

EDITORIAL

A MALTHUSIAN AWAKENING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN *The Awakening of China*,¹ Bishop J. Bashford gives some astonishing facts. He says, “Baron Richtofen, after a laborious investigation of many years, submitted to the German government a three volume report of the coal and iron resources of China, showing that they are the first in the world. . . . The German government was so amazed by the Baron’s reports that an expert commission was sent to China in 1897 to re-examine his data, and this commission fully verified Baron Richtofen’s estimates. It was the discovery of these marvelous resources of China which led to the greedy attempts of European powers to divide the Empire— . . . Surely a population of 437,000,000, in a compact territory sustained by agriculture alone, is a phenomenon unmatched by any other country on the globe.”

Continuing the Bishop says further, “If the United States had reached her present population of eighty millions by agriculture alone and had not entered upon the use of machinery, and had not yet touched her magnificent coal and iron deposits, you can see the splendid growth which would yet await us. . . . Dr. Ernest Faber, one of the ablest authorities on China, thinks that China will double her present population. I certainly hope the population in China will not double, but I believe that China will easily double her resources, when she resorts to the reforestation of her hills and adds manufacturing and mining to her agricultural industry.”

In the hope expressed by the Bishop, we have a truly Malthusian touch. Here are a people, with resources yet unscratched and so wonderful as to excite the cupidity of nations—a people easily capable of doubling their production, with

¹ [Bashford, Bishop James W. *The Awakening of China*. New York. 3rd Edition published 1907. [Click here for complete text.](#)—R.B.]

whom a doubling of population would be regarded as a calamity. What would the Bishop have—a people addicted to race suicide, prostitution and sexual perversion, the easy prey to international commercial exploitation? Surely, as a Christian the Bishop's hopes are in blasphemous opposition to the commands of his own Master, who bids the world increase and multiply. As an economist, they are at loggerheads with his own facts, and the facts of civilization, which, by its ever increasing productivity, refutes the fallacy of population increasing faster than subsistence. Given the wasteful system whose religion the Bishop is spreading among the Chinese,—the competitive system—with its destruction of the fruits of nature, for the sake of profit, and the fears of a Bashford can easily find realization. But under any rational system, under the system of co-operation advocated by Socialism, with its production for use, the race is capable of indefinite sustenance, finding within its own increase at once the necessity and the means, scientific, inventive and otherwise, to care for and perpetuate itself. *The Awakening of China* will not end in China. There will be an awakening in other quarters as well; an awakening that will not be favorable to the Malthusians.

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