**The Demographic Aspects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can one actually say about world population?</th>
<th>At least a fifth of humanity lives in a state of absolute poverty, in subhuman conditions, unworthy of man. For the sake of these people and their families, would it not be better to prevent them from having children?</th>
<th>Won’t it contribute to the happiness of the poor to have access to sterilization and abortion made easier?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isn’t a terrible threat hanging over humanity, namely, the &quot;demographic explosion&quot; of the Third-World?</td>
<td>Some go so far as to speak of a &quot;demographic bomb&quot; ready to explode.</td>
<td>Does this fear of population growth in the Third World involve certain countries in particular?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the demographic situation in Europe?</td>
<td>How has Europe come to such a demographic collapse?</td>
<td>Doesn’t the United States also experience a demographic collapse comparable to that of Europe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would the demographic implosion in Europe be of such a nature as to worry the United States?</td>
<td>Since the demographic situation of Europe is so grave, why are so few politicians concerned about it?</td>
<td>How is the problem of abortion presented in a country like Japan where it has become commonplace?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has anyone an idea of the consequences of the collapse of fertility in the developed countries?</td>
<td>Hasn’t mankind, by its very mass, become a nuisance for the environment?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What can one actually say about world population?**
a) In December of 1993, the world population was estimated at 5,543,000,000 inhabitants.

b) On the world scale, "growth has slowed: it was already but 1.7% in 1990 where as it had been 2.1% a year earlier; and the absolute number is going to decrease a little after the year 2000. having taken into account the drop in fertility already recorded in numerous developing countries ."1

c) The phenomenon of spectacular growth of population "occurred with an accelerated rhythm in countries of the South in the 20th century. This rhythm, however, has begun to drop, because world fertility began to diminish with a swiftness that is not negligible in the countries of the Third World: 6.1 infants a woman in 1962, around 3.8 infants a woman in 1990." 2 Practically all over, the synthesized indices of fertility have dropped.

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At least a fifth of humanity lives in a state of absolute poverty, in subhuman conditions, unworthy of man. For the sake of these people and their families, would it not be better to prevent them from having children?

a) The Malthusians assert that there is a disparity between the geometric progression of the population and the arithmetic increase of food resources. The Neomalthusians combine this thesis with that of the right to individual sexual pleasure without the risk of procreation. The Neomalthusian theses - proposing contraception, sterilization, abortion, etc. as the new "rights of man" - are very frequently used as a deception, making the Malthusian motive of those who consider strict control of the population a "duty" as urgent as it is imperative.

These intertwined theses are spread throughout the entire world by those who see their own interests served by them.
b) Poverty is not a fatality; nor is hunger. *Surplus food*, for example, has never been so abundant. It is the same for *life expectancy* at birth, which had never been very high anywhere in the world, and is now sharply increased. But there are serious problems of distribution, not only in what concerns food resources, but also in agricultural know-how, health, hygiene, the natural regulation of birth, etc. - not counting corruption. What the poor expect is that they be given aid to get out of their misery, not that they be left to stagnate after having been "offered" abortion and sterilization.

c) Mass sterilization of the poor, as it is actually being practiced, is going to have terrible consequences. When they get old they will still be as poor, but they won't have any children to count on for assistance. They will be abandoned, and the violence done to them by society will accelerate their death, as it has with street urchins who are left to die, with no one to take care of them.

d) Presented today in a new wrapping, Malthus’ theses are more than ever an instrument for illusion on the part of all those reactionaries opposed to every social reform.

*The Malthusians of today are indoctrinating international opinion by having it swallow the idea that poverty doesn't find its cause in social injustice, or in economic failure, or in political incompetence, or in ideological aberrations. According to them, poverty has its source in the dizzying proliferation of poor people themselves.*

It follows then, to the degree that this thesis, though false, is inculcated and accepted as blinding evidence, true appeals for justice and development may be ignored and the exploitation of the poor can be pursued without scruples.

e) Malthus has thus become the standard bearer today for all those who are an obstacle to social justice -among men and among nations- to universal fraternity, equality, freedom for all, respect for the weak, the poorest, the handicapped, the ailing, etc. For the Malthusians of today, the poor, the weak, the Blacks, the Indians, etc. are despicable; equality of all men, the right of all to freedom, access of all to material, intellectual and spiritual goods - all these are inadmissible objectives that must be fought against. To take care of the weak, to promote equal dignity for all men upsets, according to them, the equilibrium willed by nature, which selects the fittest and eliminates the weakest.

In summary, Malthusian ideas inspire the contemporary version of morality -naturalist and Nietzschean- of the «lords.» In this sense, these ideas are totally incompatible with the Judeo-Christian ethic.
Won’t it contribute to the happiness of the poor to have access to sterilization and abortion made easier?

The rich seem to have at their disposal a mysterious machine called a *eudaemometer*, an apparatus that enables them to measure happiness: their appreciation is in fact based upon statistics relating to revenue. With that as their starting point, the rich estimate that the life for the poor has no sense because they have little revenue: It is necessary, then, to prevent the poor from having children. The life of the poor would be worth the trouble if they had access to pleasure and to the wealth that facilitates it. And so abortion and sterilization are recommended, thus making them believe that they will be less poor and, above all, have access to pleasure.

Moreover, it is the same for individuals as for nations: There is no worse humiliation for a nation than massive sterilization of its citizens. This mutilation is, alas, frequently accompanied by a lie, since one "offers," by way of "aid to poor countries," what in the city is sometimes imposed as a punishment to those condemned of sexual crimes.

Isn't a terrible threat hanging over humanity, namely, the "demographic explosion" of the Third-World?

This notion goes back to the Malthusian theories. According to Malthus (1766-1834), population increases in a *geometric* progression and the food resources in an *arithmetic* one. This theory has resurfaced today in a barely modified form: "People are poor because they are too numerous." This assertion is broadcast by the media which tries hard to impose as blinding, evidence that "to be numerous is to be poor."

But we must not say that people are poor because they are too numerous but that they are too numerous because they are poor. To restrain births energetically in order to put an end to poverty is to approach the problem in the reverse.

Population excess is always measured in relationship to a precise, concrete and variable situation. Poverty is always evaluated according to man’s capacity to face his environment: A nation is poor because it isn’t able to feed it’s population. In this sense, poverty is the cause of overpopulation and not the
reverse; overpopulation is always relative to a given situation. Now this situation can be changed by man’s intervention on the condition that he has both the moral and political desire to do so. There are cases in which people are so materially, intellectually and morally under-equipped that they have no possibility of being properly educated and are, therefore, in this particular situation, too numerous. But that is the point: man can change these situations by organization, teaching and by supplying equipment.

That doesn’t mean that the demographic phenomena should not be taken into account, with its relative decline and growth. Public authority must take care of this problem. But here, as elsewhere, one must respect the principle of subsidiarity, the basis of all democracy. The intervention of public authorities must be accomplished always with respect to the fundamental rights of man. They may not use arbitrary means at any price.

According to the principle of subsidiarity, the public authorities must help individuals and intermediary entities, such as the family, to take the initiative that belongs to them and not act as a substitute for them.

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**Some go so far as to speak of a "demographic bomb" ready to explode.**

In the eyes of the ideologues of demographic security, to be numerous is to be poor. But the bomb of the third millenium is the poverty of the Third World, not the poor. Here, as elsewhere, one must not err in diagnosing the problem or in confusing the effect with its cause.

a) The causes of poverty cannot be resolved by sterilizing the poor -no more than sickness can be remedied by euthanizing the sick. In order to remedy the causes of poverty, it is most urgent that all children receive an education that allows them, by the time they are adults, to meet their needs, and we must help them get it.

b) It would be very difficult to find historical examples of a development that followed upon a drop in the birth rate.

c) In Brazil, from 1960 to 1990, the general rate of fertility, that is to say, the annual number of births relative to the number of women of childbearing age, went from 6.3 to 3.13, while the rate of demographic growth went from 2.89% to 1.8%. Can one say that during this period poverty decreased as much?
Does this fear of population growth in the Third World involve certain countries in particular?

a) The Report of the National Security Council, also called the Kissinger Report explains that developing countries must be the first targeted by the anti-birth campaigns:

Emphasis must be placed primarily on the developing countries that are the biggest and that grow more rapidly and where the disequilibrium between the increasing number [of inhabitants] and the development potential entails the most serious risks of instability, unrest and international tensions. These countries are: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Indonesia, Brazil, The Philippines, Thailand, Egypt, Turkey, Ethiopia and Colombia. 1

b) As important as it is, this report is not unique in its kind; numerous other documents confirm a constant determination among certain North American authorities. 2

1. The document NSSM 200, known under the title Report of the National Security Council or the Kissinger Report, carries the title, Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests. It was elaborated in 1974 at the request of Henry Kissinger, then Secretary of State, and was made public 15 years later. This same report provided the occasion of an excellent dossier on demography that appeared in Le Temps de l'Église n° 8, (April 1993) 28-43.

How is the demographic situation in Europe?

In order to ensure that the population reproduces itself in the "developed" countries, the rate of fertility must be 2.1 children per woman. This index is calculated for one determined year by adding the quotients of fertility by age. In short, it reports the number of children born during a determined year to the number of women aged 15 to 49 on January 1st of the year in question, and these partial quotients are added.

For example, for a given region, the index reports the number of children born in 1990 to the number of women 15 years old on January 1, 1990. Thus, a partial quotient is obtained, called also quotient of fertility by age or rate of partial fertility. One does the same calculation for infants born in 1990 but to women 16 years old on January 1, 1990, and on up to 49 years old. Then these quotients for the same year are all added up to obtain the synthesized fertility index for the year.

Almost everywhere in Europe, this fertility index is clearly below the level necessary for population replacement. For the European community, the data published in 1993 by Eurostat reports a fertility index that was 2.61 in 1960 and dropped to 1.51 in 1991. Ireland alone, with an index of 2.10 is assured of reproducing itself. Consider the following: According to Eurostat, the latest fertility index available gives 1.82 for the United Kingdom, 1.62 for Belgium, 1.33 for Germany, 1.33 for Spain, 1.26 for Italy. For France, Eurostat (1993) gives 1.78, but a recent study by Guy Herzlich in Le Monde of Feb. 10, 1994, reports 1.65 for the year 1993.

The drop is even more spectacular in the countries of Eastern Europe: "The number of children per woman has literally tumbled in eastern Germany: from nearly 1.6 in mid-1990 to 0.83 in 1992. But Russia has fallen in two years from 1.9 to 1.56.... Catholic Poland returned to 1.95 children per woman as has Slovakia.... In Russia since the end of 1991, the total number of deaths exceeded that of births." Only in the years 1965-1970, the synthesized fertility index in Europe had been almost everywhere above 2.1. By way of comparison, let us indicate that this index, which declined almost in all continents since 1965, was estimated at 3.3 for the whole world and 3.7 for the Third World.
How has Europe come to such a demographic collapse?

The causes of this demographic implosion are obviously complex. In any case, there is one that merits emphasis. In order to make contraception, sterilization and abortion acceptable in the Third World, Europe had to "give the example" itself. The message Europe addressed to the poor countries would not have been credible if it hadn't itself begun to adopt and legalize these practices. Since 1973, the agronomist René Dumont wrote: "Authoritarian measures for limiting birth... are going to become more and more necessary, but they will not be acceptable unless they begin in the rich countries and through education of the others."1

European example did bring about its effect of imitation in the Third World, but in addition it had a boomerang effect in Europe. This is a new version of the case of a trick backfiring: Europe had been, and continues to be, the first victim of the "anti-life" practices it wanted to export to the Third World to ensure the maintenance of its control.


Doesn't the United States also experience a demographic collapse comparable to that of Europe?

Despite appearances, from the demographic viewpoint, the situation in the United States is different from that in Europe. First of all, its synthesized fertility index of 2.0 is markedly above that of the European community where it is only 1.51. Moreover it is well known that this fertility differs from ethnic group to ethnic group. For example, it is much higher among the African-Americans and those of Latin-American origin than among the "WASPs", that is to say, among the "White, Anglo-Saxon Protestants." We should also note that the pyramid of age is more balanced and the proportion of young people higher than in Europe.

We should also report that the pro-life movements are much more active and better organized in the USA than in Europe. Their influence on the media is very important; their voices carry weight during elections, and they have
demonstrated many times the formidable use one can make of boycotting pharmaceutical firms. Recent presidents, like Reagan and Bush, have been pro-life themselves.

**Would the demographic implosion in Europe be of such a nature as to worry the United States?**

The diversity of demographic questions, depending on whether we speak of the Third World or Europe, finds its reflection in the ambiguity of relationships between Europe and the United States.

a) The United States and the Anglo-Saxon world in general have been pioneers in the area of contraception, sterilization and abortion. The main Malthusian and Neomalthusian theses continue to be widely spread from centers based in the USA or England. These countries have shared with Europe their obsession with "demographic security" regarding the Third World whose expansion they fear very much.

This communal interest leads Europe and the USA to join forces in order to restrict the demographic pressure of the Third World, and they don't hesitate to control international institutions to attain their end. They even seek in the new antagonism between the North and the South the cohesive cement which the previous East-West antagonism no longer assures them.

b) Nevertheless, beyond this community of interests, it appears more and more clear that some wealthier countries of the West wish to prevent the emergence of new rivals, whoever they might be. 1

The Third World in general is, in the end, a potential rival whose emergence must be controlled. Let us mention rapidly two examples.

- first of all China: it "benefits" from an "aid" to demographic control the breadth and effectiveness of which have recently been denounced;
- then Mexico: a country developing in step with the city, it must be watched more closely; and it has since been integrated into a "free market" regrouping of the states of North America.

Of different concern, however, is the maintenance of European power with the organization of the European Union.

c) One can wonder if Europe is not in the process of itself destroying its ability to intervene in favor of the development of the Third World. By consenting to its
demographic decline, Europe gives more elbow room to the United States. For all that, it could offer poor countries the alternative solution of partnership -if it had not let itself get caught in a trap.

d) It's about time that Europe and the Third World recalled the aphorism attributed to Disraeli: "The British Empire has no permanent enemies, nor permanent friends. It has only permanent interests."

1. This concern, "Prevent the Re-emergence of a New Rival," appears in a memorandum of 46 pages prepared by the office of the Secretary of Defense. It was published by the New York Times (March 8, 1992) and reported by Barton Gellman in the Washington Post (March 11, 1992) under the title "Keeping the U.S. First. Pentagon would Preclude a Rival Superpower."

Since the demographic situation of Europe is so grave, why are so few politicians concerned about it?

The lack of attention shown by most European politicians to these demographic problems is really staggering. There are different reasons for that. First of all, most politicians perceive the problems connected with respect for life, not in function of the common good but in function of their electorate. If concern for the common good prevailed among them, the long term would be favored and the demographic problems would receive the proper attention they deserve. But politicians are generally more sensitive to the short and medium term. They care more about their own particular good, their re-election, and then pleasing the electorate whom they must seduce in view of the next election.

Even Christian politicians who should have specific reasons to be concerned about these questions, often give proof of softness in these matters. The various national and European parliaments have given a thousand examples of this. In particular it is perfectly scandalous that Christian politicians have affixed their signatures to the laws regulating abortion.

Finally, we must never lose sight of the fact that cultivated ignorance is the superior form of voluntary servitude, although we must acknowledge that it finds formidable rivals in bad faith, corruption and lack of courage. 1
How is the problem of abortion presented in a country like Japan where it has become commonplace?

Abortion is currently practiced in Japan, and they estimate that there are a half a million a year. We must remark, however, that this frequency of abortion does not achieve a sense of guilt among those who have recourse to it. There are even cemeteries for unborn infants in which figurines represent the little victims of abortion.

Japan, where few women work, is nevertheless going to face a grave problem with regard to demography. The fertility index is 1.5, and the aging of the population is accentuated.

Until now, Japan has prevented or skirted the ramifications of its demographic decline by establishing some of its industries in foreign countries. But the Japanese directors are realizing that the expansion of Japan risks being hypothetical by reason of the foreseeable difficulties due to the demographic dynamic.

That is why Japan has recently taken strict measures to prevent women from using contraception.

It is also the reason why Tokyo is trying to bring back to Japan emigrants and children of Japanese emigrants. This reverse migration has the objective of contributing to the resolution of the problem of lack of manpower.

Has anyone an idea of the consequences of the collapse of fertility in the developed countries?

These consequences are many and varied and are ever foreseeable now. In a general way a demographic imbalance between North and South cannot be seen
as reassuring for the future of human society. The demographic collapse of the North would certainly entail a general weakening of the vitality of all of humanity.

Two consequences deserve, however, to be set in relief, for they concern the future of Europe and in particular of Western Europe:

a) The first is that the demographic collapse of Europe is going to reinforce the non-Europeans in their migratory tendencies. This is particularly true regarding the relationship between Europe and the Maghreb in North Africa. While in Europe the work force is decreasing, the population of the Maghreb, younger and more fertile, will bring an ever greater pressure on Europe, particularly Latin Europe. This population will be either underemployed in its own countries or employed via the European circuits of production. In both cases the problems risk being all the more delicate to manage as the experience of the recent past shows that Europe is not anxious to favor the integration of the Maghreb workers already established in its territory.

b) The second consequence is by far the more serious, and it is also the least easily perceived by the public at large. This consequence, as Pierre Chaunu has often insisted, is the exhausting of the tradition of culture and science. In effect, in the final analysis, man is the sole, unique bearer of culture and knowledge. Culture, science, morals, and religions are not transmitted except through the intervention of men who endlessly enrich them. Humanity’s memory is a living memory, that is, creative and inventive. Written documents, the various "monuments" are dead realities if no one is there to interrogate them, dialogue with them and go beyond them. The major risk that Europe runs in its declining population, is that its culture will languish. Absent will be the numerous exchanges which a large and dense population stimulate. Culture and science run a double, mortal risk: first, repetitious stagnation, and finally, shipwreck.

Hasn't mankind, by its very mass, become a nuisance for the environment?

It is certainly clear that man has a fantastic ability to destroy the environment.

a) If all men consumed as much and as anarchically as the inhabitants of rich countries, the planet would be burned up.

b) The setting on fire of the oil wells in the Gulf region proved that this destructive ability can go all the way to madness. At the same time, the devastation of the Amazon is no less worrisome.
c) Disastrous effects, even if on a lesser scale, are produced wherever natural resources are exploited using archaic and ineffective methods that are damaging to the environment.

On the other land,

a) The progress of agronomy, for example, happily shows that man also has an astonishing capacity for managing the environment and natural resources well. Even the Food and Agriculture Organization admitted that the problem of feeding mankind is less a technical problem that a political and therefore, moral problem.

b) Moreover, it is education and enrichment of the population that permit regulation of birth and not the reverse.

c) Finally, to respect the ecosystem is first of all to respect the heart of the environment, and that is the human being. How can one respect an elephant or a baby seal if one does not even respect the flesh of one's flesh?

What so often happens is that, drawn by the unbridled lure of gain, some people destroy the natural equilibrium, and then, with a rare cynicism, they declare that there are too many people on the planet earth and that this "overpopulation" pollutes the ecosystem: They damage the Amazon region and then say that there are too many people in Brazil.