

SAYS BIRTH CONTROL IS ITALY'S REMEDY

**Professor East Answers Cippico,
Who Urged Emigration as
Population Relief.**

WOULD STOP "SPAWNING"

**Inexorable Laws of Nature, He
Says, Make Other Relief
Measures Temporary.**

**GRADE A MEN WELCOME
But Economic Pressure in Italy Is
Not Driving That Class Here,
Lecturer Declares.**

Special to The New York Times.

WILLIAMSTOWN, Mass., Aug. 2.—Professor Edward M. East of Harvard, author of "Mankind at the Cross-Roads," and an authority on population problems, declared in a statement today that Italy should solve her overpopulation problem by birth control. His statement was in reply to last night's lecture at the Institute of Politics by Count Antonio Cippico, Italian Senator and Fascist, who said the Italians would never accept "the infamous remedies of Malthus" and called birth control advocates "apostles of infanticide."

Professor East, who is leader of the institute round table conference on "Agriculture and Population Increase," said:

"Our distinguished visitor, Count Cippico, like the astute politician that he is, has brought with him several sugar-coated pills of Italian expediency. These medicaments he would have the American public swallow, after the rather paradoxical Chinese method, in order to cure his country of the ills which her own reckless living has brought upon her. I refer to his views on the population question. He says, in effect, we must not accept these hard, cruel laws of Malthus. They are not valid in the first place, and, even if they are, they are materialistic and un-Christian and ought to be repealed by statutory enactment. Italy, he somewhat bitterly admits, was tricked at Versailles when the spoils of war were divided; and now the least the world in general and the United States in particular can do is to allow the excess army of half a million, which the country throws off each year, to be farmed out on other lands.

"The eminent Senator has our sympathy. We give it as one would give it to any suffering individual whose recklessness has brought him pain; but the cure does not lie in aiding a continuance of self-indulgence.

Mathematical Law Governs.

"The first Malthusian law is a mathematical law, inexorable as such laws are. Population does tend to press with irresistible force upon the means of subsistence in any given circumscribed unit.

The thesis has been proved beyond a reasonable doubt by an avalanche of quantitative evidence. Under natural conditions population increase is finally repressed and stabilized by the intensity of the struggle for existence, and Count Cippico grants this to be the fact when he says: 'The truth is that her [Italy's] territory is insufficient to support her population.'

"Such a natural law may be harsh, it may be cruel, but we must accept it for what it is, like the law of gravitation. When Christ was led to the highest pinnacles of the temple and asked to dispute the cruelty of the latter law by casting himself down, he refused. He climbed down in the regular way and went about his business. The world asks Italy to follow his example, to extricate herself from her perilous position with respect to overpopulation, in a perfectly natural and reasonable way: not by denying the truth of a law of nature, not by lamenting over its harshness if its validity be granted, but by taking care not to remain in the path of its crushing force.

"Does the world make an unreasonable or unethical request? No. It asks that Italy set her house in order, that instead of spawning children on the world with haphazard recklessness when they can be given no fair chance for a life of happiness and usefulness, to restrict the families in accordance with opportunity. It asks that the sons of Italy be brought into the world by choice, with some regard for the paternal income, the maternal strength and the health of the child. Italy's terrible infant mortality is directly traceable to too frequent childbearing and over-large families. Why not reduce it? Why should man emulate the lobster in the matter of reproduction when God has given him brains? And our visitor should know when the world gives this neo-Malthusian advice that it is not speaking of infanticide, as he stated in his third lecture at the Institute of Politics.

"This advice is not incompassionate. It is the advice of a benevolent family physician who does not want to see a great career ruined by foolhardy indiscretion. It has back of it good and sufficient reasons.

Emigration No Remedy.

"The first reason is the second law of Malthus, which says that the emigration which Count Cippico recommends is no permanent relief to a land of poor people oppressed by the results of their reproductive talents. It is as sound and as inexorable as the first law. It has been proved statistically so many times that continued elaboration of figures is superfluous. Emigration relief is temporary. There is immediate birth release and the harassed people are again back in the same situation. Has not Italy been sending out her overflow for fifty years? And is she not asking to continue this illogical process indefinitely?

"The second reason is still more important. No nation wants the dregs drained from the bottom of the vat. Those of Italy are not less welcome than those of any other nation, but they are not welcome. We know Italy's greatness, her Galileos, her Leonardos, her Michelangelos. Does she send us these, even in humble imitations? She does not. Look over 'Who's Who in America' for Italian names. They are conspicuous by their absence. Look at the army intelligence test records. They are low, so unconscionably low that they are a reproach and a shame to Italy's greatness. She is as well rid of them as an individual would be well rid of a cancerous tumor. I yield to none in my appreciation of Italian art, architecture, literature and science. Our culture here would be immensely improved if we could import and make our own some of the creative geniuses comparable to those who built so grandly in the Renaissance. Have we the slightest chance of obtaining them? Again I say no. The Grade A men of Lombardy and Tuscany are not squeezed out by economic pressure. Such people take care of themselves. Furthermore, these northerners are men of brains, thoughtful and foresighted. They are not producing Italy's excess. The excess comes from below Rome, people of a different race, people where Grade A men are negligible in quantity, where grades D and E predominate. The incompetents from Italy's population curve are the ones the astute Senator asks us to receive. And he is so complacent in his absurd proposal. We don't need these people, that is all. We produce enough of that quality ourselves."

The New York Times

Published: August 3, 1925

Copyright © The New York Times