

CADERNO APFN



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The Myth of Overpopulation and Those Who Brought it to You

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DECLARAÇÃO DE PRINCÍPIOS DA APFN

Acreditamos que:

1. A vida humana deve ser respeitada, reconhecida e protegida desde o momento da concepção até à morte natural;
2. A Família é a primeira comunidade natural da sociedade, anterior ao próprio Estado, pelo que este deve estar ao serviço da Família;
3. A Família é o lugar próprio e natural, onde a criança tem o direito a nascer e a crescer, a ser amada, protegida e educada;
4. A Família tem direito a escolher a Educação que pretende dar aos seus filhos, cabendo ao Estado assegurar esse direito;
5. A sociedade será tanto mais humana, solidária e desenvolvida quanto mais famílias estáveis e felizes houver;
6. As famílias constituídas de forma estável e equilibrada são a melhor prevenção e antídoto natural contra a droga, violência, marginalidade e outras disfunções da sociedade;
7. Os valores sobre os quais assentam as sociedades – respeito, tolerância, amor, solidariedade, justiça, verdade, liberdade e responsabilidade – aprendem-se, sobretudo, na Família, pelo exemplo e pela educação;
8. O Estado deve apoiar, estimular e promover a Família, respeitando a sua identidade e individualidade, bem como o princípio da subsidiariedade;
9. As famílias numerosas têm direito ao respeito e apreço de todos, pelo papel indispensável, real e concreto que desempenham no equilíbrio e renovação da sociedade;
10. As famílias numerosas têm direito a viver com dignidade, competindo ao Estado garantir esse direito através de políticas adequadas, nomeadamente no campo da Saúde, Habitação e Educação.

Pretendemos:

1. Contribuir activamente para uma Cultura da Vida e dos Valores da Família;
2. Promover uma Civilização de Vida e de Amor, defendendo os direitos e deveres da Família;
3. Defender a Qualidade de Vida das famílias nos diversos aspectos, físicos, materiais, culturais e espirituais;
4. Ajudar os casais jovens a não terem medo de assumir compromissos de fidelidade e responsabilidade e a manterem-se abertos à vida;
5. Fomentar o respeito pela liberdade de os casais decidirem, com sentido de responsabilidade, o número de filhos que desejam ter;
6. Ajudar as famílias a desenvolverem as suas capacidades de solidariedade intergeracional;
7. Defender os direitos da Família, colocando-a como objecto prioritário das políticas sociais;
8. Humanizar as relações Família-Empresa, através da organização do tempo de trabalho e de uma política de apoio à Família, atendendo, de modo particular, à situação e número dos seus membros;
9. Garantir aos Pais o direito de livremente optarem por se dedicar, um deles, exclusivamente à assistência aos seus filhos, aos familiares idosos e dependentes, sobretudo no caso de Famílias Numerosas, salvaguardando, no entanto, também o seu direito a um mínimo de condições que a dignidade das famílias exige;
10. Contribuir para que as leis e instituições do Estado respeitem, valorizem e defendam, de forma positiva, os direitos e deveres da Família, e, em particular, das Famílias Numerosas.

The Myth of Overpopulation and Those Who Brought it to You

I suspect that no one in this room believes the world is overpopulated, as this association stands in stark contrast and in public contradistinction to the dominant ethos. Still, the theory of overpopulation is part of the air that we breathe. It is all around us. Likely those all over Europe, indeed all over the world, believe it. It is still taught in all the schools, even Catholic schools the world over. It is everywhere. And the threat of overpopulation has hungrily fed the call for universal abortion and contraception. All of it is a lie.

The claim that the world will become dangerously overpopulated has never been true. It was false when first postulated in the 19th century. It was false when “The Population Bomb” was first published in the 1960s. It is false now. That this theory is still taught in grade schools all over the world even at this very moment does not make it any truer. It is a false theory.

In this talk I will briefly trace the development through time of the oddly utopian idea that human misery can end with the end of humanity, or at least the end of a good portion of it. I will address the work of one of the theories most important proponents, the UN Population Fund. I will discuss the differences between the feminist wing and the pure population control wing of the movement. And finally I will explain more fully how and why the theory of overpopulation is not true, especially not in the current day.

This war on the concept of people is now more than a century old. It has moved through four distinct but closely related stages; Malthusianism, eugenics, the population bomb, and is now in the stage known as “reproductive rights.”

Malthusianism, named for the early 19th century scientist Thomas Malthus, posited that having too many people in the world is the inevitable cause of many maladies, among them, hunger, starvation, disease, and war. The theory suggests that the population of the world grows exponentially while food production doesn't with the inevitable result of massive starvation. Not thoroughly discredited until the advent of modern farming techniques in the 20th century, Malthusianism has provided the intellectual underpinnings of all the other iterations of population theory.

The next step in the movement came with the advent of eugenics, the theory that not all races are the same and that the good races must die out to make room for the good ones. The bad races generally corresponded with those who were poorer and darker than the proponents of eugenics. It also postulated that not all members of the same race are of the same worth and their births, too, should be regulated and/or ended. Early proponents of this theory included Margaret Sanger the founder of Planned Parenthood who was an outright racist openly admired by the Nazi regime (these facts are ignored by Sanger ideological and biological heirs).

Of course, the Nazi regime gave eugenics its properly bad name so population theory went underground, gussied itself up and reemerged in the 1950s with the imprimatur of the American political and academic establishment. It came with a new name, the population explosion, which harkened back to the work of Malthus, but still targeted darker skinned populations in the developing world. Instead of simply saying the world would run out of food, it now posited that the world would run out of nearly everything including food, natural resources and eventually room to walk around in. This “population bomb” theory drove the movement through the 1960s until the early 90s and even beyond.

The chief feature of the population bomb scare has been coercion. If, as proponents suggested, overpopulation was a dire threat to the entire planet, then policy makers believed that some populations must be forced to reduce their number.

Almost always, coercion comes from the hands of governments directed at their own people. The most famous examples of coercion occur in developing world countries like China and Peru. The cases of coercion there are well documented and very obvious. Women in these countries were given abortions against their will. Others were sterilized without their knowledge. Still others were bribed with food and medicine in exchange for abortion and sterilization. These instances occur mostly in the developing world, but even in the United States there are well publicized cases where poor drug addicted women are paid cash by private groups for getting sterilized.

While coercion occurs mostly at the hands of poor governments on their own poor people, the impetus for it comes from rich western countries, chiefly the European Union and the United States, but also from various international institutions, mostly notably the United Nations.

The United States government helped to found the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in 1969 to be a nonpartisan clearinghouse for population and demographic information. UNFPA, however, quickly evolved into an advocacy group that has had a hand in more than one coercive population control program. Within ten years of its founding, for instance, UNFPA assisted in the establishment of the most brutal population control program the world has ever seen.

With the direct help of UNFPA the Chinese government instituted a policy that forbade women from having more than one child in her lifetime. Some women who tried to have more than one child were forced into having abortions. Others were fined to such a high degree for a second pregnancy they had no choice but to have an abortion. Indeed, according to the Washington Post, in the first six years of the program, 50 million forced abortions occurred in China.

Under threat of losing US financial assistance, UNFPA eventually promised to limit its activities to only 32 Chinese counties and promised that all forms of coercion in those counties would end (this even though UNFPA denied any coercion existed at all). UNFPA further promised that if coercion still existed in any of those 32 counties they would leave China altogether. In 2002 the US government determined that coercion still existed in those 32 counties and that UNFPA was complicit in the form of providing technical assistance and promptly withdrew financial support. UNFPA still denies coercion exists in the 32 counties and UNFPA continues to publicly praise the Chinese one-child policy.

China is not the only place where UNFPA has been proven to assist in coercion. Not long ago the Peruvian government led by President Fujimori prosecuted a very aggressive population control program against native peasant women. US government investigators found that these women were tricked into sterilizations under the guise of other procedures. Other women were withheld food until they agreed to sterilizations. UNFPA was a financier of the Peruvian program and the forced and coerced sterilizations occurred in UNFPA facilities. Though UNFPA denied coercion existed in the Peruvian program, they commissioned a study that confirmed for them that coercion existed in the Peruvian program. UNFPA's response to their own negative report was to bury it and lie about it. As recently as the summer of 2002 UNFPA denied the existence of the report, which was unearthed by a Peruvian journalist.

At the time that these debates raged during the 1990s the population controllers once more began to change their terms. They determined, quite correctly, that population control

was getting a bad press. It was viewed as too “top down,” in the words of population control advocates. Additional to the bad press, population control advocates also began receiving reports from their own demographers, which presented startling information; the drive to slow population growth by discouraging fertility was becoming more successful than anyone could imagine.

Though not revealed to the general public until the late 1990s, by the time of the Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994, it was becoming obvious to demographic experts that fertility rates were plummeting rapidly all over the world. I will address the facts in a minute but first will reveal the change in terminology, which exists to the present day.

First, they determined that the top down approach and the phrase population control were no longer tenable. Second, they already knew or suspected that fertility rates were plummeting and they feared that policy makers would conclude population control was no longer necessary. Third, they wanted fertility rates and therefore population control to continue to decline. Their solution to these sticky problems was to cloak the old theory of overpopulation in the language of human rights, the political argument par excellence of the late 20th century. Enter the phrase “reproductive rights.” The thinking went that if everyone demanded and received their “reproductive rights,” as defined by the UN, then fertility rates would continue to decline. So, under the guidance and support of UNFPA, the United Nations began the international call for reproductive rights at the Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994.

Here we have entered the latest but certainly not the last phase of the war against the concept of people. It started in Malhusianism, continued in eugenics, switched to the population explosion and has ended up, at least for now, in the fight for reproductive rights. And here we enter briefly the dichotomy in their movement, that between the feminists and the population controllers.

Actually the split is not all that great. Some feminists, though not many, have considered population control as an assault against women. Some of them, though very few, actually spoke out against the Chinese one-child policy. And none of them spoke out against coercion in Peru. But at least theoretically there is a dichotomy between those who believe that women’s rights lie in the advancement of abortion yet who still criticize coercion in family planning and those who believe so strongly in the necessity of population control that women’s rights may be trampled as a consequence. This final phase of the anti-people movement uses the language of women’s rights in the service of population control.

Let me finish with how I began. The theory that the world is so awash in people that it will eventually die is false and it always has been. We will not run out of food, natural resources, or room. The theory is completely and dangerously false. The world now produces more food on less land than ever before. The world is awash in food. The problem is getting it to the hungry. Starvation occurs in the world today not from lack of food but generally as a result of bad policies or the use of starvation as a tool of war. Also, the cost of natural resources is now lower than forty years ago. Price is always a marker for availability: lower prices mean greater availability. Why are natural resources more plentiful? Simply because of our ingenuity. Mankind is better at getting natural resources out of the ground, whatever they are, and we are more efficient in their use.

Still, the population continues to grow. How can that be? For a very good reason. According to Harvard’s Nicholas Eberstadt, it is not that people “reproduce like bunnies” rather that they “no longer die like flies” The most startling revolution in this most revolutionary

20th century was one of health. Where a century ago, almost any disease could kill someone in a matter of days, these diseases are now routinely cured. Where once someone could hope to live into the 60s, they now routinely live well into the 70s, 80s, and even 90s.

The fact is that the much feared fertility rate began declining in the west more than 150 years ago, long before the advent of UN style family planning and population control. In fact, France reached what is called the demographic transition in the 19th century. The fact of nature is that fertility rates decline naturally when populations move from the farm to the city and from agricultural subsistence to the industrial age. They decline also as women move toward education and postpone marriage, also aspects of modernization.

It turns out the war on fertility was not necessary and what we have achieved in artificially lowering it is a problem the world has never seen. At this point more than 80 countries have achieved what is known as below replacement fertility, the point at which women are having so few children, generally thought to be below 2.1 children per woman, that countries are no longer replacing themselves. The UN predicts that every nation on earth, with the exception of a few African nations, will reach below replacement fertility within the next twenty years. And this is a very serious problem. What this means is a rapidly ageing population that turns the demographic pyramid on its head. Societies are meant to have lots of young people supporting an ever-shrinking number of old people. Below replacement fertility has meant in many countries there are more old people than young people. Fifteen years ago Japan reached a global first, they reached the point where they have more people over 65 than under 15. This is a recipe for economic disaster and intergenerational warfare over increasingly scarce resources. Even the UN now recognizes this.

In recent years, the UN Population Division (official UN statistical analysts) has sounded the alarm about below replacement fertility. A year ago, they hosted an expert meeting at which demographers from all over the world concluded they did not know how low fertility can go. The UN now believes the world population will top out at roughly 8 billion people in 2050 and then begin to decline.

The population controllers continue to make their case, however. They still say the world will soon starve, and that we will soon run out of natural resources, and that the planet is running out of room. Anyone can test the theory, however. Next time you are in an airplane flying virtually anywhere in the world, even in the very populous United States, look down from on high and what you will see is a remarkably empty planet straining to be made a garden by more of us.



Dr. Austin Ruse Bio

Austin Ruse is president of the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (CFAM), a non-governmental organization that specializes in assisting UN delegations to negotiate UN resolutions, treaties and conventions. Mr. Ruse has participated in negotiating numerous international documents.

Mr. Ruse is also founder and president of the International Organizations Research Group, a New York-based think-tank that publishes scholarly research on organizations such as UNICEF, the U.N. Population Fund, the World Bank and the World Health Organization.

Starting in June 2003, Mr. Ruse took on the added duties of president of the Culture of Life Foundation, a Washington DC-based think tank that provides the facts and science related to all life issues.

Mr. Ruse regularly briefs the U.S. House and Senate on U.N. matters, as well as briefing White House and National Security Council staff. Mr. Ruse also briefs senior government officials, journalists, Church and non-governmental leaders from around the world.

Mr. Ruse appears frequently on television and radio discussing U.N. matters. Mr. Ruse has been a regular commentator on foreign affairs on EWTN, an international cable television network. Mr. Ruse publishes frequently, appearing in the Washington Times, National Review Online, the National Catholic Register as well as newspapers around the world.

Mr. Ruse travels and lectures widely on U.N. matters, appearing throughout the U.S., also in Canada, Latin America, the Far East and Europe.

Mr. Ruse is a Knight in the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the Diplomatic Order of the Knights of St. Gabriel, as well as a member of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists.

Mr. Ruse holds undergraduate degrees in Journalism and Political Science from the University of Missouri, and an Honorary Doctorate from Franciscan University of Steubenville.

Mr. Ruse is married to the former Cathleen Cleaver, chief pro-life spokesman for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Mr. and Mrs. Ruse live in Arlington, Virginia.

Cadernos APFN Publicados

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- 7— Tarifa Familiar da Água para Consumo Doméstico
- 8— Política de Família: O Quê, Porquê, Para quê, Como?
- 9— O mito da sobrepopulação e quem o criou

Somos um grupo de casais, com três ou mais filhos, acreditamos nos valores da família, defendemos o direito à vida desde a sua concepção e sentimos a necessidade de apoiar as famílias numerosas.

À semelhança do que já acontece noutros países europeus, formámos a Associação Portuguesa de Famílias Numerosas (APFN), de âmbito nacional, para defesa dos direitos naturais, próprios e legítimos das famílias numerosas.

Esta Associação, que obteve em 2003 o estatuto de Associação de Família com Representatividade Genérica, tem os seguintes objectivos principais:

- a) Defesa dos legítimos interesses das famílias numerosas, designadamente em matéria fiscal, de habitação, saúde e educação;
- b) Promoção de acções de solidariedade e apoio mútuo entre famílias numerosas;
- c) Obtenção de facilidades e descontos para os associados;
- d) Desenvolvimento de iniciativas de carácter sócio-cultural e de divulgação dos valores da família.

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