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## Book Reviews

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# Resolved: People are *not* pollution

by Paul Gallagher

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### Scarcity or Abundance: A Debate on the Environment

by Norman Myers and Julian Simon  
W.W. Norton, New York, 1994  
254 pages, hardbound, \$21

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This book—actually a debate, both live at Columbia University and written, between a leading British globalist and world government advocate, Norman Myers of Oxford, and a prominently quoted American “neo-conservative” economist, Julian Simon—shows how far below science as truth was the level of the “population debate” before the U.N.’s Cairo conference on world population. But during 1994, that debate was shifted by the worldwide outrage against the Cairo conference from Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian evangelical associations and nations.

Norman Myers was a planner of the Cairo conference agenda as a consultant to the U.S. State Department on population affairs (working with the “Global Undersecretary” Timothy Wirth) as the elements of this book were being created. In the book, he repeatedly makes the following claim—which, if true, would condemn humanity to a collapse: “Ninety percent of developing world people now live in countries where population growth is considered too high for economic growth, and should be reduced with all due dispatch. To meet these aspirations, we shall need to double our outlays on family planning by the year 2000.” That was exactly the U.N.’s projected agenda and purpose at Cairo. It was, in part, jettisoned in advance in the face of the ecumenical opposition led by Pope John Paul II; what was not abandoned was rendered unenforceable. In fighting off this Cairo agenda, much of humanity showed its moral fitness to survive.

The Columbia University debate was also noteworthy for Myers’s admission of the fraudulence of the document which launched the current mass “ecology movement”—the 1972 Club of Rome book *Limits to Growth*. Asked about previous malthusian forecasts which have proven false, Myers responded:

“The *Limits to Growth* book published by the Club of Rome in 1972 had a number of conceptual errors. It did not allow for feedback, whether positive or negative [for any technological change]. I still think it served a valuable purpose in opening up a public debate. . . . Today we are learning our predicament is not so much a case of limits to growth, but of the growth of limits. . . . We don’t really know why. The problem baffles scientists and technologists. It could well be that our crops are reaching some kind of photosynthetic limit.”

This will give some idea of the anti-scientific ideology of the U.N.’s attempted Cairo conference agenda. One of the U.N. global planning documents for Cairo, the *WorldWatch State of the World 1994* report, maintained exactly what Myers does here.

Julian Simon opposes the population control dogmas not from the standpoint of the ecumenical religious opposition, but as a “free market” economist who has become widely known for debunking environmentalists’ claims. Unlike Myers, Simon presents the reader or student with a great deal of historical data, some of it compiled originally by his research; and he demonstrates the fundamental role of technological invention and change in transforming and creating “natural resources.” This is exactly what the *Limits to Growth* or *Global 2000 Report* and their offshoots completely denied, in creating the hoary myths and hoaxes of ecologism.

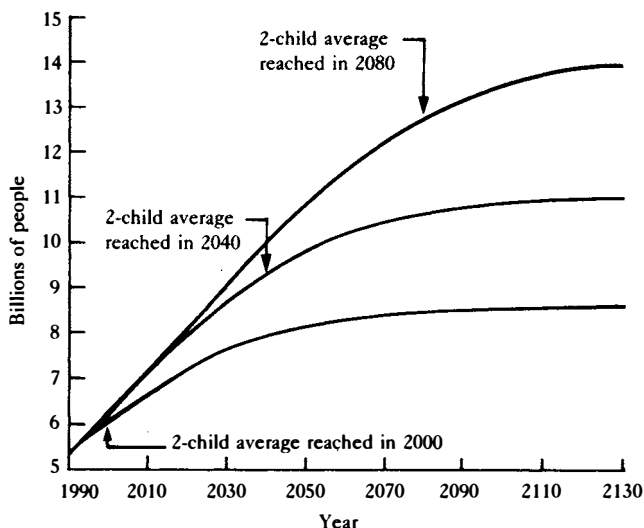
### Forecasting the future

But an attentive reader who has observed the devastation of so many Third World nations’ economies during the past 10 years or so, the forced reductions of food production *per capita* since the late 1980s, and the collapse of average wages in “growth areas” like Mexico, will see that this is where Simon “does not allow for feedback, whether positive or negative.” Simon simply projects past trends in the history of industrial civilization since the Renaissance, into the future. In fact, he makes it both a stated rule of method, and a standing wager, that those trends which represent the triumphs of the Renaissance over death, misery, and backwardness, can simply be projected *indefinitely* into the future as economic forecasting. Such linearization is completely wrong in economic forecasting and in economic policy planning, both of which are based on recognizing the generation of *technological singularities* which transform previous “trends.”

Simon does not acknowledge the massive negative economic singularity the world economy has been thrown into by deregulation and usury. Yet, he presents the evidence of past, positive economic singularities in his own graphs and charts in this book and elsewhere. In giving his idea of the necessary conditions for such positive economic transformations, the flaw in his approach is clear: “respect for property, fair and sensible rules of the market, and the personal liberty that accompanies economic freedom.” Simon leaves out the nation-state, the unique creation of the European Renais-

Figure 1a. Momentum of Population Growth

Ultimate Stable World Population Size Depending on When the Two-Child Family Becomes the Norm



The crucial factor is the pace of fertility decline in the near future. Each 20-year delay in establishing replacement-level fertility, i.e., an average of 2.1 children per woman, will add at least 1 billion to the world's population size when it ultimately stabilizes at zero growth.

Note: Two-child average family size = replacement-level fertility, or an average of 2.1 children per woman with low mortality.

Source: C. Haub, M. M. Kent, and M. Yanagishita. *World Population Data Sheet 1990* (Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C., 1990).

Norman Myers's graph promotes the eugenical idea that "the crucial factor" in stabilizing the world population "is the pace of fertility decline in the near future."

sance which made such progress possible—with the extraordinary population growth accompanying it—by supplying great projects of economic infrastructure. Myers, in the debate, uses Simon's "free market" Pollyanna flaw to score points on the ongoing depression of the world's economies, for which he postulates environmental causes without evidence—then from these "causes" he generates further "effects" such as massive extinctions of species and erosion of soils, again without any basis in evidence.

### Human 'fertility' and lifespan

The most fundamental issue in this debate on the human species' population growth, may not be the most obvious to a reader distracted by the "debaters' points" here. It is the issue of what accounts for human population growth, and on this historical issue, it is conclusive that Julian Simon lives and thinks in the real world, while Norman Myers speaks from the fog of centuries-old British eugenics.

Myers's "program" for saving the biosphere, as he presents it here, centers on the claim—put in chart form (shown

here) in his conclusion section—that the number of children that individual couples "choose to have" will determine the human population far into the future. In other words, that what demographers call the "fertility rate of women" determines future population. His chart says that simply whether world average fertility rate in 2025 is 1.8 or 2.8 children per woman, will determine whether the world population in 2100 (75 years later) is 6 billion or 19 billion.

Simon, presenting historical charts instead, shows that the growth of population in the world or a nation is determined much more fundamentally by *lifespan* than fertility; 80% of world population growth has occurred in the last 150 years, when the average human life expectancy has doubled. Simon's charts also relate both population and lifespan to urbanization—the drop in the portion of population needed to produce food, and the growth of cities with manufactures—with very interesting results.

The idea that *fertility determines population* is a crude, strongly eugenical fallacy which was embedded in the so-called "origins of population studies" by Sir William Petty and his friends in the British Royal Society from 1675-1715. It is, today, the line of the United Nations Population Fund, Planned Parenthood, and the rest of the heirs of the Eugenics Societies of the 19th and 20th centuries. In their drive to reduce fertility of Third World populations, eugenics is tantamount to genocide.

In fact, population growth is primarily associated with increases in lifespans and increase in the rate of marriage and family formation per capita per year. Both, in turn, are related to city-building and urbanization measures of human progress of which Simon gives a partial outline in his research, here and in other locations.

## Books Received

**The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance**, by Laurie Garrett, Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1994, 750 pages, hardbound, \$25.

**The Hot Zone**, by Richard Preston, Random House, New York, 1994, 300 pages, hardbound, \$23.

**Queen Elizabeth II: A Woman Who Is Not Amused**, by Nicholas Davies, Birch Lane Press, New York, 1994, 511 pages, hardbound, \$24.95.

**Conor: A Biography of Conor Cruise O'Brien**, by Donald Harmon Akenson, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y., 1994, 573 pages, hardbound, \$35.

**A Mind of My Own: My Life with Robert Maxwell**, by Elisabeth Maxwell, HarperCollins, New York, 1994, 536 pages, hardbound, \$25.