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Letters to the editor of the St. Louis Argus should be written on one side of paper only. All letters must be signed. The writer's name will be withheld at his request.

On Population

TO THE EDITOR:

I read with special interest the article on "The Population Explosion" by Dean Gordon Hancock in "Between the Lines" in your issue of January 1, 1960.

We use as a guide in our course of basic economics and social philosophy the book, Progress and poverty, by Henry George, now a world classic. In Book II, headed Population and Subsistence, there are these chapters: The Malthusian Theory, Its Genesis and Support; Inferences from Facts; Inferences from Analogy; and, Disproof of the Malthusian Theory. So little was public interest in this question that it practically disappeared as a formal part of our study. Then came the upsurge of population and number of books sympathetic to the general theory of "too many people" that the fat was in the fire, so to speak. We again made this section a formal part of our study.

In Mr. Hancock's article, truly a fine one, the question of approach to a solution of the problem is raised. Basically, it is one of justice in wealth distribution vs. birth control. Many feel that proper wealth distribution would solve this problem.

In discussing the question in our course we ask these, among other questions:

Was Dr. Malthus scientific in his reasoning. The answer is "No". We believe, that to prove his case, Dr. Malthus would have to prove two things; One, that nature was used to its fullest extent possible, and two, that no other cause for poverty was possible. He made no attempt to prove either of these conditions and we feel he could not do so.

Are all natural resources used fully? We know man has both misused and abused land, and prevented access to land. He has, by bad laws of taxation and others, greatly restricted the production of food and other essentials.

Are there man made handicaps to production? History shows an evil record of unjust laws and customs restricting production and exchange, both within countries and between countries. Crushing taxes levied by "impositors of superiority" in Europe, Africa, Asia and in North and So-

America, kept people from education and the subsequent accumulation of Capital which would have aided production — that is why these things — made such countries as Egypt, India, Russia and China backward and which prevented enlightenment from entering to their people which would have made possible their ability to enjoy generous standards of living.

But aren't some nations too heavily populated? The answer is

again "No". The World Almanac of 1941 showed India with 200 and China with 100 per square mile; whereas Belgium had 710 and the Netherland 690, both enjoying high standards of living. The fact is clear that the problem of seemingly over-population is not that of numbers of people per square mile of country.

Can densely populated countries be wealthy? Certainly! in 1829, 80 per cent of our people, says the U. S. Department of Agriculture, were farmers; by 1900 only 42 per cent and by 1930 only 20 per cent. Today, we need even less farmers; and we have a \$9 billion dollar surplus piled up, costing taxpayers great sums in storage and interest charges, and shamefully high prices to consumers. Was this problem caused by over-population? We know people have wants for endless quantities, qualities and varieties of goods and ample land space and resources exists. Only bad laws, due to the failure of education to abolish economic superstition and economics — politics as we know it, prevented natural and easy adjustments of these problems. We continue to think the solution of our problems, basically, is one of controls and re-distribution rather than one of social justice and honest, economic distribution in the first place.

At least five great potentials exist which, together, can do much to solve what has been mis-called a population problem. None of these can be said to be properly in conflict with each other — they are strictly cooperative in nature towards a solution of the problem.

1. We are learning how to produce more food and other necessities with less effort. Physical labor is greatly reduced in production because of our increasing knowledge of physics, chemistry, biology, etc.

2. We have really made little progress in conditioning of the soil and water to produce not merely more as a quantity, but more as a quality as well — as to nutritional values. We need and will have more organic farming.

3. We will learn much more about how to clean our body — how keep it free of the toxics or poisons, and how best to nourish it. Some declare that whereas today we must have, say, 2500 calories daily to do a certain job.

with better food, not devitalized by our ways of cooking, the same work could be done on 1000 units; that is they say, we must take in 2500 units to get 1000 units in value. This can be corrected, some believe, by eating foods in proper combinations — using different meals to get a balanced diet, rather than to make one meal the source of a balanced diet.

4. It has been observed that populations tend to admit under certain conditions. These are increased assurance of living requirements and increase in culture. Not many years ago the "population experts" were predicting a stabilized population in the United States, France had a stabilized population for years. Only recently has an increase, based on a cash subsidy politically conceived, changed this. That it will stabilize again there is no doubt. Incidentally, we have policies in the United States which, in effect, are like cash payments which increase population.

It must be observed that no generally recognized religion is opposed to smaller sized families. It is the methods of limitation that is argued about. And there are methods which meet the demand of the most exacting religion in this respect. Either by abstinence or by various methods, groups, free to make their choice, will limit families if they wish to do so by reasons of economics.

5. We have not begun to use the great truths found in the factors and principles of economic science for the good of people. Economics, as a science subject is burdened with superstitions and customs and the desire to conform existing theory to practices. Economists, on the whole, did this when men, as slaves — and they wouldn't consider this a matter of the color of the slave — had to be considered to be wealth because they were considered property; and other errors of things considered to be wealth because they are considered, as a matter of bad economics and bad laws, as property, are involved. The Henry George School is in the field of adult education because of such facts and is challenging economics in a few basic but certainly not all important concepts today; that is why it exists.

Sincerely yours
Noah D. Alper, Director
Henry George School

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