



energy, raw materials -- generating not only direct increases in human suffering and deprivation, but also increased political tension and (perversely) increased availability of the military wherewithal for LDCs to relieve their frustrations aggressively. Resort to military action is possible, not only in the case of LDCs unwilling to suffer quietly, but, with equal or greater likelihood, in the case of industrial powers whose high standard of living is threatened by denial of external resources. The probability that conflicts of any origin will escalate into an exchange of nuclear weapons, moreover, can hardly fail to be greater in 1985's world of perhaps fifteen or twenty nucleararmed nations than it has been in the recent world of five.

The growth of population -- very rapid in the LDCs, but not negligible in most DCs, either -- will continue to compound the predicament by increasing pressure on resources, on the environment, and on human institutions. Rapid expansion of old technologies and the hasty deployment of new ones, stimulated by the pressure of more people wanting more goods and services per person, will surely lead to some major mistakes -- actions whose environmental or social impacts erode well-being far more than their economic results enhance it.

This gloomy prognosis, to which a growing number of scholars and other observers reluctantly subscribes, has motivated a host of proposals for organized evasive action: population control, limitation of material consumption, redistribution of wealth, transitions to technologies that are environmentally and socially less disruptive than today's, and movement toward some kind of world government, among others. Implementation of such action would itself have some significant economic and social costs, and it would require an unprecedented international consensus and exercise of public will to succeed. That no such consensus is even in sight has been illustrated clearly by the diplomatic squabbling and nonperformance that have characterized major international conferences on the environment, population, and resources, such as the Stockholm conference on the environment in 1972, the Bucharest Conference on World Population in 1974, the Rome Food Conference in 1974, and the Conferences on the Law of the Sea in the early 1970s.

One reason for the lack of consensus is the existence and continuing wide appeal of a quite different view of civilization's prospects. This view holds that humanity sits on the edge of a technological golden age; that cheap energy and the vast stores of minerals available at low concentration in seawater and common rock will permit technology to produce more of everything and to do it cheaply enough that the poor can become prosperous; and that all this can be accomplished even in the face of continued population growth. In this view -- one might call it the cornucopian vision -- the benefits of expanded technology almost always greatly outweigh the environmental and social costs, which are perceived as having been greatly exaggerated, anyway. The vision holds that industrial civilization is very much on the right track, and that more of the same -- continued economic growth -- with perhaps a little luck in avoiding a major war are all that is needed to usher in an era of permanent, worldwide prosperity.¹

¹Outstanding proponents of this view include British economist Wilfred Beckerman (*Two cheers for the affluent society*, St. Martin's Press, London, 1974); British physicist John Maddox (*The doomsday syndrome*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1972); and American futurologist Herman Kahn (*The next 200 years*, with William Brown and Leon Martel, William Morrow, New York, 1976).

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Which view of civilization's prospects is correct? It cannot be decided merely by dissection, subjected to the test of critical scrutiny. It cannot be decided merely by weighing their credentials. Rather, it must be dissected, subjected to the test of critical task, for the issues encompass elements of politics, agriculture, and a good measure of growth, the machinery of import and export of resources, the potential and limitations of technology, and the benefits and costs necessary to ponder the benefits and costs of the status quo; and it is important to

Does civilization risk more if the pessimists prevail and they are wrong? Could the pessimists be too optimistic? What is the basis of such evaluations is, of course, a comparison of proposals, and evidence comes to light at the point: a presentation of essential principles bear on the predicament of humanity.

Recommended for Further Read

Brown, Harrison. 1954. *The challenge of the human predicament: technology, and resources*. Brown: University of California Press. A seriousness of impending problems scientific circles to mobilize the talent.

Ehrlich, Paul R.; Anne H. Ehrlich; and Company, San Francisco. A primary of the topics expanded upon.

National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council on Resources and the Environment. 1972. *Resources: A sober look at the future*. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C. A sober look together with forthright policy recommendations.

Osborn, Fairfield. 1948. *Our plundered planet: an integrated approach to the interrelated problems of population, resources, and the environment*. New York: Random House.

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Ecoscience

by John P. Holdren

Topics eugenics, new world order, population control, depopulation, carbon, sterile

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Reviewer: [Ivan M Johnstone](#) - - February 15, 2017

Subject: Libelous claim on archive.org website

The website https://archive.org/details/Ecoscience_17 provides the following synopsis of the book "Ecoscience" which is listed under the author John P. Holdren:

"In 1977 book, John Holdren advocated forced abortions, mass sterilization through food and water supply and mandatory bodily implants to prevent pregnancies"

The book "Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment" was first published in 1970. I purchased the book in 1978, a year after the 1977 publication. From memory the book did not advocate "forced abortions, mass sterilization through food and water supply and mandatory bodily implants to prevent pregnancies." To double check this, I downloaded the PDF version of the book and did a search of the keywords "abortion", "sterilization", and "pregnancy". The book provides comprehensive and detailed histories of these issues in many countries. The book does not advocate "forced abortions, mass sterilization through food and water supply and mandatory bodily implants to prevent pregnancies." Instead, the book raises the serious issue of over population growth and the need for zero population growth because any form of growth cannot continue forever.

The 1977 publication of Ecoscience was co-authored by Paul R. Ehrlich, Anne H. Ehrlich, and John P. Holdren. In 1977 Paul Ehrlich was a Professor of Population Studies at Stanford University, Ann Ehrlich was a Senior Research Associate in Biological Sciences at Stanford University, and John Holdren was an Associate Professor of Energy and Resources at the University of California. Paul Ehrlich wrote the chapters on population - birth control and abortions etc. John Holdren wrote the chapters on energy.

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The claim that "John Holdren advocated forced abortions, mass sterilization through food and water supply and mandatory bodily implants to prevent pregnancies" in the book Ecoscience is doubly incorrect and libelous. The above website should immediately remove the libelous statement.

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