

## Letters to the Editor

EDITOR:

*The Social Contract* should be required reading for every American! Your publication serves an enormously important educational purpose.

DAN VELLING  
Bakersfield, California

EDITOR:

I write in praise of John Cairns, Jr.'s fine piece, "Environmental Refugees," which appears in *The Social Contract* for Fall 2002 (Vol. XII, No. 1, pp. 34-44). Since he had some favorable things to say of my work one might conclude that I am blowing my own horn by praising him. But a careful examination of Cairns' essay should convince the reader that this new study is a masterpiece.

The problem of the survival of our species on Earth is devilishly difficult. Plausible ethical principles and our new weapons of mass destruction have made this problem nearly intractable. Let's hope not.

As I see it, there have been three major advances in the population problem. They were made by three men: Tertullian, in the third century; Malthus, in the eighteenth century; and now, Cairns. Nineteen centuries to see what would have been obvious to the mythical "Man from Mars"! We must think — and accept truth — faster.

GARRETT HARDIN  
Santa Barbara, California

EDITOR:

David and Marcia Pimentel end their article "Food, Energy, & Society: Options & Solutions" (*The Social Contract*, Vol. XII, No. 4, Summer 2002) with "Ultimately, it is up to each individual to reduce his or her reproductive rate."

On the following page 275, Lindsey Grant says "... nobody gains from the growth that we face. Ethnic rivalry is a poor basis for fertility policy. I will propose a better ideal, and one that discriminates against nobody: the ideal of the two-child family — stopping at two — for everybody, of every group and religious persuasion."

Yet, Garrett Hardin, in *Living Within Limits* writes extensively on the view that "population control, if based only on voluntary birth control, will ultimately fail."(p.

256). He calls attention to Charles Galton Darwin's 1960 paper "Can Man Control His Numbers?" Darwin suggested those less inclined to have children will use contraceptives. Those inclined to have children will do so. The "inclination not to have children" will be selected out of future generations. Just as world hunger can not be solved by feeding hungry adults who then have large families that grow up to be hungry. Thus, ironically, food has increased the number of hungry. The logic and irony are the same.

In *The Immigration Dilemma* Hardin argues: "It is a mistake to think that we can control the breeding of mankind in the long run by an appeal to conscience. ... People vary. Confronted with appeals to limit breeding, some people will undoubtedly respond to the pleas more than others. Those who have more children will produce a larger fraction of the next generation than those with more susceptible consciences. The difference will be accentuated, generation by generation. ... To make such an appeal is to set up a selective system that works toward the elimination of conscience from the race" (p. 24).

Hardin, in *Creative Altruism* points out that "Moralists try to achieve desired ends by exhorting people to be moral. They seldom succeed..." (p. 92). Suppose those who have an intellect to recognize the problems of overpopulation, and also have a conscience, act on that situation by not having any children, then the future will be populated by those without intellect and without conscience. As Hardin points out, it doesn't matter whether those qualities are passed on by genetics, or by rearing, the result is the same. I would like to see these authors respond to Hardin in the pages of *The Social Contract*. In a multi-ethnic society, each ethnic group stands to gain more resources and power by expanding their numbers.\* The Muslims in Lebanon gained an advantage with a higher birthrate over the Christians (Georgie Anne Geyer, *Americans No More*, p. 24). In a homogeneous nation-state, expanding numbers means fewer resources per capita.

As Hardin points out, overpopulation must be addressed at the national (not global) level. For Western countries, immigration must be stopped. Financial incentives for sterilization is a much better policy than moral exhortation. Those who value money over children will get sterilized. Poverty will be reduced, as many will choose money. If fertility does not drop enough, then increase the incentive until it does. Will the desire for money be selected out? Impossible. Money buys food, clothing, shelter, comfort, status, and power. The need to eat cannot be selected out.

Finally, I believe the readers of *The Social Contract* to be bright intellectuals with high standards of morality and conscience, and concern for the fate of our nation and the world. Every nation has a shortage of such people. Please have large families, especially if you are good parents.

PERRY LORENZ  
Fort Collins, Colorado  
Perry\_LZ@msn.com

[\*Editor's Note: For an exhaustive study of population growth as a means to power and control, see Jack Parsons' *Population Competition for Security or Attack: The Study of the Perilous Pursuit of Power Through Weight of Numbers* which is available as a compact disk for \$38.00 from The Social Contract Press, 1-800-352-4843, or order on-line.]

#### EDITOR:

Dr. Attarian (*The Social Contract*, Vol. XII, No. 4, Summer 2002) quotes world oil supply at 2000 Gb on page 277. American consumption was 7.1 Gb/yr (p.279). Is world consumption for Year 2002 available?

Campbell estimates only 1127 Gb left (2000 minus 873) by end-2001 (p.279). Sounds like virtual exhaustion this century. Have I missed something? With transportation, chemicals, agriculture, military, etc, so oil-dependent, how can the world avoid chaos?

ANDY KERR  
Laguna Woods, California

#### THE PUBLISHER replies:

America, with about four percent of the world's population, accounts for twenty-five percent of annual global consumption of approximately 28 billion (Giga) barrels. The 2000 Gb mentioned by author Attarian is the ballpark consensus figure for the original endowment, of which we have consumed roughly half.

Reader Kerr is correct: the remaining stock might

last about a century. But there are two caveats: This would be with no growth in annual consumption, not a condition that would be welcome in many quarters. Second, the remaining oil is harder to produce and of poorer quality, since we naturally produced the highest quality deposits first (those more liquid, and with lower sulfur). A maxim: When we start drilling on the outer continental shelves and in the frozen north, you will know the end of cheap oil is near!

The "Campbell" referred to is Colin Campbell, retired British Petroleum geologist who puts out a monthly newsletter called "The Association for the Study of Peak Oil." It is one of the best items available on our oil predicament. If you e-mail him at <aspoone@eircom.net> he will gladly put you on his distribution list.

And, yes, chaos is a good possibility if we don't get busy and find alternatives. The book to read is *GeoDestinies* by Walter Youngquist. It was reviewed and advertised in our Fall 2002 issue and is available from The Social Contract Press, 1-800-352-4843.

JOHN TANTON



Along with members of Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS) the Social Contract staff mourns the death of writer and activist B. Meredith Burke. With a Master's and Ph.D. in demographics from the University of Pennsylvania and a Master's in economics from the University of

Southern California, Dr. Burke devoted herself to educating others about the true causes of environmental degradation. As a freelance writer, a consultant for biotech firms and political campaigns, she had a passion for building public awareness about "demographic reality." She was inspired to write scores of o-ed pieces published in major newspapers coast to coast. The memorial note from CAPS characterized Dr. Burke as "a true humanitarian who, whether acting as a scholar, teacher, prolific author, activist, consultant, lobbyist, fundraiser, or public speaker, displayed sharp wit, fierce dedication and heartfelt compassion." At the time of her death, in addition to being a Senior Fellow at CAPS, Dr. Burke was director and founder of Lariam Action USA, a clearinghouse for users of the anti-malarial drug mefloquine.