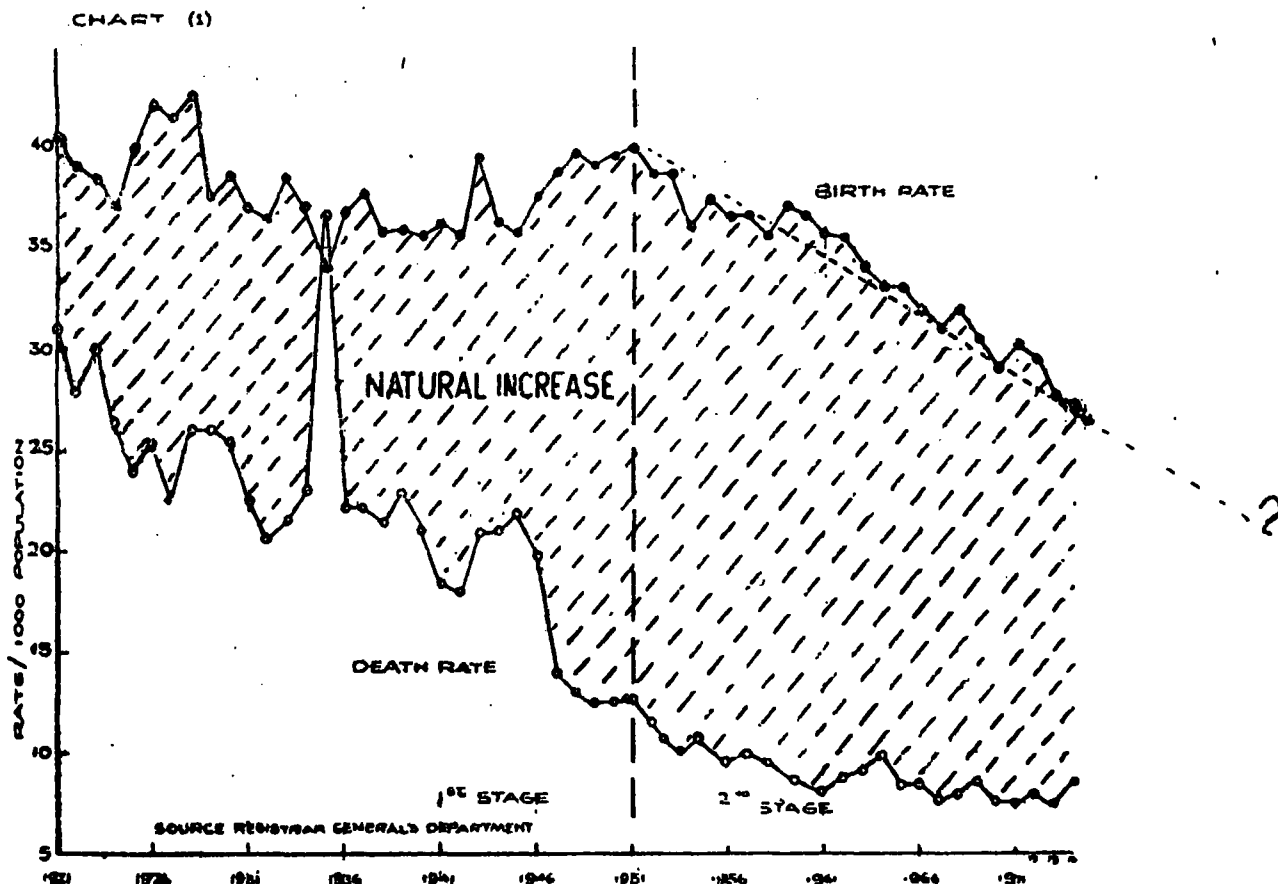


SRI LANKA'S BIRTH RATE & DEATH RATE PER 1000 POPULATION 1921 - 1974



Population and Resources

ATTENTION on increase of population and the dwindling share of the world's resources to sustain this population has kept mounting. This has evoked concern among many Third World countries including Sri Lanka. Since the 1950's it has been an article of faith peddled by many quarters that population control is a key factor in the development process. This view which emanated largely from the U.S. and the Western countries has been purveyed by many international agencies as part of their "Aid" programmes.

Recently, however, a rapid re-assessment has been in progress about the role of population. Part of this re-assessment has been that population has to be tied to sharing all the world's wealth and that popu-

lation growth itself is not necessarily a barrier to development. This revision of the imposed view of the last two decades reached a high point in the United Nations Conference on Population at Bucharest in 1974. The apparent purpose of the Conference was to adopt a resolution which would emphasise the key position of population growth as a major hindrance to Third World countries development. However, the conference carried in the wake of the new mood of militancy of the Third World, took an entirely different turning. Population was dethroned as a central factor in the development process and the consensus was that development was a pre-requisite to population control and not vice versa. The complete turn around is most dramatically seen when one

notes that even David Rockefeller, the funding father and former Chairman of the U.S. Commission on population growth changed his mind and joined the consensus position that population growth is not the primary source of poverty.

The sharp turn around in the United Nations position on population has not yet sufficiently filtered through to Sri Lanka. Hence this essay, which hopes to place in perspective the growth of population mythology and its present position.

MALTHUS AND THE POPULATION DEBATE

IDEAS of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, emanating from the French Revolution, was a source of dis-

comfiture to the vested interests of the time. In this background the theory of population propounded by Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus (1766—1834) was an instant success with the British ruling classes.

The theory was based on the formula that population increases in geometric progression: 1 : 2 : 4 : 8 : 16 : 32; while the productive power of the land increases in arithmetic progression: 1 : 2 : 3; therefore the inherent tendency of the population to multiply in excess of available means is the root cause of all misery. Malthus saw no other salvation for the whole class of the poor than by keeping their propagation down to the "absolute minimum".

The overwhelming reception accorded to Malthus's theory in his time is adequately dealt with in the 13th edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

"It can scarcely be doubted that the favour which was at once accorded to the views of Malthus in certain circles was due in part to an impression, very welcome to the highest ranks in society, that they tended to relieve the rich and powerful of responsibility for the conditions of the working classes, by showing that the latter had chiefly themselves to blame, and not either the negligence of their superiors or the institutions of the country".

The same source continues that, "in the conceptions of Malthus and his followers, a single social imperfection assumed such portentous dimensions that it seemed to overcloud the whole heaven, and threaten the world with ruin. The 'celebrated proposition' that population increases in geometrical, food in arithmetical ratio, has been conclusively shown to be erroneous, there being no such difference of law between the increase of man and that of the organic beings which form his food".

Subsequent developments in the economic history of the so called 'developed countries' had exploded the Malthusian mathematics. Malthus could not foresee the immense production resulting from the industrial and chemical revolutions which

brought enormous increases in agricultural production in the past two decades. All the "over-populated" countries in the Malthusian context particularly England, did not fulfil his prophesies.

Britain's production of wheat, as shown by calculations of the time, "could be increased enough within ten years to produce sufficient to

support six times the population of 1840".

Events in U.S.A. recorded problems of an expanding abundance of the chemical revolution. Phenomenal increases in the yields per acre created a "food explosion". "In 1798 the U.S.A. had a population of FIVE MILLION and more than enough food to feed them. Today

it has a population of 177 million—and more than enough food to feed them. In fact the food keeps piling up higher and higher despite the abnormal demand of two wars in recent years, despite the fact that some 1,800,000 farms have disappeared in the last twenty years and also that about a MILLION acres of farmland every year are turned into highways, housing developments and factories". (W.B. Furlong, N.Y., Times Magazine, Oct. 1959).

In the century following while the Industrial and Chemical Revolutions exploded Malthus's theory of food shortages, an actual decline in the birth rates began, IRRESPECTIVE of any policies of birth control. The decline was the result of structural changes that occurred in those societies with the Industrial Revolution. This phenomenon is examined elsewhere in this issue.

The fundamental mistake made by Malthus and his followers is to have isolated the poor from the population and then seek to explain the poverty of this segment on the basis of its size.

The rich and the poor are a living inter-related combination of the population as a whole. The distribution of hunger in the population has not been due to the abundance of the poor, but to the poor distribution of society's abundance as well as the anarchic organisation of society's means of production.

The productive power at the disposal of mankind has been proved to be immeasurable. But society has to be so organized as to bring about the most effective combination of men and science in the best interests of all.

Malthus made the error of looking at one phenomena of his society and applying it as a natural phenomenon true of all societies, at all times, and all places.

THE MALTHUSIAN ARGUMENT AND THE THIRD WORLD

THE arguments of Malthus have been revived and emphasised since the Second World War by Western

Resources and the Real Reasons

Jose de Castro
The Geography of Hunger

"Hunger has been chiefly created by the inhuman exploitation of colonial riches, by the latifundia and one-crop culture which lay waste the colony, so that the exploiting country can take too cheaply the raw materials its prosperous industrial economy requires. For economic reasons misery was hidden from the world's eyes, tragedies like that of China, where in the 19th century some hundred million individuals starved to death, or like that of India, where twenty million people died of hunger in the last thirty years of the Century, were glossed over" "the prevailing starvation in South America is a direct consequence of the continent's historical past. This history is one of colonial exploitation along mercantile lines..... There were the cycle of gold, the cycle of sugar, the cycle of precious stones, the cycle of coffee, the cycle of rubber, the cycle of oil, and during the course of each of these cycles, one finds a whole region giving itself up entirely to the monoculture, or monoexploitation of a single product—at the same time forgetting everything else, and thus wasting natural wealth and neglecting the potentialities of regional food supply".

And Agricultural Resources

(Dr. C. Taeber: Head of the Statistics branch of the Food and Agricultural Organisation, U.N.)

From conclusions reached by researchers, Dr. Taeber reports:—

"It is feasible to bring into production some ONE BILLION acres of land in the Tropical areas. Some 300 MILLION acres outside the Tropics. The production level assume per crop acre in the Tropics—

—is equivalent to that already achieved in the Philippines. The non-Tropics—is equivalent to that already achieved in Finland. Adding this figure to that considered attainable from existing crop land would more than adequately provide all of the required foodstuffs. And for cereals, roots, tubers, sugar and fats and oil, the total attainable under these conditions would more than double the goals used in these computations". Between 1968 and 1970 four major grain producers—The U.S.A., Australia, Canada and Argentina—cut wheat acreage from over 120 million to 81 million.

Colin Clark, Former Director of the Oxford University Agricultural Economics Institute, reports:—

"Confining ourselves to practical farming methods already used by the good farmers in different parts of the world, the world's cultivable and pasturable lands could feed something like TEN TIMES the world's population—not at subsistence levels but in an American style of diet.

nations. There are in this strong racist echoes and overtones of the supremacy of the West being overrun by black, brown and yellow persons.

The starving millions are seen as the pressure source that threatens the existing International order. "No time is to be lost. The peril mounts daily. Our way of life, if not the actual existence of ourselves and our children, is at stake. (The Popu-

lation Bomb—Hugh Moore Fund publication).

These new prophets (see box) have emphasised population as being the major reason for lack of development. These neo-Malthusians as they are almost invariably from the West finds the emphasis on population as being a central factor in underdevelopment advantageous in their international interest because it denies

the exploitative relationships that prevent development in the Third World. Primary among such disadvantageous relationships have been the deteriorating terms of trade of the Third World, a good example of which is Sri Lanka which had seen its produce fetching less and less in the manipulated markets of the West, whilst Western imports have risen rapidly in price.

Many impartial observers have pointed out the fallacy of looking at food resources being limited by population levels conceivable in the near and immediate future (see box). The main reasons for the poverty of the Third World is the past and continuous exploitative relationship with the West as is now evidenced in several United Nations resolutions on the New Economic Order.

The prescription of birth control for the "spawning millions" in support of preserving the world's resources hold neither logic nor reason. If the world is concerned about resource constraint where should its efforts be directed?

"ONE AMERICAN BABY EATS 50 INDIAN BABIES"

ACCORDING to their logic, the manner of luxury consumption, the waste and inefficient use of the presently abundant resources does not appear to receive as much attention as their preoccupation with reducing the consumption of the poor by reducing their numbers. Can the poor of our countries save anything even if they had less mouths to feed? Would the situation in the underdeveloped countries have been any better if the growth of their populations in the last decades had not taken place.

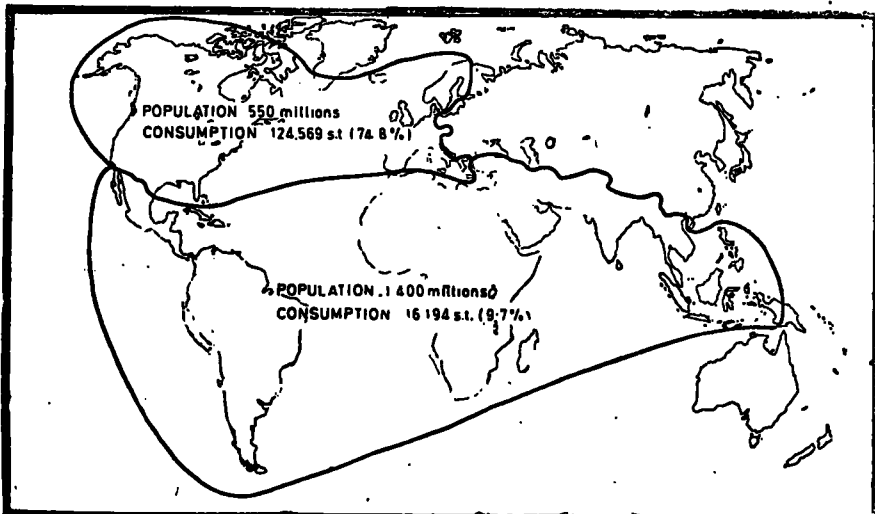
Millions of acres in the underdeveloped countries are used up to grow cash crops for export to the rich nations. It was deliberate Western policy to keep the colonies as cheap producers of raw material to feed the Industrial machines. Monopolies continue to wring millions of dollars from the former colonies through the expansion of unequal trade.

The anxiety about the exhaustion of raw materials has been largely the result of the fact that the former

colonial and semi-colonial countries have grown less and less reliable as cheap, enormously profitable sources of raw material, and the fear of being deprived of the channels for exploiting them.

OF "OVERPOPULATION"

WESTERN population experts popularly assume (or at least did so till the Bucharest Conference) that the underdeveloped countries are "overpopulated" and that their general backwardness and their inability to develop is due to "most of their resources—eaten up by continuing high rates of population growth".



Industrial consumption of tin (in short tons) in non-communist countries in 1967 (out of an estimated total non-communist consumption of 166,000 short tons):

Overpopulation must be stipulated in relation to something specific.

If it is resources, we find that poor countries are so despite possession of rich agricultural and mineral resources, and despite much lower population densities than their "colonial mother" countries. If it relates to rapid population growth rates, as is the case in many of the underdeveloped countries of Latin America and Africa, there would be an absurd position of many sparsely populated countries falling into the category of "overpopulated" and many densely populated countries not so. The fallacy of these ideas is clearly illustrated in the table (next page) that underdeveloped countries are "overpopulated".

The rules of International trade and capital transfer are being chal-

lenged by these underdeveloped countries and attempts made to unite in common action to procure fair terms of trade without much success against the Western giants. But large amounts of 'aid' have been made available for "development". Yet the underdeveloped countries become more dependent while the inequalities have become more visible and the gaps wider. Such "Aid" in large amounts are being offered through various agencies of the United Nations and mushroom organisations—with the recipe for the salvation of the starving millions and of mankind generally.

Unlimited sums of money, time,

energy, are spent on conferences, seminars etc. to create a general atmosphere of crisis and doom and establish support and spread a general belief that the "underdeveloped" countries are overpopulated and to promote the concept of "too many people" as the main reason for poverty, unemployment, slums and slow economic development.

The effect of such pressures on National Governments was an increased interest in the developing regions in setting up Family Planning programmes in their countries. Programmes of Family Planning have been established in the underdeveloped regions with the assistance of "Foreign Aid" and "Foreign Specialists" to teach the ignorant the subtle manoeuvres of population control. Yardsticks of measurement pushed by foreign concepts as targets

Some POPULATION DENSITIES

"Poor"			"Rich"		
Surinam (Dutch W. Indies) ...	4		Belgium	800	
Bolivia	10		England and Wales	750	
Belgian Congo	13		U.K.	500	
Columbia	26		Holland	610	
Iran, Iraq	30		Italy	400	
Phillippines	175		France	200	
India	250		Spain	140	
<i>Underdeveloped</i>			<i>Developed</i>		
	<i>Pop. per km.</i>	<i>G.N.P. per capita U.S.\$</i>		<i>Pop. per km.</i>	<i>G.N.P. per capita U.S.\$</i>
Asia					
India	164	—110	U.K.	324	2270
Pakistan	121	—100	Netherlands	319	2430
Sri Lanka	187	—110	Belgium	317	2720
Phillippines	123	—210	Japan	283	1920
Indonesia	81	—80	France	94	3100
Africa					
Senegal	20	—230	Fed. Republic of Germany	240	2930
Somalia	5	—70	U.S.A.	204.8	4760
Zaire (Belg. Congo)	8	—90	Canada	21.4	3700
Mozambique	10	—240			
Angola	4	—300			
Latin America					
Bolivia	4	—180			
Brazil	11	—420			
Chile	13	—720			
Columbia	19	—340			

Source: Paul Baran and World Bank

have been established by some countries as family health measures without positive goals. These efforts were not successful by 1974, and 1974 was declared World Population Year to focus attention of world opinion on the population explosion, culminating in the World Population Conference, at which it was expected to formulate a "World Plan of Action" for control of population.

The Conference held at Bucharest failed to achieve its purpose. The Draft World Plan of Action was rejected as an "irrelevant diversion" to the major issues confronting the world today and a formidable alliance of Third World countries of various political hues and the socialist countries forced a reversal of the Western imposed views on population. As such the 1974 Conference is to be seen as a major turning point in the Third World's views of its own problems.

BUCHAREST—THE TURNING POINT?

THE mammoth forum of governments gathered together in Roumania for a World Population Conference—to probe problems of "population explosion"—and critically examined subjects, highly sensitive and contro-

versial in content, as social and economic structures and policies and effects of "developed" and "developing" countries—in a general background of Red Flags, Lenin, and celebrations of Liberation of the Roumanian Republic.

Tame and non-committal as the Draft World Plan of action appeared to the conference planners who had spent several years attempting to involve governments more positively with the concept of "population explosion", a heated onslaught from the outset was its unhappy reception. The atmosphere was charged with political tension and general apprehension.

Setting the tone for the whole conference the President of Roumania in his fiery and animated inaugural address, called for a New International order.

CEAUSESCU—PRESIDENT REPUBLIC OF ROUMANIA

"We consider that in tackling the population question one should necessarily proceed from the fact that man is the determining factor of economic and social progress. Hence, the entire organization of society, the general policy of states, must have as their supreme goal the welfare and happiness of the people, the guarantee of man's freedom and dignity, the development of his personality, the participation of the masses in making their own history. We also consider that demographic policy should take account of the necessity to ensure a normal ratio between age-groups in order to maintain permanently every nation's youthfulness and vitality, the creative energy and thinking power of every people.

"Life demonstrates that the population questions must be analysed in close connection with the evolution of international relations, bearing in mind the reality that unequal and inequitable relations, of domination and oppression, are still maintained nowadays both on a national and international plane".

"The fact that some two thirds of the world population live in underdeveloped or developing countries, that the gaps separating, many of these countries from the economically advanced states grow deeper instead of narrowing down, is a tragic reality of the world today. Statistics drawn up by the United Nations Organization and its specialized agencies most convincingly illustrate the size of

THE CONFERENCE — SOME FACTS

	<i>Total</i>
Delegates from 135 countries	1287
Representatives from non government organs	337
Participants from related activities	1204
Journalists	991
	<hr/>
	3819

Cost of massive documentation: over \$ 3 million. How many forests cut down?

this gap. Early this decade, the per capita gross national product—a telling pointer of the peoples' material civilization degree—was of some 230 dollars in the developing countries

compared to 3,085 dollars in the advanced countries, the ratio being of 1:13. In a series of countries considered "the least developed"—with some 159 million inhabitants—the per capita gross national produce is of only 85 dollars, the gap separating them from the developed countries amounting to the ratio of 1:36."

"In general, many peoples have not even the most elementary working and living conditions, while a number of states have reached a high economic development level underlying which are the gains of contemporary scientific and technological revolution. The division of the world into developed and underdeveloped countries is a result of the historic evolution, the direct consequence of the imperialist,

on the observance of every people's right to develop freely, in keeping with its aspirations. The population question is closely linked to the setting up of a new international economic order, to establishing economic relations on the principles of mutual advantage, to attaining a correct ratio between the prices of industrial products and of raw materials favouring a more rapid development of the countries lagging behind."

In the conference proceedings Latin America led the attack on the Western position with Argentina and Brazil declaring their countries as outright populationist. (They have large tracts of land which are empty and capable of being developed). Cuba declared that she had a steady decline in the

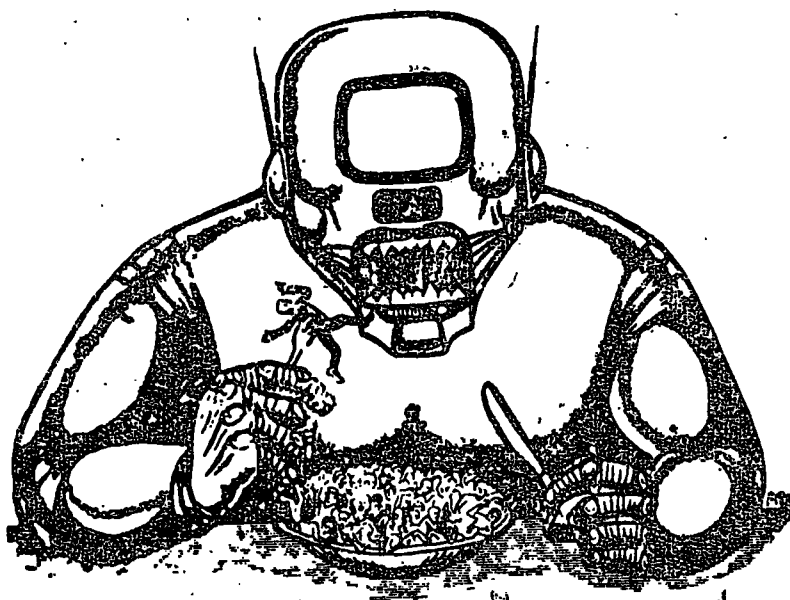
The African countries echoed the Latin American position and declared that their resource base although smaller, was in fact far less exploited. Notable in these countries was the problem of rural to urban migrations—even international migrations. These factors were attributed to a lack of economic and social development.

The Arab countries, foremost among them Algeria maintained that the population explosion was not the cause, but the result of under-development. Egypt while rejecting the concept was of the view that the priority sought for birth control tended to discharge the industrialized countries of their obligations to assist in the development of the Third World.

The Asian countries expressed the view that the overall situation of the ratio of natural resources to population densities being lower and described by most speakers as under-development and by a few as over population.

The Indian Position

Dr. Karansing, Health Minister of India announced a change of approach in the Indian Sub Continent when he said, ".....the path to family planning in every country lies through the eradication of poverty, which in fact has HISTORICALLY been the main cause of over-population. The need is to adopt an integrated approach encompassing the entire eco-system and covering the man-environment relationship in such a way that every human being born on this planet is assured of the material, intellectual and spiritual inputs necessary for the full flowering of the human personality....." ".....the dichotomy between the rich and the poor countries must be viewed in the broad historical perspective of the last several centuries. The departure from a certain uniform level came with the industrial revolution, a process in which both the presently developed and the developing countries have participated. The developed countries have been the beneficiaries of industrial progress to which the developing countries were compelled to contribute substantially through a process of



colonialist and neo-colonialist policy of exploitation and oppression of many peoples. That is why it is evident that the population questions, the development prospects of various peoples and nations as well as of mankind as a whole, are directly linked to the abolition of the imperialist, colonialist and neo-colonialist policy, to building a better and juster world, a society where man should fully enjoy the gains of contemporary civilization. More than ever before, firm action is necessary for placing international relations on new principles—of equality, respect for national independence and sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs—

birth rate presently 1.9% due to improved living standards and educational advances. The lowest infant and mortality rates in the developing world were recorded in Cuba. Cuba's position was that she sees contraception only as a part of health-care.

The overall position of Latin America was that the ratio of natural resources to population was comparatively higher, and the high rates of population growth were not viewed as posing a serious problem.

Most Latin American countries refused to consider population at all except in terms of development.

colonial denudation over several centuries. This process of exploitation consolidated certain untoward relationships both political and economic."The headlong flight towards limitless consumerism must be reversed if the developed countries honestly believe that this is one world for all. The wastage of resources involved in this super consumerism is appalling. For example, billions are spent on overeating..... and then vast sums are spent on trying to counteract the effects of overeating!

must be clear about....." if the fallacies in this respect are not refuted".....there will be no decisive factor in the social productive forces. Man is in the first place a producer and only in the second place a consumer. Historically, the valiant industrious and talented people as in Asia, Africa and Latin America made outstanding contributions to human civilisation. But over a period of time the colonialists and Imperialists subjected the Asian, African and Latin American countries to brutal aggression and enslavement. They not only plun-

alone has lost as many as 100 million people in this way.

The social productive forces in Asian, African and Latin American countries were seriously sapped. The population of some countries and nations declined drastically, and large tracts of land were laid waste.

After prolonged and heroic struggles waged by the people in Asia, Africa and Latin America, a large number of countries in these regions have successively won political independence and achieved marked progress in developing their national economy and culture as compared with the past.

Along with this development the population has grown rather quickly. This is not at all a bad thing but a very good thing. Is it owing to over population that unemployment and poverty exist in many countries of the world today? No, absolutely not. It is mainly due to aggression, plunder and exploitation by the imperialistic, particularly the super powers..... In our opinion, the primary way of solving the population problem lies in combating the aggression and plunder by the imperialists, colonialists and neo-colonialists..... breaking down the unequal international economic relations, winning and safeguarding national independence and developing the national economy and culture independently and self reliant in the light of each country's specific conditions and differing circumstances.

INDIA: After over two decades of a crash programme of population control at national level India records an increased population growth rate.

A crash programme of population control with a well arranged network of clinics and motivation, with sterilization teams at every

bazaar and street corner, cajoled with transistor radios, cash and other gifts to the "patients", incentive fees for the medical officer, nurse and motivators of the teams and vast sums of money invested, have succeeded in the programme claiming a large number of "averted births". That number has not joined the starving millions who continue to starve.

Statistics	1950	1960	1972	1973*
Total Population ...	360,950,365	462,027,000 (1963)	563,469,000 (1972)	600.4
Pop. Growth Rate ...	1.3% (1941-50) ¹	2.15% (1951-60) ¹	2.2% (1963-72) ¹	2.5
Birth Rate ...	41.7 per 1000	41.0 per 1000	42.8 per 1000 (1965-70) ¹	

¹ U.N. Demographic Year Book.

* 1973 World Pop. Data Sheet. Pop. Ref. Bureau.

Similarly, petroleum which could be used for the production of fertilizers as vital for the green revolution in the developing countries, is utilized on the multiplication of an endless range of luxury transport vehicles as well as a great variety of plastics and chemicals which are speedily reducing the habitability of this world through pollution. This in turn requires huge investments in trying to combat the pollution, instead of preventing it in the first place....."

The Chinese position as expressed by Mr. Huangshu Tse, Deputy Minister of Health set forth China's views which had many similarities to the new Indian position.

".....the Third World now has a population of nearly 3 billion, which is more than 70% of the world's population. How to see this fact in a correct light is the first thing we

dered enormous wealth from Asia, Africa and Latin America, but also engaged in human traffic and evicted or slaughtered local inhabitants. Africa

CHINA: "Of all the things in the world the people are the most precious".

Since the People's Republic of China was established in 1947, population has increased from 500 million to 800 million. Yet the annual grain output has doubled. Unemployment is nil. Famine has been abolished. Standard of living

is still low, yet everyone is ensured of employment, food and clothing and general progress is steadily improving.

This was not achieved through family planning—but through the abolition of social injustice and exploitation. Family planning in China began only in 1964.

Statistics	1949	1973
Total Population ...	500,000,000	800,000,000
Population Growth Rate ...		1.7
Annual Grain Output ...	110 mil. tons	250 mil. tons

"AID" and Development.

Total aid to developing nations in 1969 amounted to 13.3 billion dollars, of this, total grants amounted to 4.4 billion dollars.

The balance represented Loans at high interest rates.

In 1969 the public debt of the recipient nations reached 45 billion dollars.

In 1969 annual debt repayments (services, profits and interests) came to 9 billion dollars.

In fact the recipients had to pay back to the donors much more than they got in grants.

Who were the real beneficiaries?

Since 1969, the grants have got smaller, whereas the debts have grown bigger. The improvement in recent months in the position of several oil exporting countries has not altered the overall picture. Even the World Bank's President Robert McNamara warned that one could not indefinitely allow a situation in which debt servicing payments have grown by 17% a year, whereas export earnings of developing nations have risen only 6%.

Again, who is eating up the difference?

.....As for the future according to the predictions made in the famous 'The year 2000' the world will reach a stage in which the ratio of population between the three underdeveloped continents and the two developed ones will be 5 to 1, whereas the ratio of per capita G.N.P. will be 1 to 20.

Anyone who puts these two sets of figures together must realise that the "explosion" could hardly be limited to population.

.....The claim that "over-population is the reason why the have-not countries are poor" is a worn-out tune.Why do you (the West) fly into a rage at the mention of establishing a new international order?..... The average population to a square kilometre is only 12 in Africa, and 15 in Latin America. Though population density in the developing countries of Asia is a bit higher it is nonetheless lower than that in the developed countries of Western Europe. How can it be said then that the have-not countries are poor because of over population?

Eastern European countries similarly maintained in unequivocal terms that population growth rates had nothing to do with the real reason for backwardness and only served to detract attention from needed social and international reforms. It was their view that there was no need for population policy in a well organised society and that the demographic trends would automatically adjust to social and economic factors.

The United States and a few of its Western allies stood virtually alone as proponents of views rejected by the other conference members. The two main proposals of the U.S. namely:—

- (a) "Overpopulated countries" make a systematic effort to reduce the size of families to an average of two children and
- (b) to accept the specific target date of 1985 by which to implement birth control policies were resoundingly rejected.

The final consensus of the conference was included in a resolution, the main points of which were:

- That the question of population could be viewed only from its historical evolution and is inseparable from political and economic problems.
- That radical changes in social, political and economic structures long overdue have now become imminent.
- That the emphasis should be on the promotion of those social and

economic measures and programmes that would have a bearing on population growth and not direct forms of birth control.

- That the regulation of fertility and family formation was an inalienable right of individuals and couples, however, countries should provide them with the knowledge and means to exercise this right responsibly.
- That population must be considered only as a part of broader integral strategy of development within the sovereignty of each nation.

John D. Rockefeller, funding father and former Chairman of the U.S. Commission on Population Growth, millionaire, philanthropist—changed his mind and joined the consensus position that population is not the primary source of poverty, disease and illiteracy and gross inequality. He maintained that in the West growth had been concerned with material, but not human development. "In an interdependent world the internal task of developed nations is clear—to stabilize their own populations and moderate their levels of consumption in a sensible and orderly way. Most industrialized countries are doing well with respect to the first objective; the second is far more difficult at this juncture."

Asked if he had any specific proposals—he replied he hadn't.

"I come to Bucharest with an urgent call for a deep and probing re-appraisal of all that has been done in the population field, all that has been learned, so that the years ahead may yield the results mankind so desperately wants."

The final outcome of the conference was that the draft plan of action which it was expected to approve disappeared entirely. The general argument of population as being the prime inhibitor to development was rejected. All the draft plan's specific proposals disappeared under attack and only general principles of extending the basic human right to individuals to determine their own fertility and make family planning available to all couples and individuals was approved.

"They're poor because they have too many kids" is the commonest of all clichés about world poverty. It is a convenient myth for blaming poverty entirely on the poor.

Until recently it was necessary for poor people to have a large family. Take the case of an ordinary Indian peasant-farmer. His life is plagued by malnutrition and ill-health, with the result that he is too old and weak to work by the time he is fifty (indeed the average person in India dies before his fiftieth birthday). Unless he has sons to support him he will simply die young. But only half his children are likely to be sons and only half of them are likely to survive. Therefore, for very survival, he and his wife need to have a large family.

Now, because of improvements in child health care, more and more people are surviving. But it takes time for an understandably-insecure people to adjust to this trend and compensate for it by having fewer children.

Secondly, the need to have a large family would be dramatically reduced if a man and his wife did not have to die in poverty

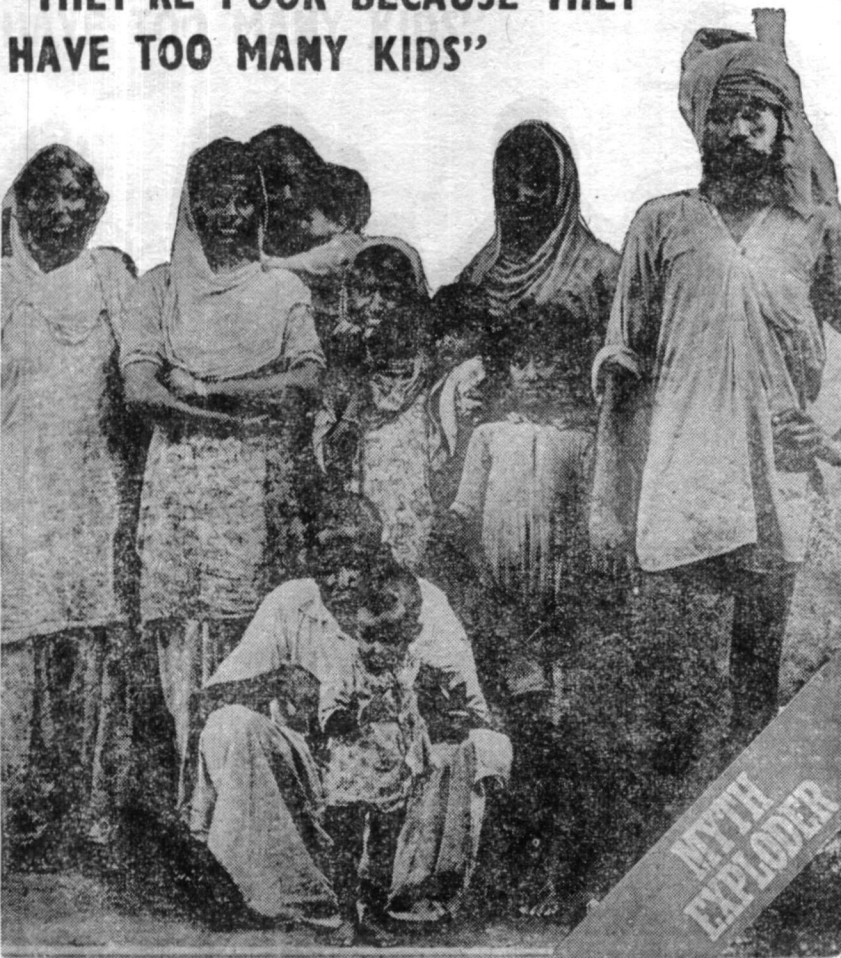
when they are too old or ill to work—if there was adequate social security, the population increase would automatically slow down. For evidence of this we need only look at the slowing down of population growth in rich countries as these countries have become more affluent.

In other words, large families are more a result of poverty than a cause of it, and in the last analysis prosperity is the best contraceptive.

This increased prosperity for the poor world is not a physical impossibility. It is a fact that the world has enough resources to feed and provide for many times more people than it has at present. Therefore, at the present time, the question of how to achieve a more equal distribution of the world's increasing wealth is more important than the question of how to cut the world's birth rate.

Education for family planning is still an essential part of the fight against underdevelopment. But to blame the poverty of half the world on the population explosion is a mistake which obscures the need for more important changes and stands in the way of their realisation.

"THEY'RE POOR BECAUSE THEY HAVE TOO MANY KIDS"



Adapted by the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign 'ideas centre' from the *New Internationalist*.

SRI LANKA

The Declining Birth Rate in Sri Lanka

An analysis of the demographic development of Sri Lanka in the past century reveals a number of significant features, which when examined in-depth, enables a reasonable assessment of the relative importance of socio-economic variables as against directly manipulated family planning programmes—and their effect on fertility rates.

It would be pertinent at this point, to refer back to the historical experience of the developed countries of the West. The classical explanation is of a demographic evolution of population through three stages—

1. Of High fertility—High mortality
2. Of High fertility—Low mortality
3. Of Low fertility—Low mortality

The "developed" countries are presently in stage (3). Of significance to our analysis is the fact that these countries arrived at stage (3) IRRESPECTIVE of any programmes of "population control".

In those countries, general economic prosperity as a result of industrialization, improved Health, Education, Equality of Women, Prohibition of Child Labour, Old Age Pension and all such factors associated with general prosperity are the main causes attributed to the decline in fertility. What must be noted is that with industrialisation new forms of production based on organized wage labour in large farms or factories brought about a break up of the family based methods of production. Wages often mean that resources are bought in *quantitatively* calculated terms. An extra mouth to feed and find employment for becomes an additional burden in *quantitative* terms. An extra child came to be looked upon not as a potential economic asset, but as a potential liability. Thus new relationships were created between individuals and of families.

In this context of changed social circumstances those people consciously desired small families irrespective of any family planning outside motivation. Fertility rates of those

countries have dropped to even below replacement levels, so much so that some of these countries are today finding themselves having to "import" labour in large numbers which is now becoming a problem. Incentives are being introduced to *encourage* more and more children e.g. France—and yet fertility keeps dropping.

Similar altered family attitudes are again evident in those societies that are changing from a large number of small producers working with family labour to large co-operatives or collectives, as in the socialist countries.

TABLE II
(World Pop. Data Sheet 1973)

U.S.S.R.	...	...	1.0
China	...	...	1.7
Yugoslavia	...	...	0.9
Rumania	...	...	1.0
Hungary	...	...	0.3
Czechoslovakia	...	...	0.5

Sri Lanka's Declining Fertility

In Sri Lanka the social structure is undergoing rapid changes. However, there has been no corresponding economic progress largely because of external restraints. In spite of a general lagging behind in economic progress, a most significant feature that has been observed is the rapid decline in fertility in the last 20 years. All records and statistical data reveal the fact that the family planning programme has not made a significant contribution to this decline.

TABLE III

Year	Crude birth rate	Crude death rate	Rate of natural increase
1960	36.6	1.6	28.0
1961	35.8	8.0	27
1962	35.5	8.5	27.0
1963	34.4 (34.1)	8.6	25.8
1964	33.2	8.8	24.4
1965	33.1	8.2	24.9
1966	32.3	8.3	24.0
1967	31.6	7.5	24.1
1968	32.0	7.9	24.1
1969	30.4	8.1	22.3
1970	29.4	7.5	21.9
1971*	30.1*	7.7	22.4
1972*	29.7*	8.0	21.7
1973	...	...	...
1974	27.2	8.8	...

* Provisional average annual rate of change
% Change, 1960-1972

It is reasonable to assume therefore, that certain other factors have brought about a consciousness, and attitudes comparable to those prevailing in the developed countries examined above, and conducive to a general desire for small families.

In order to understand this phenomena the demographic development of Sri Lanka is given in the graph on page 3 and Table III on this page.

The table presents in unmistakable terms the following features:—

(i) *Prior to 1950* the crude Birth Rate has remained fairly steady around 38 per thousand population. The crude Death Rate has fluctuated around 20 per thousand prior to 1946—and falls drastically to 14 per thousand in 1947. This fall is explained by the application of post-war scientific and technological knowledge for the control of infectious and communicable diseases that had periodically plagued the country, foremost of which was Malaria, coupled with greatly improved general health services.

(ii) *1950 - 1973:* The Crude Birth Rate is seen to have steadily decreased from 39.7 in 1950 to 27.8 in 1973. The crude Death Rate which has continued to decline from 14 per thousand in 1947 to 8.6 in 1960, has remained constant between 7 and 8 per thousand to the period ending 1973.

It could be assumed that death rates would continue to remain constant as these are levels comparable to developed countries of the West under best available health-care services. There would in fact be a slight increase in the death rate as the proportion of older people increases with declining death rates. This feature has already been noticed (1971 and 1972).

(iii) From 1950, a constant and regular declining trend is unmistakable. It can be seen from the shape of the curve that the actual rate of decline per year is accelerating. The

most recent statistics available record the rate of natural increase for 1974 as 1.8 - 1.6 per cent. It is specifically stated that this does *not* include the migration figure. (Central Bank Report on Economic Performance Problems—1974)

(iv) All indices point out clearly that an extension of this curve would even reach below desired levels in the foreseeable future.

Recent demographic studies *have identified three major features:—

1. That women have begun to marry later in life.
2. That more women remain unmarried.
3. That married couples are having fewer children.

* (a) Second Inquiry on population growth and development and country statement—1974 Planning Ministry.

(b) Recent studies in the Fertility of Sri Lanka.

(c) Socio-Economic variables in the demographic transition. Central Bank Staff Studies, Vol. 5, 1975.

Family Planning Programme Activities

During the period ending 1972, the low acceptance rates of contraceptive methods and general slow progress of family planning programme activity, could not have made any significant contribution to the declining crude birth rate. However, the increased decline in the Marital Fertility Rate for women in the older age groups 30-44 suggests an increased use of some form of family planning method. Judging by available reports and K.A.P. studies this is more likely to have been caused by natural methods rather than contraceptive use. However, that there has been considerable motivation to family planning practice, though programme activity, cannot be discounted although it has not been evaluated in terms of programme achievement. Of the various socio-economic reasons adduced to the declining birth rate, the effects of the system of compulsory Free Education has been the foremost.

The Effects of Free Education

The large proportion of children born with the decline in mortality in 1947, have now reached adulthood and are in the peak ages of reproduction. As a result of compulsory free education, these groups have received several years of training through the education scheme. Of the 13.4 million population in Sri Lanka today only 18% have not received any schooling (Socio Economic Survey 1969/71). Schemes are being extended to bring into the system the balance 18%.

An increased proportion of girls are observed to enter the education system and remain in it for longer periods. Those who come out after several years of training, wish to find employment and postpone their marriages until they do so. The labour force participation rates particularly of women are seen to have increased considerably. More women are going in for higher education. Such factors are given as reasons for a breakup of traditional patterns of occupation and as a result, the changed attitude of women towards early marriage and family size.

Low Birth Rate in the Estate Sector?

On the other hand, the fact of education and literacy in itself being a deterrent to high fertility is not borne out by the experience of the Indian Tamil estate labour, who are the least educated, of all sectors in Sri Lanka but have a lower birth rate, (25.7) than the national average of 30.5.

The social changes underlying these statistics appear to be of a far more fundamental nature, and can only be understood by examination of the changes that have occurred in our society much more deeply than has been done up to now.

Deep Changes in the Social Structure of Post War Sri Lanka

The immediate post-war period brought deep changes in our society, placing individuals in different relations to one another.

For centuries before, the bulk of production in South Asia was in small family units—of small farmers, artisans, owning or leasing their land and tools and working mainly with

family labour and the unpaid labour of kinsmen or apprentices. The production was mainly for the limited consumption of the closed circle of the small village or group of villages. The significant feature for this analysis is the dominance of the family as the unit of production and its effect on the institution of marriage and ideas of family and children.

The production of those communities were closely bound to the rhythm of the seasons—and followed a pattern that has gone on for generations without change. Reproduction and growth are as natural as the sowing and harvesting of the crops—and sexuality bound up with the regeneration of the species.

Prior to the war, the major forms of production in Sri Lanka was of this type, with the exception of the enclave of the Estate sector worked with Indian Labour and the narrow South West Coastal strip.

In the post-war period two phenomena emerged to change this pattern:

1. Commodity production for a market on a larger scale where people worked for wages. In 1971, out of 3.2 million income earners, 2.2 million were wage earners.

(Socio-economic Survey).

2. The system of compulsory Free Education imparting 8-10 years training. In 1971, 85% of the population had been through several years of schooling.

Both phenomena produced the end result of placing man in completely different relationships, one to the other, from what had been the pattern over the last few centuries—In the case of actual employed wage labour by his daily practice—In the case of students and unemployed by the training they received through the schools system.

The schools system was copied from the forms developed in early Capitalist society, designed to train the community as disciplined wage employees.

In the first period of this system one is weaned away from direct family ties and productive family tasks. One is gradually "socialized"

in terms of discipline, loyalty, punctuality, regular hours of work etc. The school leaver thus tends to reject ideas of family normally generated by those who live and work in family units of production. The school leaver is oriented to becoming an independent wage earner and seeks wage employment.

Changes in Attitude to Marriage and Family Size

These changes have affected their attitudes to family and marriage in various forms, some of which are:—

- (i) For a person who sells his labour power to another for a fixed wage, his child cannot be of help to augment his product or income.

- (ii) All his consumption needs have to be purchased out of his earnings, reckoned as wage rates per hour or day. He is thus constantly reminded of the process of quantification of his needs and their translation in terms of money. Each additional mouth to feed and educate has to be reckoned in quantities of money—wage rates—income—labour. This makes people far more aware of the 'burden' of bringing up children.

- (iii) Education is a process that is acquired outside the family and costs have to be calculated in today's society. This involves a non-working period of 15 - 20 years.

The new forms of social organization bring about a social environment highly conducive to smaller families.

This is evident in the contraceptive "acceptor" reports for 1973 and 1974, where with increase facilities made available at all Government Medical Institutions people are seen to have availed themselves of these services. There is clear indication that with the expansion of service facilities envisaged in the Government's Family Health Programme with U.N.F.P.A. assistance, the demand for family planning services would be of such magnitude as to effect a far reaching impact on an already declining Birth Rate.

THOSE IN THE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMME OF SRI LANKA TO END OF 1974

	Period of Contribution	U.S. \$	Rs. Cts.	U.S. \$
Swedish International	1953 - 1965	655,000	3,110,000.00	1974 - 1967 2,892,000
Development Association	1965 - 1974	1,780,000	11,300,000.00	
United Nations Family Planning Association	1973	5,992,702	40,151,103.00	
Ford Foundation	1966 - 1972	271,000	1,720,000.00	
Family Planning Association—				
International Planned Parenthood Federation	1958 - 1974		5,734,580.00	
Brush Foundation				
Pathfinder			206,238.00	
Oxfam and other misc. }				
Family Planning Association	1953 - 1974		1,161,101.00	
International Planned Parenthood Fund—Preethi	1973 - 1974	200,000	1,340,000.00	1975 - 1976 200,000
Colombo Plan	1973 - 1974		11,685.00	
Govt. Donations to Family Planning Association	1958 - 1974		1,237,500.00	
Government*	1973 contribution to UN-FPA Project		7,578,617.00	
			73,550,824.00	

*There was no separate govt. budget allocation for Family Planning prior to United Nations Family Planning Association agreement.

Average conversion rate 1\$ = Rs. 6.70.

Although Sri Lanka cannot claim economic prosperity in terms of G.N.P. and per capita calculations, she is far in advance of South Asian countries in deep social changes. In fact, some of the conclusions arrived at after much discussion at the World Population Conference, as pre-requisites for the success of family planning are what Sri Lanka has already established. The declining birth rate confirms a cumulative effect of these changes. The very fundamental

characteristics of the forces underlying the decline are such as to justify a reasonable prediction, that in this context of social change, and doubly aggravated by present economic strains and stresses, that this declining trend would perpetuate itself with cumulative effect to perhaps even less than desired norms within the next decade.

Government policy has consistently maintained an integrated approach

through its Maternal and Child care services and presently through its carefully programmed Family Health Service. Isolated programmes of birth control have never been government policy. Nor any form of coercion by anti-natal legislation, incentives or withdrawal of social welfare benefits. Recent trends appear to more than justify government attitude and approach.

Yet inspite of this, much energy and dollars continue to be spent by pressure groups and outside agencies. Some of these directly propagate the very same philosophy that was resoundly defeated at Bucharest. The connection between population and resources (including our just share of the world's resources) is rarely made. The day when these pressure groups carry in their propaganda the U.N. Conference view that the average rich westerner consumes fifty times as much as a Sri Lankan, will be the day when such propaganda will be seen as serving Sri Lanka's interest and not the imposed view of the rich western world. The private population control lobby in Sri Lanka must at least reflect the new mood of the Third World and not be seen as simply the tool of outside interests.

NEW ACCEPTORS OF FAMILY PLANNING AT GOVERNMENT, MUNICIPALITY & F.P.A. CLINICS BY METHODS

1973 AND 1974

Year	Loops	Orals	Condoms	Foam		Sterilization		Total
				tabs.	Other	Male	Female	
1973	27,528	34,214	12,963	348	630	1,850	18,398	95,931
—1974	29,698	—	—			7,292	34,942	71,

—Records on Acceptors of Oral contraceptives, condoms and miscellaneous methods are not presently kept at Government Clinics.