

US Most Seriously Over Populated

(CPS)--The United States is the most seriously overpopulated nation in the world today. I define as most seriously overpopulated that nation whose people by virtue of their numbers and activities are most rapidly decreasing the ability of the land to support human life.

Compare the U. S. to India, for example. We have 203 million people and they have 540 million on much less land. But let's look at the impact of people on the land.

The average Indian eats a few cups of rice a day, draws a bucket of water from the communal well and sleeps in a mud hut. In his daily rounds to gather dried cow dung to cook his rice he has a rather small impact on his environment. He does not clamor for highways, jet-ports, and steel mills.

An American on the other hand, will destroy a piece of land on which he will build a house, garage and driveway. His employer will destroy a piece of land to provide him a parking space as will the developer of his shopping center. The government will provide a road to his house and a piece of ground on which to dump his daily eight pounds of garbage.

With 38 times the per capita GNP of the Indian, our citizen's demand for the latest fashion will cause cotton farmers to kill the southern streams with endrin, his demand for power will cause the miners to kill streams with silt and acide, and his (manufacturer- induced) demand for steel to replace last year's auto will cause U. S. Steel Corp. to kill the Great Lakes by increasing the daily equivalent of 130,000 junked autos Life says it dumps into Lake Michigan. And in hundreds of ways he will contribute to the pollution of our oceans causing the final death of our fisheries which the Commercial Fisheries Review for October 1969 described as a "national problem" and a trend which has "become precipitous in the past seven years."

To supply him with his 26,000,000 gallons of water to pollute in his life-time we will build a reservoir and flood the farmland. He will contribute his share to the annual 142 million tons of smoke and fumes which killed the spinach industry in southern California, are killing forest trees and decreasing the amount of sunlight reaching our land. He will contribute his share to the annual load of seven million junked cars, 20 million tons of paper, 48 billion cans, 26 billion bottles, and a rapidly increasing number of plastic Chlorox and antifreeze containers our environment is expected to absorb each year. He will poison the land with the lead, nickel and boron from the 21,000 gallons of gasoline he will use in his lifetime.

He will eat 10,000 pounds of meat. To supply this demand, cattle will eat plants on western range land and the nutrient minerals are passed to our friend who flushes them down the toilet and into the ocean. This life pattern, unknown in the Orient, has joined overgrazing, erosion and lowering of the water table by pumping out ground water for irrigation and city and industrial use, to hasten the destruction of our land's capacity to support people.

Because the American is far more destructive of his land than citizens of other overpopulated lands are to theirs, I want to introduce a new term which I suggest be used in all future discussions of problems of human populations and ecology. We should speak of our numbers in "Indian equivalents" or IE. An IE I define as the average number of Indian citizens required to have the same detrimental effect on the land's ability to support human life as would the average American. This value is hard to determine. I take a conservative working estimate of 25. My Indian friends say this is much too low. One person suggested to me 500 as more realistic. But let's use 25 as our IE.

In terms of IE, then, the population of the U. S. is over four billion. And the rate of growth is even more alarming. We have by far the most serious population growth problem in the world. We are



growing at one percent per year, a rate which would double our numbers in 70 years. India is growing at 2.5 percent. Using the IE of 25, our growth rate would be 10 times as serious as India's if our people had their life expectancy of 35 years. With our expectancy of 70 years, our growth problem becomes 20 times as serious.

But this cannot be true you say. I am playing with statistics. You are right. I am assuming 70 years life for today's baby at today's level of affluence, and such an assumption is absurd. If we continue population growth or rape of the sources,

or both, IE will drop so drastically that by the year 2000 we may think the average Indian is fortunate.

So we should not worry about the hungry nations. The tragedy facing the U. S. is greater and more imminent than theirs. India will be there after the U. S. is gone. She will have colossal famines, but the land will survive and she will come back as she always has before.

Our citizens vary tremendously in IE. If we plot IE vs. its reciprocal (the percentage of land surviving a generation), we obtain a linear regression. Now is we place occupation types on this

graph we would find the starving Blacks of Mississippi on one end. They would approach unity in IE and would be least destructive to the land. At the other end of the graph would be the politicians slicing pork for the barrel, highway contractors, real estate developers and public enemy number one--the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

So blessed be the starving Blacks of Mississippi with their outdoor privies, for they are ecologically sound, and they shall inherit the nation. Young people who are working with these folks in hopes of saving the nation are working on the wrong end of the graph.

ECO-STATISTICS

SMOG - is killing 1.7 million trees in San Bernardino National Forest, 60 miles east of Los Angeles. (New York Times, 1/4/70)

HEALTH - Emphysema rates up over 500% from 1959, according to the United States Public Health Service. There are also high lung cancer correlations.

AIRPORTS - All together, New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D. C. are favored with three tons of pollutants a day from aircraft alone. (New York Times, 1/22/70)

NO CLEAN AIR - The last vestiges of clean air noted by the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center was near Flagstaff, Ariz., but it disappeared six years ago when air pollution from the California coast reached the northern Arizona city. (Syracuse Herald Journal, 12/21/69)

SMOG - In New York a person on the streets takes into his lungs the equivalent in toxic materials of 38 cigarettes a day. (Rienow, Roberts and Rienow, Leona Train, "38 Cigarettes A Day", THE ENVIRONMENTAL HANDBOOK)

HEALTH - "When the sulfur dioxide content of the air in New York City rises above 0.2 parts per million, ten to 20 people die as a result. In the past five years, sulfur dioxide has reached it's level at least once every ten days." (PARADE magazine, 12/21/69)

SMOG - In Los Angeles the air is so polluted that nearly every other day the City's public schools forbid children to exercise lest they breathe too deeply. (TIME, 2/3/70)

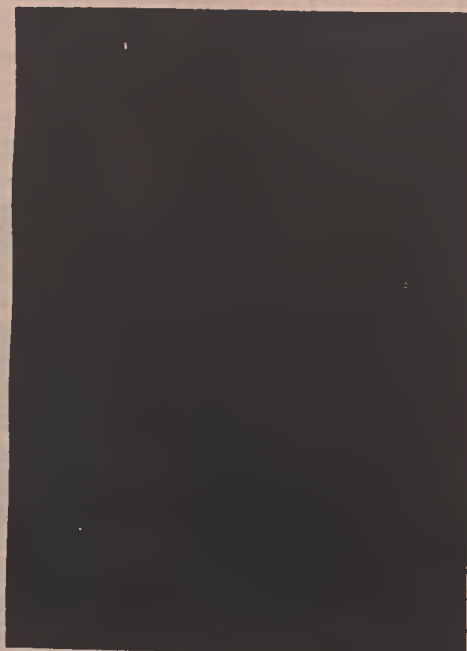
FLAMMABLE - "... the Cuyahoga River in Ohio is so overrun with volatile industrial discharges that last summer it caught fire and burned two railroad trestles." (NEWSWEEK, Jan 26, 1970)

CONTROL - "... six cities along the Mississippi River in Louisiana used \$7.7 million dollars in Federal grants to build facilities that cut pollution by 147,000 units. But 80 industrial plants along the same stretch are putting 2.4 million units into it." (N.Y. Times, Nov. 5, 1969)

DISEASE - "Harry P. Kramer, Director of the Taft Sanitary Eng. Center in Cincinnati reports: 'A few years ago the only water born virus diseases were hepatitis and polio-myelitis. Today there are over one hundred.'" (Our Polluted Planet)

ENVIRONMENTAL RAPE - "Each year the U. S. alone paves over 1,000,000 acres of oxygen producing trees." (Time, Feb. 2, 1970)

OXYGEN - 70% of the earth's oxygen is produced by ocean phytoplankton. "If the super-tanker Torrey Canyon had leaked herbicides instead of oil, the spillage would have wiped out all plankton life in the North Sea." (TIME, Feb. 2, 1970)



The Future?

FISH - More than 15 million fish were killed last year (1968) by municipal and industrial wastes in America's rivers, lakes and streams. (N. Y. Times, Oct. 20, 1969 Editorial Page)

DEATH - A 6-year-old boy in Hugo, Oklahoma was killed by a sonic boom. It was ascertained by the Citizen's League Against the Sonic Boom that fright induced panic and vomiting and asphyxiation. (Dallas Times Herald, 8/24/67)

HEALTH - Violent noise, such as sonic booms, may have permanent damaging effects on unborn babies. (New York Times, 12/28/69)

HEALTH - Well-informed scientists reckon that if city noise continues to rise as it is presently rising, by one decibel a year, everyone will be stone deaf by the year 2000. (New York Times, 11/23/69)

AMOUNTS - In 1966, an average American threw away: 118 lbs. of paper, 250 metal cans, 135 bottles and jars, 338 caps and jars, \$2.50 worth of miscellaneous packaging. (89th Congress subcommittee on Science, Research, Development: The Adequacy of Technology and Pollution Abatement, 1966)

DDT - No insecticides or pesticides have ever been allowed into the continent of Antarctica. Yet they have been found in the fauna along the northern coasts. (Foreign Affairs, Jan. 26, 1970)

RESISTANCE - "In Louisiana, synthetic insecticides were introduced to control pests on cotton, rice, and sugar cane crops. But now 15 major insect pests have developed resistance to the insecticides. Two of them cannot be controlled by even the most advanced insecticides." (Barry Commoner in address to Audobon Society.)

POPULATION

BIRTH RATES - 114.4 million per year, and it's still growing.

LEVELS - 1970: 3.5 billion people on earth

2000: 7.0 billion, approximately
THE U. S. - Unwanted births account for 35-45% of the U. S. population growth according to Dr. Charles Westoff of Princeton University. (NY Times, 10/29/69)