

ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN
DOMINATION AND THE NUMBERS
OF MEN

Between the numbers of men (or their 'pressure') and the domination which is exercised upon them, various relationships exist, the knowledge of which seems to be very useful to an understanding of historical evolution. These relationships are often of so markedly reciprocal a nature that, as against the difficulty of separating cause from effect, it seems preferable to speak simply of accommodation, or even of relative harmony.

There seems to be little question that the multiplication of mankind contributed to the formation of the first societies and consequently to the establishment of some kind of political authority; but it is not from this angle that we shall broach the question.

The 'numbers of men' lends itself to a double interpretation: it might be a question of large territories, as well as of a population of greater or less density living in a given area. It was thought, before the French Revolution, that only small territories could be the home of republics, and that large countries were given over to 'luxury' and despotism. We seem to have gone beyond this question of dimensions today. At any rate, we

On the Relations Between Domination and the Numbers of Men

shall have in mind here more particularly the second point of view, that is, a population living in a determinate territory, a 'domain', in the various meanings of that term.

Absolute Domination

The absolute ruler, who exercises power without being subjected to duties, seeks an increase in the numbers of his subjects; he is anti-malthusian.¹ We shall see this shown in various examples.

In the family framework, the concept of power and of domination is opposed to the economic concept. When the children remain under the direct and strict authority of their father until marriage, the concept of power easily carries the day. The emancipation of children has contributed to the fall in the birth rate, by accenting economic questions. If such considerations were to become the only preponderant ones, and were simultaneously to overcome both emotional needs and the concern for authority, the optimum would be zero; we should have the childless family. The effectiveness of family allowances, in our own times and among certain families, is explained by the relative reconciliation which they assure between economic and power considerations. These allotments, even in France, do not cover more than a part of a child's needs. But in rounding out the total of the family's receipts, family allotments, when paid in cash, do increase purchasing 'power'; when another child comes along, well-being decreases, but power increases. It is true, of course, that the power here is not exercised upon the children themselves. But the more the offspring are freed from the family, the more it will become necessary to offer material assistance to the parents, who are further and further removed from domination. On a slightly higher plane, the patriarch views every birth in his tribe with a benign eye, because it increases his power, which is also identified with his wealth.

In the classic administrative framework, every functionary who heads a bureau likes to see the number of his agents grow. This is a logical attitude, since every increase gives him a wider base, and all things considered, more extensive power. To be sure, the administrative chief is far from exercising tyranny and absolute power, but his power is not matched by specific obligations. If one more agent is put under his command, the

¹In the absence of a better term, we shall use here the terms 'malthusian' and 'anti-malthusian', in a sense that must not be too strictly equated with the Reverend Malthus' doctrines. These words seem preferable to the ponderous 'populationist' and especially 'anti-populationist'.

bureau chief is not obliged to cut into his own fixed income in order to pay the man. In a private enterprise, on the other hand, or in an administration sufficiently autonomous to be interested in its net-output, the manager seeks to reduce the number of persons allocated to a particular task.

Let us now look at a case which is more important or at any rate closer to our subject, that of the landed proprietor of the feudal type, or even the absolute sovereign.

The Landed Lord

When the dominant class exercises its power in an absolute manner, it is populationist. Innumerable authors have said, following Bodin, that a sovereign's strength is measured by the numbers of his subjects.

The interest of the dominant classes is to have a great number of men working for them. But is this number to exceed all restraint? Should not the lord fear that an excessive increase of people on his domains would bring about faulty sanitary conditions which are hardly favourable to high production? Theoretically, this is surely the case. And in practice, everyone who raises animals knows that he must not exceed the optimum number that will bring him the highest returns. Why are lords and kings not moved by analogous considerations?

The explanation of their position is this: the proprietor of a domain limits the number of his domestic animals, but lets the game and all the useful *wild* animals multiply. The fruit grower prunes his wall-trees, but lets the outside trees grow as they will. As the border-line between marginal and sub-marginal lands—or activities—is not clearly marked, this 'reserve' population is not well defined.

The number of slaves, on the other hand, must be held within bounds. They could, of course, be raised for sale. But in any case, the interest of the master is to assure them sufficient upkeep for physiological needs, and a minimum of good care; though this interest may not have been heeded practically in all cases, it is nonetheless imperative wherever we are dealing with a sufficiently stabilised society. This is why the domination exercised over a slave class can be less harsh than that brought to bear on a class of free workers in an over-populated territory. Linguet, who liked paradoxes, denounced in vain this little-recognised difference.²

²'I have never been forgiven for having shown . . . that the lot of a horse, well fed, well groomed, well protected from the inclemencies of weather, treated for his sickness, is preferable to that of the free workman.' (*Annales politiques*, I.)

On the Relations Between Domination and the Numbers of Men

This observation obviously does not include a servile population captured by violence. Their resale value being very low, the lot of slaves of this type falls to an extremely low level.

In addition, the high mortality among free subjects (famines, serious epidemics, etc.) leads the absolute ruler less toward a desire to improve their condition, than to a feeling that the losses ought to be made up by a growth in their numbers. From this it follows that the population scarcely ever exceeds the optimum which the dominator would theoretically wish; often, indeed, it is lower, because of the fact that taxes, farm-rents, labour-services, etc., are neither distributed nor collected according to the ideal conditions of the theory, so that the problem of an excess of rural population, which would have to be installed on poorer lands or perhaps given relief, can hardly ever arise.

In the eighteenth century, for example, many lands lay fallow. From this arose the innumerable projects for sending the vagabonds, beggars, etc., who cluttered the towns, back to the land. On this evidence, the principal preoccupation was to set everybody to work, not to tolerate any parasites. The master never has too many servants.

The 'populationist' concept of domination found a remarkable spokesman in the eighteenth century; in his three works,³ Turmeau de la Morandière, a gentleman demographer, developed it explicitly, with a cynical innocence which makes his works more instructive than those of many writers with more insight and more shame. He candidly wrote: 'Subjects and animal herds must be multiplied.' No author defended the doctrine of domination with more brutality; but many, imbued with the same ideas, have set them forth less clearly or less frankly.

Thus, for the absolute dominator, free workers are never, in practice, too numerous. For more farseeing lords, the only concern that need be felt about the subjects consists in avoiding too great a loss, leaving them that truly vital minimum beyond which returns would sharply diminish. 'The common people are useful, their conservation must therefore be looked after', said Boulainvilliers. And even this precaution was often forgotten. It was practically only after wars or devastating famines that conservation measures appeared. Colbert protected very large families.

³*Appel des étrangers dans nos colonies, 1763. Principes politiques sur le rappel des protestants en France, 1769. Police pour les mendiants, 1769.*

The interest of the Dominated

All these observations are, perhaps, banal and commonsense. More delicate is the question of the interest of the dominated. Doubtless, nobody ever asked their opinion. And yet, contrary to appearances, *they stand to gain by being numerous if they are subjected to a harsh domination; and by being subjected to a harsh domination, if they are numerous.*

If a fixed burden is attached to a domain, for example, a rent to an agricultural domain, the tenants have an interest in being as much more numerous as the weight of the levy is higher.⁴ This calculation will no doubt be shown to be inexact if the master profits from this increase in numbers to heighten the burden still more. But if this further charge does not take a systematic course, the attitude of the dominated is nevertheless oriented toward an increase of their number.

There is more to it than this. In order for as large a population as possible to survive in an agricultural economy with stationary techniques, it is more expedient that a harsh domination be exercised, involving an extreme inequality of incomes, contrary to what one might think from the depopulation accusations so often brought against despots.

This apparent paradox depends upon a question of consumption.⁵ Whatever may be the zest of the master for the table, or his desire to have pleasure-grounds (parks, hunting preserves) and horses, the saturation point of primary products (that is, those coming directly from the land, like food) appears long before he has consumed his whole revenue. With the surplus, he consumes manufactured goods (clothing, jewelry, etc.) or directly hires men (lackeys, servants, soldiers, etc.). Sometimes, in addition, he invests with an eye to future production (reclamation of wastelands, etc.), again employing men.

The richer the lord is, the less harmful he is; or, more exactly, a single all-powerful family is worth more to the dominated than a middle class of innocent-appearing proprietors.

It must be remembered, in order to see this phenomenon better, that the alimentary ration of a man is from 2,500 to 3,000 calories, of which about 1,000 are high-grade calories (notably animal foods), which require more soil; in terms of vegetable calories, the ration can go from 2,000 to

⁴ We are obliged here as elsewhere to pass rapidly over propositions of which more complete demonstrations have been given in our *Théorie générale de la population*, Vol. I, *Economie et population*.

⁵ Astonishing as it may seem, this question of the orientation of consumption, essential to any economy, has really held the attention of only three men in three centuries: Cantillon in the eighteenth, Effertz in the nineteenth, and Landry in the twentieth.

On the Relations Between Domination and the Numbers of Men

4,000 calories. The heavy eater will go as high as 5,000 or 6,000, but rather quickly experiences satiety. Even if he is ten times richer, he will not consume the produce of more than four or five times the original amount of soil.

Let us take a territory of 100,000 hectares, that is, corresponding to the size of a small French district. Under a regime of small property-owning, a body of 25,000 persons, each possessing 4 hectares⁶ on the average, will be able to subsist on it expediently. To enable more men to live, rationing and strict authority would be necessary. Even if the lord, with his horses, consumes the produce of 100 hectares, this deduction is insignificant. With the rest of his revenue, he will hire men, and the population will noticeably rise above the 25,000 figure.

The consumption of meat holds a preponderant place in such economies, for one caloric of animal food absorbs five or six vegetable calories. The result is that in an overpopulated agricultural country, '*the meat-eater is a man-eater*'. Pitiless tyrants are, no doubt, morally reprehensible; in actual fact, one of them is less of a killer than a middle class of peaceable cultivators eating meat every day.

Symbiosis between Dominant and Dominated

The maximum population will thus be obtained, in a primitive agricultural economy, by an equilibrium between a numerous, wretched class, and a very rich lord, with intermediate classes absent.

In addition, to secure this result, it is necessary that the lord shall consume as little of primary products as possible, that he prefer servants, soldiers, and trinkets to horses and hunting; another requirement is that the ruled shall be sufficiently well fed to be able to go on producing.

Between absolute dominators and the dominated, when they are not separated by middle classes, *there is thus established a sort of symbiosis*, an accommodation; the extreme inequality of incomes is adapted to the fact of overpopulation, and vice versa.

The social role of the lord of the manor is thus not only that of a protector, of a constable who assures order at home and defends against external threats; more than this, he is an agent of distribution, a rationer, thanks to whom the population is higher; which means, in a non-malthusian population, that thanks to his intervention more men are hungry—but fewer men die of hunger.

⁶This token figure may naturally vary with the fertility of the land.

The Good Rich Man

The good rich man, then, enables more people to live, by consuming, directly, as little of the ground-produce as possible. When he hires men, he consumes the produce of the soil only indirectly. He can, however, employ men in two different ways: for his immediate pleasures, or for future pleasures. If, in order to make his revenues and his power grow, he invests, if he clears the wastelands, drains the marshes, etc., he creates new sources of population.

The dominant few in an agricultural society thus have, outside of charity, three possible uses for their excess revenue. They can:

1. Consume the vital items of subsistence, natural products.
2. Consume human labour for the satisfaction of their own wants.
3. Invest in the creation of new subsistence-sources.

The first use is deadly; it reduces population.

The second augments population, but once for all.

Only the third permits an indefinite augmentation of the numbers of men, which may however meet with a natural limitation if technique does not progress.

In the time of Cantillon and the physiocrats, property being unquestioningly valued, there could be scarcely any other solution in sight. The same state of affairs does not prevail in underdeveloped areas which, today, find themselves at the same stage. We shall come back to them again below.

Now, let us consider some applications of the social functions of the dominator.

Egypt of the Pharaohs

Complete desert conditions begin, in Egypt, at the very place where irrigation stops; there are no high plateaux, no poorer lands. The decline in returns is sudden, complete; the produce of the marginal cultivator is insignificant. Likewise, intensive cultivation offered little elasticity. The Nile fertilised, and a fixed number of men sufficed to cultivate, the soil. The production obtained determined the number of rations, and thus, the number of men.

Even if they had been set to work on the land, the large body of non-agricultural servants and slaves could hardly have increased food-production, or, as a result, population. 'Everything considered', Pharaoh might plead, 'from the point of view of some final judgment, the extreme

On the Relations Between Domination and the Numbers of Men

inequality of incomes from which I benefited killed fewer people than it enabled to live.'

Not being able to move on, to wear itself out on the frontiers of production, in this country without marginal lands, vital energy was, after a fashion, doomed to spread out vertically. Assured of his power because of the featureless terrain, the sovereign master had at his command a multiplicity of servants and also of artists. Estranged from material questions during his lifetime, he could put a considerable energy to work along other lines, notably the after-life. It was these exceptional conditions which permitted Egypt to attain those summits of art which still amaze our imagination.

The case of Egypt is, of course, exceptional. The falling-off of agricultural returns at the margin is never vertical; there is always some supplemental production to be hoped for, by cultivating further or deeper, even with a fixed technique. But that country gives us an ideal schematic representation of symbiosis.

The Ancien Regime

Closer to home, we find that the feudal lords and the absolute monarchs of the Old Regime were far from correctly fulfilling their social function.

When Russia, through her court circles, exported wheat from her black soils to acquire some luxury product or other, she caused some number of serfs to die in one of her own territories. According to a calculation by Cantillon, which Condillac quotes, by paying for Brussels lace with the wines of Champagne, France parted with the product of 16,000 arpents of land in return for that of one arpent. If it were not that the product sent abroad (wine) is itself not a food in this particular case, the result could easily be converted into human lives. The purchase of a luxurious automobile, today, by some rich Oriental landowner, is also to be reckoned in terms of lives, not money.

This role of rationer, however highly paid, has not always been correctly filled; far from it, indeed. It presupposes a tax structure which is well-assessed, and which leaves to each man a sufficient minimum so that he shall not lose hope. This was far from being the case, to judge from the number of begging 'labour-deserters', vagabonds, who, as long as they had to live a miserable life anyway, had chosen vagrancy. When they had not succeeded in finding a place among the mass of servants and people who gravitated around the rich man, they still preferred to pick up the crumbs of the feast rather than to collaborate on furnishing the

means for it. The same phenomenon is to be seen, today, in the great towns of underdeveloped countries where the rich dwell.

In addition, the multitude of courtiers, functionaries, merchants, consuming much more than they were producing, created a useless burden which bore upon population in quantitative terms. This explains the optimism of certain critics in the eighteenth century, according to whom France would have been able to feed a much more impressive total of population, and who considered that a good *police*, or as we would say now, good politics, was an essential condition of growth in the numbers of inhabitants.

Not only had the French in the eighteenth century progressed sufficiently to be able, if not to organise, at least to conceive, the organisation of a republic; but the weight of parasitism had set awry the symbiosis between dominators and dominated. The conditions of a revolution were thus fulfilled.

Relative Domination: Malthus' Hour Strikes

Developments were proceeding somewhat differently in England about the same time.

When, for one reason or another, the dominated acquire rights, and the dominators acquire consequent duties, the question changes its aspect. When de la Morandière and his forerunners tried to solve pauperism by driving the poor back, although this measure might involve the death of some of the driven, they knew very well what they were doing. In England, a different conception had given certain rights to the poor, slight no doubt, but disturbing nonetheless for the ruling classes. By creating, in sum, a relative domination, the 'Poor Law' sounded the hour of Malthus.

Townsend and even Stewart had already become alarmed: 'Nations may for a time increase their numbers beyond the due proportion of their food, but they will in the same proportion destroy the ease and comfort of the affluent . . .'⁷

Thus Townsend fought the application of the Poor Laws and recommended, like Morandière, the return of these 'idlers' to a servile condition. Malthus saw things differently: no less logically, considering the poor-relief legislation as an accomplished fact, he aspired to reduce its burden. The interest of the dominant class having been modified, domination being no longer absolute, the limitation of the number of births was becoming, if not necessary, at least advantageous.

⁷Townsend, *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws*, 1786, p. 25.

On the Relations Between Domination and the Numbers of Men

From this time on, two opposite tendencies have concurrently influenced the dominant class:

1. A populationist tendency, sometimes founded on tradition or even on imperialism, but imbued, nevertheless, with the concept of domination: the multiplication of the working force is to serve the interests of property.
2. A malthusian tendency, sometimes paternalistic in nature, which dreads a costly proliferation. In France the first tendency was dominant until the Second World War. The bourgeoisie, itself sterile, deplored the fall in working-class birth rates.

Since the Second World War, with the new developments of foreign policy and the institution of social security, the two tendencies coexist in France: the one, materialistic in orientation, finds the public investment, the building of schools, etc., too expensive. The other is anti-malthusian, either because of a lingering spirit of domination, or for spiritual or traditional reasons.

Malthusianism Within the Family

At the very time of Malthus, and even a little earlier, malthusianism began within the family framework, at least in France. We meet here again the concept of domination: as long as the father of the family disposed of an absolute authority, putting the children to work, and as long as a great inequality of conditions was tolerated within the family (children left without care and gleaning their wretched food outside the house), economic interest would lead to a numerous family.

From a strictly economic point of view, the number of children should be as high as possible, when, before going to work, they roam at liberty, begging or foraging; we find here, after a fashion, the situation of the absolute dominator with respect to a free dominated class; children brought up in this way die in very large numbers, but those who survive bring money home to their parents as soon as they are of an age to work, at about eight to ten years, perhaps earlier.

At a less savage stage, the child who is fed, for better or worse, during his childhood, represents a burden for several years, but, from the economic point of view, still remains a 'producer'. Since they possess nothing, the parents are not inclined to limit their descendants. In the beginnings of industrialism, five-year old children worked in factories, sometimes even at night.

The diminution of paternal authority modifies the position of the dominator. Besides, the dominated can now become a real economic

burden, when child-labour is forbidden or not acceptable, and when the children must be educated. Possession of a patrimony still further lowers the family optimum.

Less power—more duties; the situation is in some ways comparable to that of the paternalistic ruler.

Children, after this point is reached, are born only in the numbers in which they are desired for other motives: religion, need for love, a desire to leave a posterity. The number of children in a family may fall to two, to one, and even to zero. At this point malthusianism is 100 per cent egoistical, but as soon as there is a child, the need to bring it up fittingly, and perhaps even to assure it some rise on the social scale, begin to play a part also in the parents' attitude.

In the World Framework: from Colonialism to Malthusian Paternalism

Since the great discoveries, the affective attitude of the developed countries with respect to the retarded areas has advanced more or less. But the question itself has been exactly reversed. At the beginning, the given basic fact was the territory. The thing to do was to know how to draw the most wealth possible out of it—whether with the inhabitants' help, without the inhabitants, or with new inhabitants, it mattered little. Today, the basic factor is the population itself. Now, the question is to assure its existence, the territory becoming the accessory. Although practical behaviour is far from always answering to this end, the development of domination has been sufficient to modify altogether the concept of population. With respect to slaves, the attitude of the dominator was very harsh and not much inspired by the cares of conservation, because the market was liberally supplied. It was 'advantageous' to treat men worse than animals, because the purchase price was modest.

Actually, the question of numbers did not actively worry the colonial powers, either in one direction or the other. The conquest of Algeria originally foresaw the pushing of the Arabs back toward the South, where 'they would colonise the desert'.

The truth is that, outside of slavery, the domination of a colonial power is never so great as that of a lord over his cultivators. Most often, it is a matter either of doing business with the natives or expelling them. It was practically only in Black Africa that the progress of sleeping sickness and other causes of mortality gave rise, between the two World Wars, to the expression *faire du nègre* in the sense of 'exploiting' and 'ill-treating'.

On the Relations Between Domination and the Numbers of Men

The material superiority of the West over the natives is greater today than it was two centuries ago: aircraft, tanks, even atomic bombs, require heavy industry and exceptional pecuniary resources. However, international morality no longer permits the use of naked force.

The numbers of men thus becomes a subject of preoccupation. Up until the Second World War, the indifference of the governors of North Africa to any sort of census was proverbial. It was not until 1947 that the problem of population in Algeria was correctly set forth,⁸ with glimpses of the future and an examination of ways of meeting the predictable increase.

The malthusian responses common to family or national paternalism can be found once again in colonial paternalism: from the moment when the overseas subjects become an economic burden, the increase of their numbers becomes a subject for worry; a limitation seems desirable, if not of the number itself, at least of the rate of increase.

These paternalistic malthusian preoccupations are soon manifested on a still larger scale: the fear of world overpopulation. Just as soon as the domination of the Westerners, commercial if not political, was no longer absolute, as soon as various forms of aid, somewhat comparable to the Poor Laws, appeared on the scene, a fear of excessive numbers was bound to weigh upon Western minds.

It was in the richest of the Western nations above all—that is, in the United States—that the fear of having to feed needy populations, the still more lively apprehension of one day having to open a place to them, by immigration into their vast little-exploited territories, would logically bring forth this malthusian response. A manor-lord views without displeasure a prosperous birth rate in his farmers and workmen, but dreads the multiplication of the gypsies and irregular characters who prowls around his lands. This attitude has sometimes taken a disagreeable form. The reader may recall, for example, Vogt's book, *The Road to Survival*, which sowed the seeds of fear among the Whites and of fury among the Reds.

This development has, moreover, been still more accentuated by the presence of a third party: marxism, to which we shall return in a moment.

At the same stroke, the class struggle passed to the second level: the American worker knows that his purchasing power is much higher than that of an Asiatic or even of a European; he is more or less clearly aware that he has much more to lose than to gain by a world-wide redistribution

⁸L. Chevalier, *Le problème démographique de l'Afrique du Nord*.

of wealth. And similarly the English working class, made more knowledgeable by the exercise of power, knows what the possession of Malaysia, source of tin and rubber, that is, of dollars, and the control of Middle-Eastern oil, means to its standard of living. The Labourite knows that he has more to lose than to gain from a 'general emancipation', at a time when the old lord is content to eat the vegetables of his garden, in his dilapidated castle.

Thus the problem of class has been blurred, or rather has been transposed to the international framework.

And since international joint interest could only become more and more obvious, the hour of Malthus, or more exactly of the malthusians, struck in the planetary framework as well. If the prolific nations reduce their natality, the present order has some chance of prolonging itself.

Class-revolt: Marx

In 1850 Marx's hour struck, as that of Malthus had in 1800. Technical progress at first had had, indeed, the 'recessive' effect of increasing the domination of enterprises over the wage-worker. But Marx, eager not to diminish the responsibilities of capitalism in any way, rejected any demographic explanation. The contradictions which the 'industrial reserve army' brought up seemed to matter little.⁹ If Malthus should bring off his *coup*, and obtain a fall in the birth rate of workers, their wretchedness would become more supportable and, hence, more lasting. But the marxists have always been very cautious to establish a positive doctrine of population. No limitation is in sight, for the time being, in the Soviet Union: abortion and contraceptive propaganda are forbidden. It seems to be the same in the People's Republics of Europe. The Soviet anti-malthusian attitude in the United Nations is unequivocal: it is only the vices of capitalism that lead to unemployment and to recommendations for limiting the population. Certain marxists even seem to arrive at a quasi-providential view, which suggests and adjusts to the context the saying, 'He giveth . . . food . . . to the young ravens . . .' In this reading, it is necessary only to substitute scientific progress for the divinity. In the hierarchy of the gods, nature no longer occupies the first place but follows after science.

The marxist view on population must be considered more as an attitude

⁹The purest of Marxists do not hesitate to oppose immigration, from which they fear a debasement of wages.

On the Relations Between Domination and the Numbers of Men

than as a real doctrine. This attitude would change if the natural environment should become the only adversary. It may, perhaps, even develop along different lines before such an eventuality comes about.

Mutual Adaptation of Classes: Malthusian Reformism

The reform position is in a general way more logical, because it enables doctrine and tactics to coincide. Those who affirm the possibility of a reformist progress are more in a position to propose ameliorations, such as the increase of wages, suited to giving immediate satisfaction.

This is why reformists, and notably social democrats, are all malthusians. The reduction of the numbers of the proletariat is for them a means of reducing their wretchedness and redressing somewhat the cruel balance between capital and labour. Their calculation may be shown to be inexact, for reasons which are somewhat removed from our subject, but the essential thing is that they make it. The reformists thus join up with the relative dominants, the malthusian paternalists, who dread to see the population surplus weigh in some fashion upon their profits.

The advanced malthusians of anarchistic tendency, however, are opposed to the absolute dominators, the imperialists. In order not to furnish cannon-fodder, labour-fodder, they recommend the 'strike of wombs'. 'To increase and multiply, means war', Devaldès said, and with him a whole school, now somewhat outdated.

The Underdeveloped Countries

If these areas attracted the attention of advanced countries after the Second World War, it was less because of their economic retardation than on account of their demographic backwardness. Of the two terms in the equation, birth rate and death rate, only the second had been changed. Under the attack of modern medicine and hygiene, deep cuts in mortality had been produced: in Ceylon, there was a fall of 40 per cent after spraying malaria-infested areas with D.D.T. The pecuniary cost of this drop was negligible; when a population is totally without the most elementary hygienic care, the first efforts are actually highly efficacious and hardly onerous. It was recently estimated that in Algeria 68 francs [about 19 cents] per person would be the cost of spraying areas affected by malaria.

The result is that *these countries have today the death rate which Europe had about 1900 or even 1925, and the fecundity of the eighteenth century.* This exceptional upset, which may be even further increased, promises

spectacular increases of population, that is, mouths to feed, jobs to find.

A pronounced separation between medical aid and economic aid would lead to a grave situation. To be sure, the battle against mortality, viewed economically, also reduces sickness rates at the same time, and as a consequence increases productive forces. Nevertheless, the sanitary techniques of 1950 cannot indefinitely coexist with the economic techniques of the seventeenth century or even of the Middle Ages. The necessity for important capital investments is more and more apparent. The breaking of the once-closed cycle between life and death brings with it a profound break with the past. How to direct constructively the movement thus unleashed, that is the question.

The report to the Conference of the Food and Agricultural Organisation states in exact figures that, since 1936, world population has increased by 13 per cent, while the production of essential foodstuffs was increasing only by 4 per cent. Only one man out of five receives the normal ration of 2,500 calories a day.

The most auspicious solution, and the one which comes most quickly to mind, is to increase production. But in order to double the production of an area within twenty years, important investments are necessary. It can easily be conceived that if it costs 68 francs per man to preserve a population, the investments necessary to meet the increase of the population are to be figured at an altogether different level. These investments must be financed. *The source can only be the dominants: at home, the privileged class; abroad, the developed nations.*

Rulers of underdeveloped countries do not always have a clear idea of the great pressure which the cauldrons beneath them are about to generate. They are not fully aware that the pushing back of mortality rates has broken the famous age-old cycle of life and death.

Let us, however, now give some attention to the solution which, on the surface, seems the most auspicious, the most human, and the most conservationist, in the social sense of the word: land-reform.

Land-reform: Benefit or Scourge?

However attractive it may be, this solution, if used without precautions, is dangerous and may even bring about a murderous famine by the premature creation of middle classes, before the quantity of disposable food has increased. We do not have in mind here the question of the technical aptitude of the Egyptian fellah or the Indian cultivators to farm on their own account. These difficulties can be overcome.

On the Relations Between Domination and the Numbers of Men

A general redistribution of the land to those who cultivate it will bring famine to the towns, because the freed cultivators would at once be able to eat according to their hunger and would noticeably increase their consumption of meat. Any premature rise in consumption is translatable into an impressive quantitative loss of calories, over the whole area.

The first Soviet famines, at the beginning of the Revolution, were attributed by the authorities to the voluntary retention of their produce by the peasants. It was not necessarily a matter of sabotage, or of a flight before a falling currency. The peasants, until then underfed, were in a position to consume more calories than under the old order.

Starting in 1945 from a level of diet higher than that of the Soviet Union in 1918, the People's Democracies did not undergo famine, but are suffering from difficulties in the food supply, easily imputed to some acts of treason but easily explicable for all that.

A redistribution of land which is not accompanied by other public welfare measures is thus a dangerous solution despite appearances. *Suppressing rationing with the rationer, it would starve a part of the population, despite the freeing of the rations consumed by the former rationer.*

The problem arose anew in Communist China, with even greater sharpness inasmuch as the monetary unit, the Jen Min Piao, was defined by a certain amount of produce, in which grain and rice figured principally. Paying the 10 million communist functionaries and soldiers, thus meant promising them a certain amount of food. The 1950 budget included, as a consequence, 41 per cent of revenue from taxes in kind on the peasants. A simple land reform, without sizable levies by the central authorities, would have meant the death of numerous residents of the towns or, more likely, social and political disorders of great violence.

Malthusianism?

As long as food production is insufficient, a general rationing must be maintained, in one form or another. *The model solution, in an under-developed country, is thus the redirection of all or part of the revenues of the land-owning class into investments suited to the increase of production.* This redirection can take various forms, going all the way from voluntary savings to plunder, which depart from our subject.

The dominant class in these countries was not, until a very recent date, malthusian. Different tendencies are coming to light: in Japan, under American pressure, the most malthusian legislation in the world has been instituted, with official diffusion of contraceptive practices and organised

abortion. In India, some steps have been taken along the road of birth control.

Let us now look at the attitude of the foreign dominants. This is a bit different: although less directly menaced than are the domestic dominants, they nonetheless fear demographic explosion. The solution of increased production would involve considerable expenses for them, which they do not yet seem ready to bear or accept.

This solution, in addition, does not present unmixed advantages for the dominant. The eminent demographer F. Notestein tells us: 'By launching a program of modernization, the now dominant powers would in effect be creating a future world in which their own peoples would become progressively smaller minorities and possess a progressively smaller proportion of the world's wealth and power.'¹⁰

And this author also says: '. . . Emigration will not check growth in the most important areas of population pressure, at the present stage of their demographic evolution. It would be unfortunate to waste the open spaces of the world in a fashion that could only intensify future problems of adjustment.'¹¹

Thus, we find ourselves at a stage well beyond colonialism. Whether or not they command political sovereignty over the area concerned, the developed countries are at grips with a sudden and disturbing growth in the number of the underdeveloped dominated peoples, and that at the very moment when such peoples are invited to revolt by the communist powers.

In the face of this new entry of Marx upon the scene, his old enemy, Malthus, must be sent for. How can the underdeveloped countries be led to reduce their birth rate? A formidable problem, which meets with two essential difficulties:

1. The wretched households of India, Malaysia, etc., know no other satisfaction in their lives than that of procreation, no other power than that which they exert over their children. Any hope of obtaining from them a sufficient willingness to subject themselves to some irksome method of contraception is illusory.

2. The young nations are pained by being dominated, even morally. To preach 'birth control' relentlessly to others is to risk provoking a contrary response in the spheres of leadership in these countries.

¹⁰ Milbank Memorial Fund, *Demographic Studies of Selected Areas of Rapid Growth, Proceedings of the Round Table on Population Problems* (New York, 1944), p. 156.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 150.

On the Relations Between Domination and the Numbers of Men

Malthusianism has to be spontaneous, ought almost to be 'thought up' by those who are to apply it in their own land.

In sum, economic, social, and cultural development seems to be the necessary preliminary condition to a reduction of births. Reflection keeps returning to it, as the question is asked how long a period will intervene between the already begun fall of mortality and the fall of natality. The more significant this delay must be (a generation at least), the more it will be necessary to expect a large increase in population and, as a result, to have recourse to investments which are appreciable and costly.

The dominant thus puts his hopes in science. If some contraceptive method could be discovered which demands a minimum of effort and an insignificant expenditure, voluntary sterility might take on significant proportions. Now it is already known that hormones, taken by mouth or injected, can keep women in a sterile condition for a considerable period. But these procedures are expensive, and it is not yet certain whether they are without harmful effects. Laboratories are working feverishly on the question in the United States. It is from India, however, that news comes today which might become of considerable importance; Doctor S. N. Sanyal, who had already discovered the sterilising properties of *pisum sativum*, a variety of pea, today announces that he has isolated the active factor (m xylohydroquinone) of an anti-vitamin E which combats fertility, without, it is claimed, injuring the woman's health. This discovery deserves to be followed attentively, so far-reaching would be the consequences of the perfection of a sterilising agent which is easily taken by mouth and could be distributed free or at a very low price. But the problems to which such procedures give rise are not only of a technical order but are ethical as well.

Conclusion

We have seen how close is the link between the concept of domination and the increase of men. The question is more far-reaching, for the parallel might, with the necessary adjustments for the context, be extended to other subjects, and notably to the increase of wealth. As long as the individual proprietor of the means of production thinks he will have an absolute power over the products which he elaborates, and, among others, the power to sell them, he produces as much as his technique and his instruments permit. So soon as he senses a diminution of this power, he lets up in his efforts. This reduction in power can come because of knowledge of the market and of the depression in prices which every added

amount of production involves, or from various impediments, notably in the form of a progressive tax. Then economic malthusianism in all its multiple forms is born, a phenomenon which one day or another will oblige the capitalist regime to reconsider the whole question of appropriation, formerly so fruitful, today so often sterile. Let us stick to these simple evocations of a problem which raises at the same time such great technical difficulties and so many spontaneous emotional reactions.

The problem of the multiplication or the rarefaction of men is neither among those which the researcher broaches with certainty and serene objectivity, nor is it, above all, one that he is certain of having treated in such a spirit. Let us leave to the reader the reflections we have put before him, counting on him to straighten those which lean, and to give life to some which are not to be found here.