of a regular rotation of crops and knows that the fertility of his soil cannot be maintained at the same level if the same crop is taken too often in consecutive years. This has kept the soil fertility above the minimum. Even at the worst the soil has reached minimum-possible-fertility, but the soil does respond generously to the labour and brains applied.

The general, all round raising of the standards of cultivation depends on the systematic improvement of every aspect of farming practice. Improvement is imperatively needed, and is practicable, in the plants and animals themselves; in the fertility of the soil; and in the control of needs and of animal and fungal pests.

Starvation of soil is the root cause of our starvation. The manurial problem of India is mainly one of nitrogen deficiency, because the soil depends almost exclusively on the recuperative effects of natural processes. Artificial fertilisers like sulphate of ammonia can be depended upon as the best forcing manure for production of foodgrains, yet a mixture of organic

manures is necessary: The artificial fertilisers are costly and difficult to apply. We may well copy China where artificial fertilisers are as little used as in India, but where organic refuse of every kind finds its way to the fields as fertilisers. All towns instead of wasting their sewage should deal with it under modern settling-tank-systems, from which the effluent is run off into small canals, which irrigate suitable cultivable areas. The yield of crop produced is great, as such waters contain a very high percentage of nitrogenous matter. The drainage from the city of Cairo, for instance, is said to be thirty times as valuable as the equivalent of Nile water even in flood times, when the latter bears its fertilising silt. Manures are important for quality as well as quantity. Cow-dung should be used as manure, Hence the first need is to turn every available ounce of refuse and cow-dung in the countryside into compost, and every ounce of night soil in the cities into sludge. Direct application of rural night soil to the land is dangerous to health, but city sludge is germ-free. This alone could increase output by 30 per cent. Waste, now onwards, should not be allowed to waste because Mother Earth is truly a living being and if we will not nourish her, she will not nourish us.

Irrigation is the artificial application of water to land. It sometimes gives better results than nature herself because water is given just at the time it is wanted instead of the fitful time of rainfall, and in India where no portion of a million square miles can be said to be secure against the vagaries of nature, dependence on irrigation should be indispensable. But the nation depends upon the monsoons which often fail, bringing the spectre of famine. Only 6% of the enormous quantity of water given by nature

is utilised for irrigation and other purposes. In approximately the time taken by a man to shut his eyes and open them again Indian rivers waste 1·8 million cubic feet of water into the sea. Proper utilisation of this water would not only irrigate but provide electricity, control floods, and famines. By irrigation one or even two extra-crops can be had from the same land. Utilisation of the sub-soil water is an imperative one. This can be done by sinking more tube-wells and improving the existing wells. The long term possibilities of irrigation and the resultant extra-yields are enormous but for the present "irrigation is the largest single factor blocking all agricultural progress in this country". Maximum utilisation of the existing facilities should be made and short-term schemes must be expedited. Construction of more wells and tube-wells is advisable.

Another factor which can influence production is the effect of mechanisation upon the number of acres that are available for cultivation. In England, it has been estimated that horse used as a source of power in agriculture requires three acres set apart for its maintenance, and with the more adoption of mechanical tractors. England added half a million acres between 1939-40.* Large-scale mechanisation in India is barred by small-holdings, lack of trained personnel to service machinery and factories to produce it, and beyond the financial and mental limits of the cultivators. Mechanisation in India should

*In 1913 the basic crop production in Britain was 7 tons, per man per year. By 1950 with increased mechanisation this output had risen to 26 tons—in spite of shorter working hours. Milk production had doubled—due in no small way to the replacement of 1,000,000 horses by tractors allowing 2,000,000 cows to be added to the dairy herds.

begin with the application of proven mechanical principles in the form of a small modification or addition to the simplest and crudest of country implements, achieving in so doing perhaps only a minute increase in efficiency or betterment of work performed. The cumulative resultant benefit will be great. Gradual introduction of economical machines and co-operative use of larger machines is also feasible.

India is being eaten away by her animals. There are many times more cattle than can be economically justified. We have roughly 100 cattle per 100 acres of cultivated land as compared to Egypt with 25 and Holland with 38. Only 20% are workable. The low quality of livestock is due to indiscriminate breeding leading to underfeeding and to low resistance against disease. U S. A. produces double the quantity of milk with only 25% of our cattle. The religious sentiment with its preference for starving rather than eliminating superfluous cattle and inefficiency of cattle and high mortality rate on account of which the cultivator has to maintain a large number as "agricultural reserve," are the causes for phenomenal increase in livestock. India cannot afford to lose acreage for the upkeep of superfluous cattle. The number of livestock required for cultivation must be reduced by increasing efficiency and evolving milch-animals capable of doing light work. This is possible by discriminate breeding of selected breeds (through castration of all other breeds and artificial insemination) and scientific feeding (through economising the available fodder by stallfeeding, adding cheap-meal and condiments to make inferior straw and waste palatable and by conserving grass). Thus the supply of milk and milk-products and meat would be increased to supplement the cereal diet.

Sub-division or fragmentation of holdings, although in some cases lack of rainfall necessitates the fragmentation of plots to such sizes as can be easily irrigated—often reduce the holdings to “uneconomic units” and are a serious limitation on improved agricultural methods. Primogeniture should be substituted for equal inheritance.

India’s cultivable land has been eroding on a serious scale. Dr. H. H. Bennet wrote: “It takes nature from 300 years to 1000 years or more to bring back a single inch of top-soil and we sometimes lose that top-soil as the result of a single rain if it is an especially heavy torrential rain.” Erosion by wind and water caused by wanton destruction of forests, ploughing up and overgrazing of semi-arid areas should be immediately checked by conservation measures like the replanting of trees, buildings, embankments, reclamation of land and controlled grazing.

Our fisheries, though potentially rich, as yet yield a mere fraction of what they could were they exploited in a fashion comparable with those of Japan or America. State-initiative is required.

A happy coincidence would be of planting fruit-bearing trees during “Tree Plantation” festivals.

Expansion of secondary and tertiary industries is fundamentally essential for the development of agriculture.

Agricultural research should be extended beyond production of seeds, manurial experiments, plant-breeding, etc, to all departments of production, consumption and distribution including processing, marketing, nutrition, etc.

Research without being utilised is sterile. The results achieved in the laboratories be immediately put into practice. The need is not only of more research but the utilisation of the existing research. The aid of newspapers, radio-broadcasts, travelling cinemas, posters, loudspeakers with projectors fitted in vans going from village to village, agricultural melas or fairs, Government agricultural, administrative and marketing departments, village co-operatives and communities, etc, should be taken to popularise research. "Research Propagation" societies in villages should be encouraged. Utilisation of research is more important than research itself because deficiency is not so much in knowledge as in application.

Existing agricultural education is beyond the reach of the bulk of the agricultural population. In Denmark, Agricultural-societies own and manage many of the Folk High Schools and support many agricultural counsellors—experts who combine teaching, lecturing and advisory functions. There are Farm schools in villages. Belgium has a highly developed system of instruction for both sexes in a combination of practical agriculture and rural domestic economy. Similar institutions should be started by the Panchayats and subsidised by the Central and Provincial Governments.

Agricultural missionaries are wanted to revolutionise our agriculture and infuse life into our peasantry.

Pilot projects will also be very helpful in educating villagers.

Better rotation of crops, greater specialisation of cropping according to the qualities of soils in

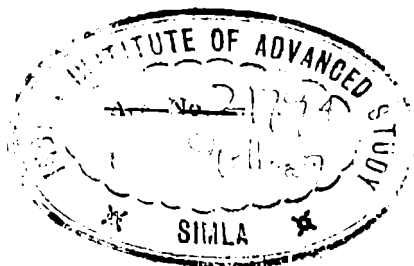
different localities, sowing of improved and selected seed, better nutrition of the plant involving better manuring and better cultivation and reduction in damages caused by man, monkeys, beasts and pests (which alone amount to $2\frac{1}{2}$ million tons per annum) so necessary for increased production can only be achieved by combining proper education and research.

Emphasis on plugging the waste is very important because our poverty is directly related to the colossal waste of resources—both human and material.

Co-operation and co-ordination from the modest to the highest level is also imperative.

The situation at present is fairly manageable. At present only half the capacity of our agriculture is being utilised. With the above-mentioned reforms, confidence in ourselves and modern scientific aid from F. A. O., U. S. A. and other friendly nations there is no reason why we should not raise our average yield of rice from 800 lbs. per acre to that of 3500 lbs. of Japan and our wheat yield from 500 lbs. to the world average of 1000 lbs. and so on.

Poverty and starvation are to be fought on the population and production fronts. As a large country like India cannot fruitfully sustain itself without individual responsibility, all should join the vital crusade because the three "F's" representing "Freedom", "Fitness" and "Food" go together.



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