

US consumer. In an equitable redistribution of the wealth would US standard of living go down?

Nader: First of all, that is a collective issue of ethics, it has to be given serious attention. We consume about 35% of the world's resources.

I don't think we need to reduce our standard of living to consume less. We waste a great deal. We waste gigantic amounts of energy and minerals in the kind of junk consumer economy that we have. Second, we waste a great deal of food. I don't think our standard of living has to go down, it might actually improve in quality as well as in the more spiritual aspects of it, and in the cultural aspects of it.

I think sooner or later we are going to have to come to terms with the billions of people in the world who have virtually nothing because no longer can we and they live in isolation, if only because of the prospect of world hunger and world pollution.

Question: What about the idea of the free market economy system - is it functional?

Nader: All kinds of government programs in the United States, agricultural extension, land grants to the railroads, and now half of Washington is just subsidizing and promoting business interests. The schools are built with taxpayer money overwhelmingly in the US. I think that needs to be thoroughly recognized.

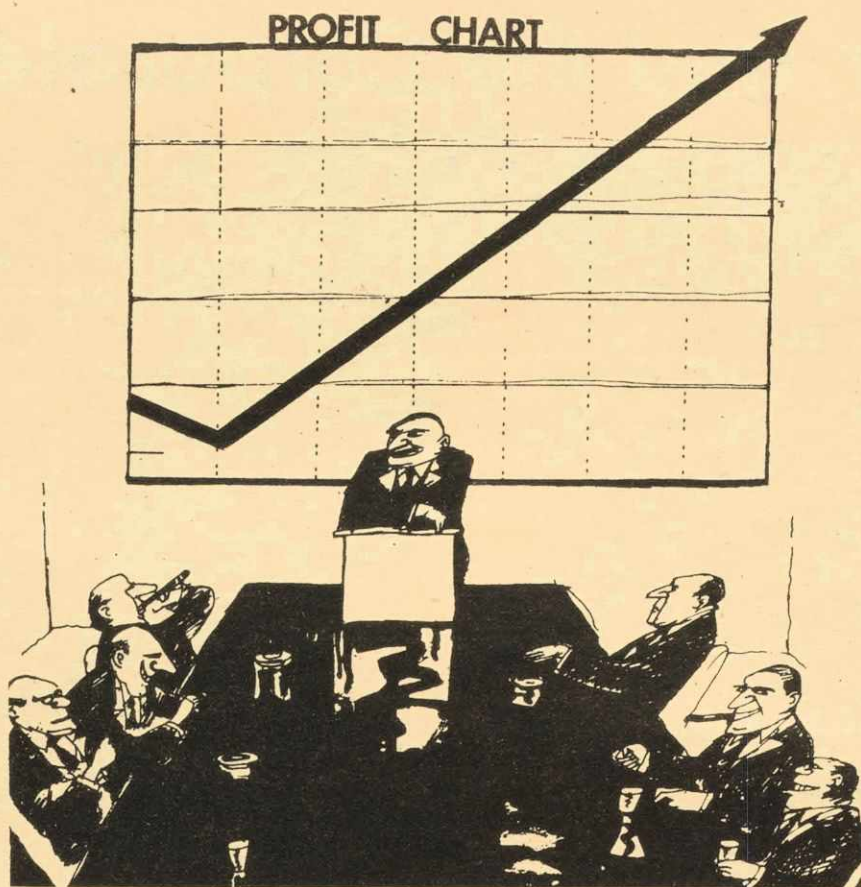
Secondly, we have to differentiate between the time when the market was replete with smaller firms and had a more competitive posture. Now increasingly the economy is being concentrated in the hands of about 200 giant corporations, with all the consequences of inefficiency and excessive monopoly of political power. I think we are moving into a period when we are going to have to ask ourselves: Why not more consumer enterprises, consumer co-ops, foodstores, banks, insurance companies, and service outlets? To give the consumer a neighborhood community base for aggregate bargaining, as well as, political power.

In many ways the corporations, the way they are developing, are becoming obsolete in terms of the needs of the society. They are withdrawing from major areas of economic needs, or doing poorly in these areas - like housing. They have redlined and proscribed large areas of cities in the US from mortgage loans and insurance. I think they are becoming larger and more monopolistic at the same time as they are ignoring the real needs of the public.

The main source of cancer in the US now is the corporation. corporate pollution, corporate products, we call it 'corporate cancer'. The National Cancer Institute of the Federal Government has stated repeatedly that 80-90% of all cancer is environmentally caused. When you say "Which environment"? they say tobacco, food additives, cancer causing drugs, and pollution. So that the cycle is turning around, I think that they are creating more and more harm proportionately than they are contributing good.

Question: But the fact is that over the past ten years these 200 companies have grown stronger. And not only have they grown stronger they have become multi-nationally based. Therefore, they have liquid assets they can move all around the world, so that they don't have to be that responsive to the needs of the US consumer. How do you combat this situation?

Nader: One is you have to break them up, restructure markets competitively. Second, you've got to have a federal policy that develops a whole alternative consumer owned



"And though in 1973, your company had again to contend with spiralling labour costs, meddling government regulations, and ecological do-gooders, management was able once more, through a combination of deceptive billing and false advertising, and the proper use of plant shut-downs, to show a profit which in all modesty can only be called excessive."

economy at the retail level to aggregate the bargaining power and the know how and the testing power vis a vis producers. There is also a movement in Europe, which is getting some attention here, to give workers more control of the workplace. Dealing with such things as industrial procedure - the routine that reduces any job satisfaction that is left on the industrial line. Those are two programs that are well under way now in the United States.

If we get a Democratic President there will be much more rigorous anti-monopoly enforcement. The Senate now almost has enough votes to break up the oil industry. One more recession or depression and there is going to be a lot of support for that. There is also a proposal in Congress now to

workers, and inflation, all the seeds of further economic crises.

There have to be new economic systems, there is no question about it. Certainly in the neighborhoods and communities that are now slums and pretty devastated, where millions of people live there is going to have to be strong infusions of consumer cooperative views as an alternate concept. Political parallel organizations as well. Neighborhood community organizations are on the rise in the US. Many just based on ten or fifteen block areas.

Question: What role do the US national political parties play in this process?

Nader: This is the last Presidential election in which we will see just two strong parties.

Question: What is going to happen?

"We don't need nuclear power because if we just become as efficient as Sweden or West Germany are now, we can double the size of our economy without using more energy."

establish a National Cooperative Finance institution to extend credit and technical assistance to consumer cooperatives. That will give the whole consumer cooperative movement a historic push forward.

Question: You say "one more recession or depression". Are you predicting one more recession or depression?

Nader: Oh sure. We are in an age of rapid business cycles. The economy of the United States is really very fragile, very unhealthy.

Question: When do you expect this recession or depression to occur?

Nader: Within the next few years. Nobody is predicting a continual boom now, this is just a little upswing. The basic problems of the economy remain. Structural unemployment, tremendous inefficiencies, technical stagnation - no new industries coming up like television for example, very serious deficits in the municipal governments, such as New York City, all over the country, huge obligations from deferred pension plans on the part of the

Nader: Multiple parties.

Question: Do you think this will be a change for the better?

Nader: Yes. The country has had enough of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Some of the new political parties may not be special interest parties; they just may have comprehensive alternatives to the Republican and Democratic parties.

Things have loosened up quite a bit. You have got primaries instead of political conventions. You have got legal challenges permitting independent voters to cross over and participate in regular party primaries. You have got government subsidies of campaign financing. All these are going to increase the fluidity of the political process.

The Republican Party, just about now, is ready to fissure into liberal and right wing. The Democratic Party has no longer any cohesive base, its blue-collar base is beginning to shatter on bussing and other issues. I think there will be a re-alignment and probably three of four parties. This will be very healthy.

Question: How will you get the public to react and take measures against the corporation?

Nader: The corporations over the years have managed to transfer the burdens on them to the taxpayer. Since the Great Depression unemployment has been soaked up by unemployment compensation; it has been soaked up by other social programs. Now if there is a limit to that, New York City is exemplifying it.

When corporations and the private sector no longer can transfer their failings on to the public sector cause the public sector is going to go bankrupt too, then, you see, there will be no where to pass the buck. The public will be confronted with a very clear reason for being interested in some pretty important fundamental re-alliances of political and economic power.

On the other hand there is always the scenario of the great disaster. Like a nuclear power disaster where a state or a city will be wiped out and be contaminated with radioactivity. That also can be quite a portent for some change. Because that raises the question of who is deciding in our country what kinds of technology you're going to use.

Question: Do you think the mood in the country (US) right now is such that people would get together easily and work well together, especially after the Watergate experience?

Nader: Not yet, not yet. The Watergate experience has been very dismal. Although it has been widely disclosed, and we are just now going into another round with the movie and the second book coming out, the public is forgetting that the only lesson we have learned from Watergate thus far is that a President should not record his conversations.

There has not been a single reform coming out of Congress. The thirty three reform proposals of Senator Ervin are still on the shelf, and have not even been moved to the Senate floor.

I think we need to go through one more stage of civil consciousness: the people, having learned of government and corporate crimes and the problems of society at first hand is the first. The next stage is one of civic self-discipline, there has got to be a feeling that people have simply got to get off their lounge chairs and cut down a little on their bridge and TV and get themselves involved. Put some of the burden of citizenship right on their shoulders rather than just - "look at city hall" and "look what a mess that is, isn't it terrible".

Question: You said the political ability to curb corporations in Canada is minimal. Would you advocate Canadian nationalization of Multi-National Corporations?

Nader: Not without some knowing what's going to happen. Namely, there is no difference between a multi-national company and a nationalized company if the citizens a) do not have any more rights vis a vis the nationalized company and b) they don't take it upon themselves to re-focus the nationalized companies policies. For example, Renault is owned by the French Government and it is operating in Canada just the way General Motors operates. So that just shifting power from the private sector to the public sector without doing anything else, going from one giant organization to another, doesn't really solve anything. Especially when you've got a government that is so secretive to begin with.

Just pushing the sale of nuclear reactors from Canada to the Third World countries, the main promoter is the Canadian Government. Ontario Hydro seems to be generating