

Worldwide underpopulation crisis looms

by Mary M. Burdman

In 1974, Helga Zepp, a leading European associate of economist Lyndon LaRouche, intervened into the first World Population Conference in Bucharest, Romania to warn that any attempt to implement "zero population growth" would not only lead to massive death and suffering worldwide, but would in fact lead to a *collapse* of both the world economy and world population. Over the hysterical braying of anthropologist Margaret Mead, Helga Zepp argued that the real problem was a turn away from scientific and technological development beginning in the early 1960s, and she accused the promoters of zero growth of planning genocide on a scale vaster than anything imagined by Adolf Hitler.

Almost 20 years later, those warnings are rapidly coming true. Although the priests of "zero growth" continue to grind out publicity about alleged world "overpopulation," much evidence now exists which demonstrates that on the contrary, the world may already be moving toward a population decline. Certainly, the so-called advanced sector nations face shrinking populations around the turn of the millennium. In the developing nations, fertility is declining so rapidly in many countries which have not achieved anything approaching the life-expectancy of the advanced nations, that the malthusians who are determined to reduce world population by billions of people could well achieve their goal.

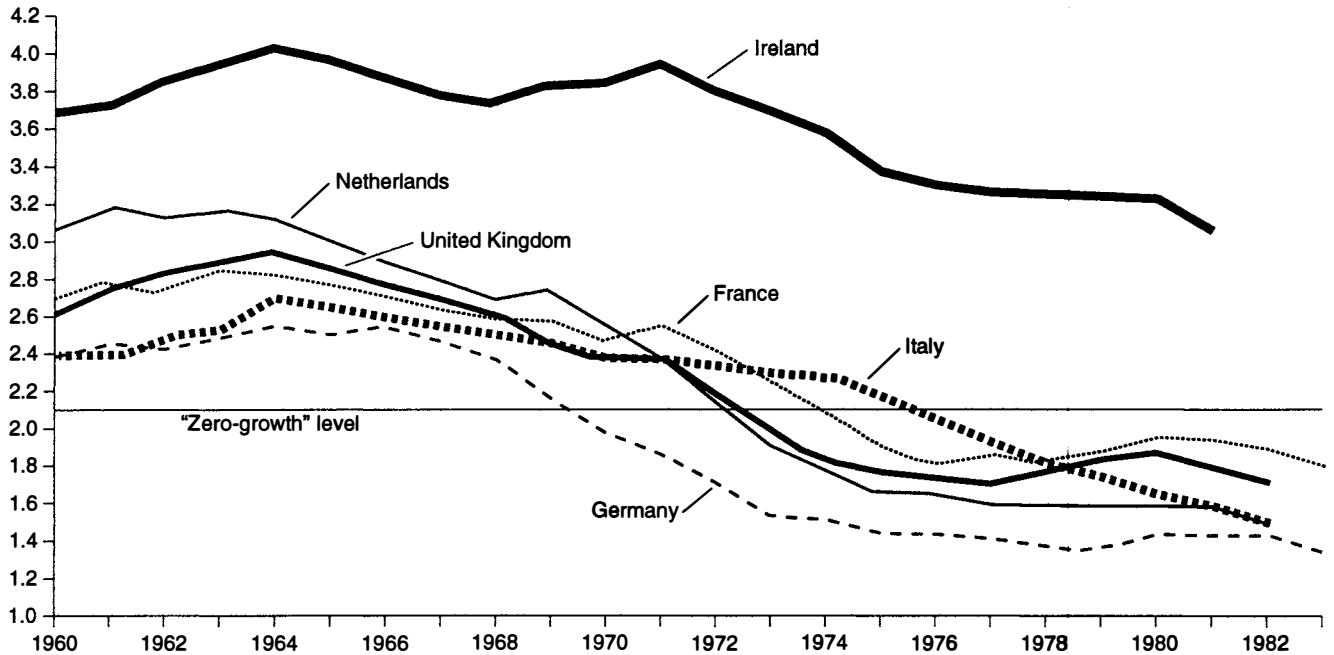
In the following pages, we present a survey of demographic studies, carried out by both private demographers and public agencies, which indicate the proportions of this underpopulation crisis, many aspects of which are *unprecedented in human history*. Admittedly, it would be naive to assume that all of the data presented in these studies are accurate (see box, p. 16); but given the current pressures to exaggerate population estimates on the high side in order to justify taking further measures such as mass sterilization, we can only surmise that the demographic collapse is probably even further advanced than these surveys would indicate.

It is a cruel irony that the constant propaganda about uncontrolled and uncontrollable population growth is actually a *result* of the collapse of fertility in the world's

FIGURE 1

Fertility in most European countries is below “zero-growth” level

(average number of children per woman)



Source: European Communities Economic and Social Committee, *Demographic Situation in the Community* (1986).

industrialized nations—in Europe, North America, and Japan. This fall in fertility over the past three decades—totally unprecedented in world history—is the result of the great cultural “paradigm shift” in the early 1960s, from the relative economic growth and cultural optimism as the world rebuilt from World War II, to the plunge into world depression, war, and epidemics today. As the danger of the AIDS epidemic wiping out whole populations in Africa and regions of Asia grows, the propaganda about the “population explosion” will also grow. As the world economy falls into a black hole, any population becomes too large for the malthusians still controlling governments and financial institutions.

Yet a healthy, growing world economy would demand a healthy, growing population. In Europe at this time, were governments—East and West—to resolve to carry out the LaRouche-proposed “Productive Triangle,” it would be necessary to import labor. Germany, during the period from the late nineteenth century until World War I, when it built itself up to become the biggest industrial power in Europe, became the second biggest “importer” of labor in the world after the United States, taking in up to 1 million workers a year before 1914. Germany and the other war-devastated nations also had to import labor from southern Europe and Turkey, to rebuild after World War II.

The ultimate effect of the fertility collapse on the world

economy is shown by what has happened in Europe—still the region with the greatest industrial potential of the world, which must be mobilized to generate the economic development of all the vast Eurasian and African land mass. As of 1990, the population of Europe had shrunk dramatically as a proportion of the rest of the world. In 1950, one in six people lived in Europe; in 2025, it will be one in 26. By the year 2000, the average age of a European will be 43 (up from 34 now), and 20% of the population will be over 60.

Most revealing is the graph of fertility rates in western Europe after World War II (Figure 1). The years 1964-65 were the turning points—in world history as well as in the births of children. These were the years immediately following the assassination of John F. Kennedy in the United States and the Profumo scandal in Great Britain, which led to the downfall of the Macmillan government in 1963 and its replacement by the Harold Wilson government, the pioneer of the “post-industrial society.” In Germany, scandals forced postwar Chancellor Konrad Adenauer out of power, which seriously weakened the German-French Adenauer-de Gaulle alliance critical to rebuilding Europe. In 1962, Enrico Mattei, the leading architect of the national development policy for Italy, was assassinated.

It was also at this point that the first generations born after the war—those of the “consumer age”—were starting to reach

How reliable are the U.N.'s population figures?

The wildest population growth projections are based on figures compiled and generated by the United Nations Population Division. In more than one case, these reported or projected figures are shown to be very questionable. The U.N. reports its population projection in three "variants": low, medium, and high. These are three possible population levels, based on different fertility and mortality rates. Needless to say, when one reads in U.N. publications such sentences as "Some specialists foresee a world population of 20 billion in the next century," these projections are based on the U.N.'s "high" variant, which projects over 9 billion people by 2025. The "low" variant projects many fewer, at 7.8 billion. But this figure is questionable, if the following cases are representative:

- From April 1974 until December 1978, the Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia and murdered at least 1 million of its people. But what does the U.N. say? The official U.N. figures show a drop of only 600,000 people between 1975 and 1980, probably half the number actually murdered. In percentages, the difference is enormous, since Cambodia had only a little over 7 million people at the time. By 1985, the U.N. claims, the Cambodian population had

miraculously re-grown from 6.5 million in 1980 to 7.3 million—despite the devastation of its young adults.

- In Nigeria, the U.N. had projected that the population would be 110-120 million people by 1992, based on the 1973 census. But the government census in 1992 counted only 88 million people. To date, the U.N. has failed to correct its projections; the "official" reported population for Nigeria for 1990 in the U.N. *World Population Prospects: The 1992 Revision* is 108,542,000 people—20 million more than the government actually counted.

- In November 1982, Prof. Youssef Corbage of the French National Institute for Demographic Studies said in a speech in Brussels that the U.N. had seriously overestimated the number of children who would be born in the Maghreb nations of North Africa, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The difference between the U.N.-projected fertility and the actual fertility represents a "very tangible" difference from what the populations of these countries will be in the medium term, "particularly by the end of the first quarter of the 21st century," he stated. Fertility has fallen at least 50%, from very high levels in all three countries over 30 years. Corbage estimates that by 2025, the population of Algeria will actually be 44.8 million, and not the 52 million estimated by the U.N. Morocco will have 40 million, and not the estimated 45.6 million, while Tunisia will have 12.7 million, and not the estimated 13.6 million.

childbearing age. A report published by the European Commission in 1986 on the causes of the demographic disaster in Europe observed that despite the devastation of all of western Europe in World War II, in the period immediately after the war, in the midst of great economic hardship, "yet couples were fired by the ideal of rebuilding their countries materially and decided to have more children." The current world economic crisis certainly is a factor in low births, "but it should not be forgotten that the demographic crisis appeared well before the economic crisis, and while the latter may have aggravated it, it was certainly not its primary cause."

Enter the zero-growthers

All these trends toward the destruction of developing, productive, industrialized societies were fostered by the neomalthusians, whose "blueprint," the Club of Rome-sponsored *Limits to Growth*, was published in 1972. The malthusians set out to create panic about "overpopulation" destroying the Earth, with such propaganda as Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, published in the early 1970s, which demanded that world population be actively reduced, not just "controlled." In the 1980s, a new argument was introduced,

that population growth was a threat to the "ecosphere." This ecological argument is promoted now, in the much-publicized book *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century*, by the Thomas Malthus of the 1990s, Yale Prof. Paul Kennedy. Kennedy writes:

"The population explosion in the Southern Hemisphere threatens to affect more developed countries of the North. Yet even if that is true, developed Northern regions place much greater stress per capita upon the Earth's resources than do developing countries, simply because the former consume so much more. Thus, the consumption of oil in the United States—with only 4% of the world's population—equals one-quarter of total annual production. . . . The same imbalance in consumption is true of a range of other items, from paper to beef. According to one calculation, the average American baby represents twice the environmental damage of a Swedish child . . . thirteen times that of a Brazilian, thirty-five times that of an Indian, and 280 times that of a Chadian or Haitian because its level of consumption throughout its life will be so much greater." Kennedy's source is none other than Paul Ehrlich.

The policy is not just to reduce the populations of dark-

skinned people in the developing nations, but also to cripple the industrial capabilities of the “advanced sector” nations, including through destruction of their labor forces, thus crippling overall world development.

Yet, were the world to carry out the development policies proposed and fought for by Lyndon LaRouche and others, the Earth could readily support a population many times the current 5 billion. Nuclear energy, particularly fusion, and “Great Projects” for water, agriculture, and transport development, could *triple* the potential population-density of the Earth, and space exploration and colonization would require billions more human beings.

But if current demographic trends continue in eastern and western Europe, North America, and East Asia, the world will not be able to produce the people it needs. At the present time, a “demographic hole” in the generations of children and young people is being created, so deep and so wide, that it may not be possible to rebuild our way out of it.

In the late 1970s, six countries of Europe went into a population decline—in a period, relative to now, of peace and plenty. In those nations (Austria, West Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Bulgaria, and Hungary), population dropped by less than 1%, but in Germany this amounted to over 600,000 people—the equivalent of one of the nation’s larger cities. The fall was due to the most precipitous and *sustained* collapse in fertility recorded—a situation which has no precedent in history. In these modern industrial nations, some with the highest living standards in the world, the natural increase of the population stopped because deaths outnumbered births. Immigration and a slight increase in overall fertility rates pushed the population of these nations up again after 1985, but this first fall only presaged what is to come.

These nations do not include several others of Europe, such as Ireland, which have negative population growth due to out-migration.

Birth rates collapse in east Europe

Today, in the 1990s, it is the turn of eastern Europe. In the new eastern states of Germany, births have fallen by fully 50% since 1989, and other eastern European countries face the same crisis. In 1988, there were 215,734 babies born in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany); by 1990, the first full year of unification, this fell to 174,736 births. In 1991, there were only 107,021 babies born in the former East German states, half the number of 1989. The migration of 1.2 million eastern Germans to the western states does not begin to account for this enormous loss; people simply stopped having children. Latvia’s population is falling; those of Belarus, Lithuania, and Georgia are on the verge of following suit.

On Feb. 5, 1993, the Russian State Statistics Committee demographic department announced that Russia’s population fell last year for the first time since World War II, by more than 70,000 in a population of 148.6 million. Ukraine faces the same problems: In summer 1992, Ukrainian officials an-

nounced at a conference in Austria that Ukraine’s population was decreasing. Fertility rates, long a state secret, have fallen to 1.17 children per woman among Ukrainians, according to reports; the Ukrainian population began falling some time ago, and only the movement of Russians to Ukraine kept the overall population up at all.

The Russian birth rate fell 11% in 1992, the casualty of “shock therapy.” Statistics Committee spokesman Igor Korolyov stated that “the soaring cost of living is forcing many couples to put off having a second child.” Abortions, the only form of birth control in Russia, are rising rapidly. In 1991, there were 201 abortions per 100 births; in 1987, the figure was 166 abortions. Life expectancy is also relatively low in Russia. Infant mortality remains very high at 17 per 1,000, compared to 5 per 1,000 in Japan, and 10 per 1,000 in the United States. Russian life expectancy is only 69.5 years, compared to 75 and above in the nations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Deputy Health Minister Nikolai Vaganov said that the death rate could even be higher, because babies who die at birth are often not even registered. If Russia were to follow international statistical rules, it could raise the infant mortality figures by 20%, putting Russia in 40th place in the world.

The population decline in Russia is part of a long-term trend. In the early 1980s, the increase in population was 1 million per year, but by 1989 it had dropped by half to 500,000. The population decline also reflects the decimation of the Russian population during World War II, when 20 million people died. The demographic effects are still being felt. “In the 1980s the number of women of childbearing age fell by 1.7 million—14%,” said Korolyov. Even the influx of Russians from Central Asia and other countries of the former Soviet Union cannot make up for the fertility decline. At the same time, up to 90,000 people a year are migrating out of Russia.

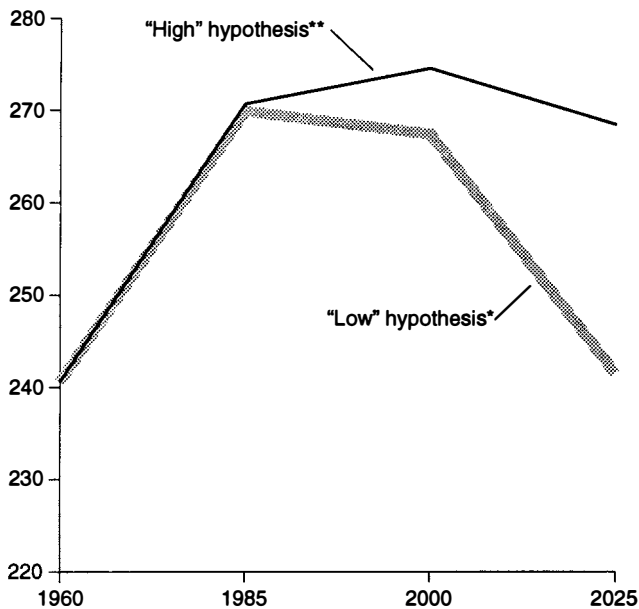
As of June 1992, the Demographic Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences claims that the Russian population is now decreasing by 196,000 people per year. The trade union daily *Trud* reports that in the industrial center of Voronezh, figures recently showed 26,000 births, as against 35,000 deaths.

By the year 2005, according to projections made already in 1990 by the United Nations, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Belgium, and Denmark will again be losing population—this time *permanently* (see **Figure 2**). The fertility rate in Germany is 1.4 children per woman. By 2030, nearly 40% of the German population will be 60 years of age or older. A 1991 OECD report said that the western German population is expected to shrink by about one quarter by 2030, from 61 million to 47 million. In some regions of Italy, fertility rates have fallen below one child per woman at the present time. That figure is 48% below replacement rate. By 2025, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria, and Luxembourg will be added to that list.

FIGURE 2

Projected population trends in the 10 EEC countries

(millions)



* Continuation of present fertility rate

** Gradual rise in fertility rate from about 1990, up to about generation replacement level (gross reproduction rate equal to 1 around 2020)

Source: European Community Economic and Social Committee, *Demographic Situation in the Community*, 1986.

“Zero growth” is not in question; what is happening is *negative* population growth. For a modern nation even to maintain its current level of population over time, overall there must be an average of about 2.1 births for every woman in her lifetime (or, more realistically, 2.3 births per woman, as levels of celibacy and childlessness rise). That level will at least maintain a level of population over time as one generation succeeds another. If fertility rates fall below this level for any period, the next generation will simply be smaller than the preceding one, and as the older, larger generations die out, population levels will fall. As the smaller younger generation maintains only a negative fertility rate, the collapse will accelerate.

There are nations facing negative population crises all around the world. In Japan, where the birth rate last year at 9.8 per 1,000 population was the lowest recorded in the world, even the most exaggerated U.N. projections predict that population will peak and begin to fall by 2010 at the latest. Japan has the second largest economy in the world. South Korea’s fertility rate is currently 1.7 children per woman. In Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, immigration is the only thing keeping population

from falling at this time. In North America, net international immigration accounts for about 25% of population growth over recent years.

How the death rate figures in

At the same time, fertility rates are falling rapidly in many of the less developed regions of the world. The so-called population “explosion” so deplored by the malthusians, is due, not to an increase in births, but to the *decrease* in deaths. At this point, as Prof. Youssef Corbage of the National Institute of Demographic Studies in France pointed out in Brussels at a conference on Nov. 26-28, 1992: “Arithmetically speaking, the impact of the death rate is now of an order of magnitude four times lower than the birth rate, following the dramatic decline in sickness and death which began at the turn of the century and began to accelerate from about mid-century onwards,” in the developing sector nations. Migration also is of lesser importance, having an effect on population growth one-twentieth that of the birth rate.

Fertility rates have fallen sharply in North Africa. Even in sub-Saharan Africa, which is generally considered the pariah of the world malthusians because of its 2-3% population growth rate, fertility is falling rapidly in several nations, according to recent surveys which are much more accurate than the generally used United Nations projections. Yet in this region of Africa, life expectancy is barely 50 years, and it is the epicenter of the world AIDS epidemic, which kills young adults, the very people who should now be producing the next generation.

Among developing sector nations, there are many cases where fertility rates are almost as low as in the industrialized nations. These include the Caribbean, except Haiti, and several nations of Southeast Asia. In Thailand the situation is particularly dangerous. The AIDS epidemic there will approach the disastrous dimensions of that in Africa by the early twenty-first century. That means, simply, that Thailand faces *depopulation* (see box).

China is an even more extreme case. The Chinese government—although it must be remembered that Chinese figures are even more suspect than those of the United Nations—just proclaimed in late April, that it has “achieved” a fertility rate as low as those of Europe and the United States. Based on data released for 1992, the fertility rate for China is now between 1.8-1.9 children per woman, down drastically from 2.3 in 1990. The replacement rate is 2.2 in China. The drop is the result of a two-year nationwide crackdown by the despised but powerful State Family Planning Commission, which carried out a massive, widespread campaign of coercion to stop births. Despite the intense propaganda exciting fear of a new “Yellow Peril” of close to 2 billion Chinese in the next century, at such negative fertility rates, China too will join the nations losing population, likely well before the middle of the next century.

All this is well-known public information, and most of it

Thailand's labor force is dying out

On May 9, the *Bangkok Post*, Thailand's biggest English-language daily, featured a two-page article titled "Drop in Fertility Threatens the Thai Race." The article features the work of Thai demographer Dr. Tieng Pardthaisong of Chiang Mai University's Medical Science Faculty, who has been studying the effects of Thailand's national family planning program for nearly 30 years. Thailand's big cities, including Bangkok and Chiang Mai, as well as its countryside are facing a severe labor shortage, the *Bangkok Post* reports, and schools and factories are being closed around the country for lack of students or workers.

Dr. Tieng has documented that Thailand now suffers a below-replacement fertility rate, the result of the broad population-control policies introduced already in the early 1960s. Thailand's overall fertility rate is only 2.21, below the level of 2.3 needed to replace the population in Thailand, Dr. Tieng reports. Population growth is now only 1.2%, as opposed to 3% before the birth control programs were introduced, and Thailand's population is "aging" rapidly.

Based on the current fertility rate, Thailand's population will rise to 58.4 million by 2000, but by 2035 it will have fallen to 56.3 million, and plunge from then. The population could be as low as 17.5 million in only a little over 100 years. At that point, the proportion of elderly people will have grown from 4.5% currently to 25%. Rebuilding the population from such depths could take centuries.

has been well known for a long time.

It is therefore very possible, if present trends continue, that the world is heading for population collapse, from which it could not recover for many generations. This has happened before in world history, but this time, the cause, the unprecedented drop in fertility, may prove harder to overcome than previous causes of falling population, such as epidemics like the Black Death of the fourteenth century. It is also a cause for concern that so much of the fertility drop is due to *permanent* measures. Sterilization of women "is the most widely used method" of birth control "in the world as a whole," Johns Hopkins University's *Population Reports* stated in December 1992. At least 16.5 million Chinese were sterilized just in 1991-92, and the rate could be higher. In Brazil, Health Minister Alceni Guerra stated in 1991 that as many as 20-25 million

women of childbearing age may have been sterilized—many of them involuntarily (see *EIR*, June 14, 1991, p. 28).

In Africa, and potentially in areas of Southeast Asia, the situation is even more alarming because of the AIDS epidemic (see *EIR*, Aug. 14, 1992). In most epidemics, it is the very young and old who are most vulnerable. Although the loss of young children takes a terrible toll on a population, they can be quickly replaced, if adults have more children. When adults in their twenties and thirties die in such numbers, who will there be to have more children?

A few facts about demography

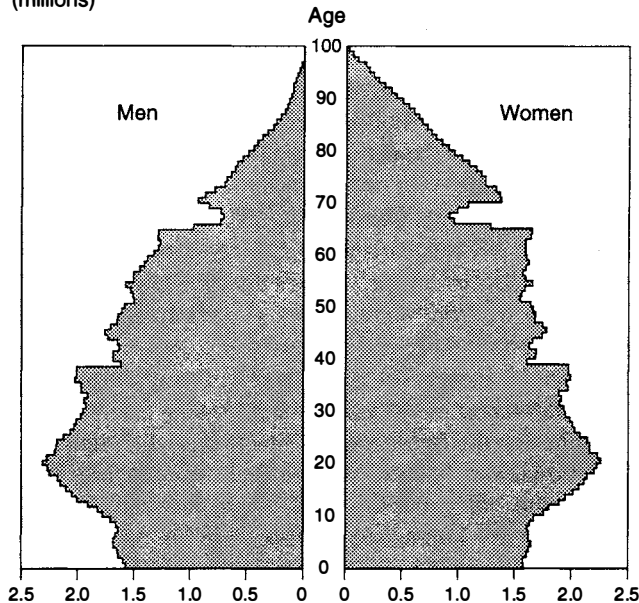
Demography—the method of looking at populations, their growth and structure—is not a matter of counting heads and adding on from there, which is, of course, what the malthusians do in their wild attempts to project world populations so vast that every square meter of land might be overrun.

A 1986 report published by the European Community's Committee on the Demographic Situation on the collapse of births in western Europe, warned that demographers must be a cautious lot, especially in their predictions. The basic reference is the duration of a human life—in the advanced nations, a span of 75 years—and important shifts in populations must be assessed over 50 years or more. Even large-scale war, famine, or disease may only have a relatively temporary effect on an overall population, reducing births and increasing deaths for some years, but this can be "made up" if larger numbers of babies are born in the following years. But the current 30-year collapse of births in the advanced nations is something that could take generations to repair—if that happens at all. As of January 1985, "the slump in fertility had already made a severe dent in the base of the [age] pyramid, greater even than the combined deficit of births in the last two wars," the report states (see **Figure 3**).

Birth rates per 1,000 population, although they are most frequently cited, are only the crudest indicator of population trends over time, because such figures can vary greatly from year to year. A more accurate measure is the Total Fertility Rate, which is an assessment of the number of children a woman bears in her lifetime. For every woman, this must be an average of slightly over two children to even replace the existing population. The Total Fertility Rate was defined by Fred Arnold and Ann K. Blanc in their report for the Demographic and Health Surveys of October 1990, as representing "the number of children an average woman would have from age 15 to age 44, if she experienced the age-specific fertility rates observed during the period for which the rate is calculated." Age-specific rates are based on birth data and calculation of the number of children a woman of a specific age group had during a specific time period, usually five years. The precise rate varies somewhat from country to country.

What is essential to understand, is that there is *no such thing* as "zero growth." A population is made up of living

FIGURE 3
European Community "population pyramid"
on Jan. 1, 1985
 (millions)



Source: European Economic and Social Committee, *Demographic Situation in the Community*, 1986.

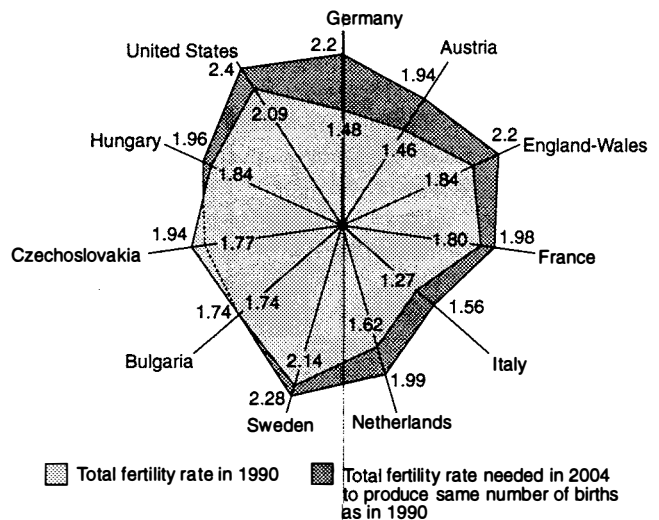
human beings, affected not only by health and disease, but also by economics, and, perhaps most profoundly, by cultural questions. It cannot be maintained in any sort of "steady state," even under the most stringent dictatorship. Foolish, arithmetically minded malthusians try to frighten the world about unlimited population "explosion" by projecting the addition of ever-increasing numbers to the current population of the planet. But populations actually develop, or devolve, on the basis of changes set in motion often years before the current head count.

The decisive question is not the *number* of people in a population, but its structure: the proportions of young and aged, the formation of families, and the production of children as older people die out.

At this point in world history, fertility has fallen so low for so long in the industrialized nations, that the number of women who will bear the next generation has shrunk—meaning that for them even to replace the current population, young women in the advanced sector nations would have to have *more* children each than their mothers had, reversing a decades-long trend to have ever-fewer children (see **Figure 4**). The fact remains, despite some odd reports recently of totally artificial means of extending fertility to beyond menopause, that a woman's ability to bear children is strictly time-limited. Once that period is past for a generation, there is no making it up.

Slight, temporary increases in the number of births at any

FIGURE 4
Fertility will need to increase in order to even maintain current number of births
 (number of births in mother's lifetime)



Source: Louis Roussel, "Fertility and Family," report to European Population Conference, Geneva (Switzerland), March 23-26, 1993.

period, do not reverse a collapse in fertility, which at this point has fallen to between 15% and even 20% below replacement level for over a decade. If there is not an over 20% increase in total fertility rates, the population will fall, ever more rapidly. In other words, if the current rate of collapse continues, populations of whole countries could actually disappear in the twenty-second century.

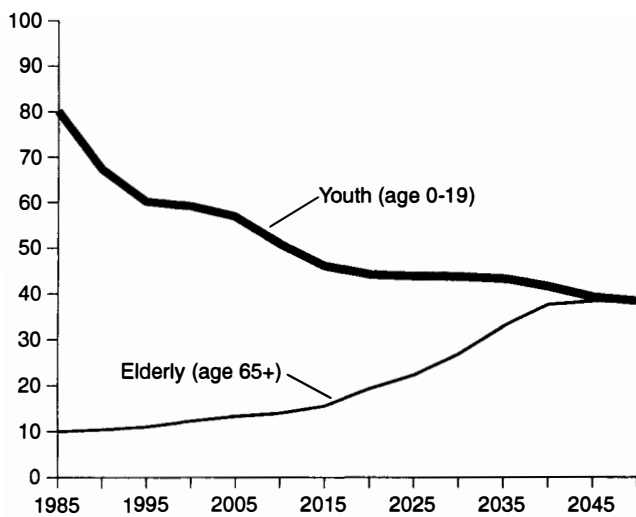
Population is 'aging'

The plunging fertility rate in the industrialized nations, which began in the United States in 1960, and spread from there to Europe, and then to Australia and Japan, is accompanied by great changes in social structure. First, the population is "aging" rapidly, not only in the industrialized nations but also in East Asia, especially China (see **Figure 5**), where the stringent population-control policy, culminating in the current one-child-per-couple rule, has artificially, drastically shrunken the younger generations over the past 30 years. While one factor "aging" the population is increases in longevity, including of those over 80, the more decisive aspect is the collapse of births. Thus, both the number, but even more important, for social and economic reasons, the *proportion* of persons over 65 is ever-growing, while the number of the labor force and the family-creators, is shrinking (see box). It will not be too long, before what used to be an "age pyramid"—the population structure which has prevailed in human history, with the broad base from age 0 on up, gradually narrowing and coming to a peak with the small numbers

FIGURE 5

The aging of China's population

(ratio per 100 persons aged 20-64 years)



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Center for International Research, International Data Base on Aging.

of those 70 or above—will be *inverted*. Referring back to Figure 3, one can readily see how even the ravages of both world wars show up as “dents” in the pyramid structure, whereas current trends are drastically altering its shape.

The 1991 OECD publication *Migration: The Demographic Aspects* emphasizes that industrialized countries soon face the risk of death rates rising higher than birth rates. This is due directly to the fall in births. *Migration* cites one study published by the United Nations *Population Bulletin* already in 1976 demonstrating that “the Western countries should expect a steady rise in their death rates, which may overtake birth rates; this results from the inertia of our age structures and from ‘catching up’ thanks to advances in health care” since World War II. “While the whole population will live longer, the increase in longevity is nonetheless limited for each individual. . . . The present generations will inevitably die out in the 2000s. These cohorts will inevitably account for more deaths than annual births, even if fertility were to stay at replacement level.” The 1976 report said that populations could be falling in European and North American nations by 1% a year by 2050; the fall will likely be much sooner and more rapid even than that.

There are other immense social changes. Marriage and the traditional family are endangered species; this includes the modern “nuclear” family of parents and children as well as the older “extended” family. In some European countries and many cities, half or more of the households are people living entirely alone. Throughout the industrialized nations, more and more children are born out of wedlock, the number reaching one-third to one-half in some countries. And so forth.

Demography of the developed nations

In January 1984, the European Community’s Committee on the Demographic Situation in the Community convened its Section for Social Questions to study and report on the collapse of births in Western Europe. “Since 1964, the birth rate in each of the countries which make up the EEC has been falling constantly. After 1975, there were some very slight improvements here and there. However, there is nothing to indicate when, or even if, we shall regain the average of 2.1 children per woman which is needed merely to keep the population stable,” the group wrote in its 1986 report.

“This situation is not peculiar to Europe. The birth rate in the U.S.A. started to fall in 1960. After reaching Europe, lower birth rates started to occur first in Japan, and then in Australia. The phenomenon therefore affects all the developed countries, and has *no historical precedent*” (emphasis added) (see Figure 6).

The depth of concern in the EEC with this problem was reflected in this report. “A child is the incarnation of hope. . . . Europe is a human, economic, social and cultural community, and it will be constructed all the more firmly if it is founded on a dynamic and harmoniously structured population, where each age has its place. That means that a higher birth rate is necessary in order to correct the present shape of the age pyramid, especially as people are tending to live longer.”

Beginning in 1964, the number of births in the entire EC had declined overall 30% by 1986, the report stated. The EC at that time included Germany, France, Italy, Denmark, Britain, Ireland, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium. In Germany and especially Italy—the two most populous nations of Europe—the fall has been 40-45%. Only Ireland has relatively high fertility, and Greece at least maintained a zero-growth birth rate. “It is unprecedented in a time of peace that in all the other countries the fertility rate should [by 1975] have dropped below replacement level and remained very low, without any sign as yet of an appreciable and lasting upturn,” the EC reported.

The critical difference is the fact that throughout Europe, the “standard” family shrank from three children to two children. Even in France, where the fall in fertility has been less extreme than Germany or Italy, the number of women having even a third child fell sharply: Of the 1930 generation, four women in 10 had three or more children, whereas by the 1950 generation, it was only 2 in 10. The London *Family Policy Bulletin* of August 1991 reported that in Ireland, fertility fell from 4 children per woman in 1965 to 2.11 in 1991. The number of third children fell by 77% in Portugal, 72% in Italy, 50% in Britain, and 40% in Ireland.

In December 1990, European newspapers reported that three Italian demographers had drawn up a confidential paper for discussion by the 12 EC social affairs ministers in Brussels, which warned of an impending demographic catastrophe. European women were no longer having enough babies to prevent absolute decline of the population, and fertility rates in Germany, Italy, and Spain had fallen to the lowest in

LaRouche on the underpopulation crisis

The following remarks were made by physical economist Lyndon LaRouche in the course of a June 15, 1991 interview conducted with Dominican Republic television journalist Dr. Julio Hazim at the Rochester Federal Medical Center where LaRouche is being held as a political prisoner.

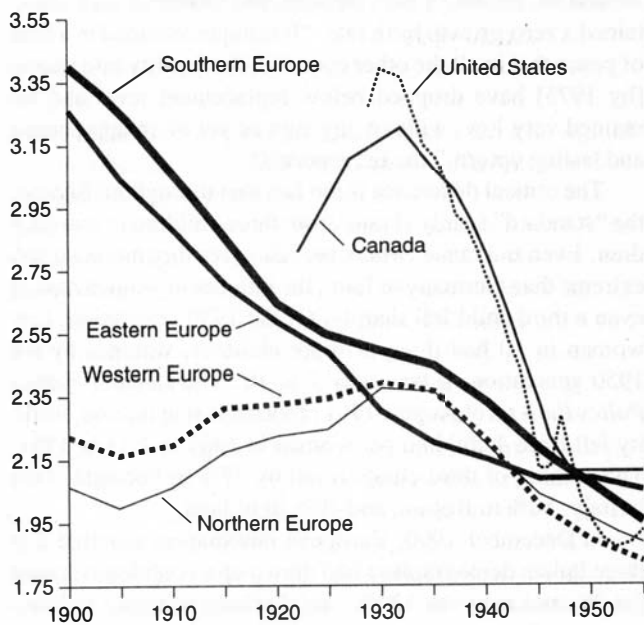
If you're going to have a high-quality population, you have to have a population which has a life expectancy, modally, up to 85-90 years of age, if you want a quality population. If you want a highly educated population, that means you have a school-leaving age of about 25 years of age. Now, in order to have a productive society, you must have a highly educated population. That means up to 25 years of age education. Now, how many years of adult life [are required] to pay for raising one child to 25 years of age with full education? That means you require an effective modal life expectancy, working life expectancy, of up to 60, or 65, or 70 years of age. If I produce a population which is generally healthy, up to

60-70 years, from the standpoint of work, then I have a population which will live to 85 or 90 years. . . .

If I reduce the birth rate, then I have a population that is demographically aged, where 50% or more of the population will become senior citizens. Now, to reduce the population, I have to go around and kill the senior citizens. This is what is happening now. People will say, "Right to Die": Cut down hospital services, cut down health insurance. You're getting to the point where if you walk out of a factory on your last day of employment at the age of 65, they shoot you in order to maintain population control.

There's a certain structure of the family in terms of children per married couple, which maintains a balance for progress. If you have fewer children, then you have a demographically aged population. If you try to lower the life expectancy below the working age of retirement, at 65 for most of the population, then you have a poorer-quality population, then you lower the population potential. What you do is, then, you create overpopulation. You create a population which you cannot maintain; and you say, "Maintain a smaller population and all will be well"; but the things that you would have to do to reduce the population will create the problem you say you're trying to avoid.

FIGURE 6
Fertility trends in Europe and North America
(births per woman, by year of woman's birth)



Source: Louis Roussel, "Fertility and Family," report to European Population Conference, Geneva (Switzerland), March 23-26, 1993.

the world. The secret paper said that "Europe can no longer exist without the dynamism of its youth, necessary for the innovative and creative spirit," but also raises the specter of an "inevitable" tide of immigration from North Africa and the Mediterranean basin if Europe does not replenish its labor force. The Italian paper accuses previous EC meetings of only coming to "feeble" conclusions, and says the time has come for action, an "operational phase producing directives (mandatory Eurolaws)." The paper indicates that fiscal reform favoring marriage should be made. The British government opposed such measures, and has already clashed with Brussels on calls for Europe-wide standards for pregnancy leave and pay for working mothers.

Nothing happened. As of January 1992, the Italian National Research Center reported that Italy's birth rate had fallen to the lowest in the world. Italian women average 1.27 children, down from 1.29 in 1990. This is over 30% below zero growth. The speed of the plunge was unprecedented. By August 1991, fertility rates in Spain and Italy had fallen to only 1.3 and 1.29 per woman. Just the year before, Italy was reporting a birth rate of 1.34, and Spain, of 1.38. Within only three years, if the situation continues, Italy will have more citizens over 60 than under 20. By the year 2021, according to projections, Italy's population, which is now 54 million, will have shrunk by 3.5 million people.

The birth collapse continued, as the 1990 demographic statistics from the European Community proved. Overall fertility for the 12 EC nations—Spain and Portugal had since

joined the EC—had fallen to 1.6 children per woman, almost 20% below zero growth. At the present fertility rate, the population of the original 10 EC nations (before Spain and Portugal joined), which was 270 million in 1985, will have fallen to 240 million by 2025. The population of former West Germany, without the five new states, which was 60 million in 1985, will fall to 35 million, and of France, at 54.4 million in 1985, to 48.6 million.

The next World Population Conference

The United Nations is preparing to hold a World Population Conference in Cairo, Egypt in 1994—on the 20th anniversary of the first World Population Conference held in 1974 in Bucharest, Romania, which set the agenda of population control in the developing nations. There is real concern among some European demographers, especially in France, about the extent of the crisis, but little will to change it. Typical of this myopic thinking was one British professor who spoke at the March 23-26, 1993 U.N. Economic Commission for Europe conference in Geneva. He said there was no need to be concerned about the shrinking labor force, since there were so many unemployed in Europe already.

Professor Louis Roussel, of the French National Institute of Demographic Studies, presented a detailed study of the scope of the fertility collapse in the nations of North America and East and West Europe. In the United States and Canada, the social change has been much bigger and faster. Both nations had fertility rates of 3.0 in 1960; by 1970 they had fallen by 40% to 1.8. Fertility rates in Canada are holding at 1.7, approximately 20% below replacement, although the U.S. rate just rose above replacement level in 1990. Fertility among women born in the early 1930s, who had their children during the famous post-war “baby boom,” was as high as 3.35 children per woman in the U.S. and 3.15 in Canada—rates that would be considered “Third World” today. The fertility drop was even more precipitous than in Europe: Fertility rates for women born in 1945 were around 2.15, a fall of over one-third in less than 20 years. Sterilization is also very widespread in North America: In Canada, 44% of women aged 18-49 are sterilized, Prof. Roussel reported; in the U.S. the figure is 28%.

As of December 1992, the U.S. Bureau of the Census totally revised its previous projections, to claim that the U.S. population will grow more in the 1990s than it did in the 1950s, with the biggest share in this growth among black and Hispanic people (the United States makes a point of classifying its population by “race”). As of 1990, the number of births in the United States had dropped for the first time since 1985, by 2%, the Department of Health and Human Services reported at that time. The largest regional decline was 5%, in the Pacific states. At the same time, the U.S. Census Bureau reported a “population explosion” of the elderly. The new Census report claims that the number of black and Hispanic people will grow to constitute almost 50% of the population by 2050. Previously, the Census Bureau had

predicted much slower population growth up to 300 million by 2038, and then a slow overall population *decline*. The fertility rate has increased in the U.S., from 1.825 in 1986, to almost 2.1 births per woman. The population will grow due to immigration, and, the Census Bureau assumes, because black and Hispanic women will continue to have higher fertility rates than European-descended women.

Such conclusions are open to question, however. European studies show that immigrants’ fertility rates tend to fall to as low or lower than that prevailing in the host country.

Immigration and the labor shortage

The result of the fertility collapse will be a severe contraction of the labor force, the EC already was reporting in 1986. “If the fertility rate remains unchanged, in the year 2000, in the Community of 10, the number of people old enough to begin economically active life will be only two-thirds that of the number of people nearing the end of their working career. The impact of this factor on the size of the labor force will increase as time passes.” The labor force overall will also eventually age as the “proportion of young people entering the labor market falls to unprecedented levels.” This aging of the labor force will affect productivity and mobility of the population. Immigration cannot begin to fill the gap. “The size of the deficit of young people and adults is such that, unless immigration is on a massive scale and hence liable to change radically the population of the societies concerned, immigration *will not* be able to prevent demographic aging.”

Labor shortages have already emerged in Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, and Japan, the OECD reported in 1991. One late 1990 prediction says that the EC’s labor force will shrink 5.5%, from 145 million in 1990, to 137 million over the next 30 years.

Of course, with the collapse of the European economies, which began with the devastating effects of the 1972 oil hoax, Europe now has a large “reserve” labor force of unemployed workers, including many older workers more and more frequently taking early retirement as an alternative to being laid off as their industries, from steel, to auto making, to mining, are shut down. This work force would be totally inadequate to any kind of genuine economic development program, however, as the following shows:

Europe suffered a labor shortage as it rebuilt from World War II, but was able to recruit workers from the south and east to meet its needs—just as Germany had done in its first great industrial buildup which was crushed by World War I. From the late nineteenth century until 1914, Germany was the second biggest importer of labor in the world after the United States, because Germany, like the young U.S., did not have enough workers to industrialize rapidly. In June 1989, W. Ohndorf of the West German Labor Ministry wrote: “Between 1955 and 1974 . . . rapid economic revival in Western and Northern Europe caused a considerable labor shortage which was filled by migrant workers from Southern Europe, Turkey and North Africa. Between 1955 and 1968,

the Federal Republic of Germany made agreements with [these countries] concerning the recruitment of foreign workers. The employment of foreigners increased from 80,000 in mid-1955 to 2.6 million in 1973. . . . The worldwide economic recession that was triggered by the oil crisis in 1973 led to dramatic change in labor markets in Europe. . . . In Germany, during mid-1973 there were 700,000 vacancies and only about 200,000 persons unemployed. By 1975, numbers had been reversed: about 200,000 vacancies compared to 1 million unemployed."

Other European nations had the same trends. "The number of employed foreign workers in Germany fell from 2.6 million in autumn 1973 to less than 2 million in summer 1975." Millions of jobs for unskilled or semi-skilled labor disappeared. It was the economic crisis, triggered by the 1973 "Oil Hoax," which led to "surplus" labor and the constantly exploited tensions about so-called "hordes of immigrants" approaching Europe. To build the Great Projects needed to pull out of the depression, Europe would have to bring in workers.

The Western Hemisphere faces the same problems. At this time, in Mexico alone 1 million persons enter the labor market each year. Mexico has a population of 90 million, about one-third of the total populations of the United States and Canada. Yet its new job seekers equal in numbers 50% of the new job seekers in all the much bigger U.S. and Canada, where the population totals 270 million. There are only 20 million people in vast Canada.

The OECD's 1991 *Migration: The Demographic Aspects* reveals that immigration was not going to be able to fill up the enormous holes in the advanced-sector populations created by negative-growth fertility. Immigration has increased the size of receiving countries' population, but it has had almost no effect on the overall age structure of the population. Projections for four countries—Spain, Canada, Belgium and Austria—predicted that deaths will exceed births by 2025 at the latest, if current fertility continues. For immigration to prevent a fall in population, it would have to start at sufficient levels—double the current rate—as early as 1990 in Belgium and Austria, by 2000 in Spain, and by 2010 in Canada.

Fertility is also collapsing in the sending countries. Prof. Youssef Corbage of the French National Institute of Demographic Studies warned in a speech given in Brussels in Nov. 1992, that births were falling fast in the North African Maghreb: Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. "Just as Europe's bulging baby-boom generation leaves working life for retirement, and will need to rely on a sufficient labor force—foreigners in particular—to finance it, the Maghreb labor markets, where labor will be in short supply, will be hard-pressed to meet export demands," he stated.

Professor Corbage debunks the "received wisdom" that the entire southern Mediterranean is overflowing with people, and that its growing population "threatens" to overwhelm Europe in a matter of years. At the present time,

women of the Maghreb bear *one-half* the number of children they did just one generation ago. Although fertility rates were very high in this region 30 years ago, they have now fallen from 6.97 per woman to 3.29 in Tunisia in 1991; from 7.17 to 3.86 in Morocco, and from 7.28 to 4.71 in Algeria, the most prolific population. Among urban women in the Maghreb, fertility is now replacement level—2.1 children per woman. Fertility rates among women who had emigrated to France were noticeably lower—as much as 1.5 children per woman—than in their original country, except Tunisia, where by 1990, lower birth rates overtook the rate among Tunisian women in France.

Studies on aging

A new United Nations Economic Commission for Europe report, released March 23, documents "unprecedented aging in Europe and North America." A UNECE release states: "Throughout history, persons over 60 years of age have been vastly outnumbered by those under 15 years of age. Even today, the population aged over 60 years in [Europe and North America] is only three-quarters of the size of those under 15 years of age. In contrast, by 2025, the number of elderly persons in the two regions is expected to *exceed the number of pre-adult persons by one-third*. This type of generational structure has never been even remotely encountered in the past. Today's regional average age of over 30 years (itself a record) is expected to increase to over 40 years in the next few decades.

"It is particularly striking that these developments have emerged almost simultaneously in each of the more than 30 national populations of Europe and North America. Although differences in national aging patterns can be substantial, they are clearly of secondary importance when compared to the common trend of unprecedented population aging."

According to U.N. projections, the median age (half the population older and half younger) of every European nation will go up by at least 10 years between 1970 and 2025. Most dramatic are the projected increases from a median age of 32.5 in 1970 in Denmark to 45.9 in 2025, from 34.3 to 48.1 in Germany, and from 28.6 in the Netherlands to 46.8. By 2025, the U.S. Census Bureau reports, Italy will have a median age of almost 50 years; in the U.S. it will rise from 33 in 1990 to 38.5 in 2025.

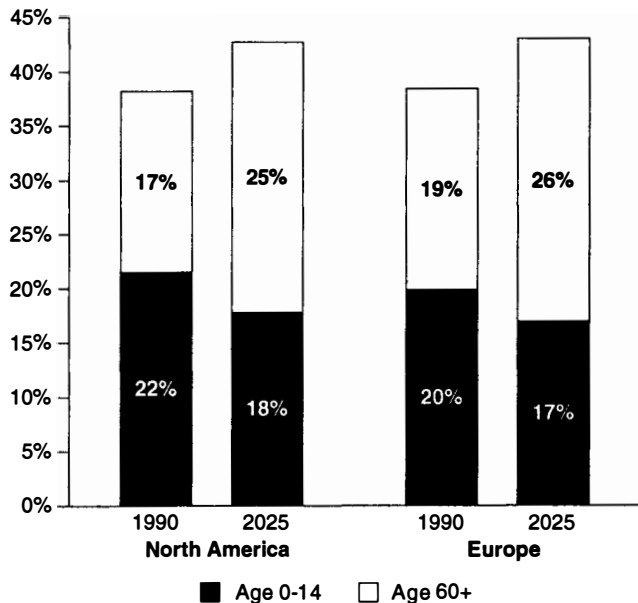
The United Nations "medium variant" projections for 2025 show the percentages of young people and elderly *reversing* (Figure 7).

The report "An Aging World II," published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census International Population Reports in February 1993, documents that the population of not only the industrialized nations, but also East Asia is aging rapidly. In only a quarter-century, from 1970 through 1996, the percentage of aged people in Japan will increase from 7% to 14%. Similar increases will happen in China, Taiwan, and South Korea. In Europe, where the "demographic transition" to a less fertile, older, longer-lived population first began in

FIGURE 7

Aging of population in North America and Europe

(percent of total population)



Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

the nineteenth century, this transition occurred over a century. China, in particular, faces an “aging shock”: The number of Chinese 65 and older is projected to rise from 66 million in 1990 to 211 million in 2025, and up to 359 million in 2050. In 2000, 7% of the Chinese population will be over 65; by 2027, that will be 14%, a process taking only 27 years. In Japan, the process will take 26. In contrast, the process took 115 years in France, from 1865-1980, and 85 years in Sweden from 1890-1975. In Hungary, a similar increase in the proportion of aged took 53 years, from 1941-94.

This aging process is part of the ultimate tendency of the world population to fall beginning in the next century. The fall in mortality, which was the foundation of the dramatic increase in world population in the 20th century, is also *not* continuing. From 1900-50, many nations added 20 years to their life expectancy. Life expectancy increased dramatically in East Asia, from less than 45 years in 1950 to over 71 years in 1990. This rate of extension of life is by no means continuing.

“Support ratios” for the elderly (the number of persons 65 and over per 100 population aged 20 to 64) will rise drastically in the developed countries between 1990-2025. The “baby-boom” component will still be of working age until 2010, so the rise in the dependency ratio will be relatively low until then in some countries; but in Germany, Italy, Greece, and Luxembourg the increase will be 40% from 1990 to 2010, and in Japan the ratio is expected to nearly double from 19 in 1990 to 37 in 2010. By 2025, Japan’s elderly support ratio will be

nearly 50, the highest level among developed nations. That means that, in addition to children which must be supported and educated by the working population, there will be one elderly person to support for every two working people. Japan, Sweden, and Luxembourg will have 80 or more youth and elderly for every 100 working-age by 2025.

The elderly support ratio is much lower in developing countries; it is the highest in Uruguay at 22, in Israel at 19, in Argentina at 17, and Cuba at 15. It will at least double between 1990 and 2025 in China, Indonesia, Thailand, Brazil, Colombia, and Costa Rica—meaning that the number of elderly per working population will be twice as high—and will more than triple in Singapore and the Republic of Korea.

Youth support ratios, on the other hand, obviously are small and declining. They are projected to decline in 50 countries between 1990 and 2025. In Kenya, for example, despite its high fertility, the 1990 level of 163 youth per working adults, will fall to 81 in 2025.

The destruction of the family

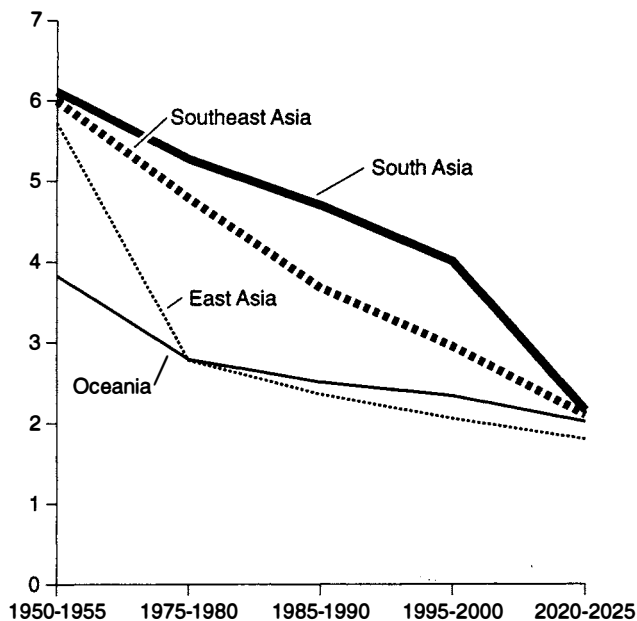
The crisis is not due only to a drop in the number of births. The fundamentals of family formation are endangered, and unless this is reversed, the fertility collapse must continue. At present in the European Community, the only EC demographic statistic that is rising, is the number of births outside marriage—which have skyrocketed since 1978, especially first births. At this point, 45% of the births in Denmark, and 25-30% in both France and Britain, are outside marriage. Only in Italy and Belgium are fewer than 10% of births outside marriage.

Marriage rates, which had increased significantly after World War II, are now falling again. In Europe and North America, Roussel pointed out, between the early 1970s and early 1980s, the number of marriages contracted fell by 20%; divorces tripled between 1964-82. Even more notable is the rise in one-parent households, and even one-person households, as speakers at the Geneva conference pointed out. One-parent households constitute 30% of households in northern Europe, and 20-30% in North America and western Europe. Some 85% of single-parent households are headed by women. One-person households, generally men, range from 57% in Denmark, 36% in Sweden, 34% in Germany, and for almost every other west European nation, 25-29%. In North America, the figure is 24%.

Studies on the developing sector

While overall population is growing rapidly at the moment in the so-called “less developed nations,” including in China, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa, already in many regions there have been large and prolonged drops in fertility that have brought some nations, such as Thailand, to the verge of *negative* growth and drastically altered societies and economies (see **Figure 8** and **Table 1**). In December 1992, Johns Hopkins University’s *Population Reports* published the findings of studies in 44 developing countries since 1984.

FIGURE 8
Projected fertility rates in Asia and Pacific
 (births per woman during lifetime)



Source: Mercedes Conception, report to United Nations Economic and Social Council Fourth Asian and Pacific Economic Population Conference, July 1992.

Population Reports states that “In developing countries, fertility has declined by about one-third since the 1960s, from an average of about six children per woman to four per woman today. Fertility has fallen even more in some countries: by over 50% in Thailand and 40% in Colombia.”

Studies based on surveys of women in developing sector countries done by the U.S.-based Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) now document that “outside of Africa fertility is declining nearly everywhere,” and at the same time recorded the first evidence of “significant” fertility declines in sub-Saharan Africa, *Population Reports* stated. Already in October 1990, the DHS-published report “Fertility Levels and Trends” documented significant falls in fertility in three African countries by comparing data over just seven years. Fertility fell by 19% in Zimbabwe, and 14% in Botswana. As of 1992, the decline in Botswana was 26%. In Kenya, although it continues to have one of the highest fertility rates in the world—still at 6.5 children per woman—fertility had fallen by 22% in the 1980s. (See **Figure 9**.) There were also declines in regions of Nigeria.

All this is happening in nations with significantly lower living standards, health care, and life expectancy than the industrialized nations. A 1987 World Bank study indicated that “a sustained fertility decline is unlikely in countries with less than 53 years life expectancy.” Nearly half the African coun-

TABLE 1
Falling fertility rates in Asia
 (total births per woman)

	1960-1965	1990-1995	Year of attaining replacement level
Japan	2.0 (1960)	1.53 (1990)	1957
Singapore	4.7 (1965)	1.79 (1989)	1975
Hong Kong	5.2 (1961)	1.36 (1988)	1979
South Korea	6.0 (1960)	1.63 (1990)	1984
Taiwan	5.8 (1960)	1.68 (1988)	1984
Mainland China	5.9	2.25	1995-2000
Thailand	6.4	2.20	1995-2000
Sri Lanka	5.2	2.47	2000-2005
Indonesia	5.4	3.10	2005-2010
Malaysia	6.7	3.50	2005-2010
Vietnam	6.1	3.70	2010-2015
Philippines	6.6	3.91	2015-2020
India	5.8	4.10	2015-2020
Bangladesh	6.7	5.13	Beyond 2025

Source: Hyun Kim, report to United Nations Economic and Social Council Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, July 1992.

tries have a life expectancy of under 50 years. Child mortality is overall *seven times* higher in the Third World than in the industrialized nations. While child mortality rates in these countries has fallen 50% since the 1950s, compared to the industrialized countries, where deaths of children under 5 years are 19 per 1,000, in sub-Saharan Africa the child mortality rate was 200 deaths per 1,000 in 1980-85; it was 140 deaths in North Africa and the Mideast, down to 55 in Asia, and only 40 per 1,000 in Ibero-America and the Caribbean.

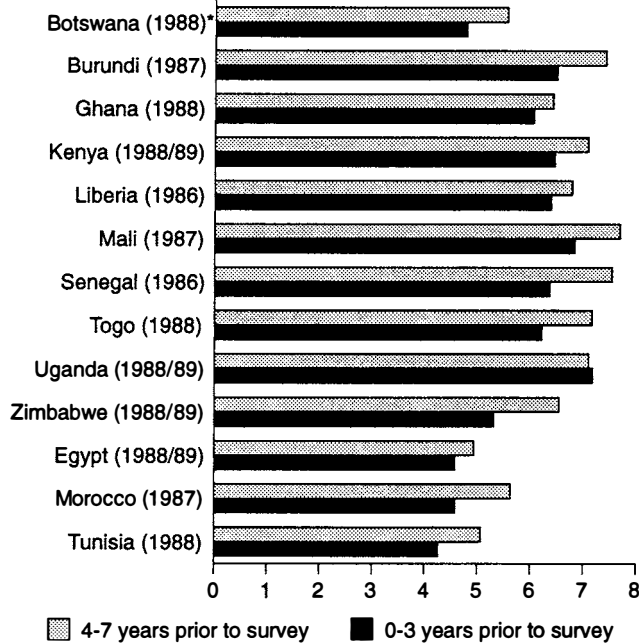
AIDS and sterilization

This fall in fertility is also happening in regions—Africa and Thailand—where AIDS, which decimates especially the young adult population, is rampant. The Asian Development Bank stated in its 1992 development outlook survey that in some parts of Asia, “the population growth rate will either stagnate or fall, especially as the proportion of infected young women rises,” due to AIDS. In August 1992, the British magazine *Nature* reported that research findings that AIDS will *reverse* population growth rates in Africa. “The only significant uncertainty [is] whether AIDS-induced mortality will decrease population size over a few or many decades.” In April 1988, the Swiss publication *Revue Internationale de Défense* reported that “according to information gathered in October 1987 from sources close to the American embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, satellite photos show a large expansion of wild vegetation in the eastern part of Zaire. AIDS seems to be the cause of the disappearance of entire communities in those regions previously densely populated.”

FIGURE 9

Fertility trends in Africa

(total fertility of women 15-44)



*Year of survey

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys, "Fertility Levels and Trends," October 1990.

The other very dangerous trend for the overall development of the human race, is the extent to which women in the developing countries are resorting to permanent sterilization—or, more ominously, are being sterilized against their knowledge and will. *Population Reports* in December 1992 reported that "voluntary female sterilization" is the most widely used contraception method worldwide. Sterilization of women is particularly widespread in Ibero-America and parts of Asia, but uncommon in Africa and the Middle East, *Population Reports* states. Rates of sterilization of women are highest in the Dominican Republic at 39%, and are 37% in South Korea, which also has an 11% rate of male sterilization. In India, 31% of couples are reported sterilized. While sterilization of men is relatively low, in China 28% of married women are sterilized; as are 25% in Sri Lanka, and 22% in Thailand. In Brazil, the rate is 27%.

The case of China

But it is in China that the most serious demographic crisis is developing—the direct result of government policy. China's population is currently about 1.2 billion. In late April, the Chinese government wrote a classified report documenting a sharp fall in the fertility to zero-growth rates,

which even China's fanatic national population-control police had not hoped to "achieve" until 2010. In the last years, fewer babies have been born in China than even during the worst of the forced-abortion operations of the early 1980s. In 1991, there was a 25% increase in the number of sterilizations in China. The proportion of couples of child-bearing age who are sterilized or use contraception rose to 83.4% in 1992—"saturation contraception," according to U.S. Census Bureau China specialist Judith Bannister. As many as 900,000 baby girls "disappear" each year, the victims of the one-child policy. Many are hidden from the authorities by their parents, meaning they do not get even minimal medical care or education; many others are the victims of infanticide.

In 1990, Women's Federation official Tang Leng said, according to Chinese newspaper reports in early September, that female infanticide was continuing because people want male children, and the result would be an overwhelming majority of young men in the very near future. China could have some 40 million more men than women in 20 years. Chinese officials claim that far too many more boys than girls are being born, in defiance of natural ratios everywhere else in the world. While the pre-1980 average ratio of male to female babies was about 105 boys to 100 girls (approximately the average worldwide), the rate has steadily climbed up to 111 boys to 100 girls born in 1990.

China is also very rapidly becoming an "aged" nation, but with a shrinking labor force that will contract by 50 million over the next 25 years. China may have more than 200 million elderly people by 2025, the U.S. Census Bureau reported in its second report on the world's aging population in April 1992. The number of elderly persons in mainland China will increase by 200%, to 211,031,000 in 2050, from 65,852,000 in 1990. China's official *Economic Daily* wrote in June 1988, that the shift to an elderly population is going too fast. Whereas industrialized nations have generally taken 40-100 years for populations to shift to an "aged population"—10% over 60, and 7% over 65—in China, the process is taking only 18 years. In 1985, China had 87 million people over 60: 22% of the people over 60 in the world. "Demand posed by the fast aging population might outrun the country's social and economic capability," the *Economic Daily* said. Of 1983 wages, 9.3% went to pensioners, but this will rise to 15% in the year 2000, and to 30% in the year 2030. The proportion of able-bodied workers to elderly in 1982 was 12.5 to 1; in 2000, this will be reduced to 9.2 to 1; by the year 2040, there will be only 2.9 workers for each elderly person.

This is happening in a nation that has one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world. Some 200 million unemployed peasants are wandering the country searching for work; average income for peasants, 80% of the population, is approximately \$120 per year.

Without enormous economic development, China's draconian population control policies of today will lead to euthanasia in the near future.