

# 5 BILLION NEIGHBOURS ON 47 BIOLOGICAL SCIENTISTS

that the threat of large-scale famine is still with us despite some nutritional advances. Pollution and ecological disruption are already affecting some food sources, and frequently efforts to raise nutritional standards are themselves polluting. Moreover, population figures are misleading, since they do not take into consideration the factor of consumption. It has been estimated that a child born in the United States today will consume during his lifetime at least twenty times as much as one born in India, and contribute about fifty times as much pollution to the environment. In terms of environmental impact, therefore, the most industrialized countries are also the most densely populated.

Man's need for space and a degree of solitude, though difficult to state in precise terms, is real and observable. We do not live by bread alone. Even if technology could produce enough synthetic food for all, over-crowding produced by ever-rising populations is likely to have disastrous social and ecological consequences.

**WAR.** Throughout history there has been no human activity so universally condemned and so universally practiced as war, and research on ever more destructive weaponry and methods of warfare has been unremitting. Now that we have achieved the ultimate weapon and seen its potential, we have recoiled from its further use, but our fear has not kept us from filling our arsenals with enough nuclear warheads to wipe out all life on earth several times over, or from blinding and heedless experiments, both in the laboratory and in the battlefield, with biological and chemical weapons. Nor has it kept us from engaging in "small" wars or aggressive actions that may lead to nuclear war. Even if final, major war is avoided, preparation for it uses up physical and human resources that ought to be spent in an effort to find ways of feeding and housing the world's deprived people and of saving and improving the environment.

It is clear that it is insufficient to attribute war to the natural belligerence of mankind when men have in fact succeeded in establishing at some points stable and relatively peaceful societies in limited geographical areas. In our time it is apparent that the dangers of global war focus at two points:

The inequality that exists between industrialized and non-industrialized parts of the world, and the determination of millions of impoverished human beings to improve their lot;

the competition for power and economical advantage among anarchic nation-states unwilling to relinquish selfish interests in order to create a more equitable society.

Stated thus, the problem seems almost insoluble. Yet mankind has demonstrated improbable resources of adaptability and resiliency in the past and perhaps facing what may well be the ultimate challenge to its survival, it will confound our fears once again.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The preceding is only a partial listing of the problems that confront us and makes scarcely any attempt to describe their causes. We really do not know the full dimensions of either our problems or their solutions. We do know that Earth and all its inhabitants are in trouble and that our problems will multiply if we do not attend to them.

In the 1940's, when it was decided to develop the atomic bomb, The United States appropriated two billion dollars and brought experts from all over the world to do the job in two years. In the 1960's, preoccupied with the race to the moon, the United States spent between 20 and 40 billion dollars to win the race and both the Soviet Union and the U.S. continue to spend billions of dollars in space exploration.

Certainly massive research into the problems that threaten the survival of mankind deserves a higher priority than atomic or space research. It should be begun at once on a similar scale and with an even greater sense of urgency.

Such research should be paid for by the industrial nations, which are not only financially best able to carry that burden, but themselves are the principal user of resources and the major polluters, but it should be carried out by qualified men from all countries and various professions, working unfettered by restrictive nationalistic policies.

Because the crisis is so pressing, however, we urge that the following actions be taken even while research is going on. We do not offer these as holding actions to keep our situation from deteriorating past the point of no return:

(1) A moratorium on technological innovations the effects of which we cannot foretell and which are not essential to human survival. This would include new weapons systems, luxury transport, new and untested pesticides, the manufacture of new plastics, the establishment of vast new nuclear power projects, etc. It would also include ecologically un-researched engineering projects--the damming of great rivers, "reclamation" of jungle land, undersea mining projects, etc.

(2) The application of existing pollution-control technology to the generation of energy and to industry generally, large-scale recycling of materials in order to slow down the exhaustion of resources, and the rapid establishment of international agreement on environmental quality, these to be subject to review as environmental needs become more fully known.

(3) An intensified program to curb population growth all over the world. It is important that this be accompanied by a decrease in the level of consumption by privileged classes, and that a more equitable distribution of food and other goods among all people be developed.

(4) Regardless of the difficulty of achieving agreements, nations must find a way to abolish war, to defuse their nuclear armaments, and to destroy their chemical and biological weapons. The consequences of a global war would be immediate and irreversible, and it is there fore also the responsibility of individuals and groups to refuse to participate in research or processes that might, if used, result in the extermination of the human species.

Earth, which has seemed so large, must now be seen in its smallness. We live in a closed system, absolutely dependent on Earth and on each other for our lives and those of succeeding generations. The many things that divide us are therefore of infinitely less importance than the interdependence and danger that unite us. We believe that it is literally true that only by transcending our divisions will men be able to keep Earth as their home. Solutions to the actual problems of pollution, hunger, over-population and war may be simpler to find than the formula for the common effort through which the search for solutions must occur, but we must make a beginning.

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SITY HEATING MONTGOMERY AVENUE

other short-sighted, unproductive practices contributed to an imbalance that had catastrophic effects on areas and over which may adversely affect the productivity of the world.

Even under the best of circumstances, we cannot provide the amounts sufficient for all people to live on the consumption of the majority in industrial societies, and between life styles of extreme poverty and permitted by all.

continue to be a source of conflict and revolution.

#### POPULATION, OVER CROWDING AND HUNGER.

The present population of Earth is estimated at three and one half billion people and calculations, based on success of present population control programs, put it at six and a half billion by the year 2000. There have been some optimistic predictions that technological and natural resources can be developed to feed, clothe and house far larger populations than this. The immediate fact is, however, that as many as two-thirds of the world's present population are suffering from malnutrition and



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