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Thanatopsis

James A. Fitzgerald, M.D.

It began as a cloud no smaller than a man's hand, of the same configuration — but the fist was clenched and threatening.

In February, 1970, the president of Planned Parenthood-World Population asked, "Can equilibrium or even slowing of population growth be achieved by voluntary means or will coercive measures by government ukase be necessary?" Asking and answering, his reply was, "Voluntary measures should be tried in the critical decade ahead — but if the rate of population growth has not been slowed to 1.5% or less by then, coercive measures may be necessary."¹

This coercive concept in reproduction is not new, and even though the motives and intentions of prior coercers were different, the goals of the prior and the imminent coercers are the same: a limited, selective reproductivity.

Sterilization experiments in order to ascertain the efficacy of a drug known as caladium seguinum were suggested to one Reichsfuehrer S. S. Himmler by

another Adolf Porkony in October, 1941. Dr. Porkony wrote, "On the basis of this research, it was possible to produce a drug which after a relatively short time affects an imperceptible sterilization on human beings, then we would have a new powerful weapon at our disposal."²

The Deputy Gauleiter of the Lower Danube, S. S. Obergruppenfuhrer Gerland, in 1942 pointed out that if these experiments were successful, as was expected, it would be possible to sterilize practically unlimited numbers of people in the shortest time and in the simplest way conceivable.³ The Obergruppenfuhrer of World Population in 1981 may cherish a higher ideal than that elaborated upon by Gauleiter Gerland.

It is paradoxical that the Third Reich should have a message with humane overtones for the present president of World Population. One defendant at Nuernberg, a Dr. Karl Gebhardt, held and stated the opinion that a sound population policy could not be realized by negative measures only.⁴ His medical attitude was not based on

the principle of negative selection and the destruction of unworthy lives or the prevention of propagation of such human beings, but, on the contrary, he was led by the conviction that these human beings must be helped in so far as medical science was able to help them at all. For other reasons — and perhaps anticipating a conflict with the World Population group — he was executed by decree at Nuernberg, on June 2, 1948.

The present policy of the World Population planners is different, more parochial and less humane than that elaborated upon by the late Nazi Gebhardt. The sustaining of the defective and inadequate is, at present, regarded as diluting a positive reproductive potential, and it is theorized that it will "ultimately lead to genetic collapse."

We shall require a new nomenclature for the future World human. Once in some circles Aryan was definitive, this has a poor connotation, and, superseding race and nationality, the new man may be called Citizen of World (C.O.W.).

It is not my intention to confuse population control for the purposes of genocide with population control for population control. Semantics is semantics. The president of World Population says that to be successful and free of the charge of genocide, "the policy must always be administered and serviced by the indigenous population."⁵

With alacrity, for no recommendations have been made for this function in the United States, I nominate the Navaho as administrators, and the Sioux, the Nez Perces, the Algonquins, the Blackfeet, the Mohawks and the

Piutes to supply the service. The lesser tribes can function in a clerical capacity in the program. For the dissenters that claim that American Indians are not autochthonous and allege their migration via the Bering Strait, I have a simple query; "Do you want the Russians to manage the program?"

Who is indigenous on the Continent, South America, and Asia will be decided later by branch offices of World Population in these areas. Some dispute is expected in the Arab-Israeli sphere, between Nigeria and Biafra, and between black and white. This aspect of things is expected to be "ironed out" — if not figuratively, then literally. After all, the policy of the plan is coercive.

For want of a hypo-spray injection technique to be used every 3 to 6 months (an ideal of the incumbent president of World Population), abortion will be resorted to voluntarily and by directive. It will be chiefly for the recalcitrant. There will be no medical reason for abortion; none will exist. In 1969-1970 when the reasons for 70% to 80% of the abortions performed in the United States were listed as psychiatric, this *raison d'être* ceased when experts in this field spelled out their position — "that psychiatry seldom can assert with authority that a woman needs an abortion."⁶ Those with lingering doubts that the conceptus might have human characteristics were reminded that this was not so; yet many, knowing that this was their origin, then felt less than human.

Another Cassandra, extrapolating from lemmings, guppies, red grouse and a variety of animal life including the American executive, warned that if over-population doesn't kill, the stresses from the consequences of it will.⁷ Once, we were "a little lower than the

angels"; in his new categorization we show less sense than a titmouse. His is a unique contribution, for an involuntary, enforced sterility is the newest of stresses. He and the planners of World Population have just created it.

The same author in his search for death — quite possibly with tongue in cheek, but hopeful — directs his attention to the young, the potentially productive. His plan for their demise and limitation includes the automobile, "which strikes most heavily at the young, and is indeed an excellent instrument for reducing population": he encourages drug usage, it being seemingly wise that "these reduce the breeding drive."

Neither does he neglect homosexuality; "It subtracts 4% to 6% from the American breeding population." For unproductive purposes, the figures should be higher.

Suicide, he states, "offers splendid vistas," and "suicide, particularly in the young and the discouraged, will make a significant reduction in our breeding numbers." Sears, Roebuck will supply, when the occasion arises, a do-it-yourself kit.

For the elimination of the young, he omits wars, these being (except for the nuclear variety) simply not efficient enough.

Again, this same seer emphasizes that territory is the key to power; he does not use the word "Lebensraum." He relates, "Among all the devices limiting a population, the necessity for a breeding territory is among the most common." To date, a bed was considered sufficient "breeding territory" — now he postulates acres. I propose a formula for the frequency of intercourse and the likelihood of propaga-

tion. It will be a simple fraction; the numerator will be the square of the land owned by the couple, the denominator will be the intensity of sexual desire. Those interested in land should rapidly acquire land; the holdings should be as large as possible, for a number divided into zero is infinity.

The specter of hunger is in his retinue. It is diminished, however, by the recognition that one Iowa farm can produce enough grain for the tenants of more than a thousand high-rise apartments. He makes an audit of the millions of cans of food on our store shelves designated for our feline and canine friends.

The young too, being born, share our aims. But there is a small, discordant note. Increasingly as they reject our politics, our social mores, our religions, our judicial systems, they may have a further distrust for our future goals and the methods we will utilize.

This is best exemplified and ponderous with implication in the reporting of the *Harvard Bulletin*. "When the team of Harvard scientists who isolated a pure gene from a living organism announced their discovery late last year, they took care to tell the public exactly how they felt about it. They called a press conference to express their fear that in the long run the tool they had discovered would be used to loose more evil than good on mankind."

One of the scientists, Jonathan Beckwith '57, Professor of Bacteriology and Immunology — told a Harvard reporter recently why he had so clearly disassociated himself from those scientists who work quietly, neutrally away on matters capable of

horrendous effect on society. "People need to be informed of what will be influencing and controlling their lives," said Beckwith. "They should be involved in the development of ideas, in some of the decisions. Too often they have no idea of the negative effects until a process is finished and it is too late. Look at the pollution problem."⁹

Speaking specifically of the discovery that he and his co-workers had made, Beckwith said, "By manipulating genes, it will be possible to cure disease, but it will also be possible to apply the same techniques to changing psychology. It would be easy to put something into the water supply, or to vaccinate people, to change their attitudes, to breed out aggression or dissent."

Beckwith's main fear is of those who might control genetic engineering, should it occur. "Once a government accepts or forces birth control, it is an easy step to accept genetic engineering," he said. Suspicious of the ability of a society that is built, he believes, on the premise that businessmen, whose primary concern is making money, will make wise decisions, Beckwith is equally suspicious of a government whose policies, he feels, consistently go with the interests of business. Intellectuals are not necessarily to be trusted, either: "Elite scientists often have contempt for people. They would feel that the highest form of life would be an Einstein, and would seek to reproduce qualities they favor. This implies a feeling of superiority that is very dangerous."

Dr. James A. Shapiro, Research Fellow in Bacteriology and Immunology, carried co-worker Beckwith's concerns one step further. On January 20, 1970, he announced that he had

abandoned research to become a full-time political activist. "Whatever I could do in the lab is useless at this time," he is reported to have said. "The only constructive thing that people can do right now is to challenge the present political system."¹⁰

If what is being contemplated is enforced sterility, and voluntary and coercive abortion, and if we are plotting the nonexistence of some who will be and whose being may not be justified by a computer — then this is a new view of a kind of death. Some of the young do not tolerate all our visions. If they do, mankind will at last be united against a common enemy — his own kind. If we hold the mirror up, we can see our terrible foe in the glass, and for the first time we will need the greatest of cupidity, a special cunning, a new armamentarium, a selfishness that supersedes selfishness — for life is intrusive and persistent. Like a brush fire, if we stamp it out in one place, it may burst anew in a dozen more.

Failing, the dark visionaries see each of us in an enclave, eating our limited food, drinking our polluted water, breathing our contaminated air — and fighting off the hordes of diapered at the perimeter.

For the solution of this problem, we do not need the Apocalyptic, the Cassandras, the extrapolators from guppies, or the mailed fist of some social reformers. We are done with the Obergruppenfuhrers — even those of the occasional tender theme.

If our vision is to be that of life, we need a sweet reasonableness, an urgent but gentle concern, a clarity in our motives, a careful design in our methods. We will need a refining of

our morality, an enlightenment and motivation of all peoples.

There is projected for us a millennium. To attain this, in our dealings with humanity, it might be a good beginning if we could begin by being humane.

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