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The Social Background of Industrialization in Japan

by Yoshimatsu Aonuma

The classical view of business, now out-dated in Western Society, the pursuit of profit is a social good in itself, has come into vogue in Japan during rapid economic growth. Since the government does not provide adequate social welfare programs to protect citizens against privation, the familism of corporations performs the equivalent function. These give even greater strength to corporate unity. When the classical view of business and the idea of familism are interwoven, what emerges is "corporate feudalism".

If corporate feudalism acted exactly as it wanted, no force would be able to check the selfish behavior of corporations. The government, for example, would pursue policies that only served the corporate interest. Actually, Japanese government has been criticized for its excessive concern with economic growth. In an age when social welfare is receiving ever increasing attention, the official attitude must look quite strange internationally. Japan is so dependent on overseas markets and on importing natural resources that she must make every effort to improve her international image. Domestically, too, the ideology of economic supremacy has been severely criticized. Outside of the corporation, public interest in problems related to environmental pollution is growing, and consumerism is becoming a power to be reckoned with. The corporation, looked upon during the period of economic growth as a savior, is now denounced as being responsible for all of today's social ills. In such a situation, the classical optimism can hardly be expected to receive popular support.

In most of the examples passed down to us through history, social revolution has meant the violent overthrow of the old order. But, in today's high-level organized society, such a revolution would be impossible to accomplish. Social Organization is so intricately interwoven that society could not endure the anarchy that would follow the destruction. Thus, while many people are dissatisfied with the existing order, most of them would not support a violent revolution. Dispensing with violence and solving problems through rational discussion, is one of the basic cornerstones of democracy. To discuss problems rationally, people must put their intelligence to better use and become better informed.

La Révolution et le partage des communaux

par K. Watanabé

A. La Révolution voulut faire rentrer les communautés en possession des biens dont elles s'étaient vues dépouillées.

B. La reconstitution du patrimoine communal, par la réintégration de beaucoup de biens qui en avaient été distraits par usurpations ou des aliénations et l'extension de ce patrimoine par l'attribution des terres vaines et vagues aux communes fut suivi du partage des communaux.

C. Dans quelle mesure fut le partage appliquée et quel en fut le résultat? Il est vrai que les non possédants ne purent faire entendre leurs voix. Le partage ne contribua donc que dans une faible mesure à vulgariser la petite propriété.