



File photo
Disease and famine have decimated African nations. Experts believe several countries may achieve zero population growth in the next few years.

Disease and famine decimate African nations

By DAVID BRISCOE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Population experts now believe that several African countries may achieve zero population growth in just a few years. But family planners are not cheering.

The reasons are gruesome and worrisome: populations devastated by AIDS and further threatened with food shortages, water depletion, ecological collapse and social chaos.

Family planners have been trying for decades to halt the population explosion in countries projected to double or triple populations by 2050. But they didn't want it to happen this way. They don't want allies that kill and destroy societies.

"A lot of countries will not see expected population increases because of rising death rates," said Lester Brown, president of World Watch and author of a new report on world population problems.

Revised United Nations projections for population growth will be out at the end of October, and U.N. demographers confirm that the impact of AIDS in some African countries will be dramatic, even "unbelievable."

AIDS, which killed 2.3 million adults and children last year, will not slow worldwide population growth, however. That will reach 6 billion by the middle of next year and is expected to rise to between 7.7 billion and 11 billion by 2050.

Highest hit by AIDS is Zimbabwe, where 25 percent of the population now carries the AIDS virus. Brown estimated its population will stop growing and possibly begin declining in just four years.

Current U.N. projections, made in 1996, have Zimbabwe more than doubling in population, from 11 million to 24.9 million, by 2050.

Larry Heligman, assistant director of the U.N. population division that draws up the long-range projections, said demographers are closely watching deaths from AIDS in 34 countries. These include countries where the infection rates have hit 2 percent or where the affected population is large, such as India which has more than 4 million of the world's estimated 30 million people now infected by the virus.

"When you begin to look at the projections beyond 2005, what we are seeing is just unbelievable," Heligman said in an interview. He said some revisions were made in projections two years ago because of AIDS, but the 1998 impact will show "even stronger devastation."

Ironically, alarm over the impact of AIDS on population in the worst-hit countries comes as the spread of the virus has leveled off or declined in the United States and other wealthier countries and is slowing even in some poorer countries: Thailand, Brazil and Uganda, for example.

Fueling the concern are the first detailed global figures on AIDS infection percentages released at an international AIDS conference in June. In addition to the impact on Zimbabwe, the U.N. data show Botswana with 25 percent AIDS infection, Namibia with 20 percent, Zambia with 19 percent, Swaziland with 18.5 percent and several other African countries with 10 percent or more.

By contrast, the AIDS infection rate in the United States is 0.57 percent. The global rate also remains below 1 percent.

Groups working to control rapid population growth around the world are concerned the new projections will be viewed as support for the cynical view that the world's problems will take care of themselves no matter what humans do.

"We must not let people think that an epidemic is going to solve problems. It's going to worsen them," said Amy Coen, president of Population Action International, which conducts research and supports efforts to slow population growth worldwide.

Coen, in an interview, noted that AIDS usually hits people in the prime of life, in their most productive years. In some countries, the number of AIDS orphans — children who have lost both parents to AIDS — is in the hundreds of thousands.

In Uganda, where the impact of AIDS is acute despite recent gains, there are 1.7 million AIDS orphans.

"No country can afford a generation of throwaways," Coen said. "The next generation isn't just going to pop up fine."

Brown, in his Worldwatch report, cites a number of pressures in addition to AIDS that may pull down populations down by pushing up death rates, including the environmental effects of population growth: deforestation, soil erosion and falling water tables.

The challenge, said Brown, is to keep families small before disease, environmental deterioration or resulting social chaos force tragic population declines.

"We had hoped we'd be able to stabilize populations by bringing down birth rates," Brown said. "Now, some of our worst fears are being realized."

Bradley, L.A.'s first black mayor, dies

By MICHAEL FLEEMAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — He took over a city divided. He left a city divided.

In the 20 years in between, Tom Bradley, the first and only black mayor of Los Angeles, felt the warm glow of the Olympic flame and the searing heat of riot fires.

The tall, quiet Texas sharecropper's son and college track star who rose through the ranks of the LAPD to become a city councilman and then a five-term mayor of Los Angeles died of a heart attack Tuesday at age 80.

Bradley never fully recovered from a heart attack and stroke in 1996.

As mayor from 1973 to 1993, Bradley was credited with opening city government to minorities and women, expanding social services to the urban poor and spurring economic growth.

Under his administration, Los Angeles surpassed San Francisco as the West Coast's economic power in Pacific Rim trading, symbolized by the downtown skyline that grew during his administration.

"He made us proud to be part of this city," said City Attorney James Hahn. "We were proud of him as our mayor — his dignity, his grace and his willingness to get things done.

The 20 years he was mayor will probably be the years when Los Angeles really grew up and became a world-class city."

Bradley was first elected over Mayor Sam Yorty in a bitter, racially tinged election conducted when the scars of the 1965 Watts riots were still fresh.

The successful 1984 Olympic Games stood out as his crowning achievement.

The economic ruin and traffic gridlock many feared never materialized.

The low point was in 1992, when riots broke out after four white LAPD officers were acquitted in the beating of black motorist Rodney King.

Bradley appealed for calm, but some said his angry denunciation of the verdicts may have provoked violence. He would later describe the violence that left 55 people dead as "the most painful experience of my life."

A soft-spoken man, he governed quietly, by building coalitions instead of using the bully pulpit. His long hours and energy, even into his 70s, were legendary.

It was a style of leadership that served him well for much of his two-decade rule — until he could no longer keep up with the changes, some gradual, some convulsive, in the late 1980s and early '90s.

In the end, after a political scandal in 1989, the King beating in 1990 and the riots two years later, his political supporters would leave him, inner-city leaders would feel abandoned by him, and the voters would feel it was time — perhaps past time — for him to retire.

At 75, he announced his retirement, avoiding an election he probably couldn't have won. Richard Riordan, a white conservative Republican, succeeded him as mayor.

Blacks protest Rebel ceremony

By BART JANSEN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ELLICOTT CITY, Md. —

Descendants of Civil War veterans honored their ancestors by rededicating a monument, but critics viewed the ceremony as a celebration of hatred instead of history.

About 150 people, some wearing historic uniforms and costumes, participated in the Sons of Confederate Veterans event Sunday.

"It's important to me because I have 20 ancestors who fought in the Confederate army," said Elliott Cummings of Baltimore, who wore a major's uniform from the Army of Northern Virginia, complete with sword and gold brocade on the gray wool. "They fought for independence."

About 75 protesters, most of whom were black, silently marched past the ceremony. County and state police kept the two groups separated.

The Rev. John Wright of First Baptist Church of Guilford wore a sign hanging from his neck on a chain that said, "Auction For Sale."

"When evil shows up ... there needs to be a response," Wright said.

Patrick Griffin III, national commander of the 27,000-member Confederate group, criticized Gov. Parris Glendening for refusing to proclaim Sunday "Confederate Heritage Day."

In contrast, Griffin said former Gov. William Donald Schaefer issued a proclamation for a similar event in Montgomery County and sent his secretary of state to attend.

County Executive Charles Ecker approved the heritage day proclamation for the county, saying he knew black residents might take offense but that he felt the event was to recognize a historic milestone.

In a statement, Secretary of State John Willis said the event would unnecessarily inflame emotions and divide residents.

To whoops and rebel yells, Griffin urged participants to punish Glendening politically, suggesting they "grab a bucket of hot tar and some feathers and head to Annapolis."

"There is a lingering cloud of

political correctness on this state that impairs Gov. Glendening's vision," Griffin said.

The granite memorial beside the Howard County Circuit Court building bears a bronze plaque with the names of 92 local soldiers who died in the Civil War. After years of false starts and fund-raising, it was originally dedicated Sept. 23, 1948, and officials sought to revive interest in it for the 50th anniversary.

"It's to show the people of Howard County their history and they should be proud," said Joseph Bach of Hagerstown, commander of local chapter of the Confederate group called Col. William Norris Camp 1398.

Richard Clark, vice president of the Howard County Historical Society, said while slavery was an issue in the war, soldiers fought to preserve their families

and communities.

"What the historical society is about is acknowledging history, wars and all," said Clark, whose godfather helped dedicate the memorial originally.

Sherman Howell of Columbia, the vice president of the African American Coalition of Howard County, said the goal of Sunday's protesters was to demonstrate that the county is open to all races. He compared the protest to civil rights marches he participated in during the 1960s in Mississippi and Washington, D.C.

"We're still seeking liberation," Howell said.

Cummings said each group must be allowed their own ceremonies.

"I don't care," he said of the protesters. "We have as much right to our cause as they do."

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Justice department agrees to settlement

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — The Justice Department has agreed to pay \$4.1 million to hundreds of immigration workers who claimed they were denied promotion because they are black.

Under a proposed settlement, back wages would be paid to about 800 past and current employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and 26 will be promoted, the Los Angeles Times reported Friday, citing a copy of the pact.

Without admitting wrongdoing, the government also agreed to pay \$1.5 million in legal fees and to hire an independent consultant for

three years to monitor the hiring and promotion of blacks.

If approved by a federal judge in Washington, it would be one of the largest bias settlements against the federal government.

"The settlement is completed," said David L. Ross, an attorney representing the plaintiffs.

INS spokesman Greg Gagne in Washington said a preliminary settlement was reached but declined to release details.

"We're hoping it will be finalized and signed within the next few days," Gagne said.

However, it could take the judge months to grant final

approval.

The case began more than five years ago when 19 INS investigators in the Los Angeles area alleged that they were denied promotions because of racial bias. That eventually led to a class-action lawsuit.

"I feel relieved, but I can hardly say I'm happy about what happened," said Norris Potter III, the lead plaintiff. "This case has humbled me. But I feel I'm a more compassionate person now."

Under the settlement, the Los Angeles-based INS criminal investigator would receive \$90,000, a promotion and transfer to Seattle.

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