

SOCIOLOGY

# Forever Hungry World

Too many people is real world problem, not just too little food. Along with industrializing countries, populations must be educated to limit births.

By MARTHA G. MORROW

► THE TROUBLE that causes a starving world is not alone too little food but too many people.

Fertility that plows and reaps the plains of the earth fills the world to overflowing with more and more human beings with ever-open mouths.

"The welfare of mankind is balanced on the two great realities of birth and death. It cannot be too often emphasized that where low living conditions and increasing numbers push a hungry people toward starvation, relief which lowers death rates without a corresponding lowering of birth rates must in the end compound disaster."

Thus does Guy I. Burch, tall, lean Washington scientist and director of the Population Reference Bureau, advise a world combating the greatest famine in all its history.

Every power-grabbing group, wheth-

er a democracy or dictatorship, wants to grow by pure increase in numbers into a majority. Mussolini cried for more people. Hitler offered bonuses for large families. American cities today vie with each other for increase in population. To reproduce and fill the earth to overflowing with one's own kind seems to be an emotional hangover from primitive times.

Yet this increase has resulted in chronic undernourishment for a vast majority of the earth's people. Today, last year, a decade ago, there simply was not enough food to take care of the world's hungry horde. During so-called normal times two-thirds of the people in the world suffer from undernourishment.

This year's total world farm output of food, in terms of calories, will be only about 5% less than the prewar 1935-39 average. Yet when allowance is made for the net increase in

world population during the war years, the per capita world production will be about 12% less, estimates of the U. S. Department of Agriculture show.

## More People Than Before War

It might be imagined that after such a destructive conflict as World War II there would be fewer people in the world than before the war. This does not happen to be the case. While the war has destroyed tremendous amounts of wealth, natural resources and means of industrial production, Mr. Birch figures that the demand for these facilities because of population increase has risen some 7%.

Want of the necessities of healthful living—of food in sufficient quantity and quality, of sanitary conditions and of proper medical care—caused the untimely death of from 20,000,000 to 30,000,000 human beings a year even before World War II. Thus about as many die from want in one "peaceful" year as were killed during the five years of war.

The majority of the people of this world are pitifully poor and must do without many of life's necessities as well as most of its luxuries. Even before this war four out of five of the earth's breadwinners failed to earn each week enough to buy what \$10 would have bought in the United States during 1925 to 1934. More than half of the world's people have a real income of less than \$4 per week per breadwinner, estimates Colin Clark, British authority on international levels of living.

## Fewer People Per Acre in U. S.

In prewar times the average worker in Italy and Japan had only about one-fourth as much to spend on his family as the typical American worker.

Uninformed Americans may believe that their higher level of living is due to their ingenuity and intelligence, but facts point to another reason. There are only 250 persons for each square mile of arable land here in the United States, while in Italy there are almost 900 and in Japan over 3000 persons for each square mile of arable land.

The mineral resources of these countries, on the other hand, in no way compare with those of the United



U. S. Dept. of Agriculture photograph



Official U. S. Navy photograph

**PLENTY AND WANT**—There is just not enough food such as the lush grain on the left to feed this hungry world. Millions of people, like the starving Okinawan child at right, suffer from malnutrition.

States. The United States has more than 60 times as much iron ore per person as Japan, for instance, and nearly 200 times as much coal.

The average breadwinner in Germany before World War II could buy only half as many of the necessities and luxuries of life for his family as a worker in the United States. Germany's reserves of iron ore per person were less than one-fourth as large as ours. Her reserves of coal per capita were about one-sixth as great as ours. There were about three times as many people for each square mile of arable land in Germany as here in the United States.

Before inflation took over in China and raised the price of everything sky-high, each week the average breadwinner could buy only as much as \$1.40 would purchase here in America. But one-fifth of the people in the world live in China while only one-eighteenth of the earth's population resides in the United States where a breadwinner has an average income of \$28 a week—about 20 times as great.

In India one out of four dies on or before his second birthday. Feed India enough to keep her babies from dying and within 100 years there would be 12,000,000,000 Indians or more. That is five times the number of people on the earth today.

### Growth Throughout World

This suicidal increase in population is not occurring just in so-called backward countries, but also in those that have been industrialized. In these the length of life is ever increasing while the number of children brought into the world continues to be large.

The USSR and tiny Puerto Rico head the list of countries throughout the world as far as population increase is concerned. With birth rates far surpassing death rates, these two countries could double their populations about every 30 years.

There are nearly 12 times as many people for each square mile in Puerto Rico as there are in the United States, yet there the birth rate is twice as high. It has changed little since the island came under the American flag, yet the death rate has been cut in half.

Our fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico, tiny island bursting at the seams with people, eat less than one-third as much meat, eggs, milk, cheese, vegetables and other protective foods as the average white person in the

United States. They get only about one-half as much to eat as Negroes in our Southern cities.

"If Puerto Rico explodes in population, it may cause little disturbance in world politics. Only the inhabitants of that island may suffer. But if Russia's already huge population explodes into a program of territorial expansion," Mr. Burch says, "this would shake world civilization to its foundations."

Today there are urgent appeals for famine relief for China's 450,000,000 people, for India's 400,000,000, for Europe's 500,000,000. Other countries like the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, parts of Africa and the Near East cry for food.

But the crisis has only in part been brought about by the destructive war. The world is chronically hungry. Every year around 20,000,000 more people are added to the world's population—20,000,000 more to feed, yet few additional natural resources are being discovered to add to the earth's dwindling supply. Famine will eternally endanger a majority of the earth's people unless the number stops growing so enormously each year.

### World Must Be Educated

The world must be educated to conserve human resources as well as natural resources. Mr. Burch's studies show that the people of the world cannot be freed from want and war by programs of industrialization and technology unless accompanied by a humane world program for limiting the number of people on this earth.

This is the basic world problem as Mr. Burch sees it. If science lowers the death rate without a corresponding decrease in the birth rate, millions of babies each year will be born only to starve. A program of population limitation must be realistically studied by the society of nations. Some means for educating the world toward this end must be adopted before there can ever be hope for enough food to give each individual a life-sustaining share.

*Science News Letter, August 17, 1946*

#### AERONAUTICS

### NACA and Army Design XS-1

➤ MAN'S FIRST attempt at flight faster than sound will be made soon in a Bell Aircraft-Army XS-1, a plane that follows design knowledge developed by the

National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, it has been revealed.

The XS-1 has been built by the Bell Aircraft Corporation under contract with the Army Air Forces. It is based on high-speed design principles provided by the NACA, with specifications worked out by the NACA, the Army and Bell in cooperation.

The airplane incorporates the latest supersonic knowledge. It is the result of studies made on models conducted in NACA wind tunnels, from the early stability tests in seven- by ten-foot tunnels and a spin tunnel to the later transonic investigation in an eight-foot high-speed tunnel.

Drag and thrust information through the upper transonic range was furnished chiefly by studies of free-falling test bodies released from high altitudes. These streamlined bombs exceed the speed of sound, and have furnished the most accurate knowledge of drag at sonic speed and the thrust required to overcome it.

Just how fast the rocket-powered XS-1 will be able to fly will probably depend on how the controls react near the speed of sound, NACA officials state. This, rather than the drag and thrust that can be calculated, constitutes the real unknown. The "transonic" region, from roughly 500 to 900 miles per hour, is difficult to duplicate in a wind tunnel due to shock waves that "choke" the tunnel. NACA wind tunnels have provided accurate information up to 96% the speed of sound, and this indicates that the XS-1 will include rapid and severe changes in control characteristics.

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