

# A Word With You

"SCANDAL" says Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, "begins like the gentlest of zephyrs. Then passing on from tongue to tongue it gains strength and sweeps along, until finally it becomes a furious storm that engulfs its poor victim." The scandal doesn't have to be true at all, the Don reminds us.

Such is the situation today: the scandal is "overpopulation," and the calamitated wretch is — all mankind.

World population is now three billion we are told, which gives us approximately 50 persons per square mile of the dry surface of the earth. If this were increased *ten times*, that would give us about the density of the population of Western Europe or the Eastern United States. In these areas there is plenty of agriculture and industry and plenty of wide open spaces and unused or inefficiently used land—supporting a large urban population and able to support more.

In fact, the observable trend in the U.S. is that fewer people are working at agriculture, are using less land for it and are able to feed a growing population, the "problem" being one of surpluses!

People do not cluster in cities because there is no room in the rest of the world but because they prefer to live close to other people.

India has doubled her population since the turn of the century, and has perhaps tripled it since the days of Malthus. By all Malthusian indicators,

nobody should be left alive in India. Instead, the standard of living is rising, especially within the past 15 years! The same is true of Japan.

"What!" exclaims the neo-Malthusian sternly, "Do you want to have a race between population and production?" No, my friend, it is not a "race" between the two. Increase in population brings its own increase of productive power. We are told that world population has gone up sharply since 1800. Production has gone up even more sharply, as never before in history.

Let us hold down population and increase productive power, says the Malthusian — exactly the same kind of thinking that kills the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Some areas in the world have a dense population on land that is naturally poor, and still there is high productivity—as in Denmark, Israel and irrigated lands in the U.S.

Science is discovering untapped reserves on our planet—the ocean, jungle and desert areas, and even arctic regions. They represent challenges but are not necessary for survival. All we need do to support many times our present population is to bring good unused land into use, allow the product to be distributed justly, and allow free trade between nations.

It's time to scotch the overpopulation scandal and get the real truth known!

—Robert Clancy

Vol. 24, No. 7

June 1961

The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York 21, N.Y., supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

Publication committee: William S. O'Connor, Arnold A. Weinstein and Lancaster M. Greene, chairman. Editor: Alice Elizabeth Davis. Subscriptions \$2 a year; single copies 20¢. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.