

POPULATION AND PEACE
IN THE PACIFIC

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B Y W A R R E N S . T H O M P S O N

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POPULATION
AND PEACE IN
THE PACIFIC

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PREFACE

THIS book was originally intended to be a revision of the author's *Danger Spots in World Population*, published in 1929, as the latter had been out of print since about 1934. The work of revision had not progressed far, however, before it became clear that revision was not practicable. The fundamentals of the problem discussed had not changed, but the materials relating to the population and economy of the Pacific Region had so expanded in the meantime that it seemed best to concentrate on the problems of the Pacific, although it was recognized that they were not separate from world problems—indeed, were simply one aspect of them.

In final form, then, this book is closely related to its predecessor in being an exposition of the view that the changes in population growth and in social (economic) organization taking place in the world should be taken account of in developing a political organization which will encourage peace rather than war. The trends in growth discernible at that time only to those especially interested in them are now much better known and have begun to attract considerable attention on the part of the informed public.

Regarding the general purpose of this book I cannot do better than quote a few passages from this earlier work, which centered discussion on two types of changes: "changes in the organization of a people which bring about new needs; and changes in size which bring about increased needs. . . . In the world of today far more than in past ages these two types of changes . . . are going on simultaneously and are far more rapid" (p. 5).

"Today, however, some of those peoples who until recently were living quite outside the influences leading to increase in both wants and numbers are beginning to feel impulses altogether new to them. They are developing industries modeled after those of the West, and they are also undergoing the growth of population which comes when a certain measure of modern sanitary practice is first introduced among backward peoples. . . . They are conscious of growing human power, and many of them are becoming painfully aware that they have not the resources to make this power effective and respected in a world where force is dominant. . . . We have the spectacle of nations holding on to vast economic resources (lands) after there ceases to be any

reasonable hope of their being able to hold them through actual settlement on the land. . . . That some such attempts [to dislodge the possessors of lands which they cannot settle] will be made within the next few decades seems certain. . . . But it should be noted here that the acquisition of new lands today, if effected by force, will involve far more serious conflict than in times past. Indeed, there is good reason to think that world wars will result from the attempted seizure of new lands by the expanding powers. It is for this reason that the most serious consideration should be given to some plan for the redistribution of resources which will avoid war" (pp. 6-13).

This situation still exists. Much water has flowed under the bridge in the last sixteen years, and in this book an attempt is made to give an up-to-date version of the need for a better and a more just distribution of the world's resources in the Pacific Region if we are seriously determined to maintain the peace. A conscientious effort has been made not to overemphasize the role of the differential population growth of nations and differentials in resources in promoting conflict between them. The reader will have to be the judge of whether, in his anxiety to gain consideration for population growth as a fundamental factor in determining international relations, the author has overshot the mark. There is certainly no intention to minimize the development of industry as an important element in the situation, but a long and careful consideration of probable development in this field has led the writer to be less optimistic about what it may do to relieve differential population pressures than many men are.

It will no doubt appear to many readers that there are serious gaps in the discussion. A detailed statement of a scheme for the handling of the present colonies in the postwar world if the colonial system is abolished will be desired by some; a more adequate discussion of the race problems which will arise if large migration into the present colonial areas from the crowded countries of Asia is allowed will be desired by others; fuller treatment of the role of industrial development in caring for population increase and of the chances for the spread of birth control in "backward" areas will be wanted by still others. It is not because these additions are not needed that they are omitted. The excuse the writer offers is, first, space and, second, his own judgment that it is more important at this stage of the discussion to gain consideration for the changing population pressures arising in the world than to attempt a statement of solutions which we know beforehand will have to be subject to continuous adjustment in the light of economic and

social changes which cannot be foreseen. Naturally, there will be wide differences of opinion on this point.

The wealth of material now available has made it necessary for the author to rely on assistants for the gathering of many of the data used. He is indebted to the Rockefeller Foundation for aid in employing these assistants and wishes to express his great appreciation for it. He also wishes to express his great indebtedness to the assistants—to Doris Vance Shaffer, Jane Frederiksen, Isabelle Brittain, Ruth W. Smith, and, above all, to Evangelyn Dine Minnis—for the unflagging interest they have taken in the work and the painstaking efforts they have put forth to assemble the relevant facts. To Mrs. Minnis has also fallen the burden of seeing the book through the press and of preparing the Index.

Since the above portion of the Preface was written, the atomic bomb has been used. It is not possible at this time to assess fully the significance of this event. Much foolishness has been talked about the new sources of power it makes available to mankind; in particular, the assumption is frequently made that this power will be available soon for everyday use. The statements I have seen by responsible scientists talk in terms of decades rather than in terms of years. But there can be little doubt that the atomic bomb is a weapon which is likely to make future wars as terrible as H. G. Wells imagined. Moreover, to judge from the spread and use of scientific discoveries in the past, it seems highly probable that the use of atomic energy in war will become the common property of all peoples by the time of the next war, if it comes.

This makes it all the more incumbent on us to develop some form of world organization capable of dealing with the problems discussed in this book. Injustice and discrimination in the allotment of resources and in the treatment of other peoples must be corrected voluntarily in accordance with laws freely accepted by all peoples, or we must expect force to be used by the underdogs to remove their handicaps. With the atomic bomb available to all moderately industrialized peoples within a comparatively short time, we do not have long to mend the errors of our ways. Even a relatively weak power, as weakness is measured today, may destroy a great power by surprise. Either we must remove the causes which make people willing to resort to war to settle differences by some kind of world organization controlling the use of the world's resources or we may expect future Pearl Harbors which will destroy a great nation and a whole continent in a few moments.

As I see it, then, the atomic bomb does not eliminate the problems of differential population pressures and unequal resources dealt with here; rather it increases the urgency of dealing with them wisely and quickly.

It may be said that this view ignores the possibility that the incredible cheapness of atomic energy will make man's present economic problems of no moment in the future, that to talk of coal and iron and copper, etc., is out of date. This may be so several decades hence; but, until those who know best are in position to assure us that we can use these new sources of energy at a cost far below that of our present sources of energy and that we can convert abundant and at present almost useless minerals into useful goods by the use of this energy, we must assume that men will go on demanding coal and iron and oil and wheat and cotton and meat and the myriad other products we are now using and that they will fight for them when they want them badly and see no other way to get them. Until the use of atomic power removes all scarcities and points the way to abundance everywhere, man will scramble for what he needs, and this will lead to war—to more awful wars than we have dreamed of in the past.

This probability only makes more immediate the necessity of removing the causes of war as far as we can now see them and of being as bold in devising new social and political controls as our scientists have been in tapping new sources of energy.

WARREN S. THOMPSON

OXFORD, OHIO
October 15, 1945

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Chapter I

THE DANGER IN THE PACIFIC

IN THESE days of world-wide and almost instantaneous communication and of air transport girdling the globe in a few days, the problems of peace are no longer local or even regional. Conditions likely to disturb peace between two or more great powers or even between lesser powers anywhere are now a world danger. For this reason all danger spots in the world today assume a vastly greater importance than ever before. If in this book attention is devoted to a particular region, it is not because it is the only danger spot but because space and time and a special interest make this necessary; besides, a fuller analysis of the factors affecting war and peace in one region will enable us to understand better the *oneness* of the world peace problem.

Perhaps the most dangerous of all these danger spots is the Pacific Region—not only because the problems it represents are of such tremendous magnitude but because if we do not deal with them now, it will forever be too late. By the “Pacific Region,” I mean the area extending from Hawaii on the east to India on the west, but not including the Soviet Far East. In this great expanse, to which we in the West have turned our eyes so recently and so late, the major problems are not merely military but concern a gigantic population increase now taking place and likely to continue for the next few decades and the probable social and economic development of the peoples living there. (India added 50 million to her numbers between 1931 and 1941.)

The development of these peoples in the next few decades may very well determine whether there will be a third world war, and yet we pass it by with a brief glance while we concentrate attention on Europe and her problems. Since such a statement naturally demands justification, our main task here is to investigate the evidence for believing that the germs of another world war are inherent in the future development of the Pacific Region, *if this development is along the lines that have been followed in the past.*

It is my hope to offer convincing proof that toward the peoples of the Pacific Region a course of action quite different from that of the past is essential if we are to avoid frictions that will lead to war. Of

course, even if we adopt new methods of dealing with the economic, political, and social problems of the peoples of this region, there can be no complete assurance that we can avoid war—but we must at least try to find better ways of handling these problems. It is my contention that we can make little headway in forestalling war in the western Pacific unless we take into account the probable population growth of this region and devise means, if possible, both for controlling this growth and for raising the region's production to provide a decent living for all its people.

POPULATION GROWTH IN THE PACIFIC REGION

The facts of actual population growth in the Pacific Region are incontestable for most of the countries and areas and are of vital interest, since they make clear what is happening. For judging population growth in China and Inner Asia, where facts are few and uncertain, we can draw upon the recent experience of other Asiatic countries where the facts are established, and thus obtain some basis for conclusions as to what has probably happened there during the last half-century. As to future growth of population in the Pacific Region, the experience of the Western world since 1800 shows the trends in population growth which can be expected here during the next few decades.

My conclusion from the study of these facts is that most of the countries of South and East Asia have already entered upon a period of population expansion quite similar to that which took place in the Western world after 1800 and that a similar growth in those lands for which data are unsatisfactory only awaits the establishment of internal peace, the development of a moderately effective health service, the improvement of transportation, and the expansion of agriculture through irrigation and better farm practice, all of which these lands hope for in the near future. This growth of population in South and East Asia, which contain all but a small part of the population of the Pacific Region, coupled with the fact that in much of the West the birth rate is no longer high enough to maintain present numbers (to say nothing of providing colonists for tropical areas), means that a large part of the population growth of the world during the next few decades will almost certainly take place in this region.

The whole argument centers so largely around the social and economic effects of this population growth on the establishment and maintenance of peace that it calls for a word on the contrast between the conditions encountered by the expanding Europeans of 1800 and those

being encountered today by the peoples of South and East Asia. When population began its rapid growth in the West—about 1800—there were probably somewhat fewer than 200 million Europeans in Europe and in the areas then being settled by them. With minor exceptions there were only small native populations in the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, which were the chief areas open to European settlement at that time. At present there are between 1,000 and 1,100 million people in South and East Asia, and there are no more Americas to be settled. Even the unsettled, or thinly settled, tropical areas of South and East Asia (Borneo, New Guinea, Sumatra, Celebes, and parts of the Philippines and the Indo-Chinese peninsula, and, I think, tropical Africa should be included) are largely colonial areas not open to free settlement and exploitation by these Asiatics.

Today there is no emigration outlet for these peoples which can for a moment be compared with that available to Europeans in 1800. This is a fact no one can dispute. But I hasten to add that in my opinion even if these colonial areas were opened to Asiatic migration, they would do little to relieve the actual pressure of population in the more crowded Asiatic countries—for the population needing outlets is five to six times as great as that of Europe in 1800, and the lands available are relatively small and not so richly endowed as the Americas.

Furthermore, Western experience with emigration is to the effect that, when populations are large and while birth rates and death rates remain high, even the emigration of considerable numbers does not do a great deal to relieve population pressure, unless at the same time industry is developing fast enough to absorb the major portion of the natural increase. What happens in a *poverty-stricken* population like that of the western Pacific, where new industry is developing slowly, is that, while the birth rate is little changed by emigration, any temporary relief of pressure on subsistence reduces the death rate so that more of the children born survive, and the gaps caused by emigrants are quickly filled by those children saved from an early death.

In a population as great as that in South and East Asia there is, then, little chance of relief through emigration, except in certain relatively small areas. In great countries like India and China, emigration will produce no significant effect. However, increasing the freedom of these peoples to settle in unused areas in this region and to exploit their resources might very well have a beneficial psychological effect in helping to remove the feeling of discrimination, of being treated as inferi-

ors. The good-will thus gained would be out of all proportion to the economic effects of emigration, whereas the feeling of bitterness now permeating all the relations of East and West will almost certainly grow more intense in the future if the West insists on retaining its present controls over South and East Asia.

THE MEANS OF SUPPORT

Obviously in a region where from 75 to 85 per cent of the people are agriculturalists, where the population is already dense, and where the level of living is very low, any large and rapid increase of population at once raises the question of how these additional millions are going to be fed, clothed, and sheltered. In general, the situation is this: while several political units, notably the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines, appear to have an abundance of land for some time to come, China, India, and Japan are already badly crowded, and the outlook for increasing their food and clothing much faster than their population grows is far from encouraging. Apparently there will not be much easing of pressure among the agricultural populations of these countries, or of certain other areas like the rice deltas of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, within the next few decades—under the present system of outside control in the colonial areas, at least, or in China without an agricultural revolution.

But, of course, agriculture is not the only source of the goods man needs for a better living. What are the possibilities of more efficient industrial production? The evidence of actual development of modern technologies, and of machine industry, in each of the countries in question shows that modern industry is spreading in this region, although the spread has been slow. Only Japan can be said as yet to possess a sufficient amount of modern industry to have any significant effect upon the level of living of the majority of the people. Furthermore, improved technologies have as yet had little influence on agriculture anywhere, except in certain types of plantation production. In spite of this industrial backwardness, the knowledge and use of modern technologies is making some headway, and during the years immediately ahead their use will undoubtedly continue to spread in most of this region at a considerably accelerated pace.

But it should be noted that the influence of modern technology is not confined to actual production. Up to the present it can be plausibly argued that modern communication and transportation, although only slightly developed, are exercising more influence on the mental

lives of these peoples than actual machine production. Their attitudes toward their own problems, toward their colonial masters, and toward other Western controls are changing faster than might be assumed from their backwardness in adopting more efficient productive processes.

In addition, if modern machine industry is to ameliorate the living conditions of these peoples, they must have the raw materials with which to work. Do the peoples of South and East Asia possess the minerals which are essential to a modern industrial system? The conclusions that we arrive at are not so definite as could be desired; but, even so, I believe we are justified in saying that, while South and East Asia do not possess the "vast" or "unlimited" mineral resources so often attributed to them and while no country seems to be well endowed with all the major minerals, there are sufficient quantities of most of them to support a steady but slow growth of machine industry in the more important countries. For the next few decades the growth of machine industry in South and East Asia is probably more dependent on overcoming social obstacles and man-made economic difficulties than on the lack of natural resources, although China's lack of good iron ore and India's lack of copper and probably of good coking coal cannot be overlooked.

China and India likewise offer conspicuous examples of social and economic difficulties. The organization of Chinese society around the family and the values attached to belonging to a class which does not have to work with its hands are very great obstacles to the development of machine industry. The family ideal makes corporate organization unbelievably difficult, since members of the family to the n th cousin must be provided with good jobs regardless of training and ability. The loss of status by one who soils his hands also makes the growth of a class of competent technicians and managers very slow. In India the caste system, of course, places great impediments in the way of organizing effective industrial production. I am not saying that these obstacles cannot be battered down—let us not forget what Japan has accomplished in this respect in the last fifty years—but I am saying that these and many other aspects of life in these countries do retard, and will for some time yet continue to retard, industrial development.

On the more purely economic side one must ask: Where is the capital to come from which is needed to build railways, highways, steamships, communication facilities, steel mills, cotton mills, and a hundred other types of factories, to open mines and build smelters, and to estab-

lish credit facilities for agriculture as well as industry? Do we have it? Does Europe have it? If it is available, under what conditions will it be loaned and to whom? Will we loan to the governments of these countries or to private interests, and will you and I loan our savings directly or will we want them guaranteed by our own government? Do we want foreign loans to be used to secure "spheres of influence" as in the past? What about trade between these countries and the rest of the world? Are they going to erect tariff barriers to protect "infant industry" which will make foreign trade practically impossible, and are we going to shut out all their products which in any way compete with our own?

When these matters are considered, I do not see how we can possibly conclude otherwise than that the development of modern machine industry will be rather slow in the countries of the Pacific Region. This is a very important matter, because the speed with which industrial expansion takes place will probably determine the speed of improvement in the level of living, which in turn is closely related to the development of effective control of population growth.

These conclusions, which follow inevitably from the facts, are probably of less interest from the human standpoint than the secondary conclusions which in turn follow from them.

THE RELATION OF EAST TO WEST

The absolute economic needs of the peoples in South and East Asia are increasing rapidly and will increase even more rapidly in the foreseeable future. As population grows, the demand for the mere necessities of life, since these peoples now live on a near-subsistence basis, will grow in like measure. But perhaps even more important will be the relative increase in the need for capital and for minerals and for industrial crops, which are essential to modern industry. Moreover, any significant industrial development will lead most of these countries to assess carefully and for the first time the sufficiency of their natural resources to provide for their future industrial expansion. In doing this, a considerable body of people in most of these countries will be made aware of the lack of certain important minerals and the rather scanty supply of others. They will at the same time become keenly aware of the lack of land for the expansion of agriculture as a national, rather than as a merely local, problem. This will be particularly true in India and China (Japan has already gone through this stage of development), where population is quite dense and new areas open to