

## DOWN WITH THE FASCIST THEORIES OF "POPULATION CONTROL" AND MASS STERILIZATION IN INDIA !

"The pressure of population is not upon the means of subsistence, but upon the means of employment. Mankind is capable of increasing more rapidly than modern bourgeois society can stand.

....Too little is produced that is the cause of the whole thing. But why is too little produced? Not because the limits of production - even today and with present day means - are exhausted. No but because the limits of production are determined not by the number of hungry bellies but by the number of purses able to buy and pay....The moneyless belies, the labor which cannot be utilised for profit and therefore cannot buy is left to death rate." -- Frederic Engels.

At the time when French revolution was sweeping through Europe, when new ideas and radical reform were the order of the day, Rev. Mr. Malthus issued his infamous law of population (1798). He said, "The power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man... Population when unchecked increases in a geometrical ratio, while subsistence increases only in an arithmetic ratio"; and so he concluded, "A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents on whom he has a just demand, and if the society does not want his labor, has no claim of right to the smallest portion of

food, and in fact has no business to be where he is."

Malthus was thoroughly exposed in his own time for what he was - an outspoken apologist for the landed aristocracy, a reactionary in his own time! His claim of arithmetic and geometric ratios was neither based on any factual data nor on any scientific investigation - just a desperate attempt to rationalize the existence of poverty and misery of the people. The history of development since Malthus has provided concrete proof that the productive forces developed by leaps and bounds and population growth when material conditions of people changed, even turned

negative. Today there are countries like the U.K., Austria, Norway and Germany where net population increase is close to zero or even slightly negative.

But in the early 1950's, once again when in all the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the great social upheavals were growing when the colonial empires were disintegrating and people were rising in revolt against internal oppressors and foreign colonizers, this Malthusian theory was resurrected in various forms. Over the past several years various U.S. monopoly capitalist-financed organizations such as Zero population growth, Club of Rome, etc., have mushroomed with the express purpose of propagating the lie that "the serious over population" problem is responsible for all the sufferings of humanity. Numerous books such as "Population Bomb", "Human Crisis", "The limits to Growth" and a large amount of "research" papers have all been repeating the same lie over and over again.

This is well known to be a standard tactic of fascist propaganda. As Hitler himself admitted, fascist propaganda is based on lies: Tell a lie, repeat it, get experts to repeat it, then repeat it again and the lie will gain currency. Take the example of the lie which claims that the cause of hunger in India is over population. What is the reality in India today? The reality is that even with such backward method of production - with wooden ploughs, no fertilisers and hardly any irrigation facilities, toiling peasants of India produce 110 to 120 million tons of grain per year which would translate into 500 gms. of grain per head per day. Clearly the reason why

these 500 gms. of grain do not reach the people, is certainly not over population!

Regarding the potential of modern agriculture in India, one estimate is as follows:

Using modern agricultural methods, scientific irrigation and farm mechanisation, for the present average Indian diet of 2150 calories a day, 410000 Calories of fossil fuel energy per person will be required each year for food production - equivalent to 55 kg. of coal costing (at 1974 prices) \$2.50. That is about 1/4th. of the per capita use of fossil fuel energy in India today. For the future diet of 3700 calories of primary plant materials and the population of 1.2 billion (instead of the present 600 million) would be equivalent to 95 kg. of coal per person, or a total of 114 million tons per year. Estimated reserves of fossil fuel in India are between 100 to 1000 tons per person. Hence if India relied on her own fuel reserves, enough energy would be available for a modernised agriculture for several hundred years. Concurrent social advances will increase the energy demands to several times this amount, which can be handled by new energy technologies. Improved material and social conditions will naturally lead to stabilisation of population. (Roger Revelle, Scientific American, Sept. 1974). But this potential is not used because the Indian agriculture is very backward.

Only about 25% of India's cultivated land is irrigated. In Bihar this figure falls to 10% though Bihar lies on an amazingly rich source of subterranean water in the Gangetic plain which is recharged by many snow fed rivers. The irrigation

systems, where they exist at all, are often old and unkept so only 20% of India's irrigated area gets sown more than once a year!

What is the cause of the backward state of Indian agriculture? We disagree with the argument of the advocates of "Population Control" that "the high rate of population growth limits the development in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America." There is no historical or contemporary evidence to this arbitrary argument. The fact that Africa is three times as large in area as Europe and its population is 50% smaller, suggests quite conclusively that the reason for underdevelopment in Africa is not population. Increased population growth had been in fact one of the prime causes of the rapid economic progress of Europe and North America over the last 200 years. Whitehead observed that in Western Europe, "a persistently increasing population has been accompanied by an equally persistent rise in the general standards of life". (A.N. Whitehead, "Adventures of Ideas", New York Macmillan, p.94.)

It is only recently that a few of the colonial and neo-colonial countries have had birth rates in excess of 3 per cent. On the other hand as early as 1880, England had a birth rate of 3.4 per cent and the same trend was present in Germany as recently as 1904. Japan had a birth rate of more than 3.2 per cent in 1931. After analysing similar data, J. Pathy concludes that "there is no historical evidence that a high density of population was the force inhibiting development". (J. Pathy, "Population and Development" Economic and Political Weekly, July 24, 1976) It

is the feudal relations of production in Indian agriculture - the peasants living by subsistence farming while the parasitic landlords expropriating whatever meagre surplus they produce - that is the root cause of the backward state of Indian agriculture.

The Indian peasantry faces extremely harsh exploitation and feudal oppression by the landlord class. The Indian peasants live from hand to mouth on subsistence agriculture under backward or non-existent infrastructure (dams, irrigation, flood-control, fertilizers, electrical pumps for lift irrigation, etc.) and are deprived of what little surplus they produce by the feudal relations of production.

Thus on the one hand we do produce enough food to feed our population but this food does not reach the people; on the other hand there is a tremendous potential for increased production, which is left unutilised because of the feudal land-lord system in the agriculture. That being the case how can anyone reasonably claim that the "problem of population" is the cause of hunger in India?

Another variation of this fascist logic that is commonly advanced in order to justify mass sterilisation and population control in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America is: "The population has exceeded the limits of the available resources in general (not just land)." Again the reality is that in the colonial and neo-colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America the problem is not one of scarcity of resources. These countries are bestowed with such rich natural deposits that the foreign powers and super powers

viciously fight even to the extent of creating wars to dominate them. For example, Chile, Peru, Zambia and Zaire have 80% of world's copper deposits. Malaysia and Bolivia provide 70% of the world's tin. India has very rich and plenty of deposits of thorium, mica, manganese and iron ores. 60% of the world's bauxite comes from Surinam, Jamaica, Guinea and Australia. It is the sold out ruling classes of these countries which exploit the people at home and sell these resources to imperialists and share the loot.

Besides, the problem of resources is a relative one. Resources are never fixed except in the short run; over time they expand with social development and development of knowledge. Resource utilisation is also a social phenomenon. It is the social structure which determines the importance of the different resources, allocates them and distributes them. Regarding the expansion of resources with social development and development of knowledge it is enough to recall that the same resources that supported a population of 1 million at subsistence level in North America from 1650 to 1750 are today comfortably supporting a population of 240 million. About 10% of the U.S. work force or less than 10 million workers in agriculture (including those engaged in the supply of fertilizers, tractors and so on to farmers), supply enough food for the 240 million people in the U.S. with enough left over for substantial exports to other countries. In contrast 70% to 80% of the labor force is engaged in agriculture in colonial and neo-colonial countries. As regards resource allocations, consider for example production of luxuries like T.V's or whisky (from food

grain) for the Indian ruling classes; or the more than 5-fold expansion of the Indian police budget since "independence"!

Thus the advocates of "population control" and "mass sterilisation" are fundamentally incorrect in their assumption that the Indian population is the cause of the ills of the Indian society and hence that it should be "controlled". But even if we pardon this fundamental blunder, these advocates of "population control" further fumble miserably in view of their totally idealistic understanding of how human beings make decisions on the size of their families. These "scientists"

utter the nonsense that the Indian peasants have large families because of "illiteracy" and "ignorance" and hence they must be educated or forced to have small families. This argument is again without any basis whatsoever.

In India the motivation for having large families arises from definite material and social conditions faced by the masses of the people. In rural India there is a seasonal labor shortage at times of harvesting and planting. At such times, a large family is a great asset. Large families do cause land fragmentation. But the problem of fragmentation of land is a problem of the next generation. The peasant's major problem is to make a living of the land in his own lifetime, to meet the cost of production in the PRESENT generation. Poor peasants stand only a few steps away from material ruin. Their land holdings are already small; their total concern is with making ends meet in the present; with reducing their cost of production as much as possible. Given a very small income, to

have to hire even one farm hand can mean disaster. If such a peasant is merely to survive, he must have to rely on his family for the necessary labor power. Per acre of land, it is the peasant with the least land who needs the most labor, due to the lack of implements. Furthermore, in remote Indian villages, the family provides almost the only form of physical security and old-age insurance. Thus the large families in rural India are the rational and intelligent response to the material and social conditions existing in present day India. History has shown that when people want to have fewer children because of a different set of material and social conditions, the population growth "spontaneously" decreases (eg. during industrialisation of Europe). Even neo-Malthusian authors like Paul Ehrlich have to admit this (see his "Population Bomb", page 8).

The next question that we would like to raise is: what criteria and standards are used to conclude that India is over populated? It could not be population density; as the table illustrates, so many European countries are more "over populated" than India, if that criterion is used. If alternatively, one compares the number of people per tilled acre of land, we see that the colonial and neo-colonial countries do not compare badly with Japan, Netherlands and the U.K. One estimate for instance, states that in Japan there are 9 persons per cultivated acre, in Britain 5 and in India only 2. (D. Wilson, "A quarter of mankind", Penguin 1968.)

In the face of such irrefutable facts, any scientific investigation which concerns itself with the problem of population in India, ought to conclude that the cause of misery and

poverty in India is not "overpopulation." Why then do some "scientists" conclude that the hard working people of India have only two options left - either keep on living in such miserable conditions and tolerate the barbaric regime existing in India or be castrated and sterilised to solve the "problem of over population"? Perhaps, because "population control" comes as a very convenient "solution" to the various fascist theoreticians to explain away the poverty and misery of the Indian people, through blaming the suffering people themselves?!

The issue facing the Indian people is not "overpopulation" but the backward method of production in the Indian economy; this backwardness is the inevitable feature of the rotting social system in India which is maintained by the big landlords and the foreign dependent capitalists, as well as the foreign powers headed by the US and the USSR. Population control and mass sterilisation have nothing to do with solving these problems. The real solution is to fight the Indian ruling classes and their imperialist masters and establish a genuine People's Democratic India - a necessary pre-requisite for development in service of the Indian people!

Country	Density
England & Wales	324
Netherlands	319
Belgium	317
Japan	280
Federal Republic of Germany	240
Italy	178
Bangladesh	425
India	104
Philippines	123
Indonesia	81
Pakistan	67.5

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