

# **DEMOGRAPHIC DESTINIES**

## **Interviews with Presidents of the Population Association of America**

### **Interviews Referencing Henry Pratt Fairchild PAA President in 1931-35**



This series of interviews with Past PAA Presidents was initiated by Anders Lunde  
(PAA Historian, 1973 to 1982)

And continued by Jean van der Tak (PAA Historian, 1982 to 1994)

And then by John R. Weeks (PAA Historian, 1994 to present)

With the collaboration of the following members of the PAA History Committee:  
David Heer (2004 to 2007), Paul Demeny (2004 to 2012), Dennis Hodgson (2004 to  
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## **HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD**

We do not have an interview with Henry Pratt Fairchild, who was the first PAA President, first elected in 1931, then re-elected in 1932, 1933, and 1934. However, as Andy Lunde and Jean van der Tak (VDT) were interviewing other past presidents, they regularly asked questions about those early presidents whom they had been unable to interview. Here are the excerpted comments about Henry Pratt Fairchild.

### **CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**

Henry Pratt Fairchild was born on August 18, 1880 in Dundee, Illinois. He received his A.B. degree at Doane College (now Doane University), a private liberal arts college in Crete, Nebraska, where his father was a professor. He then received his Ph.D. at Yale University in 1909. He married Mary Eleanor Townsend of New Haven, Connecticut in 1909. She died in 1928. Fairchild taught economics and sociology at Bowdoin College from 1909-1910, then returned to Yale as an assistant professor from 1910-1918. From 1918-1919 he was Associate Director of the Personnel Department of the War Camp Community Service, a non-profit organization designed to provide social assistance to enlisted men returning home from WWI. In 1919, he went to New York University, where he eventually became head of the Department of Sociology in the Graduate School of Arts and Science. He retired from NYU in 1945, upon reaching age 65. Fairchild had served as President of the American Sociological Association in 1936. He died in 1956 at the home of his daughter in North Hollywood, California.

### **From Andy Lunde's interview with Frank Notestein in 1973:**

**NOTESTEIN:** I remember the organizing meeting [May 7, 1931] fairly vividly. Hank [Henry Pratt] Fairchild was the moving spirit and through the good offices of Margaret Sanger, he had gotten some funds from the Milbank Memorial Fund to finance the meeting. I think there were some 35 of us there, including Frank Lorimer [PAA President 1946-47], who is now in New Zealand, and Frederick Osborn [President 1949-50], among those now surviving. It was intended by Professor Fairchild that a nominating committee put in his name as president and Mrs. Sanger as first vice-president. But difficulties arose immediately. Frederick Osborn was a very great admirer of Mrs. Sanger but he felt rather keenly that there was a great need for a professional society which was not an action group and that it would be a great mistake if the association became an adjunct of her birth control movement, which he always supported and in which he was a strong believer. I think he even convinced Mrs. Sanger of this. I don't think she was at the meeting but in any event, he spoke of this and her name was withdrawn.

Other reminiscences? It was a friendly association. For many years it met as the guest of Princeton University [nearly] every year; it was terribly pleasant for us at Princeton. It was a small association. It had the virtues of having economists, sociologists and, in the early days, biologists--people with quite a diversity of interests--but a small enough association. Every time I see Gunnar Myrdal--he used to be there in the old days--he remembers the pleasure of those meetings in the forties, when everyone knew everyone else, though we were each cultivating slightly different patches. Fairchild interested Eleanor Roosevelt somewhat and she invited us to the White House. But much more interesting, she brought her knitting and came to the session on differential fertility [at PAA's meeting in Washington in May 1935]. So, it was a rather small and gemütlich group of people.

**LUNDE:** Can you add more on Henry Pratt Fairchild [PAA President 1931-35]?

**NOTESTEIN:** Facile writer, able talker. Troubled in his last years because he was radical. Surely not a totalitarian Communist at all but surely less exercised [about Communism] than many of the establishment were. His influence was undercut to some extent because from time to time he said some nice things about Russia. He was not at all an orthodox Communist, just a man who was liberal in most particulars and at a time when things were sufficiently charged from the Depression so as to make people super-sensitive. Fairchild was an excellent founding president of the Association. His daughter was an actress--is, for all I know--I haven't seen her for years. He was a widower; a charming and very friendly person. Not a very rigorous [scholar], I never felt. I differed very much with him on the thesis of his book, People [1939]. Some people who accuse me nowadays because they view me as having carried the Population Council more heavily into birth control than it had been would be amused to know how I criticized Fairchild. His view of the drop in the birth rate was that it was [all] due to the invention of contraception. The prescription to get the birth rate down was to get birth control going [something about the Bradlaugh-Besant trial]. Our view of the demographic transition was much more in line with social change as a fundamental determinant, as I still think it is. Then you say, "What is the next marginal addition you put on within the range of your possibilities?." That was important in getting the Population Council into birth control, because at that time, that was the next possible thing to do. It was a very different thing from saying that birth control is the total explanation.

**From Andy Lunde's interview with Conrad Taeuber in 1973:**

The early group did have a variety of backgrounds and interests. Henry Pratt Fairchild [first PAA President, 1931-35] had been especially concerned with immigration and had written one of the early texts on that subject. Osborn had a strong interest in human genetics. Frank Lorimer [President, 1946-47] first came into the field through his collaboration with Osborn in the preparation of their book, Dynamics of Population [1934]. Lorimer might be considered one of the first full-time professionals in the population field. Irene and I met Frank and Faith (Williams) Lorimer soon after we were established in the Washington area. Faith held a high position in the Department of Labor. Frank did some teaching at American University. He was elected Secretary of PAA early on and decided that PAA could serve its members with a current bibliographic service. Research reports of interest to demographers were then scattered among many journals, including foreign-language journals which were not readily available to most research workers in the U.S. He began this service to the field with the modest Population Literature, asking Irene to help him. This was taken over by the newly established Office of Population Research at Princeton and Irene became editor of the renamed Population Index, with an appointment on the staff of OPR, although she could do most of her work in Washington in the Library of Congress, which has a long policy of providing space to outside scholars.

**From Andy Lunde's interview with Clyde Kiser in 1973:**

At the time of that meeting, Mrs. Roosevelt had a tea party for the members; she invited the whole membership. The actual numbers at that time were, I should think, probably not more than 75. But there were a good many government workers there too. I don't believe that all the government workers were invited to the party. It was a fairly goodsized party.

At the dinner meeting of the conference, Frank Notestein gave a paper of which I was coauthor. We were told that we should wear black tie, so we wore black tie. Henry Pratt Fairchild presided. Fairchild was first [PAA] president and he was president from 1931 to 1935. I don't know what the constitutional provisions were about presidents in the beginning, but Fairchild was re-elected just as a matter of course for the first four years. After that Louis Dublin was elected for one year and it was

pretty much on an annual basis until World War II, when [Lowell] Reed served for about three years [1942-45].

**LUNDE:** What was the topic of your presidential address, Clyde? Do you remember?

**KISER:** I certainly do and it's somewhat relevant to this. It so happened that in 1953, if you take 1932 as the year of formal organization, the Population Association was 21 years old. So, the title of my address was "The Population Association Comes of Age." I gave a history of the first 21 years. It was published in Eugenical News [December 1953].

Incidentally, there had been one previous presidential address of that kind. In 1942 in Atlantic City when Whelpton was president, Fairchild himself gave a ten-year history of the Association. He told the story much better than I have about Margaret Sanger's role in the formation of the Association.

I might say a word or two about the circumstances of that organization. In my PAA presidential address, "The Population Association Comes of Age" [1953, published in Eugenical News, December 1953], I mentioned predisposing causes and immediate factors responsible for the Association. Among the predisposing factors was the increasing interest in demography during the 1920s. The Scripps Foundation started in 1922. Pearl and Reed had developed their logistic curve and Pearl had written Biology of Population Growth and at Scripps, Thompson and Whelpton were starting work on their projections. At the Metropolitan [Life Insurance Company], Dublin and Lotka had come out with "On the true rate of natural increase" [1925]. And in 1928, the Milbank division of research was started to do research on population.

The immediate factor I saw was the stimulus given by the formation of the International Union [for the Scientific Investigation of Population Problems/IUSSP]. The International Union was formed in 1928 and that grew out of a World Population Conference held in Geneva in 1927. Margaret Sanger organized that. Margaret Sanger did more for getting population started than we give her credit for. She approached an anonymous source for money for that 1927 conference and she got it. She approached the Milbank Fund for money for the International Union and she got it. She approached the Fund for money for this first little organizational meeting of the PAA and she got that. Now the amounts were relatively small. For the PAA it was just \$600 to pay Thompson and Whelpton's fare and a few people coming up from Washington, things of that sort. But she got the money on behalf of Fairchild. Fairchild did the legwork in getting the organization started. The Fund supported the International Union the first three years of its existence almost in full. It gave, I believe, \$10,000 a year, or \$30,000 for the three years 1928-31, and the Rockefeller Foundation chipped in with additional support.

**LUNDE:** To go back a moment, you were telling me earlier about your visit to the White House during the 1935 meeting and you said something about Rupert Vance being taken up in FDR's elevator. Tell us that story.

**KISER:** We were invited for tea, so immediately after the meetings in the Willard Hotel, we went over to the White House. Most of us started up the stairway there and a flunky came out and told Vance, who of course was on crutches, that they had an elevator for him. So they led him to a little elevator which Vance thought had been installed for President Roosevelt. This was the tea in 1935.

Well, about eight years later, in January 1943, there were about a dozen demographers that were invited to the White House, invited by Mrs. Roosevelt, and the invitation read something like this: that the recipient was invited to the White House for dinner on a given night in January 1943 to honor the work of Henry Pratt Fairchild. I happened to be one of those. I can't remember all of the names, but I do remember several. Mrs. Roosevelt and Vice President Henry Wallace were there. Orson Welles, Fairchild, Leon Truesdell, Frank Notestein, Professor Ed Hutchinson of Pennsylvania,

and Warren Thompson; I distinctly remember some of the comments he made. I don't recall whether Whelpton was there or not.

We were first met in the hallway--we had our credentials with us and were able to get by the gate. We had a little reception, drinks, then went into State Room for dinner. I remember I sat next to Orson Welles. After dinner, Mrs. Roosevelt took us up the elevator to her private apartment, where she showed us a few rooms--up there on the next floor. I recall seeing the large photograph of Abraham Lincoln. After we got into her apartment, Mrs. Roosevelt settled down in a comfortable chair, took out her knitting, and told us that she didn't plan to say anything, that she wanted us to start talking while she listened. Fairchild acted as presiding officer. He outlined some of the outstanding population problems of the day as he saw them and tried to get the conversation rolling. I recall we got into questions of race, immigration, and urban-rural differentials in fertility. I remember that Thompson quoted one of his bits of wisdom in commenting on the fact that birth rates seemed to be low in cities. He said, "Well, with apartment-house dwelling it's a little like animals; you can't breed animals in captivity."

**LUNDE:** What were the papers at early meetings like as compared to those produced today? I have an impression that some of the early papers were perhaps philosophic and very broad in scope. Many of our papers today seem to be quite esoteric and pointed to a very fine area of investigation.

**KISER:** I think there's something to that. Back in the days of E.A. Ross, they were concerned with large topics of immigration, size of population, and things of that sort. I think E.A. Ross had great respect for the inductive method but he never did much in the way of scientific studies himself; he had the overall approach. So it was in demography. Take the very first PAA president, Henry Pratt Fairchild. He was a very good speaker; he needed no amplifier and he never needed any notes. Some people felt he traded a little too much on that ability. And Louis Dublin, Warren S. Thompson--they were all good men who could make a good speech without writing a paper. As you get on down the line, you find people who were interested in--interested in broad subjects, of course--but they tended to do research on small, narrow topics.

**LUNDE:** What was your impression of Henry Pratt Fairchild as a person?

**KISER:** He was a very interesting man. I succeeded him at NYU, not as head of the department, but I began teaching the courses he'd taught there when he retired in 1945. I think the first time I saw Henry Pratt Fairchild was about 1929 or 1930. Warren S. Thompson was coming through New York at the time to go to Europe and old Professor Tenney told us that Fairchild and Thompson were having a meeting at some hotel at lunchtime and that his class in sociology was invited to go; so we did. Thompson was then a fairly young man. There was also a speaker there, a commissioner of immigration, I believe. He didn't know much about demography but he was under the impression that birth rates in Italy were increasing because he knew that the total number of births were increasing each year. Fairchild and Thompson assured him that the birth rates were actually decreasing.

Fairchild, as I said, had an important role in planning the Association. Incidentally, Fairchild was simultaneously the first president of the Population Association of America and of the Eastern Sociological Society, which was also formed in 1931.

#### **From Jean van der Tak's interview with Henry Shryock in 1988:**

**VDT:** Your mention of the international conference of 1954 reminds me of the IUSSP. I noticed that you were one of the 29 Americans among the 147 people who were first invited to be IUSSP members when IUSSP switched after the war from membership by national organizations to individual

membership. Could you tell a bit about your involvement with IUSSP [International Union for the Scientific Study of Population]? Were you, for instance, involved in the IUSSP meeting held in New York in 1961?

**SHRYOCK:** I remember being there. I don't remember whether I had a paper at that time or not; seems to me I was busy working on my first migration book. But I was at the first IUSSP meeting after the war, in Geneva in 1949, and there I had several assignments. The person in charge of our delegation was Henry Pratt Fairchild of New York University, the very first president of PAA. He was quite an imposing character. Quite a gourmet. He was a friend of Oscar of the Waldorf, I remember. He also was suspected of some leftwing activities, with regard to immigration groups. He belonged to some organization and he used to take the membership file home from his office every night and hide it under his bed during the McCarthy era, I was told. He was instrumental in organizing the American delegation to that first IUSSP meeting after the war, along with Frank Lorimer, who was the secretary of IUSSP at that time. He was the executive director, based in the U.S.

**From the interview by Harry Rosenberg (substituting for Andy Lunde) with Joseph J. Spengler in 1976:**

**SPENGLER:** The record probably would bear out that Fairchild was the prime mover who put this thing over. I mean he was the type. I remember when we were together at the first big meeting on birth control, organized by Margaret Sanger in 1934, with Amelia Earhart and Katherine Hepburn and so on, and Fairchild was the real pusher. I don't mean this is the pejorative sense; good organizer. I don't know if we would have had an organization if it hadn't been for Fairchild, who had done work those many years on immigration, this, that and the other. What always struck me was that his brother was a very conservative economist at Yale, wrote on income distribution. He had this book called [Furnace Fairchild?], all his students used to alliterate this thing. I think you really more or less felt this way--the importance of Fairchild as the organizer, pusher. Osborn may have gotten, put up more money and so on, since he was interested.

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Henry Pratt Fairchild (1880–1956)

Author(s): Clyde V. Kiser

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HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD  
(1880-1956)

Henry Pratt Fairchild, first president of the Population Association of America, died October 2, 1956, at the home of his daughter, Eleanor Fairchild Cadwallader, in North Hollywood, California. The circumstances of his death were described in a letter from his daughter as follows: "He was out here for a month's visit with us and had been here three weeks enjoying the sun, home cooking, and his little granddaughter. He wasn't sick a minute, just went to sleep one night and didn't wake up. The examination showed that he had a heart condition. Whether he knew it or not I don't know; we didn't. He gave up tennis a couple of years ago."

Fairchild was born August 18, 1880, in Dundee, Illinois. He received the A.B. degree at Doane College (Nebraska) in 1900, and the Ph.D. at Yale University in 1909. During the interim he had taught three years at the American International College in Turkey and another three years at Doane College. On June 2, 1909, he married Mary Eleanor Townsend of New Haven. She died October 1, 1928.

After receiving the doctorate, Fairchild taught Economics and Sociology at Bowdoin College (1909-1910). He then returned to Yale, first as Assistant Professor of Economics (1910-1912) and then as Assistant Professor of the Science of Society (1912-1918). He was Associate Director of the Personnel Department of the War Camp Community Service during 1918-1919. In 1919, Fairchild went to New York University where he eventually became head of the Department of Sociology in the Graduate School of Arts and Science. He retired at New York University on reaching sixty-five in 1945.

Fairchild first gained national prominence as the author of Immigration: A World Movement and its American Significance, published by the Macmillan Company in 1913. In this book, he traced the history of immigration to this country and discussed the causes, processes, and effects of the movement. Published at a time when the tide of immigration was very heavy, the book did much to stimulate concern over the problem and to crystallize demands for restrictive legislation. In this book, as in his later writings, Fairchild was characteristically sympathetic with the many immigrants who faced hardships; yet he was much concerned about the economic, social, and political dangers of unrestricted immigration. In fact, by constantly stressing the difficulties of accommodating the "newer" immigrants to the American way of life he probably helped prepare the stage for the quota system that was to be instituted in the 'twenties. In a later book, The Melting Pot Mistake (1926), Fairchild argued strongly in defense of the quota legislation that had been recently enacted. Interestingly, in this book, published in 1926, Fairchild used a phrase often associated with Winston Churchill at a later date: "America was brought over as a tender plant, ill-defined and simple, with little indication of the form into which it was to grow. It was planted in the congenial soil of a new land. It was watered by the blood and the sweat and the tears of those who brought it, and of the generations that came after them."

Other books by Fairchild include General Sociology (1934), People: The Quantity and Quality of Population (1939), Economics for the Millions (1940), Dictionary of Sociology (1944), and Race and Nationality (1947). In 1950, his little book Versus: Reflections of a Sociologist was published under the sponsorship of some of Fairchild's former students, colleagues, and friends. It brought together some of his essays and articles on various choices and dilemmas confronting man.

Fairchild's early concern with immigration led quite naturally to a general interest in population questions. He would probably have



been the first to insist that he was more interested in the social-problem aspects of population than in demographic methodology or demography as a science. Perhaps his chief bid toward methodological contribution was his attempt to introduce the term "larithmics," which in his Dictionary of Sociology he defined as "the scientific study of population in its numerical and quantitative aspects, as eugenics is in its qualitative aspects."

Fairchild did a great deal to advance interest in population. He participated in the 1927 World Population Conference in Geneva which resulted in the formation of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population Problems. He was a leading organizer of the Population Association of America and served as its President during the first four years (1931-1935) of its existence. He served for several years during the 'forties as Chairman of the United States National Committee of the International Population Union, and he participated materially in the drafting of the by-laws of the reconstituted International Union for the Scientific Study of Population in 1947.

Fairchild was President of the American Sociological Society in 1936, President of the American Eugenics Society in 1929-1931, and President of the Eastern Sociological Conference in 1931. A giant of a man with a booming voice, he gave his talents as organizer, master of ceremonies, and public speaker to many social and civic organizations, such as the Birth Control Federation of America and the Town Hall Club. On the platform he needed neither notes nor loudspeaker.

It was sometimes observed that Fairchild grew more radical as he grew older. Yet, in perspective, it should also be said that in some matters, such as immigration and race, he remained, rather, ultra-conservative. The obituary in The New York Times stated that Fairchild was secretary of the American-Soviet Friendship Council. It should be noted, however, that he was a defender of Malthus and an advocate of family limitation. Some of Fairchild's Economics for the Millions has been described as pro-Marxist, but his writings on immigration, race, Malthus, and contraception certainly would not find favor behind the iron curtain. In this writer's opinion, Fairchild was too much the individualist, the nonconformist, and the lone wolf to be a close follower of any "ism."

The Publication Committee responsible for the previously mentioned Versus observed in an introductory note: "In common with many other independent thinkers, Professor Fairchild's ideas have frequently aroused opposition, as well as commendation. No one, however, has ever doubted his integrity and sincere devotion to the public welfare. He has never spared himself in the interest of society. To Henry Pratt Fairchild may aptly be applied the words of Emerson, '...the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.'"

Clyde V. Kiser

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The National Science Foundation will award individual grants to defray partial travel expenses for a limited number of American scientists participating in the following international congresses: 30th Session of the International Statistical Institute; Congress of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. These congresses are scheduled to meet in Stockholm, Sweden, August 8 to 15, 1957. Application blanks may be obtained from the National Science Foundation, Washington 25, D.C. Completed application forms must be submitted by March 1, 1957.



**We have no record of Henry Fairchild having given PAA Presidential Addresses, but this article published just prior to the creation of the PAA suggests what he might have said.**

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Immigration and the Population Problem

Author(s): Henry P. Fairchild

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# Immigration and the Population Problem

By HENRY P. FAIRCHILD, PH.D.

Professor of Sociology, New York University, New York City

THERE is nothing that has impressed me more forcibly in my attempts to understand some of the human relationships than the fact that there are many aspects of life which seem to present an extraordinary paradox in which the solution that seems to be indicated as right and helpful for the individual proves to be no solution whatever for society.

To cite a single illustration, let us take the problem of unemployment which is so prominent in the public mind at the present moment. In discussions of unemployment we often hear it said that the solution is to be found in increasing the productivity of the individual worker. This is true enough for the individual. If you and I are unemployed, the thing for us to do is to see if we can improve our economic efficiency and go out into the labor market with a better offering and get a job.

## INDIVIDUAL SOLUTION UNAVAILING

However, the striking thing is that if chronic unemployment prevails, the improvement of the personal efficiency of the individual not only fails to solve the social problem of unemployment but may even make it worse. If you and I improve our efficiency and get jobs, other men who are slightly less efficient will promptly lose theirs. Further, since the whole trouble is due to the fact that there is too much economic productivity for the consuming power of the market, an improvement in the personal efficiency of the worker leading to still larger productivity will intensify and aggravate the problem of unemployment.

It is as if one were planning to give a concert in a hall that would seat one thousand, with a singer that would attract twelve hundred. The thing for you and me to do, of course, would be to go early, and maybe we would get seats. But that would be no solution of the problem as a whole, and the more numerous the people who attempted to apply that personal solution, the worse would be the resulting confusion and loss of time. The only solution for such a problem would be to hire either a larger hall or a poorer singer.

In many of the aspects of social life, the individual solution is not a social solution at all. Yet, one of the hardest things that the social scientist has to do is to convince mankind at large of the conclusions of social science.

## EMIGRATION AS AN EXPEDIENT

One of the finest illustrations of this whole truth is found in the great expedient of emigration, particularly in its application as a relief of overpopulation. In the naïve view, the view which anyone takes when he first approaches consideration of this problem, emigration and immigration seem to be simply matters of arithmetic. If there is an emigration of five hundred thousand people from one country to another, a total of five hundred thousand has been subtracted from the population of the first country and added to the population of the second country. That has been the interpretation of emigration as a social expedient in overcrowded lands from time immemorial. Yet, the whole teaching of social science is that under the conditions which have underlain the great

migration movements of the past hundred and fifty years, emigration has been no relief for overpopulation, and immigration has not tended to increase the population but has simply had the result of substituting foreign population for native.

The defense of that conclusion on the basis of established theory is simple enough. I need only recall to your minds the essential features of the Malthusian theory of population as we customarily call it, which represents the best thought along those lines up to within the last decade or two, and you will see the truth of that statement.

According to the Malthusian doctrine, there are four great factors in the material situation of any society, which have such reciprocal influence that anyone may be regarded as the result of the other three, or any three as the cause of the other one. Those factors are: first, the land, the source of all material supplies; second, what we commonly call the stage of the arts, the sum total of the economic and industrial technique, including the ability of the people themselves, by which the resources of the land are withdrawn and made available for human consumption; third, the size of the population itself; and fourth, the standard of living upon which that population maintains its material existence.

As we all know, those four factors are included in the ordinary summary of the Malthusian doctrine to the effect that population tends to increase on a given area of land and a given stage of the arts and a given standard of living, up to the supporting power of the soil. That theory, in harmony with the truth of the factors involved, assumes that the great, dynamic, elastic factor in that quartette is population, and that has certainly been true in the past. Population has been a great,

expansive force, held under repression by the inflexible barriers of the supporting power of the soil coupled with the industrial arts and linked up with the standard of living which the people rightly regard as a priceless possession.

#### BIOLOGICAL INCREASE

The expansive force of population is well known to you all. One of the most familiar examples, of course, is that of the oyster, neither the highest nor the lowest form in the scale of organic evolution, but one which does its part in the development of social theory as well as in other ways. The simple fact is that if we started with a single pair of oysters, breeding at the average American rate of reproduction, by the fifth generation there would be a mass of oyster shells eight times the size of the earth. That is simply a middle example of the power of biological increase. Havelock Ellis tells us of a simple microscopic organism, the reproductive power of which is such that if left unchecked, a single specimen would in thirty days produce a mass one million times larger than the sun.

Now, mankind, of course, is at the other extreme of that range. *Homo sapiens* is one of the slowest breeding animals on earth. Yet, the extent of potential multiplication of the human species is virtually unlimited. Dr. Kuczynski<sup>1</sup> has spoken of the retarding rate of human increase in the world today, and very truly. But if we allowed the population of this country to increase at the rate that prevailed in the early years of this century, which was not a phenomenal rate, the United States would be much more seriously overcrowded by the end of this century than China is today. Now, I agree with Dr. Kuczynski that this is not

<sup>1</sup>See "Population Growth and Economic Pressure," in this volume.

going to happen. I simply cite it to illustrate the tremendous expansive power of human population which is always present, always ready to assert itself, and held in check only by the barriers of the other factors in the situation.

#### EFFECTS OF MIGRATION

In view of these facts, what is the effect of emigration on a country which is experiencing the pressure of population upon the supporting power of the soil? Obviously, the immediate effect of emigration is to relieve the factor of population by the departure of a certain number of individuals. Yet, that population is under extreme pressure and is trying to force itself to wider limits. If the exodus is a moderate and gradual one, as most of the emigration currents of the past hundred years have been, the effect is simply to relax the tension upon population and to give it an opportunity for expansion which it has not had. Population surges forward and fills up the gaps left by the emigrants, and as the emigration stream flows on, the population remains just as large as it was before, and according to some students, becomes even larger.

The same principle prevails in the immigrating country. If it is an old country where the balance has been struck between the desire for population and the desire for standard of living, the immigrants intensify the pressure of the population upon the existing economic situation, forcing a reduction in the increase of native population, and resulting in no greater growth in the total population than would have taken place without any immigration.

I will not take up your time to enter into an elaborate, detailed, theoretical exposition of the foregoing principles. I will simply say that so far as my studies have gone, these principles are

accepted by practically every scientific student of the population problem and of the immigration problem, and, so far as this country is concerned, the theory is usually stated by saying that we have in 1930 no larger population in the United States than we would have had if not one immigrant had come to our shores since the year 1820.

That doctrine is so well supported, so thoroughly documented by all the best scientific literature on the subject, that it stands as one of the most unassailable conclusions of economic and social theory. That being the case, the conclusion naturally follows that under prevailing conditions in Europe, to say nothing of the more overcrowded countries of the Orient, emigration is no relief for overpopulation. It is a false and illusive expedient which rather aggravates the evils that it is sought to remedy.

Those who have read the report of the Red Cross Commission to China will perhaps recall the very dramatic paragraph in which that Commission sums up its conclusions in this matter with respect to China. The statement is made that if all the less crowded lands of the world were to open their doors wide, and if all the passenger ships that sail the seven seas were to be diverted from their ordinary routes and used exclusively to carry Chinese emigrants, the whole fleet could not possibly keep up with the annual increase of population.

#### LEADERS HARD TO CONVINCE

Yet, in spite of all scientific demonstration, in spite of all tangible and visible proofs, this teaching is one of the very hardest things to get across, not only to a disinterested group of students, but particularly to the statesmen concerned with these problems in the various countries. It is really pathetic to see the confidence with which states-

men and leaders of public thought cling to the fond hope that emigration can be used as a cure for overpopulation.

Within the last two or three years, two books have been published by eminent Europeans—one by a Swede, Dr. Helmar Key; the other by an Englishman, Professor Gregory—both of which bear out this doctrine on almost every page. For instance, Dr. Key says, in his book, published in 1927:

It is clear that one of the inevitable preliminaries to better conditions in European industry must be sought in large-scale emigration from Europe. . . . Nothing effective can be done to improve the economic position of Europe without carefully organized, large-scale emigration to overseas countries. . . .

The simple and inevitable truth is that a considerable part of the population of Europe must be given the opportunity to emigrate.

These are paragraphs taken from different parts of Dr. Key's book, illustrating his thesis all the way through.

Professor Gregory says:

The first information necessary is the amount of emigration from Europe required to relieve its overpressure. A net emigration of half a million would suffice under existing conditions to relieve the condition of Europe, though it would not relieve the whole of the genuine unemployment.

I say it is pathetic, because it is like a sufferer from some insidious disease who takes a patent medicine year after year and dose after dose and lives on, cherishing the fond hope that one more dose will produce results. It is really extraordinary to think that at the close of a century of the heaviest emigration that the world has ever known, a century terminated by the worst war that the world has ever known, largely caused by overpopulation, there should still be leading students of social problems who would

continue to say that the only relief for the situation in Europe is more emigration.

#### A NEW ATTITUDE

However, a new day is dawning. New factors are being introduced into the situation, and new factors alter the significance of scientific conclusions. There is a new attitude towards population, the world over. It has not yet been fully accepted, particularly in this country. Most of our favorite slogans still remain, "Bigger and better something or other," all the way from battleships to babies. We still cherish the ideal of bigness. Mere size is still a fetish to us.

I often think of a story told me by a cousin of mine who was in France during the war, and who while there met a very eminent French artist, who had painted most of the notables on the Allied side. Later on, this French painter and his wife came to this country on a visit and spent some little time in the home of my cousin. Of course, they had their eyes open for all characteristic American things, and they were particularly impressed with our breakfast foods—something with which they were not familiar in Europe. The one which caught their eye and their fancy most of all was puffed rice. "There," they said, "is something typically American—puffed to eight times its natural size."

So, we have not yet completely departed from the old tradition of bigness and from the worship of size for its own sake. Still, a new factor is entering into the whole situation, namely, widespread birth control, to which Dr. Kuczynski has referred. The whole Malthusian theory presupposes the appearance of as many children to the married couple as the Lord sees fit to send. Malthus took no account of the deliberate control of family increase



within the marriage bond and consequently his whole set of theories and principles was built up in the absence of that consideration. That is why he was known as the arch pessimist of all time, the "gloomy parson," the man who condemned mankind to greater or lesser degrees of misery for all time to come.

But now we have the introduction of a new factor in social evolution, of an importance which Warren Thompson, in his recent *Danger Spots in World Population*, considers comparable to that of the invention of the printing press and the discovery of fire. When you have a new influence of that kind entering into the situation, the whole series of conclusions must be revised. And that is exactly what we see going on in the world around us today.

#### PROGRESS OF BIRTH CONTROL

Birth control is gaining headway and will very soon be established as a general if not a universal factor in the life of Western countries, and is, strange as it may seem, beginning to penetrate the countries of the Orient. People are becoming interested in it. In fact, I have heard it said that there are just three things in which the American people really are interested—eugenics, birth control, and girth control.

By way of illustration, I may mention the recent action of the Town Hall Club in New York, which has a rather unique and distinguished membership. The Club held its annual vote for that member who had done most to add to the enlargement and the enrichment of life. There were some six hundred members voting, and out of the five candidates, two were tied. A careful recount showed a margin of one vote. The two who were tied were Dwight Morrow and Margaret Sanger, and Dwight Morrow won out in the end by one vote.

Such a thing as that would have been utterly impossible ten years ago. It is a sign of a change of the factors underlying the whole population question. And with the introduction of birth control into the emigration problem, everything takes on a new color. If a country has the power to control its growth of population by internal methods, then perhaps a wisely directed and cautiously controlled emigration may prove of some value.

#### MIGRATION AS A TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT

Professor Thompson, in his book previously cited, reaches the conclusion that as between the densely settled sections of the earth's surface and the less crowded areas, there exists a differential pressure which, if not relieved in some way, will inevitably bring the world once more into war. He advocates migration as a solution of that problem until the expedient of birth control shall have made its way and shall be prepared to serve its function. He applies this solution particularly to such a country as Japan.

With many of Mr. Thompson's basic conclusions I heartily agree, but I differ from him with respect to the order in which he places these two expedients. I am very much afraid that if countries like China and Japan and India are given recourse to large emigration as a relief from their acute problems, they will use that as an excuse for postponing birth control indefinitely, and in the end we shall have still more overcrowded countries, still worse situations, still less relatively vacant land, and birth control no nearer its goal than it is today.

I would say most emphatically, as a prerequisite to the application of migration as a relief for overpopulation, let any particular country demonstrate that it can introduce and apply birth

control to the extent of holding its population stationary say for a decade, or even better, for a generation. When a country has shown that ability, there will be some reason to consider its rights to use emigration to draw off its surplus population.

#### DOES WAR RELIEVE POPULATION PRESSURE?

There is one other application of this group of principles that seems to me of very great importance. It was my good fortune about six years ago to make a tour through Europe in the investigation of migration problems, which brought me into touch with officials in most of the capitals of Europe. The one thing that impressed itself upon me was that, under modern conditions, war is no relief for overpopulation.

We have been trained to look upon war as one of the great expedients of Nature to dispose of her surplus population. In that tour over Europe only a few years after the close of the world war, with its terrible holocaust of human life, I found practically every country in Europe more overpopulated, or at least more conscious of its excess population, than it was before the war started.

I am convinced that there is a fundamental principle here which is easy to understand. As already stated, overpopulation is a condition dependent upon the total economic setting of a country. One of the important elements in the economic setting of a modern country is a complex industrial, financial, and general economic system which not only exists within its own

boundaries but links it up with other countries on a basis of commerce, of credit, of international finance, and so on.

A war completely shatters that fabric of international relationships and to a large extent destroys even the internal organization; so that when the war is over, a country finds itself far less able to support its smaller population on its disorganized economic basis than it was to support a larger population with better economic foundations before the war. By the time those economic foundations have been restored, the population has again shot forward, so that the condition is no better than before the war took place. I think this throws a new light upon international problems. We must stop thinking of war as any remedy for excess population.

I believe that this whole situation is taking on a new aspect and a new setting. We are beginning to discard the Malthusian view that population is a great brooding, menacing force hanging over mankind at all times, threatening us with constant misery, to be dealt with on the best possible terms but always greater than the human will or social efficiency. We are coming to think of population as one of the great concrete, tangible, objective factors in human welfare, to be directed just as we direct any of the other great institutions of human life. On that basis, I am confident that we are moving forward into a new and better era, both economic and social, because of our better grasp of this great human capacity.