

Lecture #14: Strategic Resources and the Population Bomb

Suggested Readings:

William Vogt, *The Road to Survival*, 1948; Paul R. Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb*, 1969.
Michael S. Teitelbaum & Jay M. Winter, *The Fear of Population Decline*, 1985.
Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population*, 2008.

Outline

I. Planning for City, State, and Region

TVA stood as model for whole new approach to earlier conservation concerns: planning.
planner as new professional expert with skills to integrate disparate activities and functions into unified, harmonious whole; proliferating throughout society
new towns of 1920s and 1930s as utopian vision for planners: Norris, TN; Radburn, NJ
original inspiration for new town movement was Ebenezer Howard's "garden cities" in England
earliest planning efforts generally in urban areas: 1893 Columbian Exposition a model, led to Plan of Chicago in 1908, effort to rationalize urban landscape
1920s saw creation of Regional Planning Association of America: Clarence Stein, Lewis Mumford, Benton MacKaye, Catherine Bauer, Stuart Chase. regional planning for NYC
movement culminated in Regional Plan of New York and its Environs, 1929

II. Planning for Conservation, Planning for War

New Deal extended these earlier efforts to nation as a whole, with planning at all levels
key agency: National Resources Board, first report promoted planning in 1934
important new resource issue emerges for planners in 1930s: strategic minerals
unequal distribution of key industrial supplies gave nations differential power in war
Axis powers saw war as best way to gain access to resources controlled by Allies
geopolitics of resource economy an increasing concern for U.S. and allied planning
Brookings Institution 1943 report on *World Minerals and World Peace*: "a modern war cannot be fought without tremendous quantities of a few minerals..."
coordination of resource access essential to stability of post-war world; reinforced by Twentieth Century Fund's *America's Needs and Resources*, published 1947

III. The Bomb

persistence of strategic thinking in post-war world: collapse of European empires, rise of Cold War, and explosion of first atomic bombs (Trinity July 16, 1945, Hiroshima August 6, Nagasaki August 9).
bomb pivotal to subsequent environmentalism
nuclear weapons necessitated whole new realms of planning: extremely complex production cycle geographically spread across country, coordinated by state; strategic military planning; state secrecy apparatus; civil defense planning
civil defense meant planning to protect national infrastructure and natural resources

IV. The Parson's Prophecy

post-war years saw new genre of apocalyptic environmental writing: threat to planet
key texts: Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet* and William Vogt's *The Road to Survival*, both published 1948, best sellers: human beings now threatened own survival
bomb taught conservationists to think globally, pointing toward environmentalism
Vogt's argument: rising human population increasingly impinging on global resources
familiar argument since Thomas Robert Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, 1798, which argued that resources increase arithmetically, population geometrically
human populations therefore constantly tend to press against limits of environment
pattern complicated: exponential population growth came from falling mortality, only stopped by comparable fall in birth rates (the "demographic transition")

V. The Population Bomb

post-WWII saw wave of neo-Malthusianism: 1954 pamphlet entitled "The Population Bomb" showed nuclear weapons as best available metaphor for apocalyptic population growth
pamphlet funded by Hugh Moore, inventor & president of Dixie Cup, acted as major funder for publications promoting population control for next 20 years
friend Margaret Sanger strongly supported; she had fought for birth control since opening first clinic in Brooklyn in 1916, many arrests, published *Birth Control Review*, founded Planned Parenthood; she convinced Katherine Dexter McCormick to underwrite \$2+ million development funds for birth control pill, released on US market in 1960
birth control at center of population controversy, much conflict with Catholic Church
potential racist underside to population control: eugenics protects white races from dark movement culminated in 1969 with Paul R. Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*: population as the central environmental problem, Malthusian triage as solution, cut off aid to poor