

The CFR's population specialist calls economic hardship the best weapon

Phyllis T. Piotrow, considered by many the leading population expert among New York Council on Foreign Relations circles, recently spelled out the ultimate connection between the depression-producing economic policies of the CFR grouping and its advocacy of population reduction.

In an Oct. 2 interview obtained by *EIR*, Piotrow states that she fully expects world economic conditions to worsen, and that these worsening conditions *will raise mortality rates* in the developing sector, slowing or reversing population growth. Piotrow in fact identifies economic hardship as the single most important factor in forcing population reduction.

The former top aide to pro-population reduction advocate General William Draper, Jr., Piotrow was chosen to head the Population Crisis Committee/Draper Fund in the mid-1970s. It was the Draper Fund network, which includes former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maxwell Taylor and bankers George Ball and Robert McNamara, that assigned her to co-author the population volume for the 1980s Project, the CFR's policy blueprint. Her work was published by McGraw-Hill in 1978 under the title *Six Billion People*, the total the CFR says it wants to prevent from being born or otherwise eliminate from the world's population over the next four decades.

Population growth and 1984

The volume predicts that increasing economic and social chaos will make alleged overpopulation the foremost concern after 1984.

Piotrow states point-blank that Chinese-style "totalitarian" "coercive methods" are the "most successful programs to control migration as well as fertility," will become necessary in the United States and the rest of the world. "Is it possible," she asks rhetorically, "in a world of rapidly increasing population, not to restrict some elements of freedom?" All economic development decisions must be taken in accordance with an overall aim of lowering population growth rates, she writes.

In his introduction to the volume, Council on Foreign Relations 1980s Project Director Edward L. Morse says that the population crisis shapes all other volumes in the study. This is especially true of the principal economic volume which calls for a controlled disintegration of the world economy, and provides the call to action for the Carter administrations's *Global 2000 Report*.

Q: In your book for the Council on Foreign Relations, back in 1978, you were very optimistic about the prospects for reducing population growth. Are you still as optimistic?

Piotrow: It depends on your point of view. In a sense, there have been some bright spots. The situation in Latin America, for instance, is quite hopeful. The ordinary people in Latin America have decided that they have had enough, and contraceptive use rates are going up and fertility is going down rather surprisingly in many areas. So I am very optimistic about Latin America. I am also quite optimistic about East Asia. There has been a lot of progress there. There is still quite a bit of concern about, because in Africa, unlike other parts of the world, there doesn't seem to be a desire for smaller families. At least the one survey that now exists in Kenya seems to show that people kept on wanting to have 10 children.

One really has to distinguish optimism about population declines from optimism about other things. There is growing evidence that economic hardship, *not development*—things getting worse, not things getting better—that really makes people want to have smaller families. And everywhere you go, things are getting worse economically.

I don't want to say that I am optimistic that things are going to get worse, and therefore people are going to want smaller families, ha, ha. So that's why I say that it depends on what you are optimistic or pessimistic about.

Everyone has been saying for a long time that it took development to persuade people that they want smaller families, but this summer I was in Latin America and I

asked people, why have attitudes changed about family planning and reducing family size? and the answer always was: people are so poor they know that they can't afford children. One hears this in a lot of places, in areas like Bangladesh, that poverty will reduce population growth. . . .

Q: People have said this about the advanced sector, the United States, Europe.

Piotrow: Yes, of course. But the cliché has always been that this is all very well for us, but in the developing countries, unless they get above a certain level, that won't be true. A lot of people are above that very bottom threshold level at this point. The faster you have urbanization, you have people being more aware of themselves in a modern context, this [economic hardship] becomes a real constraint on population growth.

I don't mean to say that I am optimistic that the economic situation is so bad that we are going to end up having fewer people around, but that is the reality. It appears that what is happening is that the hardship effect is really dominant now. In the latest pamphlet that I have done for the Foreign Policy Association, I said that there were really two factors encouraging lower fertility. One is the so-called positive factors—more education, more urbanization, more jobs outside the home and away from the home, and outside of agriculture. There is more of that and it encourages smaller families, but there is really a lot more of the hardship factors—limited cash income, seeing things get worse rather than better, and feeling that they can't meet the aspirations that they have developed. And I can't help thinking that these factors, the hardship, are basically going to accelerate into a major fertility decline. . . .

Q: Many people are talking about the world economy's continuing in a depressed state, well into this decade.

Piotrow: Well, the most obvious things that will happen is that death rates will go up and that will reduce population growth. That is bound to happen. If food supplies are limited, if distribution is even more inefficient than it is now, this will raise death rates, and this is very likely. It is now almost inevitable. If malaria programs are cut back, as is likely, if social infrastructure begins to collapse, these deaths are inevitable. It is inevitable.

Q: In the CFR book, you talk about developing chaos this decade caused by the population crisis, you are presaging much of what is happening now.

Piotrow: I think the chaos is increasing almost every day. Look at the situation in Iran. Look at Lebanon. Pakistan will probably be in chaos soon. I don't know enough about the situation in specific African countries, but you certainly have it [chaos] in El Salvador and Central America. I think you see even greater chaos

coming, but there are an awful lot of people who wouldn't see it as caused by population. But it is. Look at the administration. It is emphasizing terrorism. Terrorism and that kind of civil disorder, like in Iran does depend on the number of young people with nothing to do available to become involved. These numbers are still increasing, and will increase through the next decade.

Q: Do you see hope in this administration for an enlightened approach to population problems?

Piotrow: I can't speak for this administration, and I wouldn't even want to say at this point, because I think that there are a number of people in this administration who are concerned about these issues. They are a little bit caught between pressure from the right and people who say, "We don't want to get into social engineering." But these people in the administration see very clearly the problems they have to deal with and how to do it. I think that the administration as a whole is not intrinsically against looking at demographic problems and trying to deal with them. Their biggest problem is an extremist fringe, right-to-life organizations, people on the Senate, not really people in the administration itself. . . .

Q: Many people are saying that the way to do that is to talk about population control from the standpoint of national security.

Piotrow: Well that can be overdone too. If you talk about it too much from the standpoint of U.S. national security, it tends to backfire, because then you get liberals and other people, who are on your side, upset. I think that one solution is not to talk too much about it, but to support programs and policies that need support. . . . It is still too soon to tell whether the Reagan administration is going to cut these programs or not. They haven't cut them substantially so far. They have even added to them. . . . My personal interpretation is that they are trying to do it quietly without arousing opposition and they may give in on the very controversial issues like abortion, but the basic principle of supporting programs to limit population growth will not be abandoned at all. . . .

Q: There are many people who say that, because we did not take action to curb population years ago, it is now too late to save anybody, that hundreds of millions of people are going to die. This sounds like Malthus and it gets people upset.

Piotrow: Well, they shouldn't get upset. You can never expect the government to respond to a crisis, before the crisis has really happened. Governments really have to have their noses rubbed into crises before they are going to react to them . . . and that means that millions of people die, and problems occur that would not occur if they acted sooner.

Q: Is the Roman Catholic Church an impediment to solving population problems?

Piotrow: It probably will not be as much of a factor in the future. More and more people are tending to make up their own minds on this. Religious leaders, church leaders, tend to have more influence on the politicians and government leaders than they do on individuals, and this runs the risk of slower programs and less action like in Latin America, where the leaders of the Church are still pretty critical of family planning. Contraceptive use rates are becoming quite high. The problem is that there are still not very good government-supported programs, and women still go and get their abortions, and die, and fill up the hospital wards with victims of illegal abortions. So people are suffering as a result of Church policy, but the Church won't prevent birth rates from going down.

Q: In the CFR book *Six Billion People* you say that one of the countries which has had the most success with population policies is China. They use coercive methods. In the future, as the situation in the world gets worse, will more countries be forced to choose these coercive measure in the face of growing chaos and death?

Piotrow: It remains to be seen. The problems with most governments in developing countries is that they are not as strong and as tightly administered as the government of China. So that even if they wanted to do these programs, they probably couldn't. They would be overthrown, or like the government of India, kicked out of office. . . . It seems to me that it is far more likely that the population will take care of itself by the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse.

Q: You were very close to Gen. William Draper, Jr., who was quite outspoken on these issues for years and no one listened. Now you say people are still not listening.

Piotrow: We've made a tremendous amount of progress in the last 10 or 15 years. It is tremendous. I am not discouraged at all. I wish we could do more, and I am unhappy about the backlash against many programs. You can't expect 100 percent. Look at the number of countries where we have created substantial declines in fertility, 10 to 20 percent, it is really phenomenal. . . . The thing to keep in mind, of course, is that over the last decade we have had the oil crisis and that reduced population somewhat, but we have had pretty good years from an agricultural point of view. . . . There have not been disastrous droughts or floods in most of the food-producing regions. India is just now beginning to have trouble because of a bad monsoon this year, but India has had some terribly good years for awhile there. All it is going to take is a few years of bad weather, and then the thing will hit very hard. And then people will say that Draper was right. Not that I hope for that, but it is going to happen.

Book Review

The White House can learn from Ike

by Barbara Dreyfuss

The Declassified Eisenhower, by Blanche Weisen Cook, Doubleday and Company, New York 1981.

The Eisenhower Diaries, edited by Robert Ferrell, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1981.

Eisenhower the President, by William Bragg Ewald, Jr. Prentice-Hall, Inc. New Jersey, 1981.

Eisenhower and the Cold War, by Robert Divine, Oxford University Press, New York, 1981.

Late in September, Caspar Weinberger asserted that another Dwight Eisenhower is now in the White House. Certainly, many of the millions of Americans who voted for Reagan out of disgust with the policies of the Trilateral Commission's Jimmy Carter hoped that Reagan's presidency would restore the Eisenhower era of American economic and military power.

Like Reagan, Eisenhower was surrounded by advisers from the Eastern Establishment, committed to brinkmanship with the Soviets and limits on U.S. economic growth. Yet Eisenhower proved himself unwilling to act as their complete captive. It was not that he was an intellectual giant, or that he came to the White House with a well-conceived plan of what he wanted to do. Ike rarely made major initiatives; he merely responded to world events. But when he did, he acted out of deep concern for world peace.

Eisenhower grew up when the nation was undergoing great industrial development, and at West Point he gained a sense of the scientific outlook responsible for that growth. He had served as aide to Douglas MacArthur in the 1930s, of course, but it was the World War II years that most shaped the General. By the time he reached the White House, he had overseen the largest, most intricate logistical deployment in history, and taken responsibility for the infinitely delicate diplomacy required to maintain the Allied war effort. And during those years he knew that millions of women, young people, and black Americans, who had never before been part of the industrial labor force, suddenly found them-