

Editorial

How to save Africa

A first necessary step to reversing genocide in Africa, is to stop the Cairo population conference. The African Academy of Sciences is already on record, in a document released last November, opposing the headlong drive toward making coercive population reduction into official United Nations policy.

For the U.N. side, there is Cornell professor David Pimentel, who proposes, in effect, to kill 4 out of every 5 people now living, in order to reduce the human race to 1 billion in the next century. WorldWatch Institute is more modest, allowing that only 1 out of 5 individuals need be eliminated to get population down to 4 billion. The U.N.'s *officially preferred* "low scenario" for collapse, opts for 2 out of 5 and an extended time lag into the 22nd century.

The fact is that the world is already on the road to a disastrous contraction in population. World population growth was at its highest in 1965-70. The picture in Africa is stark, as events in Rwanda merely highlight. There is no such thing as "explosive population" on that continent, just the reverse.

In 1950, as the colonialists of Britain, Belgium, etc. were losing their grip on their African colonies, Africa's population was 200 million people. Four times the size of Europe, it had 40% of Europe's population. The newly independent African nations' average *population density* was 6-7 persons per square kilometer, about one-eightieth of some of the European nations which had subjected them, or one-fifteenth of Europe as a whole.

In the first 25 years of political independence, 1950-75, the African nations' combined population grew 90% to 385 million: still only an average density of 13 persons per square kilometer. In 1975-2000, according to the projections of international population agencies, African population will have grown to 600 million, an increase of not 90%, but only 55% in 25 years. Moreover, these African population figures are scandalously inflated. The most stunning example is the U.N.'s official population estimate for Nigeria, Africa's most populous country: 124 million. Nigeria's own 1991 census counted only 88 million people, 30% less! If this adjustment alone is made to the 2000 A.D.

"estimate," the 1975-2000 population growth is not 90% or even 55%, but only 48%.

The West African nations including Nigeria grew 100% in 1950-75, and will grow perhaps by 50% in 1975-2000; Egypt by 85% in 1950-75 and perhaps by 60% in 1975-2000; South Africa by 107% in 1950-75 and perhaps by 75% in 1975-2000.

The policy reasons for this are clear. Beginning with the 1970s oil and commodity hoaxes and currency deregulation, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank cut off credit to African countries except to finance exports, demanded and forced currency devaluations, and stopped economic infrastructure spending through IMF "adjustment" and "shock therapy" programs. Many African countries have fewer railroad and road miles, fewer hospital beds, and less sanitation and fresh water capacity today than in 1975; less domestic food crop per capita; and civil wars annihilating their people. Somalia's population has fallen by 10%; Rwanda's has fallen by 3-4% in two months. Uganda's population is 20-30% infected with the fatal AIDS virus.

A modern electrical power production and transmission system featuring nuclear, coal, and hydroelectric components, is the primary parameter of a nation's standard of living and labor productivity. Americans produce about 9,500 kilowatt-hours per capita per year; Europeans, 8,500; Africans, 1,000-1,500. To have a modern power sector able to design, build, and operate both plants and transmission systems, requires a labor force devoted to this of at least 75-100,000 skilled workers, engineers, and scientists, even for a nation small in area. Many African nations have populations of 10 million or less, and industrial work forces of 1 million or less: *too small* to support a skilled electrical power sector of the needed size, without large numbers of young workers entering the labor force (rapid population growth) and the means to educate and train them through the years of secondary or college-equivalent education.

The truth is that Africa needs more people. The world does not need, and should not tolerate, the policies represented by the planned conference in Cairo.