

# INTRODUCTION

FROM THE END OF 1945 WHEN HE was posted to Japan to assist General Douglas MacArthur in planning the postwar land reform there, Wolf Ladejinsky spent the last thirty years of his life almost entirely in Asia. These three decades were devoted to the cause of agrarian reform on behalf of the hundreds of millions of submarginal farmers, tenants, sharecroppers, and landless laborers who had become his human as well as his professional concern, and whose cause he had made his own.

Another, broader concern was at least equally compelling. Having grown to young manhood in Czarist Russia in the midst of the impoverishment, alienation, indignity, and persecution that characterized life in the restricted Jewish community (*shtetl*), and having experienced at first hand the brutalities that accompanied the Bolshevik revolution, Ladejinsky had a passionate dedication to democracy. This had been intensified by the holocaust Hitler visited upon European Jewry during World War II. Ladejinsky thus committed himself entirely to the survival and flourishing of democracy in the newly independent countries of Asia. Such an outcome, he was convinced, depended on satisfying the basic needs and yearnings of impoverished rural Asians for a bit of land they could call their own, or at least for security of tenure and a tolerable rent on the land they cultivated for absentee and exploitative landowners. Only in this way could they escape from the grinding poverty and personal indignity they were increasingly unwilling passively to accept. Aware of how powerfully Lenin's promise of "land to the tiller" had influenced the Russian peasantry to accept and support the revolution, all too soon to be dispossessed again in favor of collective and state farms, Ladejinsky developed a profound sense of the *political* role of the land. He recognized the importance of ownership, tenurial rights, and the distribution of the land's rewards in determining whether democracy would indeed survive in Asia or whether its rural masses would succumb to the Communists' promise.

Ladejinsky's major contribution to the highly successful land reform in Japan (1946–48) brought him almost instant renown and led to requests for his advice and assistance in many other lands.<sup>1</sup> He made a significant contribution to the equally successful land reform in

1. Ironically, this recognition became even more pronounced following the notoriety which Ladejinsky received late in 1954. When responsibility for the work of agricultural attachés abroad was turned back to the Department of Agriculture by the State Department, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Benson refused to re-employ Ladejinsky on the ground that he was a "national security risk." The outpouring of support for Ladejinsky which then ensued from the press, professional associates, the Japanese government, and farm organizations and individuals in the United States soon forced a retraction and apology from Secretary Benson and a revision in U.S. national security procedures. It also made Ladejinsky and the general nature of his overseas work known to millions, both at home and abroad.

Taiwan in the early postwar years, encouraged and provided guidance to agrarian reform efforts in India in the early 1950s, was a prime mover in less well-known land reform successes in South Vietnam in the late 1950s, and encouraged and provided guidance to incipient agrarian reform stirrings in Nepal, Indonesia, and the Philippines in the early 1960s. Most of his last ten years were spent fighting, against enormous odds, to channel ineffectual agrarian reform efforts in India into more constructive and practical channels and trying to generate the political *will* without which meaningful reforms could not be implemented. If, in consequence, he came to be regarded by many as "Mr. Land Reform," this was in a sense a misnomer. For humanity was his deeper cause and, for him, human welfare and dignity in Asia could be promoted only under democracy, not under Communism, which he saw as the only likely alternative.

### Antecedents

Wolf Isaac Ladejinsky was born in 1899 in Ekaterinopol, a small town or hamlet in the Russian Ukraine. His father was engaged in flour milling and the timber trade—a man of relative means in a predominantly Jewish community in the Pale of Settlement to which Jews were by law restricted. Precluded from farming and most urban occupations, Russian Jews were almost uniformly poor or on the verge of destitution. Demeaned and persecuted at best, and subjected at worst to periodic pogroms, they were able to endure only by nurturing a close communality and an intensely religious inner life. The more intellectual and spiritual among them escaped into religious studies. The relatively few who achieved a degree of material success, as did Ladejinsky's father, enjoyed some prestige in the community (witness Tevya's song, "If I Were a Rich Man," in *Fiddler on the Roof*); but genuine reverence and honor were accorded only to learning and the learned—in the shtetl, invariably rabbis and biblical scholars. This tradition led Ladejinsky to scholarship. One of the very few of his local peers who completed the Gymnasium (the secular secondary school), he also attended in his younger years the elementary *cheder* for Hebrew and religious instruction.

Little is known of how the Ladejinsky family fared after their properties were expropriated by the revolution. According to one report, his brother was killed in the civil war. In 1921, two years after completing his studies, Ladejinsky walked out of the Soviet Union into Romania. He worked briefly in a flour mill and as a baker's apprentice before getting a job in Bucharest with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. But the United States—the "Golden Land" which, from the 1880s to World War I, had drawn perhaps a third of all East European Jewry as immigrants—was almost surely his destination from the time he left home. The following year, 1922, with a group of Jewish orphans who had been entrusted to his care for the journey, Ladejinsky entered the United States. A variety of odd jobs sustained him while he learned enough English to enter Columbia University in 1926 and then while he earned his degree, which was granted in 1928. He sold newspapers at a stand on Sixth Avenue and 50th Street in New York City while he continued his graduate work in economics and history into the early 1930s. His first published paper, the classic "Collectivization of Agriculture in the Soviet Union," apparently was intended to have been his doctoral dissertation. In the early years of the Great Depression, however, Ladejinsky withdrew from the university and accepted a post with the Department of Agriculture offered by Rexford Tugwell, one of his professors, who had been called to Washington by the newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This job launched a

richly productive professional career that was to span four decades, terminating only with Ladejinsky's death while serving as a member of the World Bank's resident mission in New Delhi.

## Work Career

Ladejinsky's first eleven years in the U.S. government's service (1935–45) were spent in Washington with the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations of the Department of Agriculture. Here his work was essentially scholarly. Working from source materials and internal documents, he completed for publication in the department's official journal some twenty-odd studies of agriculture, mostly in Asian countries. Although many of these were quite conventional (such as "Agriculture in Manchuria—Possibilities for Expansion," "The Japanese Cotton-Textile Industry and American Cotton," "Japan's Food Self-Sufficiency," and "Thailand's Agricultural Economy"), others made important contributions to the crystallization of Ladejinsky's interests, ideas, and values and to the shaping of his later career.

His 1937 study of "Farm Tenancy and Japanese Agriculture" was his first major venture into tenurial problems outside the Soviet Union. Together with his 1939 *Foreign Affairs* article, "Agrarian Unrest in Japan," it established him as the Department of Agriculture's expert on Japanese agriculture. When it later became Allied policy to "democratize" a defeated Japan, it was thus only natural that Ladejinsky would be called upon to assist in planning a thoroughgoing land reform in that country. His 1938 study of "Soviet State Farms" strengthened his already strong antipathies to forced collectivization, to the imposition of rigid central plans, policies, and administration on highly disparate agricultural production situations, and to measures which either violated the independence and integrity of the individual cultivator or smothered his incentive to produce. In 1939 Ladejinsky's substantial study of "Agricultural Problems in India" provided a solid base for his future work in that country and introduced him to tenurial and other problems in India's complex agricultural economy. For the first time he faced the severity of India's population problem and the limitations that the land-man ratio would necessarily impose on any future efforts at urgently needed agrarian reforms. Wartime studies of agricultural policy in colonial situations, such as "Agricultural Policies in British Malaya" and "Manchurian Agriculture under Japanese Control," confirmed his convictions that peasant cultivators could be constructively led, given an appreciation of their interests, but that they could not be manipulated or successfully controlled to act in ways contrary to their perceived interests. By the time Ladejinsky arrived in Tokyo to participate in the Japanese land reform effort, he had served his apprenticeship. Already in his middle years, he was a man who had experienced and studied much, reflected deeply, and developed powerful convictions. He was a man strong enough to impress General MacArthur.

Ladejinsky never wrote about his own role in the Japanese land reform, although many have credited him with having been its chief architect. While the State Department was still undecided on the matter, General MacArthur decided to proceed with land reform on the basis of a memorandum presented to him by his political adviser on October 26, 1945 (see Appendix A). This memorandum was the outcome of intensive consultations with Wolf Ladejinsky in Washington.<sup>2</sup> Agricultural specialists attached to the occupation headquarters

2. Robert Fearey, who prepared the memorandum, is the authority for this statement.

thereupon got to work, concentrating largely on the Fearey memorandum and Ladejinsky's earlier studies. Ladejinsky himself was called to Japan in December. Meanwhile the key SCAP<sup>3</sup> Directive 411, issued by order of General MacArthur December 9, instructed the Japanese government to submit by March 15, 1946, a program for rural land reform and established basic guidelines for such a program (see Appendix B). After almost a year of intensive study, planning, and negotiations back and forth with the Japanese, legislation acceptable to the occupation authorities was enacted. During this period, according to the official historian, Ladejinsky "knew more as a student about the general topic of land reform in its historical, political and economic aspects than anyone else. His tremendous enthusiasm was a continuous energizing factor in its accomplishment. Ladejinsky was the brilliant, indefatigable salesman of ideas about land tenure. His enthusiasm brooked no obstacles. Not even the sacred precincts of high military rank prevented his carrying the gospel directly to the fountainhead of all authority."<sup>4</sup> The fountainhead, of course, was General MacArthur. But Ladejinsky was also getting out into the countryside, in what was to become the hallmark of his working method, to obtain first-hand information on the attitudes of tenants and landlords toward the land reform then under consideration. These field observations are in part recorded in his "Landlord versus Tenant in Japan" and are reflected in the more substantial "Farm Tenancy in Japan," which updated and went beyond his earlier studies and obviously did much to shape the final land reform program.

For Ladejinsky himself, these field trips in Japan and his face-to-face contacts and communication with hundreds of Japanese peasants resulted in another kind of shaping—an internal one. When intellectuals from the shtetl background encountered modernization in a new setting, they typically sublimated their traditionally intense inner religious life by turning to Zionism, socialism, or trade unionism (with, to be sure, a heavily socialist tinge). Ladejinsky's scholarly vocation, had he remained in Washington, might well have found complementary expression in such a way. (He did, indeed, develop very strong feelings about Israel, to which, in his will, he left the beautiful Oriental works of art he had lovingly collected over the years.) But the peasants, their wives, and children whom he encountered in the countryside he did not see as primarily Japanese. He saw them as human beings in desperate need of help to achieve a bit of the security and dignity, and the prospect of a better life for their children, to which all human beings were entitled. His humanity, his sense of social justice, were deeply aroused. Henceforth Ladejinsky's religious inheritance would require no other expression.

Papers presented in this publication serve to block out, broadly, subsequent phases in Ladejinsky's career. He was borrowed in 1949 to assist the Joint (U.S. and China) Commission on Rural Reconstruction in its agrarian reform efforts in China and Formosa. From 1950 through 1954, in addition to his normal duties as agricultural attaché in Tokyo, he reviewed the effects of the Japanese land reform, assisted again in Formosa, and, at the urgent request of the ambassador to India, Chester Bowles, examined at first hand tenurial conditions and problems in Kashmir, Punjab, and Madras (in 1952) and the general status of the land reform program in India (1954). His final year in U.S. government service was spent as land reform advisor with the aid mission in Saigon. From 1956 to 1961 he continued his work

3. Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

4. Lawrence I. Hewes, Jr., *Japan—Land and Men* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State College Press, 1955). The official history was Hewes's "Japanese Land Reform Program," Report no. 127, General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

in Vietnam as personal advisor to President Diem. For the next three years he served the Ford Foundation as a kind of roving regional consultant, advising on the foundation's work in Nepal, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines. In the latter part of 1964 he began his consulting work for the World Bank. After participating in a major World Bank study of India's prospects for economic development and in other missions to Mexico and Iran, Ladejinsky was posted to India early in 1967 as a member of the Bank's resident mission in New Delhi. There he finished out his work with an increasing stoicism. While India was his primary responsibility and concern during this last period, he was also called upon to assist ad hoc with the Bank's work in Iran, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

## Writings

Over the years, Ladejinsky's career was productive of a considerable body of written work. Most of it, of course, was done for the governments and development institutions for which he worked. His Department of Agriculture studies, most of them pre-1945, were all published in official journals (two appeared in *Foreign Crops and Markets*, the rest in *Foreign Agriculture*). Other U.S. government papers done in India and Vietnam appear here for the first time. In fact, the 1955 Vietnam papers have been declassified only by request for the present purpose. The Ford Foundation papers similarly have until now reposed in the foundation's archives. The World Bank papers have always been restricted in circulation and appear publicly for the first time. For these reasons Ladejinsky's postwar written work has been available only to the extent that it has appeared in public print or was distributed, on occasion, to a handful of close friends and professional colleagues. The best known, perhaps, are the seven articles published in *Foreign Affairs* over a thirty-year period and another six which appeared, beginning in 1969, in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay). Other articles appeared from time to time in more popular magazines such as *The Reporter*, *Country Gentleman*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. But other than the *Foreign Affairs* articles, most of the published work, including many of the *Foreign Agriculture* articles, are not easily accessible. Ladejinsky's reputation as a development practitioner therefore rests more on the intimate knowledge of the relatively few government and institutional policymakers and officials with and for whom he worked and of a small circle of professional colleagues with whom he shared his experiences than it does on a wide familiarity with his writings. The present publication is intended to remedy this situation.

An intensive search for the purposes of this volume turned up some 142 studies, surveys, reports, articles, memoranda, conference statements, and a few substantive letters comprising approximately one million words. Although a number of significant items may not have been garnered in this process—especially internal memoranda and private letters of value—the papers collected and listed in the Chronological Bibliography almost surely incorporate all Ladejinsky's important work and are representative of all the countries, problems, and ideas with which he concerned himself throughout his career. As might be expected, Japan, Vietnam, and especially India—the countries where he spent the most time and did his most important work—account for a substantial portion of his total writings. Tenurial conditions and agrarian reform are recurrent themes in different countries, conditions, and times. But the papers deal in depth with much more: agricultural and development strategy, institutional barriers (credit, extension, administration, and so on), small farmer programs, drought in Maharashtra and refugees in Bengal, the Green Revolution and government procurement procedures and

marketing, human welfare and Chinese communes, President Diem's views and the seriousness of Nepal's development intentions. Truly, this lode is rich with highly concentrated ore waiting to be mined by policymakers, development practitioners, rural development specialists, scholars and students, and also by all those genuinely interested in the human and operational aspects of economic development.

Those who read Ladejinsky here for the first time will find nothing that is academic or theoretical. Every piece Ladejinsky ever wrote is based on specific facts and situations addressed to *living* and urgent problems involving the burdens and agonies of millions of impoverished peasants. His writings were designed either to stimulate the required central government attention, necessary programs, and policy action, or to suggest to the World Bank and the Ford Foundation, his only nongovernmental employers, how they could most usefully assist one country or another. His published postwar articles were written to mobilize an élite or broader public support for necessary government actions. To repeat, then: this man was no academic, no theorizer; he was a *doer*. His written work, no less than his work in the field, was operational.

The pieces presented here have been selected, first, for their relevance to the agricultural, developmental, and human conditions in Asia today and the enlightenment they offer policymakers and development practitioners in addressing and improving that condition. A second criterion has been the contribution made to the understanding of agricultural and economic development. Third, an attempt was made to present papers that would be truly representative of the man and his work, the countries, problems, and ideas with which he was concerned, and the values he cherished. A fourth criterion, applicable in the case of papers such as those on Vietnam, has been their uniqueness and historical value. Fifth, previously unpublished papers have been given some slight preference, although not at the cost of quality, relevance, or comprehensiveness.

Limitations of space and the fact that Ladejinsky dealt with many topics more than once have made it necessary to curtail many excellent pieces. Sometimes he revisited at a later time a problem previously dealt with; sometimes he added a new dimension or depth, or underscored that a problem previously flagged was still there, naggingly awaiting action; sometimes he revised for a more popular periodical an earlier piece written for an institution or professional journal. Particularly in a number of the India papers over the last decade of his life, Ladejinsky repeatedly reviewed the evolving problems (and programs) of the small submarginal farmer, of land reform, of the Green Revolution, of such institutional constraints as cooperative credit, extension, and administration, and so on. The criterion of accessibility has also been invoked. All but two fragments of the classic "Collectivization of Agriculture in the Soviet Union" has reluctantly been excluded because of its length (close to 90 printed pages)—but only because the *Political Science Quarterly* in which it appeared in 1934 should be available in any good library. In several cases it has been possible to use Ladejinsky's own summary of, or a significant excerpt from, a paper. But no paper with a solid claim to inclusion on the grounds already described has consciously been omitted unless it is reasonably accessible in published form.

### The Ladejinsky Thesis

I have dealt thus far with Ladejinsky's professional career, his antecedents, his motivations and values, and the subject matter of his written work. It is time to turn to the substance of his thinking—to the Ladejinsky "message" or thesis, to his work method and style, and to the qualities of the man himself.

Ladejinsky never wrote a book. Neither did he contemplate, even toward the end of his career, summing up in book form what he had learned or the message he wished to leave behind. Like the shoemaker who heeded the admonition "Stick to thy last," Ladejinsky was too humble a man to undertake—as have so many of vastly lesser experience, insight, and wisdom—organizing and presenting his views in a framework broader than that of the specific problems to which he habitually addressed himself. Thus, even among his articles, there are no such titles as "Toward a Strategy for Agricultural Development," "The Role of Agrarian Reform in Agricultural and Economic Development," "Agrarian Reform and Political and Social Stability," "The Possibilities and Limitations of Foreign Aid," or "The Role of Asia in a Postwar Democratic World." Yet Ladejinsky had deep insights and strong convictions about these and other large questions too. Although he never chose to isolate and develop them, his views about them nevertheless emerge, often in fragmentary form, in the course of his treatment of much more specific subjects. Like exploding flashbulbs, they illuminate the larger background of the more immediate and limited scenes on which he had been focusing.

In only one or two significant exceptions to this generality did Ladejinsky present his broader views in something more than a paragraph or two. In a private letter to Kenneth Iverson of the Ford Foundation late in 1954 Ladejinsky attempted to formulate, in very broad terms, his understandings of the problem facing those in the West who wished to advance the cause of human welfare in the poor countries. He dealt with the competition with communism in this regard; the kinds of assistance programs that might prove most effective, especially in relation to land tenure; and the qualities most essential and desirable in technical assistance personnel (II-24).<sup>5</sup> Another exception is a paper, "Land Reform," prepared for delivery to an MIT Conference on Productivity and Innovation in Underdeveloped Countries in 1964 (IV-47). Here Ladejinsky uncharacteristically dealt with the land reform problem in general terms rather than in the particular. He examined the scope and significance of land reform, its meaning and content, its politics, its relation to productivity and political stability, its prospects and limitations. These two items should not be missed even by the highly selective reader.

It should be useful to set forth here, albeit only briefly, what Ladejinsky was too humble to develop at length himself. Here, then, are what strike me as the chief elements in what might be called "the central Ladejinsky thesis," set in the larger perspective in which his views were framed.

1. In a world in which mankind's best hopes for human welfare under freedom are dependent on the fruition of the democratic dream, to which Communism represents both the major threat and likely alternative, the role of Asia is crucial. ". . . what happens in Asia in coming decades is as decisive for the future shape of the world as anything that happens in Western Europe." "From the point of view of the West and the preservation of its most cherished values, it is of the utmost importance whether, in their current efforts to modernize, the underdeveloped countries will lean towards the West, adapting its technology and political ideas to suit their special needs or, instead, accept the Communist promises and eventually the Communist system. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the existence of the Western, democratic world will depend upon the choice, free or accidental, of the underdeveloped countries between following in the Communist path or proceeding with Western aid" (II-24).

5. References are to part and chapter numbers of this book as listed in the table of contents. The examples cited in this introduction are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

2. The welfare of the Asian peoples will play a definitive role in this outcome. "Every Asian, however illiterate, consciously or unconsciously aspires to a measure of this welfare which consists of better living conditions, better health, better social status or greater equality of status, better government, greater participation in local or national affairs, and a host of other values which spell out the ideas of human welfare and of 'the dignity of man' . . . The survival of the underdeveloped countries along Western lines dictates the application of these objectives . . ." (II-24).

3. Agricultural progress is basic and essential to economic development and welfare, whether in Asia or in other agrarian and developing societies (II-24, IV-43), not only because agriculture contributes directly to production but also because it provides a growing market for the domestic manufacturing industries which are also essential to economic growth and employment (CB-100).<sup>6</sup> Yet developing countries generally failed to recognize this through the 1960s, and recognition of agriculture's central role is still far from general. Ladejinsky was far ahead of his time when he perceived in the early 1950s that the developing countries were making a critical error in overemphasizing industrial development as the high road to economic growth, at the cost of agriculture and overall economic development (II-24; III-29, 38; IV-46). "More immediately to the point [as an obstacle of agricultural progress] is . . . the heavy bias in favor of industrialization in the typical underdeveloped, agrarian country, as against setting its agrarian house in order. This approach, favored by planners and economists, both Western and Asian, has tended to retard the much-needed agricultural effort. This criticism is not leveled against industrialization as such; its usefulness is all too obvious. What is at issue is *the overemphasis on industrialization in relation to agriculture* . . . In largely agrarian Asia this approach is an economic and political fallacy which, if persisted in, is bound to lead—has already led—to serious stresses and strains affecting the progress of developing countries" (IV-46).

4. Where the land-man ratio permits, redistribution leading to widespread land ownership for the great mass of cultivators is the best way to provide the incentives necessary to the agricultural investment, modernization, increased output, and higher levels of living and welfare that connote agricultural progress. Where the land-man ratio will permit such redistribution only in limited degree, the most practicable and therefore constructive solution to the problem of equity and incentives lies in achieving a truly secure land tenure for tenants and sharecroppers, combined with tolerable ceiling rents (IV-47). The price and terms of repayment for redistributed land must not burden excessively the new owner (II-18, IV-47). Where land redistribution programs enable absentee landlords to resume sizable farms for their own cultivation, "The net result is a new type of tenant . . . the 'evicted tenant'" (II-24). The satisfactory implementation of land redistribution programs requires active participation and execution by local or village land commissions, at least half of whose members should be tenant farmers (II-10, 11). Tenant tenure should be protected by written contracts with renewal safeguards. In the absence of secure tenure, effective rent ceilings are impossible to administer (II-24, V-51). Effective rent ceilings reduce the capitalized value of land and make it easier for tenants and sharecroppers to buy land of their own in the marketplace (II-12).

5. Widely distributed land ownership and secure low-rent tenancies do not alone suffice to make or ensure the success of an agrarian reform. Also needed are adequate and secure

6. This and a few following CB references are to papers listed in the Chronological Bibliography but not reproduced in this book.



water supplies and effective institutional arrangements for essential inputs, the credit necessary to obtain them, and the extension services needed to guide small farm operators in their efficient use. "In conditions of rural poverty even redistribution of the land will not suffice unless it is accompanied by the necessary means to work and improve the land" (IV-47).

6. This is not to say that agrarian reform is a panacea that provides an assured solution to all the problems of the countryside. Especially "Where the pressure of population on limited land resources is great, agrarian reform . . . is not a final solution . . . Rather it does away with the worst features of a system that has outlived its usefulness economically, socially, and politically" (IV-47). And "the issue in India is not one of *solving* the rural problem but of palliatives capable of wiping out the worst features which condemn the farmers to a below-subsistence level of existence" (II-23).

7. Because of the peasant's desperate need and hunger for land, and because exposure to the winds of change have aroused him ("an overworked and overexploited common man who for centuries was inertly miserable is now alertly miserable"), basic agrarian reform is inevitable and its character essentially revolutionary (II-24). ". . . despite the opposition of the landlords or of governments dominated by them, the transfer of ownership is inevitable; what is in question is the pace—quicker in a country where the government is bent on implementing a reform, slower where a government has neither the strength nor the desire to activate the issue . . . the reform movement is a revolutionary one even though landlords' heads do not roll and noblemen's nests are not set afire" (II-22). Land reform "involves a drastic redistribution of property and income at the expense of the landlords. It becomes a revolutionary measure when it passes property, political power, and social status from one group in the society to another . . . A reform worthy of its name is supposed to strengthen the principle of private property where it was weakest, at the base of the social pyramid . . . As the landlord loses much of his affluence, he loses much of his influence" (IV-47).

8. The key to who makes agrarian reform, and to what determines whether an attempted reform will be successful, is political. "Technical expertise in preparing and administering the necessary legislation is indispensable, but experts do not make reforms. Politicians, and only politicians, make good or poor reforms or do not make them at all. They control the political climate, which determines the will or lack of will to proceed with the task; the specific measures with which the reform is or is not endowed; the care or lack of care with which the enabling legislation is formulated; the preparation or lack of preparation of the pertinent and administrative services; the presence or absence of technical services with their bearing upon the success or failure of the reform; and, most important, the drive or lack of drive behind the enforcement of the provisions of the law" (IV-47; see also V-51).

9. Government then—its desire and its *will*—is the key to agrarian reform. "The built-in landlord opposition, abetted by public servants, can be dealt with successfully if the political leadership is bent on carrying out its goals. This is especially important because the peasantry has not developed a popular political movement of its own capable of effectively representing and advocating its own cause" (IV-47). But what if governments fail to act, or act only in a halfhearted way, so as to vitiate the announced purposes of an "intended" reform? "Government authority, after all, usually is controlled by the very forces likely to be adversely affected by progressive economic and social development" (CB-47). In such a case, "There is ample proof that sooner or later the dispossessed will take the law into their own hands, to the utter destruction of the governments and classes who failed to grant them peacefully what they [will] otherwise try to acquire through violence . . ." Experience has thus demonstrated that "the foundations of the social structure stand or fall in the countryside and

that the peasant and his interests and aspirations must be placed 'in the center of the piece.' There is ample lesson and warning in postwar history "of the shape of things to come when the economic and social aspirations of the peasant are sacrificed for the sake of an outdated status quo" (III-32). ". . . somebody else will take over this long-overdue task, and much more will be at stake than a new rearrangement of income distribution and status in the countryside" (IV-47).

10. Complementary to this "or else" thesis is the conclusion that, where circumstances fairly cry out for agrarian reform, effective governmental action to achieve it is essential to economic, social, and political stability in the countryside and hence to the survival of democracy itself (III-32, IV-43, CB-100). ". . . farm reform can become a powerful political instrument. The native governments friendly to us would be more likely to win popular support, and popular support in Asia is 'peasant support or nothing.' An owner cultivator or a reasonably satisfied tenant would acquire a stake in society. He would guard that society against extremism. Private property would be strengthened where it has been weakest, at the huge base of the social pyramid . . . any effort to ease the peasant's burden . . . lays the foundation for a middle-of-the-road, stable rural society . . . 'Land and liberty' has ever been the ideal of all peasants" (II-13).

The Ladejinsky thesis speaks for itself and calls for little comment here. Attention may, however, be called to one element in his thesis about which Ladejinsky himself, late in his career, became shaky. And some questions need to be asked about another because events may seem to have negated it.

Until close to the end of his life, with his observation of Communist policies in the Japanese, Vietnamese, and Indian countrysides confirming his earlier observations and experience in the Soviet Union and China, Ladejinsky insisted that if basic agrarian reforms were not carried out from the top down, voluntarily, by supposedly democratic governments while they had the opportunity to do so, change would inevitably come about by violent action, from the bottom up, inspired by Communist propaganda. But he began to experience serious doubts about this as he puzzled over the passivity of the peasantry in Maharashtra during the devastating drought of 1972-73. Raising the question "Will peasants rebel?" Ladejinsky found it "a source of wonderment that the afflicted 'take it' without overt protests, let alone without resorting to violence . . . one is mystified . . . This observer couldn't help but cogitate about the causes explaining it . . ." (V-58). A few months later, addressing a World Bank seminar on land reform, this doubt had become a conclusion. "If we are to wait until the peasantry of India—or, for that matter, a number of other Asian countries—decide to take the law into their own hands and fight for an out and out radical agrarian revolution, I think we would have to wait a long, long time." Given the obvious lack of the essential *will* on the part of the Indian government, Ladejinsky for once was at a loss. "I really don't know what one does at this point." And then, with wry humor, "I suppose the only person who probably knows what the eventual solution may be is the Indian astrologer; I leave it to him at this point to provide the final answer" (CB-127).

What invites question is the complex of judgments at the heart of the Ladejinsky thesis that "the foundations of the social structure stand or fall in the countryside," that the peasant must be placed "in the center of the piece," and that the economic, social, and political stability essential to the future of democracy in Asia rest on finding solutions to the socially cancerous problems of the countryside. Are not these judgments contrary to the Asian experience of recent years? Has it not been the wretched conditions and insistent demands of a rapidly growing and highly politicized new urban proletariat which has dominated political

decisionmaking or frightened weak governments into indecision and impotence? Has it not been the frustrated dissatisfaction of this urban proletariat, rather than the "alert misery" of the peasantry, which has eroded the political base of weak parliamentary governments and opened the political gates to military and other authoritarian governments?

So it would seem. But do these unhappy historical developments of recent years really negate the core of the Ladejinsky thesis, or do they serve rather to confirm it? What was it that sent the teeming millions of impoverished and landless cultivators streaming into the cities where they could not find employment, housing, nor schooling and health care for their children nor escape from misery? Was it not the failure to address the fundamental problems of agrarian reform in the countryside, and the misguided overemphasis on industrialization at the expense of agriculture, which increasingly exacerbated inequalities of income, unbalanced development, and stunted economic growth? Has the central problem not been and does it not remain the one Ladejinsky posed? It was with a piercingly prescient simplicity that he wrote in 1954: "Four-fifths of the people who populate the underdeveloped areas are peasants. Agriculture, not industry, is the pivot of their lives in all its principal manifestations. Industry has made but a small dent in the character of Asia, notwithstanding the industrialization of Japan, the oil gushers of the Middle East, the tin mines of Malay and Siam, and the jute and cotton mills of India. The factory may bring material advancement to the Asians some day, but that day is in the future. The heart of the problem of Asia today lies in the countryside. It is on the farm where solutions must be sought and found" (II-24).

### Foreign Assistance

Ladejinsky firmly believed that economic development was basically a job which, for the most part, the poor countries had to do for themselves, making fundamental policy choices which only they could make. His views on foreign aid were therefore not incorporated into the core of his thinking just presented. The vital importance he attributed to the role of Western aid was made evident from the very outset, however, and was indeed fundamental to his thought. For this reason, and as a sensitive, wise, and highly experienced practitioner of development assistance over the years, he came to a number of highly insightful and useful ideas about it, which will be examined here. Ladejinsky's view of the critical choice confronting the poor countries between the Western and Communist systems provides a useful point of departure for this examination. The following quotations from an article written in 1950 develop this view.

"Now the forces that keep the peasant within well-defined bounds are breaking down under rising agrarian discontent. The peasantry is at last in motion. The Communists have exploited this fact and placed it in the center of Asiatic politics . . . Lenin . . . visualized the final crucial battle as a conflict between a Communist East and a capitalistic West . . . To win Chinese and Indian support, Stalin developed a program for those countries consisting of three stages: a struggle against foreign imperialism, an agrarian revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party, and finally a proletarian dictatorship. The key step was to be the wooing of the peasants . . . The only way to thwart Communist designs on Asia is to preclude such revolutionary outbursts through timely reforms, peacefully, before the peasants take the law into their own hands and set the countryside ablaze" (II-13).

On the nature and strategy of assistance, he had this to say about the Western role: "Whatever we may contribute to Asia's advancement and stability—be it in the form of dollars, of technical guidance, of organizational advice, or of military assistance—our policy

and all our diplomatic competence and tact should be actively and sympathetically guided by the knowledge that the foundations of the social structure stand or fall in the countryside . . . We must make an effort to persuade the more conservative Asian groups that rural reform is essential to their own preservation as well as in the interest of the peasantry . . . From ambassadors and ministers to foreign service clerks, we must begin to feel and act in terms of the common man, and in Asia he is the peasant. We must make a special effort to seek out and encourage in every way possible the native liberal groups who might otherwise be lost to our common cause" (II-13).

Ladejinsky went to China and Taiwan in 1949 to assist the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction in a pre-Point IV foreign assistance program which impressed him greatly and which he thought might well serve as a model for future assistance efforts. One unusual aspect he admired was that the joint commission was itself a cooperative effort, with three Chinese and two American members. The chairman was Chinese while both American members were men who had lived and worked professionally in China for many years and who shared fully the aspirations of the farmers they sought to serve. The commission adopted "a bold rural program" with ten constituent elements that gave first priority to land reform. This was no accident. "It was . . . clear to the commission that the chief beneficiaries of the technical projects would be the landlords and not the majority of the farmers—the tenants—unless tenancy conditions were improved." And Ladejinsky described approvingly the basic principles and criteria the commission selected as a basis for its activities. It ruled out costly projects with modern equipment unsuited to small-scale Chinese agriculture. It chose not to set up new enterprises that would compete with existing ones, but chose rather to assist in enlarging and improving the latter. It shunned projects for which the farmers themselves had not expressed a strong preference. It concentrated on projects that would help the people to help themselves and that would benefit the great majority of farmers rather than just a few. To develop indigenous leadership it made special efforts to draw the educated youth of the country into the work of rural reconstruction. And, most important of all, it insisted as a condition of its aid that "physical reconstruction must be accompanied with social justice." In assessing the work of the commission, Ladejinsky sagely observed that "the experience of the commission shows that, unless it can be usefully absorbed, money alone cannot solve problems. And," he generalized, "this is a point worth remembering in all rural aid efforts in underdeveloped countries" (II-14).

Two letters to Ford Foundation officials in 1953 and 1955 are addressed to the question of how the foundation could most usefully be of assistance in Asian countries, but Ladejinsky's advice also has a more general application. The foundation's Report on the Conference on Land Tenure (in which he had himself participated by invitation some months earlier) was, he said, not realistically geared to the actual situation and problems of the countries the foundation sought to aid. Its stated principles of land reform policy, he pointed out, "constitute something akin to a perfectionist scheme, upon the fulfillment of which no land reform waited in the past or will wait in the future." Moreover, useful assistance in land reform does not lie in advising governments "how to formulate policies, administer, execute, and evaluate them." We know too little for this, he insisted, while "Every country in Asia has an articulate group with knowledge of the country's agrarian problems and ways of solving them. The difficulty is that often they choose to ignore them." It follows that "To be of real aid we could do no better than try to persuade this group that it is perhaps later than they think. This is where under propitious circumstances we could, with subtlety and experience, render useful service." A low profile, caution, and humility are other requisites (II-22).

The second letter, already cited in an earlier connection, is much broader in scope. Because backwardness in underdeveloped countries is not only economic but general, assistance programs "must not be limited to what is commonly known as technical or economic assistance." Moreover, with a sober prescience, he foresaw and stressed that "it is not at all certain that achievements in technical [or economic] assistance will automatically or necessarily insure a greater sharing of economic welfare . . . of political power, free public schools, the emergence of representative governments, and other developments which denote progress in democracy" (II-24).

Since it is the political climate for reform which is crucial, the strategy of assistance should aim at reaching those "groups whose support could make the difference between determined action . . . or none at all." In India Ladejinsky saw the universities as the key medium for such an approach. But he cautioned that outsiders seeking to advance the essential cause of land reform must be sensitive to the fact that it is a highly controversial issue. Landlords are bound to resist it, and "Foreign 'interference' may add fuel to the already burning issue by antagonizing not only the conservatives but also the pro-reform supersensitive nationalists" who are only too ready to fight any infringement on their national sovereignty (II-24). Two decades later Ladejinsky cautioned the World Bank to the same effect. Since agrarian reform was essentially a political decision, no government, large or small, could be prodded into such a decision if it were not itself politically ripe for it (CB-127, 141).

These views about foreign aid are, not unnaturally, reflected in the qualities Ladejinsky sought in technical assistance personnel. "In the light of the goals our aid should pursue, he [the field-worker] must have much more than technical competence . . . [He] must be able to understand the position the people of a given country are in, to grasp something of their attitudes, their feelings, their state of mind, their view of events and of the world . . . He must see what it is . . . that these people bring with them onto the world stage at the present time." In a former colonial dependency he must appreciate that "the economic legacy is often poverty . . . The psychological legacy is fear, suspicion, and hostility" stemming from "all that resulted in the imposition of enforced inferiority. The political legacy is authoritarianism, even when it is embellished with modern democratic forms . . . to a large degree the success or failure of his [the field-worker's] labor will depend upon the extent to which he understands and accepts these fundamentals" (II-24). Given these qualities as well as tact, a genuine humility, a gift for personal relations, and a sharing of purposes, said Ladejinsky, the field-worker will gain the *acceptance* which is so essential if his ideas are to reach their mark. "Advice from the outside has its place and will be accepted if based on knowledge and proffered in the spirit which induces Asians and Westerners to work together for a common goal" (II-24, III-28). (Not a bad—if unintended—description of Ladejinsky himself!) These views were reflected, not long after, in his assessment of the U.S. aid program in Vietnam (III-31).

Some twenty years later development institutions and the development profession are coming to a belated recognition of some of Ladejinsky's homely truths. Recognition that "the heart of the problem lies in the countryside" became central to the World Bank's development assistance policy in the 1970s, and much else that he had to say has become part of the conventional wisdom, if not yet the conventional practice. The Western world has learned to its sorrow that economic growth does not necessarily ensure human welfare, nor an increasing measure of social justice, nor even the continued adherence to, let alone the strengthening of, democratic institutions. Not until the 1970s did the appreciation develop that "overemphasis on industrialization in relation to agriculture . . . is an economic and

political fallacy which, if persisted in, is bound to lead . . . to serious stresses and strains affecting the progress of the developing countries." This early insight alone should suffice to make Ladejinsky stand out like a giant in the field of economic development.

### Work Method and Style

What imprints on Ladejinsky's writings their unmistakable stamp of reality and authenticity is the fact that they either reported on his personal field observations or derived directly from them. This is not to say that he failed to devour the relevant literature, to pore over the statistics, or to garner the wisdom and experience of other scholars, observers, and field-workers, domestic or foreign, living or dead. All these things he also did, with a prodigious energy and a burning intellectual curiosity, steeping himself at the same time in the culture of the place so that he could see from the inside as well as from the objective perspective he never lost. But he never made these things his own, whether by adoption or rejection, until he had tested them by his own direct observations. As Ashok Mitra observed (see below), "Ladejinsky did not just write reports, he lived through them." It is the inescapable realization that Ladejinsky had thought and felt deeply about what he had himself seen and heard, that he had "lived" his reports, that gives his papers the great immediacy, cogency, and force which characterize them.

Just as agrarian reform was central to Ladejinsky's concerns, so direct field observation was central to his work method and style. Typically he would set out, accompanied only by an interpreter and without a preset plan, and interview everyone he encountered by chance or sought out, who might be involved in one way or another in the problem at hand: tenant farmers, sharecroppers, agricultural laborers, landlords and sublandlords, district and local officials, representatives of cooperative banks and marketing agencies—in short, everyone who could possibly provide an insight into the prevailing condition, their interests in it, and their reactions to it. This took him not only into the fields, marketplaces, and offices but also into the hutments where he could observe how the people lived, what food was in the larder, and how the wives and children fared. If he stopped by the roadside to talk to a farmer or laborer, inevitably others drifted over to observe and listen and then to join in the conversation. For it was always plain to them that this foreign stranger was no alien being, questioning them from a plane other than their own. They sensed at once that he spoke with them as one man to another, that he shared with them the human condition, as well as their interests and concerns; they in turn were glad of the opportunity to share their interests and concerns with him. Over the years Ladejinsky must have thus visited and spoken intimately with many hundreds of peasants in every country in which he worked. It is doubtful whether any other man—agricultural economist, development practitioner, or, indeed, government official—had made so close and direct an acquaintance with the peasant cultivators of Asia or had come to know so well the peasant condition. It was quite natural, therefore, that Ladejinsky's work was never theoretical but invariably rooted in fact and specific situations and problems. His work was always set in a perspective that embraced both the immediate as well as the historical and broader background. It sought out causes, objectives, obstacles, and accomplishments and assessed all of these in one large, professionally disciplined and yet very human view.

One other aspect of Ladejinsky's working method or style is particularly noteworthy. In country after country in which he worked he managed, after conducting his surveys and reaching his conclusions, to gain an audience and the opportunity personally to present his

findings and conclusions to the head of government. That this was not customary but rather highly unique any experienced development practitioner or advisor knows, ruefully, only too well; neither, of course, was it accidental. It happened for the most part by Ladejinsky's design. Although his reputation often preceded him and helped, just how he managed to do this is a political, diplomatic, and operational art that can neither be dissected nor emulated by any formula.

Ladejinsky would have been less than human if he had not been somewhat flattered and gratified by such opportunities. He could scarcely have avoided wonderment, as he approached such audiences, that he, so recently a poor immigrant, was about to converse with the high and mighty. But such access was essential to his purposes. He knew very well that any significant progress toward agrarian reform in any country required a political decision at the highest level of authority. Ministers of agriculture or planning or finance might be persuaded and might even relay the message to the head of government, but they were scarcely likely to convey it as cogently or persuasively as Ladejinsky himself, if indeed they could be relied upon to carry the message at all. This is the why if not the how of Ladejinsky's audiences, frequently repeated, with General MacArthur in Japan, Premier Chen Cheng in Taiwan, President Diem in Vietnam, Prime Minister Koirala and King Mahendra in Nepal, Prime Minister Hoveida in Iran, President Marcos in the Philippines, and President McNamara at the World Bank. In his single audience with Madame Gandhi, he once confided, he failed to "reach" her, and despite his long residence in India he did not try again. And he knew better than to try in the case of one other national leader. Describing a visit to Indonesia early in 1961, where he had met at some length with Minister Sadjarwo, he wrote: "Whether it is really worthwhile investing time—assuming that I had some to spare—is another matter. My skepticism stems from the knowledge that, in such a highly personalized government . . . the number one, Mr. Sukarno, must be influenced if real progress is to be made. Regretfully, I am not sure that I could reach him, and, even if reached, I am not sure that I could find the key to a man whose attitude toward affairs of state is a great puzzle and wonderment to me and countless others" (III-37).

That he was a superb reporter as well as analyst of the agrarian scene is evident in many of the papers presented, whether in Japan (CB-27), Szechwan (II-12), Vietnam (III-26), Punjab (V-50), Bihar (V-51), Eastern United Provinces (V-54), Maharashtra (V-58), or elsewhere. Nor was this superb reporting limited to the agrarian condition, as demonstrated by his description of the conditions in West Bengal as refugees fled from the horrors in Bangladesh (V-56), by his interview with President Diem (III-27), by his impressions of India after the China war (IV-41), or by his assessment of Nepal's development intentions (CB-86).

At least two observations should be made about Ladejinsky's writing style. The first and more obvious is that, especially in his published work, which he labored to polish, he had a beautiful command of the English language, a command all the more impressive because his mother tongues were Yiddish and Russian, and, like Joseph Conrad, he learned English painfully only after he had reached maturity. This command was enriched by his gift for the pithy phrase, the apt quotation, and the lively anecdote.<sup>7</sup> The second is that Ladejinsky always treated his subject in a full, thoroughly rounded out—almost prolix—fashion. I take this to

7. For example, in his "Traditional Agriculture and the Ejido" (CB-100) he tells of the farmer who, when asked about the extension service, replied, "Ah, you mean the fellow who drives by but never stops here."

be a reflection of both his seriousness and his pride. If a subject was important enough to engage Ladejinsky's attention, he would treat it thoroughly, with the seriousness it deserved and with no concession to the possibility that the reader might take it somewhat less seriously than he. He can sometimes almost be heard saying, "If this matter was serious enough to warrant my attention and examination, and you wish to learn what I have learned and come to think about it, you will have to give it your equally serious attention." In his case, this point of view is entirely justified.

### The Man

Ladejinsky was one of those rare individuals of whom it can literally be said that the man was his work and the work, the man. A good deal of the essential Ladejinsky must already have emerged from what has been said in the preceding pages. Those who read all his papers will be impressed with many more aspects or qualities of the man than have already been stated or implied: the judicious evenhandedness shown in his assessment of colonial policies in the Netherlands Indies and in British Malaya (I-6, 7); the fair treatment for landlords called for in Taiwan (II-10); his insightful political acumen (everywhere, but see especially III-28, 31, 35; CB-86); his unerring eye for the essential; his great persuasiveness (IV-40, CB-101); his dogged persistence in getting his work done, despite the official discouragement or obstacles he sometimes encountered (II-21, CB-123, 141); and the humility with which he assessed his own role and achievements (II-16, 24; CB-49). These are only some of his personal qualities. Left untouched are others which would more appropriately be treated in a personal memoir—his capacity for friendship, his passion for good craftsmanship, his sense of humor, the stoic fortitude with which he endured ill health and disappointment, and his love of beauty in music, literature, and art. But at his innermost core and in the end perhaps most important were zeal, and faith, and love. It was of these that his long-time friend and colleague in the quest for genuine agrarian reform in India, Ashok Mitra, wrote in a touching tribute:<sup>8</sup>

Wolf Ladejinsky was much more than a desiccated agrarian expert. Such experts are legion; without them, foundations set up by multibillionaires would face a problem of non-utilization of resources. They come, write their report, go, and soon forget the country for which they had written it, their mental horizon is always colored a cynical grey. Ladejinsky did not just write reports, he lived through them. He did not need, in his ripe old age, the trifle of the World Bank salary to keep coming to this country, base himself in an impersonalized hotel room in New Delhi, and restlessly wander across the Indian countryside to comprehend the essence of agrarian truth. It was bizarre, yet emotionally a moving experience, to see this near-octogenarian, who had lost the sight of practically both his eyes, who was in such a precarious state of health that he could hardly assimilate any food, still determined to catch the plane, land on the airstrip in a distant town, and get into the jeep or station wagon, or take the ferry across the river, so as to reach some remote village where the *bataidar* would be able to tell him a little more about the mystique of the local land system, or of the local wage rates. This was no run-of-the-mill technical expert, this was a zealot. And the zeal came from a deep love for people, whatever their civilization or the pigmentation of their skin.

8. *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay), July 19, 1975.



Yet Wolf Ladejinsky was no ideologue. He would not have minded being described as an old-world liberal, who takes it as his mission to analyze and state the truth, whatever its hue. Thus he could be of considerable service to General MacArthur in Japan in 1946; the Shah of Iran too called for him, and the State Department, in the late 1950s—before it lost its head completely over Vietnam—also thought that he could render some good to the authorities in Saigon with his advice and counsel. Ladejinsky did not stint on his advice, but he did not stint on telling the truth either. Thus, in the Indian milieu, he could say things—and be heard with respect—which the establishment would not be prepared to hear from others, things about Bihar's medieval feudalism, about the Green Revolution stifled three-quarters the way in Punjab and Haryana, about the agony of Bengal's deprived sharecroppers and landless labor, about the real nature of famine relief in Maharashtra. Land reform, he could say in his quaint American-heavily-tinged-with-Russian accent, was nine-tenths political will, and where there is a will there is a way, and not just legislation.

He was no ideologue—one cannot in any case afford to be one once one accepts World Bank sponsorship—but he was not afraid of ideas either.

And he knew how to bestow affection. Never very demonstrative, he would still make his little gestures, and there could be no mistaking the depth of his goodwill. An admirer of this journal, he would, every now and then, drop one an appreciative note about some altogether insignificant piece one might have written. It calls for a special genre of faith in humanity to assert that, whatever the circumstances, howsoever unmitigatedly unfavorable the objective conditions, in the short run, a people—any people—are capable of lifting themselves through a revolutionary upsurge. Wolf Ladejinsky held such faith, and he tried hard to convert others to it. As one mourns for him, one does not just mourn for a great American, one also mourns for a great romantic, who had wizened with the years, but who refused to forsake either hope or love.

## The Ladejinsky Contribution

What was the Ladejinsky contribution? What did his forty years of dedicated work accomplish? This is not the place or time for such an assessment. His contribution will have to be evaluated eventually by his impact on agrarian reforms accomplished, stirred up, shunned neglected, or frustrated; on economic planners and development workers in the developing countries and the institutions with which they are associated; on the programs of development institutions like the World Bank and the Ford Foundation; on the thinking of academics and research workers in the field and on their institutions; and on the new generation of university graduates in both Western and developing countries who were inspired by his thinking, whether it reached them directly or indirectly. However his contribution might be assessed at this time, there can be no doubt that his impact is still growing. "The ideas of economists and philosophers," Keynes said, "are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed, the world is ruled by little else . . . I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas."

It will not, however, be inappropriate to record here a few notes and suggestions concerning his contribution. Partial answers have already been placed on the record by persons in the best possible position to evaluate his role in particular situations. Concerning Ladejinsky's contribution in Japan, General MacArthur wrote (to the U.S. secretary of agriculture on January 15, 1947): "Mr. Ladejinsky performed outstanding service in connection with the initiation of a comprehensive Land Reform Program by the Japanese Government, thereby

aiding in the attainment of important objectives of the Occupation. I wish to express my appreciation to you and the Department for having made his services available." And in a letter to Ladejinsky dated April 26, 1952, inscribed on an impressive silver plaque, Minister of Agriculture Kozen Hirokawa on behalf of the Japanese government wrote in part: "Our country owes you [a] heavy debt for your share in the successful accomplishment of the Land Reform Program. The world knows that this is the most significant reform which Japan accomplished under the Occupation, and I know that the reform was carried out with the closest cooperation and in the most friendly atmosphere between yourself and the personnel of our Ministry and I am convinced that the effect of the Land Reform will remain forever and so will your name in Japanese agriculture."

With respect to his contribution to agrarian reform in Taiwan, there is the testimony of Premier Chen Cheng, who cabled Ladejinsky in Tokyo on March 6, 1951: "I was glad to learn . . . of your willingness to come to Taiwan again. We are grateful for your invaluable assistance rendered to our country when you were last here [in 1949]. Now we are planning to carry out a limitation of land holdings program in which your advice is greatly needed. We have requested General MacArthur to approve lending your services to our Government and he has been good enough to give his approval. Please notify us of the date of your departure. You will be coming as my honored guest." Acknowledging the report "Observations on Rural Conditions in Taiwan" (II-15) which resulted, the premier wrote, on July 19, 1951, "We are grateful for your deep concern with Free China and the enthusiasm in presenting and analyzing the actual rural conditions in Taiwan. Please be advised that your valuable suggestions have been referred to [the] Economic-Financial Committee of [the] Executive Yuan for consideration to put them into effect." This relationship and appreciation continued. More than a year and a half later, on February 28, 1953, the premier wrote Ladejinsky again, inviting his views on the most recent land reform steps taken by his government. "It has been some time since I last heard from you. It is perhaps not necessary for me to say that you have always been in my thoughts . . . I am happy to report that at the beginning of this year we have put into execution the third and final step of land reform . . . As you have given invaluable assistance in the past . . . I enclose herewith a copy of the English translation of the *Land to the Tiller Act* . . . I shall be very grateful if you will be good enough to give me your comments . . ."

These testimonials by the highest authorities associated with the land reforms in Japan and Taiwan take on body and flesh when they are read in the light of Ladejinsky's own backward looks and assessments of the achievements of those reforms. For Japan the relevant papers are II-9, III-33, and CB-12, 49; for Taiwan, II-14 and CB-38. We have no comparable testimonial from President Diem of Vietnam; but the Vietnam papers presented here are perhaps testimony enough, especially the two backward looking and evaluative papers, III-38 and CB-75.

Ladejinsky's contributions to agrarian reform in India, where he strove mightily and long, will be more difficult to assess, even by those of his professional Indian colleagues who subscribed to the same values and goals and who are in the best position to attempt it. The papers included in this publication provide abundant evidence of Ladejinsky's efforts and the lines along which they were directed. As far back as the early 1950s he established close and cordial working relations with the Planning Commission in India. The commission subsequently formulated central guidelines for agrarian reform by the state governments (which have sole authority under the Indian constitution to legislate in this field) along lines which coincided with Ladejinsky's views. For this early period there is also the testimony of the

then U.S. Ambassador Chester Bowles, at whose urgent request Ladejinsky was borrowed from his post in Tokyo in the latter part of 1952 to study and advise on projected plans for land reform in India. (This visit resulted, among other things, in land reform observations in the Punjab, Madras, and Kashmir, recorded as II-18, 19, 20.) Upon Ladejinsky's return to Tokyo, Ambassador Bowles wrote him on February 5, 1953: "It was wonderful to have you here. I am convinced that your work and your contacts have clarified Indian thinking on the whole problem of land tenure and speeded up the process of doing something about it." To Ambassador Robert Murphy in Tokyo, who had reluctantly loaned Ladejinsky for this purpose, Bowles wrote: "I can't tell you how much it meant to us to have Wolf Ladejinsky here over the last several months . . . There was no clear, current picture of the situation when Wolf got here and no really good evaluation of the actions that had been taken over the last several years by the central and state governments. Wolf's clear insight and unfailing energy gave us a good picture in a brief time of what had been done and, still more important, what needs to be done. I think he communicated his own sense of urgency about this to many of the state officials but particularly to the people concerned with the Five Year Plan and other officials here in the central government."

But over the years following, most state governments in India enacted land reform legislation that was either feeble or pockmarked with such loopholes as too high ceilings on acreage retention and resumption—and this only after landlords had been afforded ample opportunity nominally to "divide" their land among relatives, so as to gain additional escape from the application of "reform" legislation. The same state governments also failed to implement vigorously the weak legislation they did enact. Despite Ladejinsky's valiant efforts in later years to stimulate significant action on security of tenure and rent ceilings, where substantial gains were and remain possible, the government revived instead the chimera of new landholding ceilings and redistribution legislation, where only very limited gains were possible and still fewer actually made. (See especially on this aspect papers V-59 and CB-122.)

Ladejinsky's impact was felt, however, in the sense of concern and even guilt he introduced into the national conscience through his own writings and those of India's intellectual and academic elite to whom he provided inspiration and example. The basic questions he raised became part of a continuous public debate in academic, research, and government circles and in the press. National commissions were appointed, conferences organized, new programs undertaken, and new priorities established in large part because of the logic and moral force of Ladejinsky's insistence that the problems of India's agrarian poor were central and had to be addressed. The battery of rural "social justice" programs initiated in the early 1970s—such as those for small and marginal farmers and landless laborers and crash employment programs—owe their genesis to the ferment Ladejinsky did so much to create.

Another important outcome of his residence in India on behalf of the World Bank was undoubtedly his impact on the Bank itself. The World Bank Sector Policy Paper, "Land Reform," May 1975, notes that: "The position of the World Bank in regard to land reform has changed over the past decade . . . In the early years of the Bank's operations the focus was on providing adequate infrastructure for increasing agricultural production. In the early 1960s the approach to agricultural development was widened to include the provision of rural credit and on-farm inputs. Problems of tenure were seen to have an indirect bearing on production . . . By the end of the 1960s, however, concern was growing about distribution of income in the rural areas and the relationship between land distribution and income distribution." An internal Bank paper affirmed that "It is clear that agricultural development

cannot do all it might to improve rural life if the distribution of land ownership is highly skewed." Since that time the Bank's concern has been reflected in both its technical assistance and lending policies.

In a large organization such as the World Bank many people are involved in the accommodation of policy to experience, changing conditions, and new insights into needs, goals, and optimum strategies. But there can be no doubt that Ladejinsky's work and views were a major influence in the evolution of these constructive changes in World Bank policy. Although the Bank recognizes, as did Ladejinsky, that its "potential for using the Bank's influence to press or even force the issue of structural reform on member countries is severely circumscribed," it does propose to "give overt priority in lending to those countries and projects which meet land reform criteria" and states that it will "not lend for projects if tenurial arrangements are so bad that they frustrate the achievement of the Bank's objectives." How much impact this new policy will have remains to be seen. Ladejinsky's contribution to it may prove to have been one of his crowning achievements.

Even these very preliminary notes suggest that Ladejinsky accomplished more than enough during his lifetime to have justified a real sense of pride in his achievements. But he was far more concerned with what he had failed to do, or get done, than with what he had helped to accomplish. And indeed one comes away from Ladejinsky's papers with the pronounced sense that the business of agrarian reform is largely unfinished and that the major part of the job to which he devoted his life remains to be done. Only in retrospect, however, do these opportunities lost or neglected seem distressing; for the future the opportunity is great. The publication of these papers, it is hoped, will bring about a greater awareness, in many countries where it is needed, that this essential, unfinished business still awaits constructive social action. To the developing countries, newly insistent on the creation of "a new international economic order," these papers issue a sober reminder that a necessary component of the social justice they seek can be achieved only through internal agrarian reforms, and that the sovereign power to initiate and carry through such reforms rests solely with themselves. This reminder is at the same time, therefore, also a challenge.

LOUIS J. WALINSKY