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Although the Malthusian principle of population in its classical form was largely vanquished intellectually by the mid-nineteenth century, it continued to reemerge in new forms. In the late nineteenth century it took on new life as a result of the Darwinian revolution and the rise of social Darwinism. It therefore seems appropriate, on the bicentennial of Malthus' Essay on Population, to reconsider what Malthus stood for, the nature of Marx's and Engels' response, and the relation of this to contemporary debates about ecology and society. Contrary to most interpretations, Malthus' theory was not about the threat of "overpopulation" which may come about at some future date. Thomas Malthus (1798). An Essay on the Principle of Population. CHAPTER 2. The different ratio in which population and food increase - The necessary effects of these different ratios of increase - Oscillation produced by them in the condition of the lower classes of society - Reasons why this oscillation has not been so much observed as might be expected - Three propositions on which the general argument of the Essay depends -- The different states in which. Let us now bring the effects of these two ratios together. The population of the Island is computed to be about seven millions, and we will suppose the present produce equal to the support of such a number. imagine that the Essay on the Principle of Population was ever based on the law of diminishing returns is to. confuse Malthusianism as expounded by J. S. Mill with Malthusianism as expounded by Malthus. (1924: 144)4. In the Essay Cannan finds the law of diminishing returns in rudiments only, overshadowed by the construct of. the two ratios, but understands that it will eventually turn out to be the true basis of Malthus's theory and. eliminate the two-ratio construct.5 After quoting a passage in the second Essay, which diagnoses the economic. While for Godwin an egalitarian society will remove the negative effects of the principle of population, Malthus. posits that the principle necessitates inequality in human society. Both accuse political institutions of.