

Letters to the Editor

EDITOR:

Imagine my surprise upon opening the summer issue of *The Social Contract* to find myself extensively quoted by Diana Hull based on one private conversation she and I had several years ago ["Cry, the Overcrowded Country: A Post-Earth Day Requiem," *The Social Contract*, Vol. IX, No. 4, Summer 1999]. Ms. Hull had identified herself as a member of FAIR's Advisory Council (on which I also serve) calling to get acquainted.

Since I am a national leader of the Sierra Club, quoting extensively from me in an article criticizing the organization [creates the impression] that I was the source for, or at least confirmed, the many incorrect statements about population, immigration, and the Sierra Club.

For example, the Club has never placed "blame for environmental degradation on U.S. patterns of consumption alone." The Sierra Club Board of Directors and all six activists who serve on the Population Committee support stabilizing — in fact, reducing — the population of the U.S. as well as that of the world. The Political Ecology Group was never "given the task" of promoting that the Sierra Club stay out of the immigration issue. They took it upon themselves to become involved, just as did outside organizations and individuals who supported the other alternative in that contentious 1998 Sierra Club debate. The article contains numerous other mistakes of detail and of broad picture.

Many of the comments attributed to me are not my words and are misleading. Things I told Ms. Hull in confidence are now in print. An offhand assessment I made of the prospect for immigration reform is now quoted as the conclusion of an article in *The Social Contract*.

Ms. Hull should be ashamed.

Sincerely,
JUDITH KUNOFSKY
Berkeley, California

Diana Hull responds:

EDITOR:

On August 20, 1997, I had a 40-minute telephone conversation with Judy Kunofsky. The purpose of my call was to ask why she thought environmental leaders would not focus on U.S. overpopulation, and would not work publicly for immigration reform. Who better to explore this issue with than an environmental leader who was also on the FAIR Advisory Board?

I thought Ms. Kunofsky's views were valuable and part of the historical record. She confirmed what has long been suspected — that Hispanic elected officials in Los Angeles had refused to cooperate with the Sierra Club on environmental issues, if the Sierra Club was involved in immigration reduction.

I am confused at Ms. Kunofsky's statement that the Sierra Club Board and Population Committee support reducing U.S. population. If so, how can they adopt a position of neutrality on immigration? Are they cowardly — or innumerate?

It cannot be said, as Ms. Kunofsky asserts, that the Political Ecology Group "took it upon themselves to become involved" in this issue. Santos Gomez and Cathi Tactiquin were appointed to the Sierra Club National Population Committee immediately after they joined the Club. Ms. Tactiquin is on the Advisory Board of the Political Ecology Group and also the Director of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. Mr. Gomez is on PEG's Organizing Board. PEG literature states that "the Sierra Club is a key battleground in the "Greening of Hate" and boasts that they "work closely with 'progressive' members of the Sierra Club to resist a takeover by anti-immigration zealots." Those zealots are identified as the Federation

Correction

With apologies to author John Cairns ["An Epic Struggle: Sustainability and the emergence of a new social contract," Volume IX, Number 4, Summer 1999] we note that in the chart on page 215, column 2, item 2 should read: "Frugal use of resources." And on page 216, column 2, line 8, the word "Easterners" should be "Westerners."

for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), Negative Population growth (NPG), Population/Environment Balance (PEB), Carrying Capacity Network (CCN), and Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS), ecologist Garrett Hardin, et al.

The mission of NNIRR is, in their words, “reframing the immigration debate.” Signatories to the pro-immigration statement include Brian Andreja, Sierra Club, National Environment Justice Task Force, and Julie Beezley Sierra Club, Southern California Sierra Club Task Force.

Ms. Kunofsky was indeed the source of every comment I attribute to her in this article. I have a detailed record of what she said and every quote is an exact quote.

Ms. Kunofsky never said any of her statements were confidential although she is aware that I write on this subject. I regret that a cordial and informative discussion on issues I assumed were of mutual concern has resulted in controversy.

I stand by my conclusion that leaders of the Sierra Club, at the highest level, have been either seduced, intimidated, or both, by unscrupulous opponents of immigration reform.

Sincerely,
DIANA HULL
Santa Barbara, California

EDITOR:

Regarding Walter E. Williams’ view that the “Population Bomb” was a Dud: [*The Social Contract*, Vol. IX, No. 4, Summer 1999] perhaps, Mr. Williams, you could consider Bangladesh. It has a population of 120 million and a per capita income at one percent of the American level. Of course, they would like to have America’s standard of living. Suppose the task was to bring them up to our standard of living within 25 years. They would need a transportation system of highways, rail, and air. They would need hospitals, office buildings, streets, factories, energy production and distribution, schools and universities, communications systems, all on a scale equal to half the infrastructure of the United States, because they have half the population. Also, everyone would have to be brought up to our level of education, skills and training. This would be a daunting task even for a country with the financial muscle of the U.S.

Yet, if they could do it, they would have to start all over and do it again. That’s because their population is doubling in 25 years. Then they would have to *double* their efforts and do it again for the next 25 years which will bring an additional 240 million. Thus, in 2050, Bangladesh will have 480 million people on land the size of Florida.

Mr. Williams, either Bangladesh has an overpopulation and a high fertility problem or it doesn’t. Your remedy: “the most promising anti-poverty tool for poor people and poor countries is personal liberty” doesn’t even work for those in poverty in America. A better anti-poverty tool is low fertility for poor people. Poverty would nearly vanish, if the poor stopped reproducing.

Mr. Williams asks: “suppose the rest of us don’t feel like adopting a one-child policy, then what? The elite’s answer will be to use brute government force, like China does...” Why pick on fertility? Brute government force is used to raise taxes, recruit juries, draft armies, clear houses out of the path of highways. China is attempting to avoid famine. What is the U.S. attempting to do when it jails marijuana smokers and prostitutes? Since all countries use “brute government force” it is clearly the ends and not the means that Williams objects to. Nevertheless, financial incentives for low fertility would be more appealing than coercion.

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