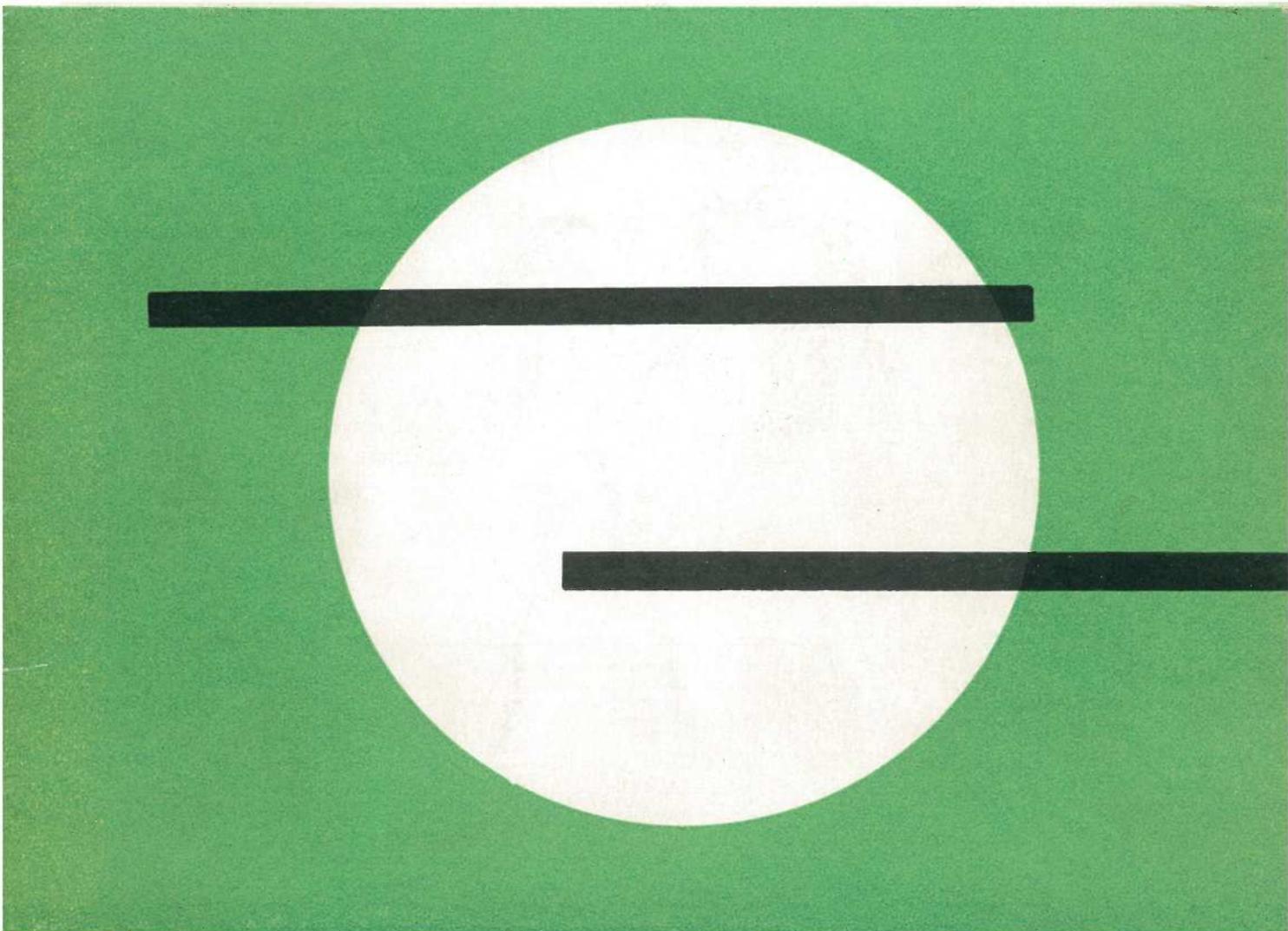


# POPULATION AND FOOD SUPPLY



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

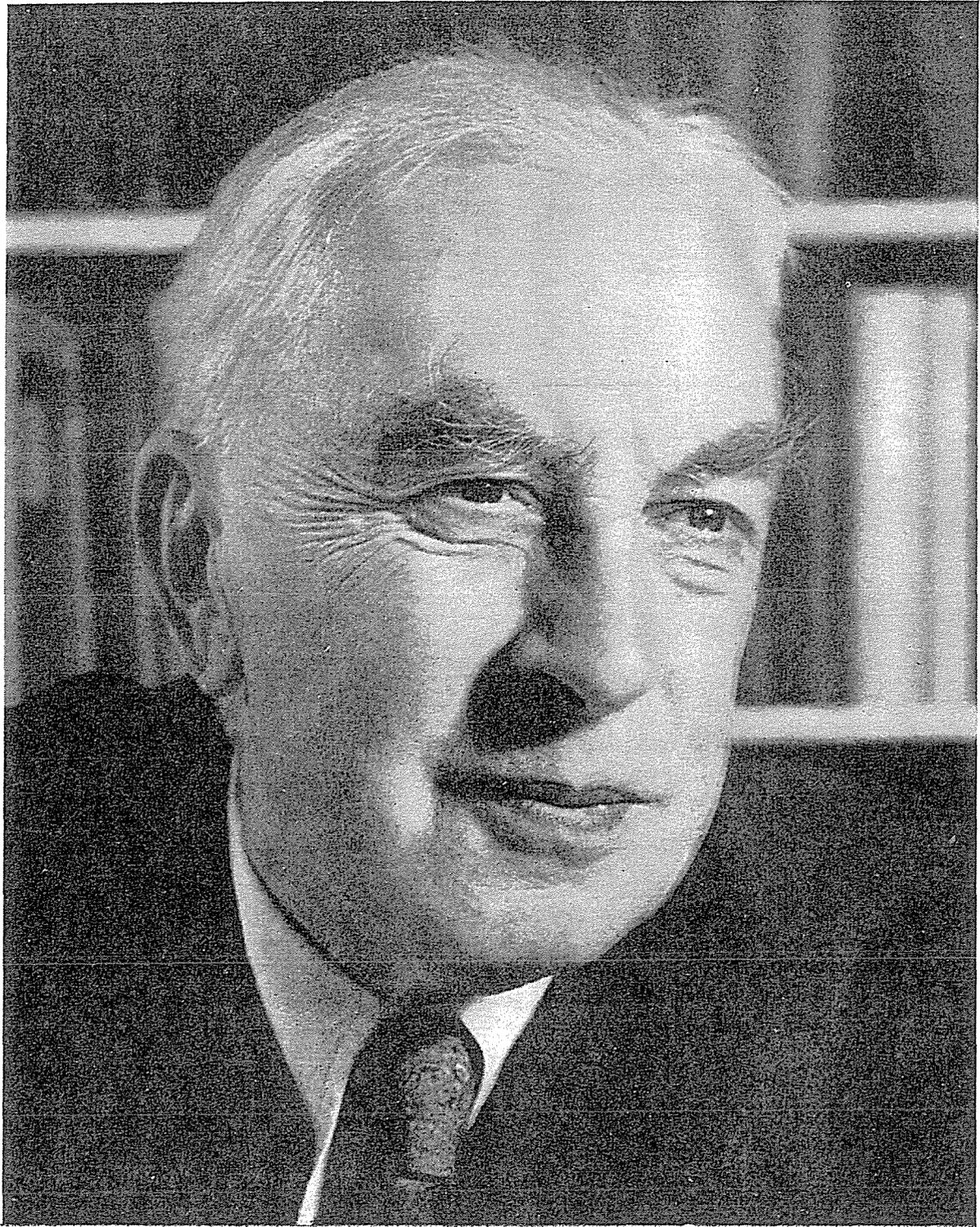
McDOUGALL MEMORIAL LECTURE 1959

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# POPULATION AND FOOD SUPPLY

by ARNOLD TOYNBEE

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
ROME 1959



*Arnold Joseph Toynbee, the well-known English historian, born on 14 April 1889, and educated at Winchester and Balliol College, Oxford, is known principally for his great work, A Study of History and for his distinguished contributions to and editorship of the Surveys of International Affairs. These were published under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, where Dr. Toynbee was Director of Studies from 1925 to 1955. During the second world war the resources of the Institute were placed at the disposal of the Foreign Office and Dr. Toynbee became Director of the Foreign Office Research Department.*

*He was fellow and tutor at Balliol College, Oxford, from 1912 to 1915. After the first world war he became Koraes Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek Language, Literature and History at London University, and from 1925 Research Professor of International History at London. He retired in 1955 and was made Professor Emeritus in that year.*

*His more recent publications include, apart from the celebrated Study of History, The World and the West (Reith Lectures for 1952); An Historian's Approach to Religion; Christianity among the Religions of the World; East to West: A Journey round the World, and Hellenism.*

*The McDougall Memorial Lecture was instituted in 1958 by the Twenty-ninth Session of the Council of FAO, acting on a proposal of the Director-General, to commemorate Frank Lidgett McDougall, one of the leading figures, from its earliest days, in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the very conception of which was largely his.*

*McDougall died on 15 February 1958, in Rome, at the age of 74. His part in the creation of FAO may be briefly recalled. It was in 1942 that he met President Roosevelt and outlined to him the idea of an international agency devoted to world problems of food production and distribution. In May 1943 the first United Nations conference on food and agriculture assembled at Hot Springs, Virginia, and McDougall was a member of the Australian delegation. From then on he worked for the establishment of FAO in the United Nations Interim Commission for Food and Agriculture, and after the foundation of FAO in 1945, became Counsellor to the Director-General and later Special Assistant. In that capacity he represented FAO for a number of years at the United Nations General Assembly and at the Economic and Social Council.*

*In establishing the McDougall Memorial Lecture the Council of FAO indicated that the lecturer should be a person of world standing, of any nationality; he was to have considerable latitude in the choice of subject, but the lecture should have some relation to world problems of food and agriculture and to population and food supply.*

*The first McDougall Memorial Lecture was delivered by Dr. Arnold Toynbee, the historian, on 2 November 1959, in Rome, at a Plenary Session of the Tenth Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. This booklet contains the text of that lecture. Its publication by FAO in the three working languages of the Organization must not be taken to mean that the views here expressed are necessarily those of the Organization.*

## POPULATION AND FOOD SUPPLY

**T**he Second World War has, I suppose, been one of the greatest tragedies in human history so far. It was particularly tragic because, as Sir Winston Churchill has argued, it was avoidable. Yet during that war, and because it had not been avoided, one thing happened which, in retrospect, may perhaps come to be recognised as having been a happy turning-point in history. During the Second World War, for the first time, a political organisation, acting for all mankind, took responsibility for ensuring that, in this great crisis, the whole of the living generation, in all parts of the world, should receive at least sufficient means of subsistence to keep it alive.

The political organisation that took this historic action was the United Nations in its war-time form. It was only the embryo of the world-wide organisation that has inherited its name. It was a coalition of states at war with another coalition. Yet the Allied and Associated Powers did make the welfare of all the world their own concern. While the war was still being fought, they made provision for post-war relief, not only for their own countries, but for the countries that had been occupied by their opponents and for the opponents' countries too. This was a plan for human welfare on a world-wide scale — the first that had ever been made on that scale. And it was not just a pious resolution. An agency — UNRRA — was set up to put it into effect; and this agency was furnished with supplies and facilities. True, UNRRA was given only a temporary commission that was to terminate, and did terminate, after the passing of the post-war emergency. But, before the war was over, plans were being made for setting up a permanent organi-

sation to do long-term constructive work in the same field under the more propitious conditions of peace-time. These plans resulted in October 1945 in the establishment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

How was it that these great and far-seeing acts of statesmanship were accomplished? Politics has generally been a hand-to-mouth business. Even in peace-time, the pressure under which the statesmen have to work is so severe that it is difficult to catch their attention for any public business that is not immediately urgent. In war-time they are doubly and trebly pre-occupied with the demands of the moment. The setting-up of UNRRA, and, even more, the setting-up of FAO, look like miracles, considering the dates. But a miracle means, I suppose, an event that cannot be accounted for by human minds. And, if this definition is correct, these two events were not miracles. They were not, because we know why they happened. We can name some of the individuals who brought these two beneficent organisations to birth and guided them through the critical early stages of their activity. UNRRA and FAO sprang, each in turn, from a creative partnership between people of two kinds: public servants with the vision and knowledge to plan them, and statesmen with the vision and authority to put the plans into effect. I will mention, *honoris causa*, one eminent representative of each class: among the statesmen, Franklin D. Roosevelt; among the public servants, Frank McDougall. The service that McDougall has done for FAO, and, through FAO, for the human race, is known to many here present through their personal experience of having worked with him. One form that the recognition of his service has taken has been the foundation of the McDougall Memorial Lecture. When Dr. Sen invited me to give the first lecture in this series, he was doing me a great honour and giving me a great opportunity — so great a one that I cannot, of course, hope to be able to contribute anything at all adequate to the occasion.

What was the spark of greatness in McDougall? He was an experienced administrator; he knew all about his subject; he was an excellent colleague. All these fine qualities played their parts in making his work bear the fruit that it has borne. But I should guess that the underlying cause of his success was his unquenchable faith. The conception that eventually took shape in

the establishment of FAO was not a sudden happy thought, and the plan was not an improvisation. McDougall's preparatory work started at least as far back as 1933, and it was inspired by a depressing experience that might have led someone who had no faith to fold his hands and give up trying to work for any improvement in the conduct of human affairs. In 1933 the World Monetary and Economic Conference assembled and dissolved without having initiated any effective action for combatting the world economic crisis. Some of the responsibility for this fiasco rests on the shoulders of President Roosevelt, who, at a later stage, was to show such understanding of McDougall's ideas and to help him so mightily to put them into effect. But this later opportunity might never have occurred if McDougall, and a small band of like-minded friends of his, had not struggled on, in adverse circumstances, during the intervening ten years. McDougall's reaction in 1933 to the failure of the World Monetary and Economic Conference was a refusal to despair. This was an act of faith. Faith in what? It was a faith that eventually moved mountains, so it must surely have been justified in its object. I think it was a faith in human nature: a belief that we human beings have in us enough goodness, wisdom, rationality, ability, and freedom of choice to control and guide the course of human affairs to an extent that makes the effort worth while. The notion of guidance implies, of course, a goal. The goal of an active philosophy, such as McDougall's was, is, I suppose, to make human life more humane than it could ever be if human beings resigned themselves to abdicating, and left it to Nature to take her course uncontrolled by human wills. Of course, human wills are free to choose between good and evil. They can do worse than Nature can, but they can also do better. They can make the course of human affairs work out more rationally — that is, more nearly in accordance with human ideas of what is good. This is, I think what we mean by the word "humane" today. The word has a long history, going back to Cicero and, behind him, to the Greeks. It has become one of the watchwords of the liberal version of our modern civilization. I will venture to define McDougall's faith as a faith in Man's power and will to make human life more humane.

McDougall and his friends were personally fortunate in their field of action. Even if they had not been successful, they would still have spent their lives

working with all their might for the good of mankind, and a life spent on doing that will have been well spent, whatever the outcome of its endeavours. At the same time other men — equally able, and not less upright or less devoted — had the misfortune, in the dark hours of the war, to be working towards an achievement which was aimed at large-scale destruction of human life. The establishment of FAO was not the only historic event that made the year 1945 a turning-point in history. The same year saw the harnessing of atomic energy as a weapon of warfare.

Measured by the standard of humaneness, these two historic events of the year 1945 were at opposite poles of the gamut of human achievement. Yet there was an historical connexion between them, and a close one. Both events were consequences of an increase in Man's power that had been in progress since the dawn of history and had recently been accelerating. By 1945 Man was within sight of acquiring the power either to provide a humane standard of living — spiritual as well as material — for the whole human race or alternatively to commit "genocide" — a new word that we have had to coin to describe an atrocity that was previously beyond our reach. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good and death and evil." These words were written in the seventh century B.C., but they might equally well have been written today or in the Palaeolithic age. They set out the human situation as it has always been since our pre-human ancestors became men. To be human means to be free to choose between good and evil. Good and evil are always what they are. But the stakes of life and death are raised higher with each successive rise in mankind's power.

This increases our danger. Since 1945, the human race is again in danger of extinction for the first time since, at some point in the long course of the Palaeolithic age, man definitively got the upper hand over non-human nature. This time the danger comes from ourselves — the only source on this planet from which Man could be threatened with extinction in the age of his supremacy. The danger is, of course, that we might use atomic energy for destructive purposes. This new danger from ourselves is greater than the primaeval danger from non-human nature. The magnitude and manifestness of the danger, and the fact that Man's enemy now is no other than himself, are, however, also favourable factors in the situation. They tell us that we have

the power to exorcise a threat that we have had the power to conjure up, and they challenge us to save ourselves by our own exertions. The one fatal course would be to fold our hands and resign ourselves to committing suicide. The invention of atomic weapons makes it a matter of life and death for us to believe in, and act on, what I have called McDougall's philosophy. Used constructively, atomic energy can bring in a new era of progress for mankind as distinctive as the past new eras inaugurated by the "inventions" of agriculture and of metallurgy and by the Industrial Revolution.

The opposite philosophy — the philosophy of resignation — has been prevalent in the past. This defeatist philosophy has always been untrue to the facts. Man has always had some freedom of choice ever since he became human; but, when his power was in its infancy, his freedom was not so obvious as it is today. In those days he felt himself helpless in the face of forces that, today, we know that we can control if we choose. Man once felt impotent, for example, in face of the three classic scourges of human life: war, pestilence, and famine. An invasion by human aggressors was, for our forefathers, on a par with an invasion by locusts. Their onset is inexorable; so there is nothing that you can do with them but fight them, and, if you fail to destroy them, they will devour your crops and thus destroy you. It had not yet occurred to people that their human enemies, being human, could be reasoned with, and that perhaps both parties, when they talked it over, might find that they had a common interest in keeping the peace, and basing it on agreed mutual concessions. Instead, tribe felt tribe to be as unamenable to anything but force as Man has found locusts to be. As for pestilence and famine, these too, like war, were accepted as being acts of God. How could Man ban disease or influence the weather by taking thought? When God gave David a choice between famine, pestilence, and war as his punishment for an offence, David felt that God was doing him a great favour. Instead of leaving the choice to David, God might have made it Himself; or He might have afflicted David and his people with all three scourges at once.

Today we do not feel ourselves impotent against any of these three classic afflictions. We have taken up arms against pestilence, and have already made great progress towards stamping it out. Medicine — preventive and curative — has routed disease; and domestic animals and plants, as well as human

beings, have benefited by this human victory. Our victory in this field is now within sight of being consummated by an alliance between public health and nutrition: the marriage of health and agriculture, as Lord Bruce has called it. As for war, we know that we have the power to abolish it, if we have the will — and the incentive for having the will is now enormous. We have the power because we have formed the habit of negotiating and have long ago organised the channels for this. Even on the political plane, on which co-operation is hardest, we know that we can build a world government if we choose. What about famine? This is the question that is of immediate concern to FAO. This ancient adversary of the human race is the one that FAO is commissioned to combat. We know that we can conquer famine too, but this operation may call for even more patience and tact than either of the other two.

The establishment of rational and humane control over the course of human affairs is possible only in so far as we can secure concord and co-operation between human wills. To persuade even just two people to work in concert is hard enough. The difficulty of achieving harmony increases in geometrical progression with every addition to the number of the people that have to be induced to come into line. This point is simple and obvious, but it has important practical applications. One of these is that there is a difference in kind, for practical purposes, between rational measures for human welfare that can be carried out more or less effectively if there is agreement and co-operation between governments, and other measures that require personal decisions by private individuals in their hundreds of millions. It is clear that, in this second situation, the process of securing effective co-operation is likely to be more laborious and longer-drawn-out.

Of course, no government, not even a despotic government, can defy its subjects' feelings or fly in the face of their beliefs altogether. In the long run, at any rate, a government cannot do without a minimum amount of consent on the part of the governed. But most of the time, even in a democratically governed country, the government can count on obtaining the passive acquiescence of its subjects in taking action that is not provocatively controversial. There are, in fact, measures that governments can adopt and carry out by their own action and through their own organisation; and, in this field,

co-operation is comparatively easy, because the number of wills that have to be co-ordinated is comparatively small. Take some ultra-democratic country; construe the word "government" in the widest sense, and include in it all civil servants and all members of parliament, besides the cabinet and the government's executive head. You will find that the total number of persons concerned is minute compared to the total population of even a small country. Again, the number of governments in the world is not large. Though this number has been rising as one formerly subject people after another has obtained its independence, the total is still not more than about a hundred. This means that, in fields in which the governments can take effective action, measures can be put into force all over the world if they have been accepted by, at most, one or two hundred thousand persons, all told. Measures of this kind are obviously much easier to carry out than those that depend on the co-operation of the world's two or three thousand million private citizens.

A field in which governmental action has been conspicuously effective is preventive medicine. This is not a controversial subject. All human beings agree, as a matter of course, that the improvement of mankind's health is an objective that ought to be pursued actively by the governments and the public alike. And, though conscientious objections to public health measures do sometimes arise — vaccination is a case in point — it is broadly true that, in promoting public health, the governments can count on receiving their respective subjects' support, besides being able to count on agreeing with each other. Consequently, the measures of preventive medicine that have been adopted within the last hundred years or so have produced great effects within a short time; and, if the improvement of public health depended on preventive medicine only, its progress would be assured. Here, however, there comes in a point of McDougall's, which Lord Bruce has summed up in his plea for the marriage of health and agriculture. Preventive medicine, beneficent though it is, is negative, as its very name implies. It can liberate mankind from the toll that disease has taken from it in the past, but it cannot provide the positive constituents of human health and strength. Health requires the marriage of effective preventive medicine with adequate nutrition; and this means eating the right kinds of food, not only in sufficient quantities, but in the right proportions. It means a diet in which the energy-giving and the

protective kinds of food are properly balanced. And here, as we know, we run into difficulties with which the promoters of public health through preventive medicine do not have to cope.

In the field of preventive medicine, the human race behaves today more or less like a single family. The combatting of disease is conducted on a world-wide scale. Ideally, the production and distribution of the world's food ought to be organised on the same world-wide basis — indeed, it will have to be before long, if the world's rapidly increasing population is to continue to be fed. Yet, actually, for this purpose, the world is still divided into local units, each pursuing a rather narrowly self-interested policy. What foodstuffs shall be grown in each country, and what foreign foodstuffs its government shall allow to be imported, are still matters of political controversy and conflict. In this point, the humane objective of providing adequate nutrition for the whole human race is obstructed by the same kind of difficulty as the humane objective of abolishing war. There is a political difficulty in both cases. But, in the battle for adequate nutrition there is also a non-political difficulty which is still more formidable. Let us imagine that all the governments in the world had been as far-sighted and as co-operative in their policies about nutrition as they have been in their policies about public health. Would that mean that the problem of nutrition had been solved? No. It would mean only that the preliminary political obstacle had been removed, and that we could now get down to the task of persuading the world's thousands of millions of individual citizens to do what they have to do if mankind's standards of nutrition are to be raised.

There is a proverb that “you can bring a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink.” A government has it in its power to remove restrictions on the import of foodstuffs into its country; and it can have at any rate a very large voice in deciding what foodstuffs, in what relative quantities, its own country shall produce. But it cannot decide what its own subjects shall eat, or what diet those of them who are parents shall give to their children. At least, it can do this only to the extent of making certain foodstuffs difficult or impossible for its subjects to procure. It cannot decide for its subjects the choice that they shall make among the alternative foodstuffs accessible to them, or the proportions in which they shall balance one kind of foodstuff

against another. Right or wrong decisions on these points will make all the difference between proper nutrition and malnutrition. But the choice here lies with the individual wills of millions of men and women. The scientific study of nutrition is still young; and, though the new knowledge already obtained is great, it is possessed up to now by only a tiny band of professional researchers. The diet of the great majority of mankind is still determined by ancient habits, and these habits are fortified by prejudice. In so far as the actual diet differs from the right one, it is not enough for the governments to make the right diet accessible to their subjects. The subjects have to be persuaded individually to adopt it; this requires a campaign of mass-education; and this, in turn, requires work, money, and time. Here is the crux of the nutrition problem. Millions of ignorant and prejudiced human beings have to be persuaded to change their habits in order to bring their diet into conformity with the progressive findings of science.

But diet is not the only field in which mass-education and mass-conversions are needed if mankind is to free itself from the menace of famine. Food of the right kinds in the right proportions has to be produced in sufficient quantities to feed the world's population, at whatever figure this may stand. The movement of population is decided by movements in the ratio between the death-rate and the birth-rate. Preventive medicine, applied by public authorities, has lately been reducing the death-rate, sensationally, in most parts of the world, including many of the most populous of the so-called "backward" countries. If this progress in preventive medicine were to be paralleled by a progress in the improvement of nutrition, the death-rate would fall lower still — especially the rate of infant mortality. This would be a great victory for humanity over Nature's inhumane practice of producing her creatures in superfluous numbers as an offset to preventable casualties. Human beings are no longer willing to submit to being "expendable" items in Nature's extravagant balance-sheet. And this revolt is, of course, wholly good from the humane standpoint. But, if mankind is now going to save itself from the casualties formerly inflicted on it by pestilence and by war, it is going to bring on itself the new problem of an inordinate increase in population. Our efforts to reduce the death-rate must be paralleled by conscious efforts to keep the birth-rate under control; for the resources of this planet, even if scientif-

ically administered and developed and husbanded for the benefit of the whole human family, will not suffice for ever to feed a population that is increasing *ad infinitum*. We may select the most desirable crops and livestock and raise them on the soils best suited to them; we may cultivate the sea, as the Japanese have begun to do. But, sooner or later, food production will reach its limit; and then, if population is still increasing, famine will do the execution that was done in the past by famine, pestilence, and war combined.

The things that I have just been saying are, of course, all platitudes to the experts, but they are still worth saying and, indeed, worth shouting from the house tops. We have to reach the ears, and influence the actions, of the thousands of millions of people on whose individual decisions the reduction of the birth-rate depends. The death-rate has been reduced by the beneficent action of a small number of people in high places. But, when it is a question of proportionately reducing the birth-rate, the public authorities are almost impotent. The initiative, here, is in the hands of the world's private citizens.

These thousands of millions of people have to be educated simultaneously in two fields. In the field of nutrition, they have to be persuaded to co-operate with the governments in reducing the percentage of premature deaths. In this field, the world's private citizens have only part of the job to do, though theirs is an important part — nothing less than a voluntary reform of their traditional diet. Our diet is an intimate part of our private life; but it is not so intimate as our sexual habits; and the need for a reform of these will become still more urgent than it already is if FAO's educational work in the field of diet meets with the success that it deserves.

All over the world till lately, and in most of the world still today, mankind, in its sexual life, has been following the course of Nature: that is to say, it has been breeding up to the maximum. To let Nature take her extravagant course in the reproduction of the human race may have made sense in an age in which we were also letting her take her course in decimating mankind by the casualties of war, pestilence, and famine. Being human, we have at last revolted against that senseless waste. We have started to impose on Nature's heartless play a humane new order of our own. But, when once man has begun to interfere with Nature, he cannot afford to stop half way. We cannot, with impunity, cut down the death-rate and at the same time

allow the birth-rate to go on taking Nature's course. We must consciously try to establish an equilibrium or, sooner or later, famine will stalk abroad again. And here we come back to the heart of our problem. The death-rate can be reduced by public action taken by the few; the birth-rate can be reduced or stabilized only by private action taken by the many.

If we wanted an excuse for taking no action at all, we might say that unlimited breeding is a human instinct, and leave it at that. But are there such things as instincts in the make-up of human nature. And, even if there are, are they unamenable to human wills? I do not think we should be justified in taking refuge in the plea of instinct. What does seem unquestionable is that, on this issue of the birth-rate, we have to reckon with ingrained habits; but habits, however deeply ingrained, are not immutable. Man cannot add a cubit to his stature by taking thought, but he can change the height of his hat and the thickness of the soles of his shoes.

Even if the birth-rate is a matter of habit, the task of inducing a change of habit is formidable in this sphere. The habit of breeding up to the maximum may not be inspired by instinct, but it was justified by experience in the long ages during which war, pestilence, and famine were taking their toll unchecked. It has also been consecrated by religion. The perpetuation of a family becomes a religious duty if one's welfare in an after-life is held to depend on posthumous ritual observances in one's honour, and if it is also held that only one's descendants can perform these rites efficaciously. Such beliefs would put a premium on the maintenance of high birth-rate in an age in which the toll taken by war, pestilence, and famine was high.

This issue is, indeed, a religious one in the sense that it raises the question: what is the true end of Man? Is it to populate the Earth with the maximum number of human beings that can be kept alive simultaneously by the world's maximum food supply? Or is it to enable human beings to lead the best kind of life that the spiritual limitations of human nature allow? The first of these two possible objectives seems irrational. What matters, surely, is not that the surface of this planet should hold, say, four thousand million instead of three thousand million living human beings; what matters is that living human beings, whatever their number, shall develop the highest capacities of their nature; and, if this is the true end of Man, what we should

aim at is the optimum size of population for this purpose in the economic and social circumstances of each successive generation. The optimum figure cannot, of course, be determined in impersonal terms. An upper limit may be set by the limits of the supplies of food and other necessary material commodities; but the lower limit will be set by considerations of what makes for the best in terms of individual lives. For most men and women, life is incomplete without marriage and children; and, for children, childhood may be incomplete without a minimum number of brothers and sisters. The good life that is to be the criterion of the optimum size of population means a good life for individuals in the setting of the family. But this objective is far removed from the objective of maximum numbers for their own sake.

Whatever our objective may be, either in the field of population or in the field of nutrition, we shall do well to remind ourselves again that agreement and co-operation among governments will not be enough to bring the objective within mankind's reach. In both these fields, it can be attained only in so far as it has been adopted as their own by the innumerable private individuals on whose innumerable acts of choice the outcome in these fields will depend. This means that the political part of our task is only the beginning of it. Beyond that, there is an educational task. This will take time, since the gospel has to be preached to the whole of mankind, and a great majority of mankind is still fast bound by the bonds of ignorance and habit. It would be a mistake to try to hurry the process. Pressure would be likely to defeat its own purpose. It would be likely to evoke a hostile reaction; and human beings, thrown on the defensive, can, as we know, be as stubborn as mules.

This situation demands a high standard of self-restraint, patience, and fortitude among the small minority of the human race that has the management of public affairs in its hands. The men and women who occupy these responsible positions today are aware of the dangers to which mankind is exposed in our time. They know that, until we have succeeded in abolishing war, we shall continue to be in danger of committing mass-suicide. They also know that, until we have succeeded in regulating the size of the world's population, we shall be running a perilous race between the present inordinate increase in the world's population and the expansion of the world's food-supply through the joint efforts of statesmanship and science. While techni-

cally it is possible — and it is also the central task of FAO and of the governments — to double or treble the world's food supply, this race has a time limit, considering that there must be a maximum beyond which mankind's food supply cannot be expanded. Meanwhile, the statesmen and the scientists have to face the hard fact that, even if they know how these urgent problems can be solved, and even if they are of one mind in wishing to see the feasible solutions put into effect, their wills — even their united wills — will not prevail unless and until they are able to convert the rest of mankind. Myriads of minds will have to be enlightened, and myriads of wills will have to be induced to make myriads of difficult personal choices.

These terms of mass-conversion are the terms in which we have to think of Man's freedom to exercise some humane control over human affairs. In a pessimistic mood, we might be tempted to say that these conditions, if they are the actual conditions, for Man's use of his freedom are so prohibitively difficult that they make human freedom illusory. Perhaps we can control our affairs within the field in which an experienced and responsible minority can achieve results by its own action without requiring more than the passive acquiescence of the ignorant and hide-bound majority. But we must not expect that this control can be extended to issues which depend on the choices of private individuals in their multitudes. Here, the pessimist might contend, we have no choice but to let Nature take her course. The composition of mankind's diet and the size of the world's population will have to be left to settle themselves. The outcome is unlikely to be good, and may be disastrous, but we cannot do anything about it.

This mood of defeatism was never, I imagine, McDougall's mood, and it would surely be a betrayal of all that he stood for if we allowed ourselves to fall into it. The enterprise of converting mankind is, no doubt, staggering in its magnitude, but we modern humanists are not the first that have had to undertake it. It has been undertaken within the last 2500 years by the missionaries of the historic religions; and their vast achievements are precedents that ought to give courage and confidence to us. In our day we have material means at our command that the early Buddhist and Christian missionaries did not possess. The modern world has already been knit together, on the material plane, for good or evil. These material facilities will help us, but,

by themselves, they are not enough to carry us to success. The missionaries of the historic religions were able to convert whole continents because they were working for the salvation of the men and women to whom they preached. They had faith that human nature would respond to this call, and it did. In our missionary work in our day we may not all be inspired by traditional religious beliefs, but we do all have the same objective as those who hold or have held them. We, too, are concerned for the salvation of our fellow human beings. We are concerned to move them to make individual choices that will bring a better life within the reach of them and their children. We too must have faith in the human nature that is common to all men. If we have this faith, we can be equal to the task of helping these millions of human beings to save themselves. We can help them to choose right in making Man's perennial choice between life and good and death and evil. But the decisions have to be taken by each one of us for himself. No one can take them for his neighbour.

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