

# Global Human Life-Expectancy Fell, World's Population May Soon Follow

by Paul Gallagher

Buried in the United Nations' report on the population of the world's nations for 2000, is a shocking signal of what the era of "globalization" and post-industrialism has done to the world's physical economies. The average life span of the entire human race fell between 1998 and 2000. Though the drop was very small—two-tenths of one year for men, and one-tenth of a year for women—it is the first fall in global life-expectancy, for as long as worldwide statistics for this measure of human well-being have been reported.

The development is a sign of devastation of the Third World economies, as a whole, since the ongoing financial collapse struck, first in Asia, in 1997. For all the nations combined, of what the United Nations report calls "the underdeveloped sector," the human life span fell, between 1998 and 2000, by three-tenths of a year for men, and two-tenths for women. And for the "least developed countries" (note that this category has grown from 24 nations in the 1980s, when it was first used, to 41 nations today), average life-expectancy fell by 1.3 years for men, and 1.5 years for women.

Nor was this average drop caused, solely, by the sickening declines in the length of human life in Sub-Saharan Africa, down to 40 years and less during the 1990s decade of globalization; nor by the infamous collapse in Russia's life-expectancy during the same decade. In fact, according to the UN Fund for Population Activities report, life-expectancy in Russia did *not* fall further in the past two years. No, the human life span declined in no fewer than 58 of the roughly 150 nations which the UN reports, and increased in only 30 nations. Most of these 58 nations also showed increases in infant mortality from 1998-2000. More than half of them had declines in energy use per capita, per year, one of the most critical and sensitive measures of human living conditions—as even the American population is now being painfully reminded.

The countries in which human life is getting shorter, included 31 in Africa, 8 in Asia, 9 in Europe, 6 in Ibero-America, and 3 in Oceania—including that wondrous model of globalization and free-trade economics, New Zealand.

It must be remembered that the population counts for many nations in the world—whether reported by the UN or

by the U.S. Bureau of Census, which also publishes world population reports—are only approximately accurate. In some famous cases, especially in Africa, they have been worse than approximate. Thus, it is not the absolute numbers of human beings reported, but rather the changes over years, and the changes in other demographic indicators such as life span, infant and child mortality, etc., which indicate what is impacting human populations.

## End to Population Growth

The increased worldwide mortality from disease and war, shown by these reports, combined with the well-known global drop in human fertility since 1970-75, is causing the rate of growth in human numbers to fall sharply; if the fall in average human life span continues and accelerates, it is a certainty of demography that the whole human population will be declining within less than ten years. Not surprisingly, the UN's annual "State of the World Population" reports no longer contain forecasts of future population growth, except in the very small print of the data charts at the back of the book. Rather, the reports, like the newsletters of the Malthusian anti-population groups, now consist entirely of articles about "the equal rights of women to make reproductive decisions."

Though the UN no longer gives any emphasis to population-growth projections, it still makes them. How wrong they have been rendered—how completely the demographic experts of the UN Population Division have been surprised and passed by—by the ongoing collapse of physical economy worldwide, can be seen by a glance at **Figure 1**. There, the actual growth of the human population as a whole is taken from 1950 up to 1992; from that point on, the forecast for the future which the UN published in 1992, is compared to what has actually happened, and is happening, to human population growth through the year 2000 and beyond.

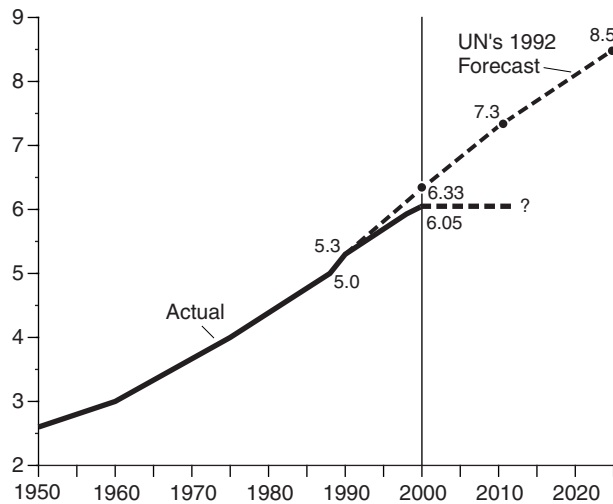
This forecast, the dotted line in Figure 1, was what the UN in 1992 published as its "medium variant," explaining that of the high, medium, and low variants of its projection, the medium variant was "the most likely to occur."

But in just eight years, the human population has actually

FIGURE 1

## World Population Far Below Projections Made Only Ten Years Ago

(Billions of People)

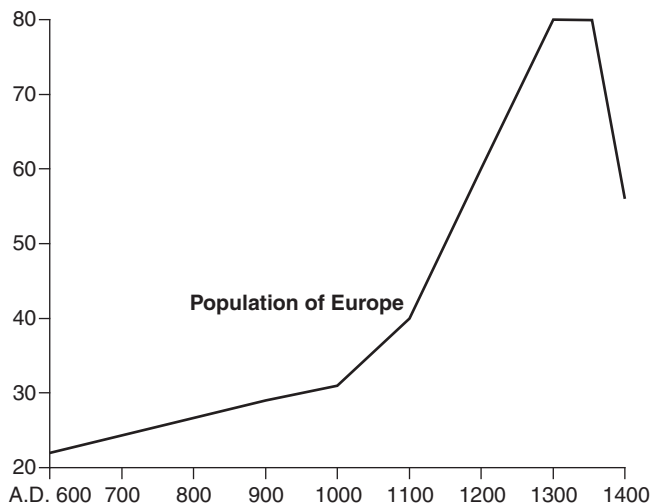


Source: *State of World Population*, 1992 and 2000, UN Fund For Population Activities.

FIGURE 2

## 50-Year 'Pause' in Europe's Growth Followed by Black Death

(Millions of People)



Source: *Atlas of World Population History*.

fallen 300 million souls below that “most likely” projection. The rate of growth annually, which was about 85 million people in 1992, was below 80 million by 1996-97, and then appears to have dropped suddenly, in 1998-2000, to less than a 65 million increase per year (from 5,930,000,000 people in mid-1998 to 6,055,000,000 in mid-2000). See that annual increase as a percentage of the whole, and the sharpness of the fall becomes clear: 1.7% annual growth as of 1992; 1.4% as of 1997; 1.3% average for the years 1995-2000 taken together; but only 1.05% annual growth as of now.

It can not be escaped, that this apparently sharp demographic deterioration of the human race has occurred since the onset, in 1997, of what Wall Street and London financiers instructed the media to call “the Asian crisis,” but what has now become clear as a global financial blowout of the system run by Wall Street and London. The crippling of most of the leading economies of Asia, then Ibero-America, has been overlain upon the devastation already wrought on Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries by the International Monetary Fund and international financial speculators, and the genocide of millions in continual slaughters, malaria, AIDS, and other pandemics in Sub-Saharan Africa. We have reached the point where one-third of the 150 countries reported by the UN have stagnant or falling populations, in absolute numbers. That number is increasing with each annual report. The population of the CIS countries,

as a whole, is falling; the same thing is true of Europe, East and West; and the total population growth rate of all of Africa has fallen well under 1%. One clear common denominator of all these nations, is the serious collapse of public health systems of protection of the populations from epidemic disease; the casualty of 1990s globalization and unregulated free trade.

### What Is Coming?

The year 2025 has, for 30 years, been the “horizon” commonly aimed at by demographers making projections, whether “expert” or simply ideological, of the future growth of the human race. Though now in very small print, the UN Population Division still publishes a forecast for 2025. It has reduced that forecast by 700 million people since 1992; by 215 million people just since 1998 (from 8.039 billion to 7.823 billion).

But unless there is a new Bretton Woods agreement established—along principles set forth by Lyndon LaRouche, operating to foster physical-economic *reconstruction* of infrastructure, public health, education systems—these rapidly shrinking demographic projections will still be as wrong as that in Figure 1. The current “levelling off” of the human population is anything but an equilibrium—on the contrary, human history shows it to be a completely unstable condition, the uneasy prelude to a collapse to far lower levels of human life and population density.

The clearest example of this phenomenon over a large part

of the human race—Europe before the 14th-Century Black Death—is shown in **Figure 2**, which foreshadows the actual current direction of population in Figure 1. The population of Europe had been undergoing a slowly accelerating growth for more than 600 years—since the final collapse of the Roman Empire—when at the end of the 13th Century, economic “globalization” was imposed. The imperial financial center then was not London or New York, but Venice, which used its maritime empire to gain control of currencies, and domination of production of the most important commodities, over all Europe and even over the murderous Mongol Empire to the East. Venetian oligarchs pumped money into the banks of Florence, making them banking conglomerates on a world scale never seen before. As this globalization intensified, food production per capita declined; by 1300, the healthy European population growth levelled off and gave way to an eerie “equilibrium” that lasted almost 50 years. This was the prelude to complete collapse: of banks, of trade, of productive economic activity, of human health, and of population.

This financial and economic disintegration—finally reversed by the launching of the 15th-Century European Renaissance—is, as Lyndon LaRouche has insisted in many articles on the current crisis, the only model history offers us for the economic collapse we face today. This is true demographically, as well as for economy.

### **The U.S. ‘Exception’**

There has been great fanfare surrounding the apparent exception of the United States; the U.S. Commerce Department released on Dec. 29, 2000 its decennial census count, as required by the U.S. Constitution, and announced that the population of the United States had grown by 13.3% from 1990 to 2000. This represents an annual rate of growth of about 1.25%, much higher than the rate for the world as a whole, if it is still continuing. And in fact, the indications are that the rate of population increase in the United States, was actually itself increasing in the last years of the decade: The American population as counted by the Census Bureau, was more than 2 million higher than the United Nations thought it would be.

While the Census Bureau has not yet broken down the increase, a sizable part of this increase, perhaps a third of it, has been caused by immigration. Just as the American economy has been living on vast imports of capital from the rest of the world, and on massive imports of cheap products shown by its huge trade deficits, so labor has been following that capital into the United States, to be cheaply employed in most cases.

But this entire process is now coming to an end, with the dollar blowout which has begun to be revealed so suddenly since the November U.S. Presidential elections. The large immigration, and the higher-than-average U.S. population growth, is set to end with it.

## **Santa Did Not Come To Poland, Either**

by Anna Kaczor Wei

Usually a festive time, this past Christmas in Poland was dominated by the news about a nationwide protest action by nurses, hundreds of whom spent Christmas Eve occupying the Health Ministry building in Warsaw, far away from their families. The protest had been going on for weeks, and it involved not only appeals to the government, picket lines, and threats to abandon patients, but also blockades of roads, border crossings, railroad links, and bridges.

All this did not bring the expected results. The National Nurses and Midwives’ Union (OZZPP) demanded an increase in their shamefully low wages: 500 zlotys more per month added to the current 600-900 zlotys average monthly wage (\$140-210).

The government claims that nurses’ wages are no longer its responsibility, because after the 1999 reform of the health-care system, public hospitals and clinics (private ones hardly exist) are run and owned by local governments. These governments, in turn, claim that there is simply no money for wage increases, because many facilities face bankruptcy anyway. A few days before Christmas, however, the government suggested allocating some money in the 2001 year budget to increase nurses’ wages by 200 zlotys (\$48) monthly. The Sejm (Parliament) passed the bill, but some deputies suggested that the only way to get the money for this purpose is to increase taxes. The union decided to continue their protest since there was no guarantee that even this modest proposal would be actually realized.

According to the OZZPP statement from Dec. 30, some 162 hospitals and clinics all over the country announced readiness to go on strike, 35 were occupied by nurses, and in 25 there was a hunger strike going on. Nurses in over 100 health institutions were planning to leave patients for a few hours. In some locations—for example, Lublin and Gdansk—nurses were occupying local government buildings and insurance headquarters. A day before, 1,500 nurses from all over the country marched through downtown Warsaw to the Office of Ministers’ Council. They were joined by a group of miners who tried to storm the building and became involved in a brawl with the police.

In an interview with the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Longina Kaczmarek, chairwoman of the Mazowiecki chapter of the