

The New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of the Aging has fostered community programs, housing, counselling and job placement for the aged. In view of the fact that ours is an aging population, it is of utmost importance that the Committee continue its work, for the time has come "... to prove the potentials of the later years, and the value of age."

KATHERINE SIMON

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### MALTHUS TWICE AGAIN<sup>1</sup>

THAT two separate books on Malthus were published in London in 1953 is only an example of the current resurgence of interest in Malthus. Much of the renewed interest has been aroused by the controversies over the outlook for world population and resources. These controversies, in turn, have been augmented, if not frequently started, by the postwar activities in the underdeveloped areas of the world.

Dr. George F. McCleary's book *THE MALTHUSIAN POPULATION THEORY* provides for the layman a good nontechnical description of the "Theory"; it is full of human interest materials on Malthus and some of his ancestors and contemporaries.

However, McCleary's is not simply a "popular" book. The author has studied Malthus's writings with much care. In the reviewer's opinion, he makes a distinct contribution in the chapter entitled "Malthus and Contraception" in which he marshals the evidence that Malthus knew about contraception and strongly disapproved of it. In the chapter "Mistakes About Malthus" McCleary points out that some held that Malthus advocated contraception and others that he was ignorant of it. Other "mistakes" listed by McCleary are "that the ultimate object of his work was to check population increase" (p. 95), "that Malthus recommended war, disease, and famine as remedies for over-population" (p. 96), "that population actually increases in a geometrical ratio" (p. 98).

<sup>1</sup> McCleary, G. F.: *THE MALTHUSIAN POPULATION THEORY*. London, Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1953, 191 pp. 15s.

Glass, D. V. (Ed.): *INTRODUCTION TO MALTHUS*. London, Watts & Company, 1953, 205 pp. 10s 6d. (New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1953, 205 pp. \$2.75.)

McCleary's own appraisal of Malthus is summarized as follows:

It seems that most students of population would agree that the central Malthusian position has survived its hundred and fifty years of hostile criticism and still stands. Malthus held that since it is easier for man to produce children than to produce subsistence, population constantly tends to outrun subsistence but is restrained by a variety of checks, all of which may be divided into (1) positive, which tend to raise the death-rate, and (2) preventive, which tend to reduce the birth-rate. He also held that the positive checks become less prevalent, and the preventive more prevalent, with the advance of Western civilization; that an unchecked population would double itself every twenty-five years; that it is necessary that population increase should be restrained; and that the positive checks should as far as possible be eliminated, and the 'requisite population of any country' be reared 'from the smallest number of births.' On these basic propositions there seems to be agreement among most instructed critics that he was right. (page 157)

INTRODUCTION TO MALTHUS, edited by Professor D. V. Glass, is a good companion volume to McCleary's book. This, too, is a nontechnical book but of an altogether different type. It consists of three papers *about* Malthus, two *by* Malthus, and a classified bibliography of important writings on population and the Malthusian controversy during the period 1793-1880.

The three papers about Malthus are H. L. Beales: "The Historical Context of the Essay on Population"; D. V. Glass: "Malthus and the Limitation of Population Growth"; and Alan T. Peacock: "Malthus in the Twentieth Century."

Glass' appraisal of Malthus is considerably less defensive than is that of McCleary. "However sincerely Malthus professed to further the interests of the labourer, the denial of poor relief and the refusal to acknowledge contraception as a relevant means of population control must today appear curiously inhuman. Moreover, for a man who put forward a comprehensive theory of economic and social development, Malthus's view of the factors influencing social change was

curiously narrow. As a result, a useful short-run analysis of the relation between population and economic progress was elevated into a law of doubtful validity.” (page ix)

The two books on population should be of value not only to students of population but also those interested in the demographic aspects of modernization of underdeveloped areas.

CLYDE V. KISER

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION GROWTH IN RHODE ISLAND<sup>1</sup>

**I**N this booklet, Kurt B. Mayer “attempts to trace in brief outline the growth of Rhode Island’s population from its inception and to relate it to the processes of economic development characteristic of this area.”

Primarily an agricultural community when first colonized in 1636, Rhode Island subsequently became a maritime and commercial community and finally an industrial state.

Settled by those persecuted in the Massachusetts colonies, most colonists were dependent upon subsistence farming. However, early could be seen not only division of labor—the blacksmith, the shoemaker, etc.—but also the beginnings of foreign commerce and shipbuilding, which formed the basis of the colony’s wealth during the eighteenth century. Newport became the leader in New England commerce as well as the center of the American slave trade. Subsidiary to maritime commerce, but developing as a result of it, were distillers to convert imported molasses to rum, manufacturing concerns to produce sail cloth and cordage, and iron works. Livestock farming on large plantations was initiated.

The population of Rhode Island increased rapidly during the colonial period. It increased from the 7,181 persons in 1708 to 59,678 in 1774. Diverse social strata could be observed on the eve of the Revolution: the wealthy commercial and mercantile class and the landed aristocracy, the poor self-sufficient farmers, the colored slaves, and indentured servants. Popula-

<sup>1</sup>Mayer, Kurt B.: *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION GROWTH IN RHODE ISLAND*. Providence, Brown University, 1953, 70 pp., \$2.25.