

A Voice Cries Out:

Why The American Living Standard Is Going Down!

**We are in or close to world chaos!
One factor is the rise and fall of the
American standard of living. Why?**

IT'S TIME we awaken to **CAUSES!** Human survival has become the world's No. 1 problem.

What brought the world to this frightening brink of human extinction? What brought on the myriad problems, upheavals and evils that engulf the world? And, paradoxically, amid awesome progress?

It's easy to become so engrossed in the day-to-day activities that we overlook underlying impending disasters. It's no time to fiddle while America and the world are burning!

Look now to one serious contributing factor—the 20th-century rise and now impending fall of the American standard of living. No nation ever ascended to the high living standard this nation has enjoyed!

But why? How did we come by it? What have we done with it? What basic **CAUSES** threaten to bring us low now?

There was an unrealized, underlying reason for America's rise to unprecedented wealth and affluence. But let me now mention a specific subsidiary cause.

On Jan. 6, 1914, I was sent as an editorial representative of a national magazine to Detroit to interview Henry Ford about his sensational \$5-a-day wage scale announced the day before. I saw Mr. Ford at the then Highland avenue plant. But for details I also saw John R. Lee, head of the Sociological Department. It had been Mr. Lee's brainchild and he administered it.

"I understand," I began, "you are now paying the highest wage scale in the automobile industry."

"On the contrary," came the surprising reply, "we are paying the lowest."

Astonished, I asked, “Are you not now paying \$5 per day for an eight-hour day, while the union scale at other plants is \$3.75 for a nine-hour day?”

“Correct,” Mr. Lee replied, “but we don’t evaluate what we pay in terms of dollars per man-hour, but what we get for what we pay.”

Then he explained that Ford alone had production large enough to shift to the assembly-line system. This enabled the company to set the pace of worker production.

Mr. Lee continued: “We now get more than twice the production per eight-hour day than others per nine-hour day. We pay \$5 labor cost for the same production others receive for \$7 labor cost—and our employees make \$1.25 more per day for one hour less work.”

The Ford company was then non-union, but later became unionized. It was not many years until others in the motorcar industry were able to go on the assembly-line system. Soon it became the system in most U.S. industry—all lines.

This nation provided a mass market for mass machine production not then possible in Europe and Japan.

This mass machine production soared industrial profits. But labor leaders were not going to allow capital and management to reap all the luscious benefits. Labor wars ensued. No longer was a single industry a united team of employer and employees. Of course capital and management was out to “GET” all it could by expanded profits from mass machine production. But labor, too, was out to “GET” all it could.

The “GET” incentive led to competition—too often to strife and violence—between the two divisions of the same company or industry.

It is enormously significant that in those years American mass production enjoyed lower production costs because of mass machine production. Other nations could not compete. With labor getting its full share of the enlarged prosperity pie, **THE AMERICAN STANDARD OF LIVING SOARED TO A HIGH NEVER ATTAINED BY ANY OTHER PEOPLE IN WORLD HISTORY!** A huge middle and upper-middle class emerged in the United States.

But Europeans, in due time, provided for themselves a mass market by the European Economic Community, the “Common Market.” Soon Europe was competing in mass production by the assembly-line system—but with low-cost labor. Postwar Japan followed suit. America now faced a new international competition—European and Japanese assembly-line mass machine production with low-cost labor, against U.S. production with high-cost labor.

When I opened a new liberal arts college in England in 1960, the average American wage was still three times that of Britain and Europe and four times that of Japan. Two decades have considerably upped wage scales in those countries. The Japanese today are the luxury buyers of the world—the leaders in world travel—and, wonder of wonders, Japanese automobiles production has overtaken that of the United States!

Living standards in other industrial nations have been rising. Ours is on the way down!

It is a competitive world. The way of “GET” is the impelling motive! And “GET” is the overall CAUSE of all world troubles and evils!

Abraham Lincoln knew, and said, we Americans did not come to our unprecedented prosperity and affluence of our own efforts. The Great God bestowed it on us—and is

holding US ACCOUNTABLE! We have not used this unearned material birthright according to God's basic spiritual LAW of LOVE ("GIVE"). IT IS NOW BEING TAKEN FROM US!

It is time we WAKE UP—and THINK! This is no impractical or superstitious maudlin religious statement. It is the hard cold *facts* that stare us in the face!

We are going to be made to pay for our transgressions of the basic spiritual LAW of life set in just as relentless motion as the power of gravity!

Then, not because we deserve it, that super strong "Unseen Hand from Someplace" is going to intervene, and save this beloved country—and the world from ourselves! It will not be done *by* us, but *to* us—ushering in the utopian WORLD TOMORROW—world peace, happiness, universal well-being, eternal salvation for all who will!

The time has come! A voice cries out! You have been told! Your acceptance or rejection will not alter what is about to happen!

Herbert W. Armstrong
(1892-1986)