

ANNOTATIONS

FROM MALTHUS TO MAO TSE-TUNG¹

READERS of this book may be disappointed if they expect to find a searching discussion of population theory and policy in Communist China, supported by comprehensive documentation. Their disappointment will, however, be short-lived because Professor Sauvy has written what this reviewer considers one of the most stimulating expositions of the "population problem" in any language. It is to be hoped that translations into English and other languages will soon make the book accessible to the non-French-reading public.

DE MALTHUS À MAO TSÉ-TOUNG is arranged in three major parts, followed by a brief overview and conclusions in the final chapter. The first part of the book, entitled "Facts and False Solutions," focusses attention on "*the new fact that after a long period of quasi-stagnation, the numbers of people in the greater part of the world have entered a phase of rapid growth*" (p. 22, Sauvy's italics in all quotations), reflecting a combination of declining mortality with constant fertility in many countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Sauvy asks two crucial questions. Can rapid growth continue for a long time? Should one be concerned about it? His answer is "no" to the first question, and "yes," to the second. It is unlikely that the decline in mortality can be reversed since governments will find it "*impossible to stop medical progress from spreading, at least in its summary and collective techniques*" (p. 91). Nor will the economically developed countries be able to withhold aid if millions of human beings are threatened by

¹ Sauvy, Alfred: DE MALTHUS À MAO TSÉ-TOUNG. Paris, Editions Denoël, 1958, 303 pp., 900 fr. + T.L.

local famines. Emigration can alleviate overpopulation only in small territories, mainly islands politically associated with larger countries. "Thus we find ourselves in a grand dilemma: *economic solution or demographic solution*. Adjustment of resources to population or adjustment of population (through declining natality) to resources. *There is no escape hatch*" (p. 104).

The "economic solution" is discussed in the second part of Sauvy's book. He points out that a population growing at an annual rate of 2.5 per cent must make "demographic investments" of about 10 per cent of its national income merely to maintain its level of living. The relatively high proportion of children in a rapidly growing population also tends to reduce goods and services available for consumption per adult equivalent. To improve the level of living, additional "economic investments" must be made, necessitating further belt-tightening. Sauvy concludes that "*many underdeveloped countries are experiencing too rapid population growth to succeed in getting out of the hole by their own efforts*" (p. 153). The participation of foreign funds, private or public, in economic development is often blocked by political considerations. It is not surprising, then, that in recent years economic progress has been very slow or even lacking, especially in densely settled countries, such as India and Egypt, and that hunger and misery have persisted.

Sauvy then turns to the "demographic solution." He traces the history of birth limitation—incidentally, a much-neglected subject. He analyzes the social and psychological factors both promoting and impeding the widespread adoption of contraceptive practices and points to the political implications in the atomic age. "The Malthusian reaction of familial and national paternalism recurs in colonial paternalism; from the moment when subjects become charges, the growth of their numbers becomes a matter of concern; it appears desirable to limit, if not the number itself, at least the rate of growth.

"These preoccupations . . . manifest themselves on an even larger plane: the fear of world overpopulation. As soon as the commercial, if not political, domination by the West ceased to be absolute . . . the fear of excessive numbers was bound to grip

the mind" (p. 225). Sauvy has some harsh words to say about the manner in which this fear has occasionally been expressed, especially by Americans.

In a concluding chapter, Sauvy stresses once more the urgency of the situation and the necessity of employing all economic and demographic remedies. While up to now neither the U.S.A. nor the U.S.S.R. has faced up to the vast task ahead, the problem offers a common challenge to both protagonists of the cold war and to all humanity.

CHRISTOPHER TIETZE, M.D.

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THE SCIENCE OF DEMOGRAPHY

THE National Science Foundation in its Second Annual Report (1952) expressed the need for "an adequate body of fact about the current status of science in the United States, including an inventory of our present resources in trained men and facilities." Such a need could be met only through studies of the individual sciences and one such study which the Foundation supported was that of demography.¹ Major responsibility for the study was concentrated at the University of Chicago Population Research and Training Center. Philip M. Hauser and Otis Dudley Duncan of the Center staff edited and also contributed substantial sections to the publication. Twenty-seven other authors wrote individual chapters.

The book opens with a brief preface and a comprehensive "Overview and Conclusions" by Hauser and Duncan which serve to orient the reader to the scope, nature, and methods of the undertaking. These are followed by the four major sections of the book: Part I, Demography as a Science, by Hauser and Duncan; Part II, Development and Current Status of Demography; Part III, Elements of Demography; Part IV, Population Studies in Various Disciplines. The last three parts are composed of individual chapters by various authors, with

¹ Hauser, Philip M. and Duncan, Otis Dudley (Editors): *THE STUDY OF POPULATION, AN INVENTORY AND APPRAISAL*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1959, 864 pp. \$15.00.