

Population growth: Homo sapiens prompts pollution and famine

In 1979 the last non-Communist government in Latin America, that of Mexico, is replaced by a Chinese supported military junta. Famine has swept across Asia, Africa and South America.

Food riots have become anti-American riots, as their enemies claimed they were withholding food from the starving. In Southeast Asia the Vietnam, Thai and Laotian wars have resulted in massive casualties and economic crises.

During the Mediterranean crisis of 1978, the joint Mexican-United States expeditionary forces were withdrawn from Costa Rica. Only the outbreak of a particularly virulent strain of bubonic plague, killing 65 percent of the starving Egyptian population, had averted a direct Soviet-American clash in the Mediterranean.

In 1977 both superpowers had withdrawn all aid from the Indian subcontinent as India fell apart into a large number of starving, warring, minor states.

Western European nations, side with the Soviet Union, accusing the U.S. of waging biological warfare against the Egyptians. They are joined in their denunciation by Pope Pius XIII who also accuses the U.S. of "eating meat while the hungry of the world lack bread." In the U.S. there is less meat to eat than at any stage in their history. Food and water rationing are standard.

The Mexican coup hits President Montgomery at a time of profound internal crisis. The third Los Angeles killer smog has wiped out 90,000 people. Troops holding the city under martial law are under constant attack by rioters.

The President's Environmental Advisory Board has reported a measurable rise in the sea level due to the melting of Polar Ice Caps. The decline in fisheries is now irreversible due to pollution. The Board recommends the immediate compulsory restriction of births to one per couple. It says that unless the population size in the U.S. is reduced rapidly, it will be facing massive famine by the year 2000. Pollution and pesticide poisonings have supplanted cardio-vascular disease as the number one killer of Americans.

In early 1980 the Chinese and Russians jointly begin to establish missile bases and other military facilities throughout Latin America.

In the U.S. right wing pressure to launch pre-emptive nuclear strikes against China and Russia becomes extreme. Sino-Russian intelligence recommends a first strike by Communist forces. This advice is acted upon and a thermonuclear war ensues.

Particularly devastating are the high altitude "flash" devices designed to set fire to all flammable materials over large areas. At one point 15 fires rage in the Northern Hemisphere. Each covers an area four times the size of Colorado. The effects include rising radiation levels and climatic catastrophe resulting from the addition of enormous amounts of debris and carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. These and general sterilization of the

soil make the northern two-thirds of the Earth uninhabitable. Small pockets of homo sapiens hold on for a while in the Southern Hemisphere but slowly die out as social systems break down, radiation poisoning takes effect, climatic changes kill crops, livestock die off, and various man made plagues spread. The most intelligent creatures surviving this period are cockroaches.

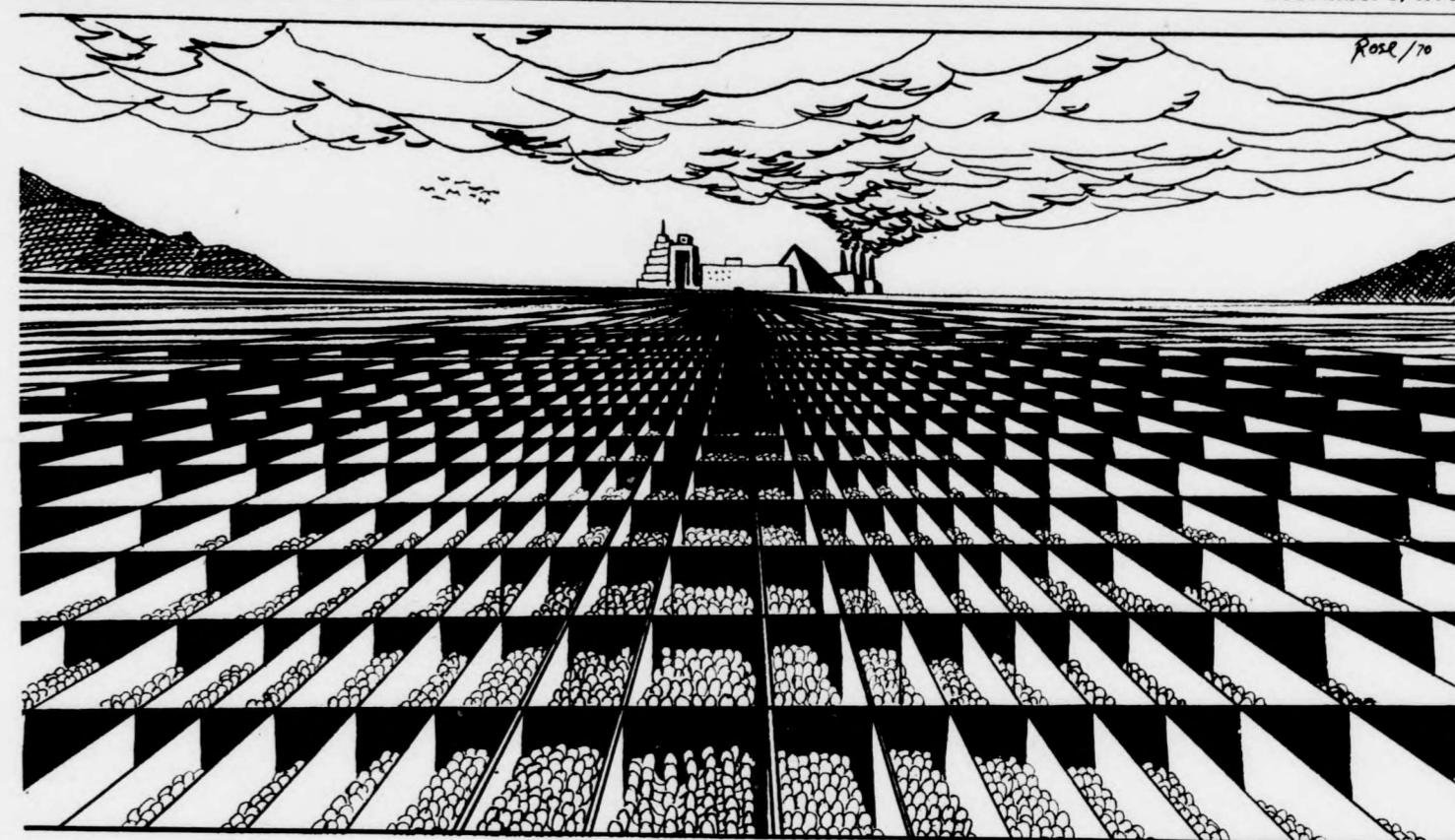
Paul Erlich-Population Bomb.

The situation described above is indeed plausible if man persists in considering himself an independent form of life. He has yet to realize that he is only one of many species inhabiting an ecosystem with a finite source of resources. Homo sapiens must depend on these other species of animals and plants for survival. Man's misuse of technology is destroying the biosphere. We are all acquainted with the facts and figures concerning pollution. We realize the disastrous outcome if pollution continues. Yet, we fail to realize that human population growth today is directly related to pollution. Population growth is indeed a serious problem, especially when one realizes that the earth's resources are finite.

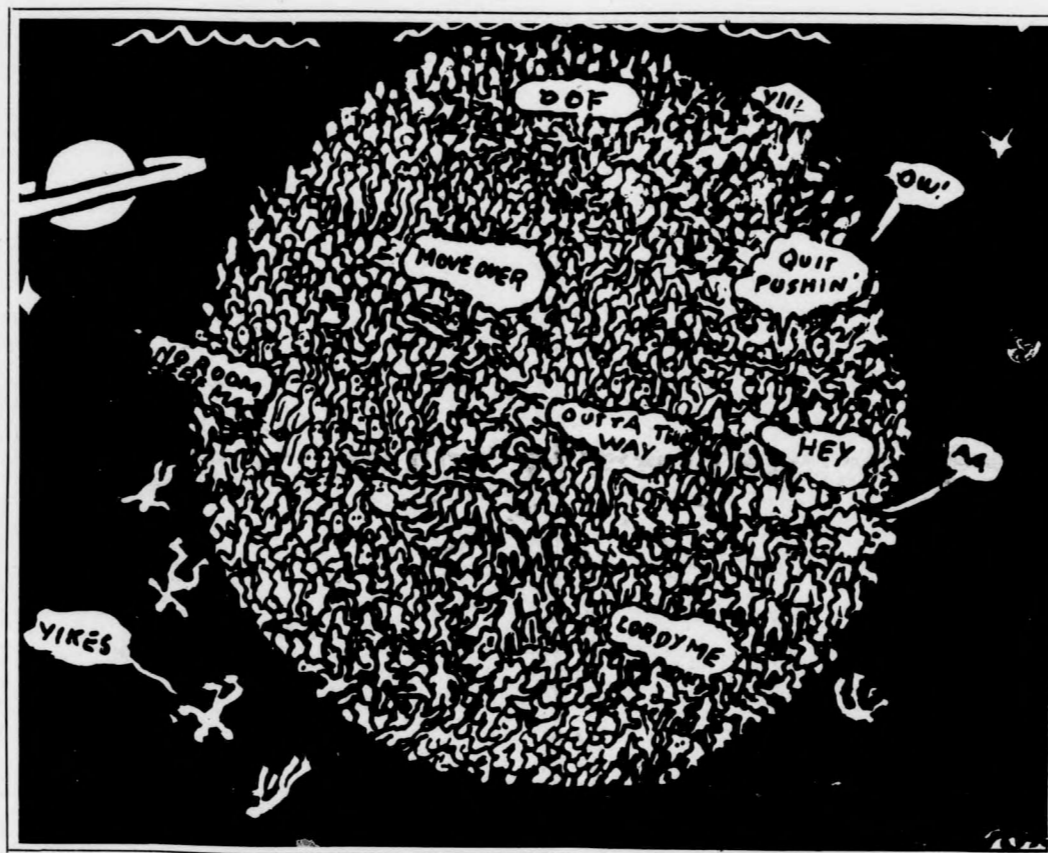
World population today is about 3.6 billion. It is doubling every 35 years. This means that in the year 2005 world population will be 7.2 billion. Doubling time is decreasing yearly.

If we cannot feed starving people today what shall we do in 35 years?

Population growth, however, is not uniform throughout the world. Basically, countries can be divided into two groups:



By Shelli Hunter



Underdeveloped countries (UDCs), which have rapid growth rates and developed countries (DCs), which have relatively slow growth rates.

UDCs make up two thirds of the total world population. They have little or no industry, inefficient methods of farming and a small gross national product. DCs, on the other hand, are highly industrialized countries.

The doubling time for populations in UDCs ranges from 25 to 30 years. This means that food production will have to double in 25 to 30 years. This may be quite impossible considering that these countries cannot feed their people now.

Doubling time for DCs is 50 to 200 years. This is because they have undergone demographic transition. As industrialization in these countries progressed there was little need for large populations. Machines replaced human labour.

We often condemn UDCs for contributing most to the population problem, but, it is a well-known fact that the average North American middle class baby has a future consumption and pollution pattern ahead of him that cannot be matched by 50 of his peers in Calcutta.

To raise this baby in the middle class style many natural resources of the UDCs will be mined and processed by North Americans.

The U.S. has the technological tools to exploit these countries. They enter a UDC, build plants and set up mines. True, this arrangement offers employment to the inhabitants but it does not allow them to develop their own resources.

As the resources become scarce and the populations of UDCs continue to grow, a tense political situation could develop, since UDC governments will become more nationalistic to protect what resources they have left.

The demands for these resources are increasing rather than decreasing. Every North American wants to own a Super Car which is probably the most significant air polluter and resource consumer. The U.S. which has only six percent of the total world population, uses over 35 percent of the world's resources.

The gravity of the pollution and population problem is immeasurable. What steps must be taken to alleviate the problem?

There is a non-profit organization called Zero Population Growth which is advocating measures to curb population growth. They believe that this can be accomplished several ways:

(a) No family should have more than two natural born children. If more are desired, they can be adopted.

(b) All methods of birth control, including abortion, should be freely available to the public. Poor families should not be charged for these.

(c) Tax laws should be revised to discourage large families. This would not effect large families already established but would discourage future births. There would be a tax exemption for every child. This would be halted if after the second child, additional children were born. Poverty stricken families would have bonuses allotted for restricting the number of births in the family. This would offer incentives for limiting family size; serve to alleviate the standard of living for poor families; and save tax dollars since fewer children would be supported by welfare.

Zero Population Growth is working to stabilize the population of North America. By curbing population growth we can conserve our resources. Zero Population Growth aims to protect the environment that you, your children and your grandchildren will have to live in. If you would like further information about Zero Population Growth write to: Zero Population Growth-Toronto, 43 Queens Park Cres. E., or call 928-6404.

