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pour le

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Human Population Growth

Madeline Weld

A paper delivered to a luncheon meeting of the Canadian Association for the Club of Rome in May, 1997. The speaker introduced it as follows:

"I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Club of Rome on the very important issue of human population growth. I suspect that some of the things I say may be controversial. Perhaps some of you will think that the statements I make require further documentation or elaboration. I am looking forward to further discussion of any topics I raise after lunch, or at any other time. I believe that the more controversial something is, the more it will benefit from discussion, here and with the Canadian public. There is no doubt in my mind that everyone in this room has a very good grasp of the big picture:"

The world's population is still growing very rapidly in absolute numbers. In fact, at 90 million people a year, it is growing more rapidly than ever before in the history of earth, even though the rate of growth has gone down to 1.6% annually from a maximum of 2.2%. The UN offers several projections, the high, medium and low, for the decades and centuries of the future, depending on demographic developments right now. By the year 2050, the difference between the low and the high projection is 4 billion, or the total world population in 1970. At the same time, in recent years, agricultural production has slowed down relative to population growth, and there is no evidence that a new green revolution is on the horizon. The impact of population growth has dampened the benefits of the increased agricultural production of the last several decades.

The impact of human population growth is evident in

every part of the globe. Vast tracts of land have been cleared for agriculture, a major contributor to the loss of biodiversity. Even those regions that are too inhospitable to be densely populated have been detrimentally affected by humanity. The pesticides used

on citrus fruit are poisoning the polar bears. The tigers of Siberia are being hunted to extinction by poachers. Nor are the oceans safe from human predation.

There are two salient features about the population issue. The first is that there is a consensus among scientists that population is a major factor in the global problematique. The consensus is every bit as solid as the consensus among historians that the holocaust really happened. The Union of

Concerned Scientists in 1993 produced a brochure called "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity" that warned of the detrimental impact of human activities on the planet. The pamphlet warns that "pressures resulting

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from unrestrained population growth put demands on the natural world that can overwhelm any efforts to achieve a sustainable future". The pamphlet is endorsed by 1670 leading scientists, including a majority of living Nobel laureates in science. The national scientific academies of some sixty nations met in New Delhi in 1993, and warned that the world must achieve zero population growth in the lifetime of our children. Even the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the scientific advisory body to the Vatican, warned (prior to the Cairo conference) that there was an urgent need to contain births in order to avoid insoluble problems in the future.

The second feature of the population issue is that, despite the scientific consensus, there is a great deal of public ignorance and confusion about it and reluctance or even fear to address it.

The object of my talk today is to address the question of why the public is so confused about an issue on which the scientists are virtually unanimous. If you're not already convinced of it, I'm going to try to convince you that the public is the victim of deliberate attempts at obfuscation and confusion. There are several players in this drive to confuse the population issue, and I will list some of the ones I have come across.

It is not possible to discuss the global population problem honestly without addressing the very destructive role that the Roman Catholic Church has played. At the end of the second world war, there was a great deal of concern among delegates to the newly formed United Nations about population growth and its implications for the future of mankind. There was hope that the World Health Organization could play a role in bringing family planning to many countries. The Vatican however, assembled a coterie of nations that threatened to withdraw from the UN if family planning were put under the umbrella of the WHO. The Secretary General of the WHO capitulated to this blackmail and family planning was separated from other general health matters. This made it much easier for the Vatican to manipulate individual governments, especially those of Catholic countries, and to shut down family planning clinics in countless developing countries. This is still going on today. The Vatican did its best to derail the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in September, 1994.

Aside from working directly on governments, the Catholic Church uses indirect methods to influence

public opinion and the actions of the governments of developed nations. People in developed nations take family planning for granted, and there would be general outrage, even among Catholics, if any government tried to outlaw birth control. The Vatican knows it cannot succeed in turning westerners against the idea of making family planning available to people in developing countries. But the Catholic Church has millennia of experience in manipulating the actions of people through guilt. The west is currently undergoing paroxysms of guilt for past imperialistic offences. The Catholic Church has been instrumental in making many people feel that concern about population growth in developing countries is just another manifestation of western imperialism. Ninety -five percent of population growth occurs in developing countries, but to be concerned about that rate of growth means that we are selfish, and that we don't want to share the earth's resources. The justified concerns of western governments about the impact of this population growth on their own national security is condemned. In reality, such government concern shows responsibility to its citizens.

.....despite the scientific consensus, there is a great deal of public ignorance and confusion about the population issue and reluctance or even fear to address it..... The agents of public confusion must be identified, exposed and their arguments systematically refuted.

The Catholic church has set up disinformation networks. One of them can be accessed on the Internet. It calls itself Population Research Institute – and its purpose, in its own words, is to “educate the general public about the world-wide population control movement, its human rights abuses and racist foundations.” PRI is a subsidiary of Human Life International, an extremist Catholic organization founded in 1981 by a Father Paul Marx with the encouragement of the Vatican. HLI condemns all forms of so-called artificial birth control and works hard to impede access to reproductive health care. Global Population Concerns, Ottawa has downloaded some information from the PRI Website and we would be happy to make it available to CACOR. Seeing is believing, and some of you may not believe what is being said unless you see it. Better yet, visit their Web Site yourselves.

A group that is very helpful to the Vatican in promulgating the view that a concern with population is racist are the feminists, or at least one very significant and vocal branch of that movement. While they disagree with the Vatican on birth control, they do much to advance the aims of the Vatican by associating any concern with population as being racist, anti-woman and anti-poor.

In a 1993 article in the magazine *Mother Jones*, Nafis Sadik, the executive director of the UNFPA, who served as secretary general of the Cairo conference, is quoted as saying: "We have to realize that in many parts of the world, women want [birth control] methods they can hide from their husbands and families. Many of them are desperate saying, 'Can't you give me an injection, or a pill, because I don't want to be pregnant again'". Dr. Sadik hails from Pakistan, and she also says "Anyone who says the reproductive role of women isn't the most important in the emancipation of women doesn't know what really goes on in our countries." And what are some of the well-heeled feminists who claim to speak for those desperate women described by Dr. Sadik doing? I attended a meeting held in Ottawa in June of 1995. It was organized by a number of feminist organizations including NAC and Inter Pares, and was part of a world-wide effort by feminist organizations to stop research on anti-fertility vaccines, which, if they ever reach the market, promise to suit the needs of poor women in developing countries. The vaccines would be cheap and long-term (1-2 years), require no literacy skills, and could be used confidentially. Ideological feminists are also opposed to Norplant and Depo-provera. One of the criticisms levelled against all these methods of birth control is that they don't protect against AIDS, but only condoms do that, and condoms require the co-operation of the male partner, which is not always forthcoming.

The ideological feminists are doing much to prevent pragmatic methods of birth control from reaching women who are desperate to have them. Their demand that all new methods of birth control be totally risk-free acts as an obstruction to further research. They are also raising the spectre of abuse by governments of certain potential new methods, as well as injectibles and implantables. It is hard to tell the feminists from the Catholics in this instance.

The stance of the ideological feminists is not only unscientific, it is anti-scientific. Science is depicted as a tool of patriarchal western oppression. As such, the scientific evidence of the reality of overpopulation can be dismissed as racist, anti-woman and anti-poor. At the conference just discussed, Whitman Wright challenged the moderator with the scientific evidence for overpopulation. "It was scientists who brought us the atom bomb" she responded, to the great approval of the panel.

Another sower of disinformation is the Fraser Institute, which likes to think of itself as a think tank. In 1995, it produced a document called "Exploding Population Myths", which argued that the world's problems have nothing to do with population growth. This year it

produced one called "Environmental Indicators for Canada and the U.S.", which argues that our environment is really in pretty good shape.

The CBC, both radio and television, has done its bit to confuse the public on population issues. In September 1994, at the time of the Cairo conference, the CBC radio program *Ideas* ran a four-part series entitled "The Population Riddle", and ran it again in the spring of 1995. The *Population Riddle* argued that there was no scientific consensus of a population crisis. One of the so-called experts featured extensively was an economist by the name of Jacqueline Kasun.

The *Population Riddle* was promoting an untruth when it depicted the disagreement about the population problem as a disagreement among scientists. The disagreement is between scientists on the one hand, and certain feminists, economists, and religionists on the other. The *Population Riddle* didn't inform its listeners that Jacqueline Kasun publishes some of her work through the Population Research Institute, that subsidiary of Human Life International. She explicitly avows the Vatican line in some of her books. If the producer was not aware of this, he did not do his research very well. Surely it would have been only fair to inform his listeners of her connection to Human Life International. The *Population Riddle* would appear to deliberately mislead the Canadian public as to the severity of the population problem. The CBC television aired a terrible program called *The Human Laboratory on Witness*. *The Human Laboratory* was originally produced by the BBC. The unstated aim of the video appears to be to discredit all population control efforts in the developing world. For example, it showed a feminist activist (Betsy Hartmann) ridiculing the U.S. government for being so paranoid about population growth that it actually launched a National Security Study to analyse the issue. The camera then cuts to another scene, leaving the uninformed viewer with the impression that that study was indeed an example of U.S. paranoia. However, that study, which was submitted to the U.S. government in 1974 as National Security Study Memorandum 200, is printed verbatim in a book called "The Life and Death of NSSM 200" by Dr. Stephen Mumford. NSSM 200 analyses the global population and resource situation and makes predictions of deteriorating environmental, economic and social conditions if population control is not implemented. Those predictions made in the early 1970s read remarkably like the headlines of today's newspapers with their barrage of stories of collapsing social systems and ecosystems. It is not believable that a reporter for the BBC did not have the resources to actually read NSSM 200. If the producers of *The Human Laboratory*

did not read NSSM 200 yet allowed someone on their video to comment on it, they are remiss in their duties. If they had read NSSM 200 and yet showed the comment being made and allowed it to go unchallenged, the only reasonable interpretation to be made is that they are deliberately misleading their viewers. (By the way, Stephen Mumford convincingly argues in his book that NSSM 200 was shelved due to the efforts of the Vatican, acting through the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and their agents).

The BBC video similarly deceives with its material on quinacrine, a chemical sterilizant used to block the fallopian tubes. Unlike tubal ligations, the use of quinacrine does not require surgery, which, under the septic conditions often found in third world hospitals carries a significant risk. The video shows activists attacking quinacrine, but does not inform the viewers of the enormous amount of evidence for its safety and effectiveness. It was used by millions of people as an anti-malarial drug before and during the second world war. The video tells us that the WHO is refusing to test quinacrine. It doesn't tell us that the director of the WHO's Human Reproduction Program is a professor at a Catholic University in Rome and the son of the Pope's dentist. Surely, that piece of information is at least as relevant as the fact that attempts at chemical sterilization were first made by the Nazis (which we do learn from the program). In fact, quinacrine, which is more painless than a tubal ligation, is likened to the acids that the Nazis used.

The programs just discussed produced by the CBC and BBC are far more damaging than anything Human Life International could produce. People believe that they are getting objective, unbiased information from those august organizations. But are they? There are many articles, too numerous to mention, that downplay the population issue. Many of these articles attack the actions or motivations of population activists. Some try mockery, for example, by implicitly equating concerns about the future of our planet with the flaky predictions of millenniumists or armageddonites. Paul and Anne Ehrlich have written a book called "The Betrayal of Science and Reason: How the anti-environmental backlash threatens our future", which analyses and discredits the arguments of what they term the brownlash. If a single person stands out in this effort to confuse the public, it must be the so-called economist Julian Simon. Simon is known for arguing that humans are our best resource and the more we have of them, the better. When I went to the Human Life International

office here in Vanier to find some material by Jacqueline Kasun, I learned that the recently published (1995) book which Simon edited, "The State of Humanity", is their virtual bible. Simon's articles appear frequently in HLI newsletters. Simon, formerly of the Heritage Foundation, started up his own organization, the Committee on Population and Economy, in 1985. It is housed in an exclusive girls' finishing school, financed by Opus Dei, an extremely right wing Catholic organization. It makes you wonder whether Simon isn't marching to the beat of a higher drummer, doesn't it?

Having attacked everyone else, I now get to the part of my address where I ask "What should the Club of Rome do?" CACOR has done a number of good things. Its members have produced some excellent articles and a well-designed global modelling system. CACOR's main problem as I see it, is its low public profile and the fact that it is more of a discussion group than an action group. What are some examples of actions it should take? Right now, I think, it should organize a response to the Fraser Institute's "Environmental Indicators". It should shred that report, and it should issue a press release about its analysis of Environmental Indicators. It might not be too late to cut up "Exploding Population Myths" while we're at it.

CACOR should stop treating the Pope with kid gloves when he makes his absurd pronouncements on the evils of family planning. This will take some courage, as no one concerned about the global situation, from the Union of Concerned Scientists to the World Wildlife Fund, dares identify the public enemy number one of family planning. Nor should CACOR be shy about refuting non-scientific statements from other "protected by order of political correctness" groups, be they feminists or members of racial minorities. CACOR members should be on the lookout for population-denying newspaper and magazine articles, and respond to them.

I will conclude by saying that everyone who is interested in the future of this planet beyond their own lifetime would do well to recognize that there are deliberate efforts being made to downplay the gravity of the problems we face and the urgency of taking immediate action. There are attempts to discredit those who do publicize the gravity of the situation. The population deniers know how to use selective information to confuse the public and how to make use of the mainstream media to advance their arguments. The agents of public confusion must be identified, exposed and their arguments systematically refuted.

Some Notes

Scientific Consensus on Population:

"World Scientists' Warning to Humanity", pamphlet printed April 1993 by the Union of Concerned Scientists. The UCS may be reached at: Two Brattle Square, P.O. Box 9105, Cambridge MA 02238-9105, tel. 617/547-5552, web home page: <http://www.ucsusa.org>. The UCS also has a "Sound Science Initiative" (SSI) which focuses on four issues: climate change, biodiversity, ozone depletion and population growth. If you are a scientist and are interested in this campaign, contact Lori Jackson at ssi@ucsusa.org

The "Population Summit of the World's Scientific Academies" was held in New Delhi, India, by invitation of the Indian National Science Academy, from October 24 to October 27, 1993. A joint statement was signed by 58 of the world's scientific academies (Population Summit, 1993). The papers delivered at the conference were published the following year ("Population - the Complex Reality. A report of the Population Summit of the world's Scientific Academies." Graham-Smith, F. ed. London: The Royal Society, 1994).

The Pontifical Academy of Sciences acts as a scientific advisory body to the Vatican. It consists of 80 scientists of different religions and nationalities. A Vatican-sponsored report on population and resources produced by 8 of the PAS's lay Catholic scientists was published in June 1994 by the Italian Bishops' Conference. The report stated: "There is a need to contain births in order to avoid creating the insoluble problems that could arise if we were to renounce our responsibility to future generations." Although the scientists avoided discussing specific means of birth control, the Pope was reported to be furious and the report drew swift rebuke from the church. On June 14, 1994, 114 cardinals issued a unanimous condemnation of any population-control measures that would legitimize abortion, sexual promiscuity and "distorted notions of the family".

"The Betrayal of Science and Reason. How Anti-Environmental Rhetoric Threatens our Future", by Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich, 1996, Island Press, Shearwater Books, Washington D.C. This book takes apart the pseudo-scientific anti-environmental arguments in a broad range of areas. It also cites studies (page 26, note 4) showing a profound lack of scientific understanding among the American public. One study estimates that the fraction of truly scientifically literate adults is only 4-5% of the population, almost all of them scientists and engineers. Another study estimates that about 30% of Americans possess a "minimal" understanding of scientific terms and concepts. The lack of scientific knowledge among the general population makes it susceptible to being misled by what the Ehrlichs term the "brownlash".

Role of Roman Catholic Church in sabotaging population control:

Mumford, Stephen D. **The Pope and the New Apocalypse. The Holy War Against Family Planning.** (ISBN 0-937307-01-7). Published by Center for Research on Population and Security, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709, 1986.

Mumford, Stephen D. **The Life and Death of NSSM 200.** (ISBN 0-937307-05-X). Published by Center for Research on Population and Security, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709, 1996. Mumford, Stephen D. **Vatican control of World Health Organization Population Policy: An Interview with Milton P. Siegel.** *The Humanist*, vol. 53, no. 2, pg. 21-25 (March/April 1993).

"The Mumford Affair" published in *The Humanist* (Nov/Dec 1983), pages 5-10, documents the firing of Dr. Stephen Mumford from his position as research scientist with Family Health International as a result of pressure from religious groups due to articles that Dr. Mumford had written.

Free Inquiry, vol. 14, no. 2 (Spring 1994) has many articles on population, population control and its opponents.

Statements By Governments In Which Concerns About Population Growth Are Expressed:

National Security Study Memorandum 200, prepared for the U.S. government, is printed verbatim in Stephen Mumford's book "The Life and Death of NSSM 200".

Canada in the World, (ISBN 0-662-61581), Govt. of Canada, 1995.

Examples of Disinformation on Population Issues:

On the Internet: The Population Research Institute (copyright 1996 PRI and Catholics Online All Rights Reserved) at <http://www.pop.org/> The Population Research Institute, based in Baltimore MD has a local address also: 1642 Baie Verte, Orleans, ON K1C 3K2, tel. 613/824-2497. The PRI is a division of Human Life International, based in Gaithersburg MD, but with a local mailing address at: P.O. Box 7400, Station V, Vanier, ON K1L 8E4. Their office in Vanier is located at 191 Granville.

Some literature by Jacqueline Kasun from PRI office:

The War Against Population. The Economics and Ideology of Population Control. Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1988. The foreword of this 225 page book is written by Julian Simon.

Population Control of the Family. Population Research Institute, 1988.

Birth (out of) Control: The Failure of Government Family Planning Programs. Population Research International, 1994. This booklet has a short preface condemning "anti-reproductive services" by Fr. Paul Marx, founder of Human Life International.

Quotations by Nafis Sadik from: The Holy War Against Birth Control, by Mark Hertsgaard, in *Mother Jones*, March/April 1993, pg. 20-23, 68-74. This article also documents Vatican Interference at the Rio Earth Summit in June 1992 (UN Conference on Environment and Development).

Other Examples of Population Denial:

"In the Name of Development", by Inter Pares, a non-governmental charitable organization, which receives considerable support from the Canadian International Development Agency. This publication denies the contribution of global population growth to environmental degradation. During our correspondence with Inter Pares, we received a letter that stated that the world could support twice or thrice its current population if wealth were equitably distributed. Inter Pares is located at 58 Arthur St., Ottawa, ON K1R 7B9.

From the feminists:

"Power, Population and the Environment: Women Speak", published by the Toronto-based WEED (Women and Environments Education and Development) Foundation at the time of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. Most of the articles in this book deny the population growth/environmental degradation link. One excellent article, by Ann Dale, has a note saying that the views expressed are those of the author only. WEED is located at 736 Bathurst St., Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4.

From the Fraser Institute:

Two Critical Issues Bulletins, "Exploding Population Myths", 1995 by Jim Peron, and "Environmental

Indicators for Canada and the United States", 1997 by Boris DeWiel, Steve Hayward, Laura Jones and M. Danielle Smith. The Fraser Institute is located at 2nd Floor, 626 Bute St., Vancouver, BC V6E 3M1.

From CBC Radio:

"The Population Riddle", produced by David Cayley, aired on Ideas, September 5,6,7,8, 1994. Transcripts can be obtained from Radio Works, P.O. Box 500, Stn. A, Toronto, ON M5W 1E6.

From CBC Television:

"The Human Laboratory", produced for the BBC in 1995 by Deborah Cadbury and aired on CBC's Witness program in 1996.

Mockery about Global Concerns:

"All the trouble in the World" by P.J. O'Rourke, 1994, Random House, Toronto.

Julian Simon, the author of many population-denying books and articles, edited the 1995 book, "The State of Humanity" (Blackwell, Oxford).

The CACOR Newsletter and Proceedings

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- Microsoft Word for Windows
- DOS Versions of Microsoft Word
- Word Perfect 5.0 or 5.1
- Word for Macintosh 4.0 or 5.0
- Excel Work Sheets and graphs.

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- Book Reviews
- Reports on meetings of other groups
- Announcements
- Guest Columns

