

*The Stork Can Destroy Everything:*¹
The American Population Control Movement of the 1960s and 70s

The population control movement of the 1960s and 70s in the United States is an understudied movement that is not remembered along with the other social movements of its time. In a little over a decade, and with the integral support of a similarly unremembered man, Hugh Moore, the population control movement impacted American society and established a strong and lasting discourse about overpopulation in the American mind. In its short lifespan, the movement drew on the particular circumstances of its time to appeal to supporters and consequently established a unique strain of Malthusianism with strong domestic implications. Boasting a powerfully elite leadership and support base, the population control movement used its plentiful resources to draw the American public and government into acquiescence on the existence of a problematic population explosion. Influenced by the globalization, increases in scientific knowledge, and even the catastrophe-obsessed outlook of the time period, the public and the government came around to this cause and made it successful. For a number of years, the population control movement was a widely-recognized social force, rivaling and often surpassing the influence of its more well-studied contemporaries.

In the end, the population control movement failed. This failure was caused by a confluence of reasons, but most notably because of its rejection by these other social movements. In this way, the failure of the population control movement speaks to the culture of social movements in the 60s and 70s. This rejection was largely caused by a changing climate in America and the perception of other social groups that the population control movement was old-

¹ From an article by Dr. Joseph Spengler, director of population studies at Duke University, in *The New York Times*, April 15, 1970.

fashioned in its ideology, specifically reminiscent of eugenics, and tied to the establishment in its elite membership and propagandist techniques. Despite this rejection and the movement's ultimate failure to become an enduring American social force, it is important to record the 1960s invocation of Malthus as a distinct social group and study it accordingly. At the very least, the population control movement informed a public discourse on overpopulation as a domestic issue and also helped to facilitate the acceptance of birth control in federal policy.

A major issue in any analysis of the literature on population control and Malthusianism is that, as Herman Daly put it in 1977, "Malthus has been buried many times, and Malthusian scarcity with him. But...anyone who has been buried so often cannot be entirely dead."² Because of this recurrence in the public mind, the vast majority of literature on the topic of overpopulation are written with an agenda and seek to prove one side of the issue or the other. Even many assessments of past invocations of Malthus's theories are written with overt biases and the objective of reinforcing or refuting his theories. Another issue with the literature about the population control movement of the 60s and 70s is that, while it is discussed in publications concerning other social movements of the time and mentioned in overviews of Malthusianism in general, it is rarely discussed in a context all its own. Given these constraints, an analysis of the literature concerning the movement must be conducted through the bits and pieces that exist. Writings on Malthusianism that contain critiques can still be helpful in revealing the cause's perception by its concurrent movements and its historical legacy. Likewise, analyses of 1960s and 70s neo-Malthusianism that are mentioned in analyses of these other social movements can help to situate the population control movement in its era and show where it agreed with and diverged from the era's other popular causes. Still, a monographic study of the population

2 Björn-Ola Linnér, *The Return of Malthus: Environmentalism and Post-war Population-Resource Crisis* (Isle of Harris, UK: White Horse Press, 2003), dedication page.

control movement is sorely needed both to finally acknowledge its distinct existence and to reveal its legacy in society.

A singular article, “The Population Debate in American Popular Magazines, 1946-1990,” by historians John Wilmoth and Patrick Ball does portray the population control movement as an autonomous entity with its own influence. In it, the authors analyze popular literature on population in an attempt to examine “the changing structure of the political and intellectual debate over the desirability of intervention in population processes.”³ Wilmoth and Ball use these popular shifts in population growth ideology to identify five frames of viewing population growth throughout their studied segment of American history. The first of these models is the “limits to growth” or “Malthusian” frame, which holds that there are inherent limits to the growths of human populations. Eventually, it postulates, human populations must be brought under control either through a decrease in the birth rate or an increase in the death rate. Failure to control population growth, it predicts, will result in famine, disease, misery, and, potentially, the extinction of the human species. According to Wilmoth and Ball, the second model of viewing population growth has been the “population pressure” or “worlds system” frame. This view holds that population pressure threatens the internal stability of national political systems causing countries to press out in search of more room (as in the Nazis’ search for *Lebensraum*) or to collapse internally, leading to communist-inspired revolutions. A third historical model is the “quality of life” or “overcrowding” frame. This theory posits that overpopulation leads to a diminution in quality of life, including pollution, loss of housing and recreational space, and urban congestion. It also theorizes that overpopulation, especially in urban settings, causes “social pathology” from street crime, to sexual deviance, to domestic violence. A fourth view of

³ John R. Wilmoth and Patrick Ball, “The Population Debate in American Popular Magazines, 1946-90,” *Population and Development Review* 18 (December 1992), 631.

overpopulation is the “race suicide” or “population decline” frame, whose central premise is that other populations are “outbreeding” ours or invading via immigration with superior numbers. According to Wilmoth and Ball, the final view of overpopulation has historically been the “growth is good” model, which argues that humans are the ultimate resource, irreplaceable by technology and that a larger pool of human creativity is naturally a positive asset to society. It also holds that a large consumer base is important in expanding economically. Wilmoth and Ball’s models are significant because they represent a real attempt to isolate ideologies based on overpopulation.

In the 1960s, a number of Wilmoth and Ball’s models characterized an overall view of overpopulation that was uniquely influenced by its time. Numerous authors have noted the era’s scientific advances, increasing globalization, and an overall pessimistic and “catastrophic” worldview. Björn-Ola Linnér’s work, *The Return of Malthus: Environmentalism and Population-Resource Crisis*, specifically analyzes the 20th century incarnation of Malthus, concluding that it was caused by advances in science, which identified a “population-resource crisis” where population would exceed means of survival. Scientific advances allowed for this crisis to be illustrated by “catastrophe empiricism,” tangible evidence of such doomsday scenarios. In his words, “Research reports replaced doomsday prophecies and historical-philosophical theories of decline. When the conservationists warned of a forthcoming catastrophe they increased the credibility of their warnings by supporting them with statistical material on population growth and food production.”⁴ In this same way, the movement is clearly a product of its time and distinguishable from past movements because of its utilization of the new forces of science and a globalized, more easily-observed world. Linnér bases his argument on primary empirical evidence in the form of research reports by governments, the United Nations, and organizations

⁴ Linnér 97.

and the ways in which it was relayed to the American public in newspapers, journals, proceedings, radio programs, and books. Furthermore, Linnér finds that the movement was specific to its time and identifiable compared to previous population control movements in that “the new ideology tied in closely with the preoccupations of the time, such as the new demands of capitalist production modes and mass consumption...and new technological possibilities for mass destruction.”⁵ Scientific advances, according to Linnér, made the perceived problem of overpopulation an empirically demonstrable phenomenon, but also gave many Americans new methods by which they could foresee their own destruction. In this analysis, Linnér recognizes the atmosphere of increased technology and the particular circumstances of the 1960s and their influence on the population control movement in general.

In his book, *Terminal Visions: The Literature of Last Things*, W. Warren Wagar illustrates this point through an analysis of popular culture. He notes that, since World War I, humans themselves have been the most common cause of world-ending disasters in two-thirds of apocalyptic novels, most commonly through advanced weapon systems.⁶ But after World War II, Wagar's analysis reveals, there was a slight increase in stories about an ecological doomsday resulting from waste and pollution and science fiction plots based on environmental catastrophes.⁷ This view of humans as the cause of their own extinction is illustrative of the mindset of the time. The increase of environmental issues causing human apocalypse is also indicative of the renewed concern about the byproducts of overpopulation and urban crowding. Wagar's book is applicable to the subject of the population control movement because it speaks to the general atmosphere and context in which many Americans saw based on the popular culture they consumed.

⁵ Linnér 115.

⁶ W. Warren Wagar, *The Literature of Last Things* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 27.

⁷ Ibid., 100.

In his article, “Apocalypse Yesterday,” Thomas DeGregori echoes this theme by arguing that modern technology, which burst onto the scene in the 1960s represented automatically and unavoidable global impacts on all segments of society. This rampant growth in technology, according to DeGregori, sapped society of any sense of personal autonomy. Also, American society had just struggled through a decade dominated by the fear of “the bomb” and so such doomsday scenarios as those propagated by the neo-Malthusians were familiar and thus easily accepted.⁸ Michael Mandelbaum, in an article entitled “The Bomb, Dread and Eternity,” illustrates this concept by examining college students' feelings in the 1960's. He concludes that students of the time period felt a widespread helplessness and disconnectedness with their surroundings and the world at large. One student described her worldview as “the feeling that mankind is very stupid and very suicidal.”⁹ Not only did this student categorize mankind as one entity, which speaks to the effects of globalization, her comment that mankind is suicidal is a direct echo of neo-Malthusians' fatalistic view of human overpopulation leading to a very real suicide of our own species. Wagar, DeGregori and Mandelbaum's works inform a monographic study of the population control movement by illustrating the atmosphere of the time and its fertility for ideas about catastrophe.

In a society where as Wagar points out, books and movies with environmental disaster themes were ragingly popular, it is clear that Americans were increasingly concerned about the environment and society's effects on it. Because of this, much literature about overpopulation has concentrated on its relationship to the rising environmentalist movement. One of the definitive books about the environmentalist movement, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence* by

⁸ Thomas R. DeGregori, “Apocalypse Yesterday,” in *The Apocalyptic Vision in America: Interdisciplinary Essays on Myth and Culture*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1982).

⁹ Michael Mandelbaum, “The Bomb, Dread and Eternity,” *International Security* 5 (Fall 1980), 8.

Samuel Hays argues that, with the prosperity following World War II, middle and upper-class Americans became more and more consumerist and clamored for “environmental amenities” like clean air, clean rivers and streams and more parks and green spaces.¹⁰ Thus, Hays argues that environmentalism was the result of a self-centered national consumerism. Hays notes that positive environmental values seemed to rise with urbanization and thus tie in with the issue of overpopulation. The more crowded an area, he says, citing national polls as evidence, the greater the desire for natural space.¹¹ In Hays's analysis, High population numbers and urban congestion led to a popular disdain of crowding and a consumerist justification for fewer people demanding limited natural “amenities.”

In his book, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*, Adam Rome echoes Hays's analysis, using literature from the time and reports from concerned organizations like the Sierra Club and the Conservation Foundation_ to explicitly link the two movements. He also identifies a change over time in overpopulation jargon, observing that,

The threat of global overpopulation had become a part of conservationist discourse in 1948...but the public did not pay much attention until the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1948, Americans had no near-at-hand image of uncontrolled population growth. The problem was most obvious abroad—in Asia, Africa...But by 1968, when *The Population Bomb* became a sensational bestseller, the danger no longer seemed so distant. Though Ehrlich dramatized the explosion of people in distant lands...Americans had begun to feel the pressure of population growth directly: The sprawling metropolis seemed to threaten much that the nation held dear.¹²

In this way, Rome links environmentalism, overpopulation, *and* a specific concern of the time (urban congestion) to show how the issue of population control became a mainstream one taking from and informing a concomitant social movement. He also identifies a distinct change over

¹⁰ Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridgeshire: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 266.

¹¹ Ibid., 224.

¹² Adam Ward Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 142.

time that shows how unique the 1960s American incarnation of Malthus was; what began, and had historically been, a concern about overpopulation abroad became a domestic issue visible in the American city.

Both Hays and Rome complement Linnér's analysis of a population-resource crisis. Hays adds to Linnér's point that the new catastrophism of environmental concerns clashing with overpopulation was influenced by seemingly objective scientific analyzes in his observation that, while post-war, middle-class, consumerist Americans were primed to react to threats to their environmental amenities, many Americans in a technologically-advanced age needed the initiatives of "professionals, scientists, technical experts...and 'thought leaders'" who would research and write about these more universal problems.¹³ While it is a top-down view of the movement, all three sources (Linnér, Hays, and Rome) agree that concern with overpopulation was fueled by and became the widespread concern that it did because of advances in science. All three support this claim by citing new methods in the 1960s and 70s of gauging and communicating the crisis to predict apocalyptic ends. Although some concern about overpopulation may have come from observable conditions, these authors suggest that much of what defined the movement was a top-down, scientific evaluation conceived and disseminated in research reports and technical prophecies. While this trend of catastrophic empiricism is certainly apparent, there was a widespread and powerful public discourse on overpopulation not found in studies or reports with much more vivid and sensational elements.

The most important literature dealing with the population control movement in conjunction with another social movement is about its relationship with the birth control movement. As with environmentalist movement, the population control movement shared certain roots with both the birth control and women's rights movement. In "Feminists and Neo-

¹³ Hays 208.

Malthusians: Past and Present Allies,” Dennis Hodgson and Susan Watkins analyze declarations and proceedings of feminist organizations of the time, and find a distinct alliance between neo-Malthusians and feminist members of the birth control movement. The authors find that this alliance was based on shared ideologies (both wanted expanded access to more modern methods of contraception) and demographic goals (both advocated smaller family size—neo-Malthusians for obvious reasons and feminists because it meant more individual power for women in families).¹⁴ According to Linda Gordon however, in her prominent book, *Woman's Body, Woman's Rights*, this alliance was a tenuous one since both movements had such different roots. According to Gordon, the two causes joined in an alliance around 1950 and that the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) was the key bridge between the two movements. She goes so far as to argue that Planned Parenthood actually made the population control movement possible because it provided the neo-Malthusians with “its organizational and financial base.”¹⁵ She says that a rift, however, occurred between the two movements as early as 1960 as the nuances of the birth control movement were easily overtaken by the “heavy-handed rhetoric” from the population control movement.¹⁶ Citing rhetoric and publications from the neo-Malthusian movement, Gordon says that around 1960, “population control exponents and bankers” decided to shift the cost of birth control to the government and so “in order to accomplish this they naturally had to convince at least vocal parts of the public that population control was in their interest...population control propaganda carried sometimes overt, sometimes covert, racist and elitist messages.”¹⁷ Because of this elitism, Gordon says that the more “Radical” elements of the feminist movement cut themselves away from the population control

14 Dennis Hodgson and Susan Cotts Watkins, “Feminists and Neo-Malthusians: Past and Present Alliances,” *Population and Development Review* 23 (September 1997), 471.

15 Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Grossman, 1976), 391.

16 Ibid., 386.

17 Ibid., 397.

movement and argues that because of this racism and elitism, the neo-Malthusian movement was perceived as being tied to the establishment and was “not part of the Left-leaning coalition of social movements.”¹⁸ Gordon's points are compelling and, although possibly biased by this fact, lent credibility by the fact that she was a part of the “radical” components of the women's rights movements that split from the population control supporters. Although this fact makes her more likely to disparage the tactics of the neo-Malthusians, her observations can be taken as indicative of at least a segment of the birth control movement's reaction to the population control movement's leadership, helping to situate the movement under study in the context of its colleague movements. Linda Gordon's observations, however, are extremely valuable because they show a fact of social movements too often ignored: they did not always ally with each other. Just being a social movement in the 1960s did not ensure partnerships with contemporaneous movements. Furthermore, even if an alliance were established, Gordon makes it clear that this alliance could be discarded at any time.

The population control movement did, however, remained tied to Planned Parenthood throughout its manifestations in the 1960s and 70s. According to Ellen Chesler's extensive study of Margaret Sanger, *Woman of Valor: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in America*, this relationship began with the population control's ties to the eugenics movement before 1950. According to Chesler, this relationship, although long-lasting, was not at all harmonious. Chesler's account is littered with examples of the population control movement's diffident attitude towards its major organizational ally. For example, in the movement's influential pamphlet titled *The Population Bomb*, author Hugh Moore explicitly disavowed any “sociological or humanitarian aspects of birth control,” major concerns of organizations like Planned Parenthood. Chesler notes that this pamphlet was only distributed to 10,000 notables

¹⁸ Ibid., 487.

identified in *Who's Who in America* and was a fundraising exercise.¹⁹ Likewise, the first annual report of the Population Council, a population control movement organization partially funded by Planned Parenthood, expressed gratitude to numerous other organizations, but made no mention of Planned Parenthood and guarded its autonomy from “propagandists on the grounds that only as an avowedly scientific organization, steering clear of controversy and dedicated to the narrow proposition that unchecked population remained an impediment to economic growth, could it hope to make itself eligible for major grants from controversy-shy institutions like the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations.”²⁰ This information, garnered from official population council organization publications, fits well with Gordon's supposition that the population control movement had elitist goals, leaders, and thereby, audiences.

Echoing this critique of the movement being too closely associated with the establishment are more Marxist critiques of it. Just as Hays and Rome, in their analyses of the environmentalist movements, note that Americans were motivated to fight for the environment for the amenities it afforded them, Marxist theorists critique the neo-Malthusians for a corporate and capitalistic bent. Sociologist Eric Ross delivers such a critique of neo-Malthusianism in general by arguing that Thomas Malthus's “most enduring influence has been to shape the academic and popular thinking about the origins of poverty, and to defend the interests of capital in the face of the enormous human misery which capitalism causes.”²¹ Largely through analysis of Malthus's original ideas and writings, Ross sees the entire neo-Malthusian movement as a conspiracy executed by individuals with interests in the preservation of the capitalist system. Although it is clear that Ross began his assessment of the movement with definite ideological

19 Ellen Chesler, *Woman of Valor: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in America* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1992), 438.

20 Ibid., 426.

21 Eric Ross, *The Malthus Factor: Poverty, Politics, and Population in Capitalist Development* (London: Zed Books, 1998), 25.

biases, it is obvious from the preceding sources that the neo-Malthusians of the 1960's and 70's were viewed in this same light by many of their contemporary movements and critics.

Along with these models, it is important to have an institutional account or roadmap of the topic of population control's rise to prominence. In her book, *World Population Crisis: The United States Response*, Phyllis Piotrow provides such an institutional history of the movement and its treatment in official public policy. Piotrow's work is extremely useful because, like Wilmoth and Ball's analysis, it focuses specifically on the neo-Malthusianist cause of the 1960s and 70s. Piotrow's central question is how American public policy went from Eisenhower's 1959 statement that "birth control...is not our business" to a decidedly active public and government on that very issue less than fifteen years later.²² She concludes that five factors led to this consciousness, including: a shift in the framing of the issue of birth control from its immorality to its denial being discrimination against the poor, increased technology making birth control more accessible and efficient, the involvement of a large and varied pool of professionals and activists, Congressional support for the cause, and influential individuals making up the movement's leadership.²³ Her work is a detailed account of the political and institutional progression of the topic of birth control and population control through the Kennedy, Johnson, and early Nixon administrations. Piotrow uses examples of government programs, presidential and Congressional speeches, and United Nations declarations and committee action to demonstrate the swift progress of the issue from obscurity to prominence. As such, Piotrow's work provides an invaluable source of information about the official United States response to the issue of population control at home and abroad.

Piotrow's work also provides a central question about the population control movement

22 Phyllis Tilson Piotrow, *World Population Crisis: The United States Response* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), x.

23 Ibid., 59.

of the 1960s and 70s. How *did* the United States government go from Eisenhower's statement that birth control was not a concern for the federal government to Nixon's assertion that population was a primary threat to the well-being of the nation? Today, the most agreeable answer might be that the efforts of the birth control and women's rights movements caused this institutional change. Or it might be that the overall climate and liberalization of the 1960s made such government policy possible and acceptable to Americans. But these answers are incomplete without considering the actions and impact of the population control movement. As a distinct entity, the population control movement informed the public discourse about how many people should inhabit the same earth, the consequences of exceeding this number, and the means acceptable to limit these people and avoid the consequences. At the same time, much of the existing literature chronicles the population control movement in its relationship with and influence on other social movements of the time period. As is clear in its relationship with the women's rights movement, the population control movement did not exist harmoniously with these other causes and, in fact, was very different in both membership and ideology. The literature has also traditionally considered the population control movement as subordinate or secondary to others, but an examination of the movement in general shows the influence that the movement wielded all on its own and the implications of this influence on all levels of society.

To fully understand the 1960s population control movement and the way it was perceived by different elements in society, one must examine its ideological context. Before World War II, the dominant ideology related to population control was eugenics. Eugenacists, most prominently remembered in the personal crusade of Margaret Sanger (1879-1966), argued that humans should reproduce according to scientific principles to generate the best possible genetic pool. Their efforts peaking in the Interwar years, eugenacists campaigned the government for

federal policy promoting reproduction of the “fit” and discouraging reproduction of the “unfit.”²⁴ In the words of the eugenicist movement’s founder, Francis Galton, eugenicist policy would “improve human stock by giving the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable.”²⁵ Eugenics was an international movement, arising around the same years in the United States, Europe, and Latin America.²⁶ Between 1910 and 1930, forty-three international conferences were convened to promote its efforts.²⁷ The movement was particularly strong in the United States, however, where 31 of the 48 states had passed sterilization policies of some sort by 1937.²⁸ Eugenacists advocated such coercive measures to institute negative eugenics, reasoning that “the lowest stratum of society has... neither intelligence nor self-control enough to justify the State to leave its matings in their own hands.”²⁹ Unluckily for the movement, however, its popularity built up during the Interwar Years would not be enough to overcome comparisons with Nazi policy following World War II.

As Americans learned the extent of Nazi racial policies and their gory implications, the American eugenicist movement became an instant pariah. And the comparisons were not inapt. While the American eugenicist movement surely was not in favor of genocide, the two movements had been linked. One American attendee of the 2nd International Congress for Studies on Population in 1935 in Berlin commented that,

It is from the work of [British and US eugenicists] that the leader of the German nations, Adolf Hitler...has been able to construct a comprehensive racial policy of population development and improvement that promises to be epochal in racial history...It sets the pattern which other nations and other racial groups must follow, if they do not wish to fall

24 Daniel Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 159.

25 Francis Galton, *Inquiries into the Human Faculty* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 24-25.

26 Deborah Barrett and Charles Kurzman, “Globalizing Social Movement Theory: The Case of Eugenics,” *Theory and Society* 33 (2004), 492.

27 Ibid, 498

28 Ibid., 509

29 Charles B. Davenport, “The Eugenics Programme and Progress in its Achievement” in Morton Aldrich, ed., *Eugenics: Twelve University Lectures* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1914), 10.

behind in their racial quality, in their racial accomplishment, and in their prospects of survival.³⁰

The eugenics movement of the Interwar Years was surely, then, an international one and its downfall would be international as well.

As John Meyer points out, the years following World War II were characterized by international rejection of the ideology of “hierarchical personhood,” the core of eugenicist beliefs. From its inception, the United Nations positioned itself as a bastion of human rights and assumed a mission of combating racial discrimination. In 1946, UNESCO founded its Commission on Human Rights and in 1948 the United Nations issued its Declaration of Human Rights.³¹ In this climate, the eugenics movement was not slow to learn that its heyday had come to an end. Immediately after World War II, the movement went underground and convened no more international conferences.³² The movement did not end, however, adopting what one leader called “crypto-genetics...to reach the goal of eugenics without saying frequently what one really seeks and without using the word eugenics.”³³ As early as 1947, the minutes of one US eugenics society meeting declared that “the time is not right for aggressive eugenics propaganda.”³⁴ It is significant, however, that the eugenics movement was not dead and only underground. Eugenicist ideology lived on in other endeavors. In 1974, William Draper, former president of the American Eugenics Society, and later the head of the Population Council recounted that the post-war birth control and abortion-rights movements had been eugenicist causes but “if they had been advanced for eugenic reasons it would have retarded or stopped their acceptance”³⁵ It is

30 Barrett and Kurzman, 510.

31 John W. Meyer, “Self and Life Course,” in George M. Thomas, Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez, and John Boli, eds., *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society, and the Individual* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987), 260.

32 Barrett and Kurzman, 513.

33 Faith Schenk and A. S. Parkes. “The Activities of the Eugenics Society,” *Eugenics Review* 60 (1968): 154-155.

34 Kevles, 252.

35 Mary Meehan, “How Eugenics Birthed Population Control,” *The Human Life Review* 24 (1998): 78.

apparent that World War II abruptly ended the popularity of the eugenics movement. But no movement can be snuffed out entirely, and it is equally apparent that eugenics lived on in spirit, embedded in newer movements with more socially acceptable terminology and stated goals.

This climate of transition for the eugenics movement and for the country at large was the one during which Hugh Moore, co-inventor of the Dixie Cup, was first visited by the specter of Thomas Malthus. Born in 1887, Hugh Moore went on to make a good deal of money with his Dixie Cup Company. Beyond that, he was a philanthropist and involved citizen, working for the League of Nations, acting as a consultant to the US Delegation at the 1945 San Francisco conference to establish the United Nations, and serving as the Chair of the Executive Committee for NATO from 1949 to 1951. Deeply concerned with the cause of world peace, Moore founded or worked for numerous organizations, including the American Union for Concerted Peace Efforts (1939-1941), the Americans United for World Organization (1944-1945), the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (1940-1941), the Free World Association (1939-1947), and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation (1943-1964).³⁶ Notably, Moore had never been involved in any birth control advocacy or eugenicist movements before 1948. In that year, his interest began abruptly as he became convinced that world peace was not attainable without a reduction in population increase. Before his life's work was finished, Moore would spark the movement that made overpopulation a major cause in the 1960s and 70s. Moore's activities and the work of his organization, the Hugh Moore Fund will serve as an overarching case study for examining the population control movement in this paper. Because Moore's personal interest in population matters began exactly as the eugenics movement was being forced underground, Moore and his work are especially illustrative of the movement and the influence exerted upon it by its unique

36 Princeton University, Mudd Library, "Hugh Moore Fund Finding Aid," Princeton University, <http://diglib.princeton.edu/ead/eadGetDoc.xq?id=/ead/mudd/publicpolicy/MC153.EAD.xml> (accessed April 8, 2008).

era. The maneuverings of Moore's movement were wholly confined to a post-World War II atmosphere and took place mostly in the 1960s and early 70s, the scope of this examination.

There is no concrete evidence about what caused Moore's sudden interest in population control in 1948, but it is clear that in that year he threw himself into the cause full-force. In 1948, he wrote to Frank Boudreau, head of the Milbank Memorial Fund, a foundation promoting good public health policy, for information about how he, Moore, could use his resources to "educate the people in the matter of population."³⁷ That same month, he began sending a book about overpopulation, *Human Breeding and Survival* by Guy Irving Burch and Elmer Pendell to a number of prominent people and organizations, including Alger Hiss and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the World Peace Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The book was not met without some criticism. Boudreau warned Moore that "It (the book) is not regarded very seriously by the authorities in the field of population...The authors are not real authorities on the subject; their knowledge is secondhand. I could pick out statement after statement which would not stand critical analysis." Furthermore, Boudreau cautioned Moore against using such incendiary material in his efforts, advising that "any campaign to prevent overpopulation must be based on truth and facts. The truth is always less sensational than distortion...There is just enough truth in the book to make it very dangerous."³⁸ Boudreau's warning does not seem to have impeded Moore's efforts to circulate similar literature throughout the next decade. He hoped to attract attention and support from prominent and wealthy Americans with these mailings of pamphlets and books.

These mailings do seem to have produced some success in Moore's cause. In 1955, he wrote that he had had a very good response to one particular pamphlet from the "cross section of

37 Frank Boudreau, Letter to Hugh Moore, 10 November 1948, Princeton University Archives, Hugh Moore Fund Collection, Box 14, Folder 20.

38 Frank Boudreau, Letter to Hugh Moore, 8 November 1948, PUA, HMFC, Box 14, Folder 20.

top American leaders” to whom it had been sent. Moore went on to note that, “their letters instead of being mere acknowledgements run all the way in some instances up to seven pages... Almost unanimously they think something should be done and many of them have made constructive suggestions.”³⁹ It is clear that Moore’s objective was to recruit support from an elite section of the American citizenry. Many of those targeted would have been older and might have had at least previous exposure to the eugenics cause, a characteristic that might have predisposed them to pay attention to Moore’s mailings and emit such a positive response. Still, Moore’s mailings met some skepticism. In 1954, Joseph Johnson from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace critiqued a pamphlet Moore had sent, cautioning him “not to ‘oversell’” and stating that, “given the paucity of actual factual knowledge,” some of his statistics should be lowered. Johnson also questioned the integrity of Moore’s charts and figures, accusing him of skewing the proportions on a chart that made a curve appear vertical. From the very beginning of his involvement in the cause, then, Moore was reaching out to elites and using highly alarming information and propaganda. This would become Moore’s *modus operandi* and come to characterize the movement in the eyes of its detractors.

By 1958, ten years after his first introductions to Malthus, Hugh Moore had broken into writing on his own behalf. In an article entitled “Too Many People in Paradise,” and published in *Western World Magazine*, Moore wrote:

The UN estimates that world population is growing by 5400 every hour or 47,000,000 a year. A number larger than the total population of France is being added every year to the people living on this earth! In their desperation for food and for opportunities and jobs, people are more susceptible to communist propaganda and may be enticed into violent action. *As communication increases and the world tends to become one city*, the people in the areas where population is mounting...are increasingly dissatisfied.⁴⁰ (emphasis added)

39 Hugh Moore, Letter to Ellen St. John Garwood, 9 February 1955, PUA, HMFC, Box 15, Folder 7.

40 Hugh Moore, “Too Many People in Paradise,” *Western World Magazine*, August 1, 1958, 8, PUA, HMFC, Box 1, Folder 8.

In this, probably Moore's first published writings on the matter, he shows many of the characteristics that his movement took from the particulars of its time. By appealing to statistics, he exhibits the scientific advancements of the time in line with what Linnér calls "empirical catastrophism." Moore's article also appeals to Americans' fear of the spread of communism, a fear specific to that time period. Finally, in the emphasized text, it speaks to the increasingly globalized nature of the world, asserting that overpopulated areas would be more dissatisfied with their conditions because they would see what others had. It is possible, also, however, that this globalization and the world "becoming one city" would make these numbers more alarming to other residents of the metaphorical city, as Moore clearly was.

In the end of the 50s and as the 1960s began, Hugh Moore's efforts also branched off to formal organizing. As early as 1952, Moore had allied himself with Margaret Sanger, the former eugenicist leader and president of the American Birth Control League, which would later become the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA). Together, in 1952, the Moore and Sanger began the International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF), the umbrella organization for all divisions of Planned Parenthood worldwide. The two managed to get enough money to set up a headquarters for the IPPF in London. Hugh Moore also assigned a young employee of his Hugh Moore Fund, Tom Greissemer, to concentrate on expanding the IPPF.⁴¹ In his alliance with the confirmed eugenicist Sanger, Moore forged another tie with the defunct cause of eugenics. The IPPF also, then, began with strong influence from "crypto-genetics." Although instrumental the IPPF's founding, Moore was never completely accepted by the American branch of Planned Parenthood. In 1956, he published a pamphlet (later to become the book by Paul Ehrlich) *The Population Bomb* specifically disclaiming "sociological or

⁴¹ Chesler, 436.

humanitarian aspects of birth control” and advocating population control as a bulwark against Communism. His words stung many in the PPFA who demanded that he change his rhetoric.⁴² Moore retained his strong relationship with Margaret Sanger, however, and remained committed to the IPPF.

In 1960, Moore continued to organize by calling together a group of prominent citizens at Princeton University under the title of the World Population Emergency Campaign (WPEC). Some attendees included Eugene Black, President of the World Bank, Will Clayton, cotton magnate and former Undersecretary of State, Gen. William Draper, former Undersecretary of the Army, Marriner Eccles, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and Rockefeller Prentice. The WPEC raised \$100,000 at their Princeton meeting alone, and several hundreds of thousands of dollars in the next year.⁴³ Through the WPEC, Moore began his organizational efforts on behalf of population control with an eye towards attracting big name and big moneyed followers. According to the only institutional history of his actions, written by a close associate of his, he sought this level of support because “he was following the tested merchandising principle that controversial ideas need impeccable bedfellows.”⁴⁴ These “impeccable bedfellows” would include a wide array of elite members of society, names that Moore hoped would lend credibility and respect to his movement. In this way, it is clear that Moore realized his efforts would be controversial and acted accordingly. At the same time, he built up a separate following from the one orbiting Planned Parenthood, making his movement distinct and identifiable in membership and in the fact that Planned Parenthood was split on its view of Moore’s arm of the movement.

Despite any animosity that may have existed between the two, in 1961, the heavily-funded WPEC merged with PPFA. There were reservations on both sides about this merger. In

⁴² Chesler, 438.

⁴³ Lawrence Lader, *Breeding Ourselves to Death* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), 10-13.

⁴⁴ Lader, 12.

late 1960, Margaret Sanger wrote to Moore that several members of the Executive Committee of PPFA were “setting up hurdles” to the merger. The letter went on to tell how these detractors worried that the WPEC might overshadow the PPFA, a fear she labeled “ridiculous—for PPFA stands to gain.” Finally, she told Moore that she had insisted upon acquiescence to the merger as a condition of her continued service, after which the resolution passed.⁴⁵ In these communications, it seems clear that Margaret Sanger felt closer and more ideologically aligned with Hugh Moore than with her own organization, Planned Parenthood. Still, PPFA’s initial reluctance to accept the WPEC into its ranks shows the truly separate identities of the two movements. In a later interview, Moore described the merger coolly, remarking:

At a certain point...the Planned Parenthood people thought that we were taking business away from them, that there were subscribers to the WPEC that they would have gotten. This was not my view as I thought we were creating new customers both for them and for the movement. However, this matter concerned the Planned Parenthood Federation people so much that...(the PPFA Chairman) and I decided to merge the two organizations under a formula whereby a certain percentage of the income from both was divided in the domestic and in the international work.⁴⁶

While Moore’s assessment is assuredly biased, it does seem that both sides of the merger had at least slight reservations. In such an atmosphere, it is likely that both would maintain their individual identities.

Ultimately, the WPEC and Hugh Moore’s fundraising did a tremendous amount to finance the IPPF and thereby the PPFA. As early as 1964, C. P. Blacker wrote of the IPPF that “with increasing assets...accruing through the initiatives of Mr. Hugh Moore and others, our finances were becoming realistic. Less was heard of shoestrings...Mr. Moore and others have provided the fuel.”⁴⁷ And although the relationship between the two movements would deteriorate by the end of the 1960s, in 1972, Julia Henderson, Secretary General of the IPPF said

45 Margaret Sanger, Letter to Hugh Moore, 2 December 1960, PUA, HMFC, Box 20, Folder 11.

46 Hugh Moore, personal interview, undated, PUA, HMFC, Box 22, Folder 9.

47 C. P. Blacker, “Aspects of its History,” *The Eugenics Review* 56 (October 1964), 141.

that “Hugh Moore, more than any single individual, has had major responsibility for the International Planned Parenthood Federation’s present financial strength.”⁴⁸ Along with this financial assistance, Hugh Moore had been supplying manpower to the IPPF and PPFA. Since 1952, T. O. Griesemer, the director of the Hugh Moore Fund, had been devoting nearly all his time working for the IPPF, helping to write the IPPF’s first constitution, and later acting as secretary of the IPPF’s Western Hemisphere Region. Moore’s strong bond with Margaret Sanger further speaks to the crossover leadership constituencies of the two movements. In these ways, the population control movement and the birth control movement began the 1960s as allies, linked in resources and personnel.

As the decade that is now so strongly remembered for its social movements went on, however, the two movements each evolved in their own directions. Eventually, these differences became too glaring to further tolerate their initial alliance. One major difference of the population control movement and the WPEC was its demographics. As previously mentioned, Hugh Moore had always appealed to elite members of society for support, beginning with his very first mailings. Moore habitually sent mailings to every person listed in *Who’s Who*, specifically targeting businessmen and political figures. It appears that his efforts were productive in cultivating a following among this section of society. In 1962, Moore and General Draper made a visit to the State Department and met with Robert Barnett, “the State Department’s man on population” who told them that the President had been receiving a lot of mail about overpopulation and that the letters were “distinguished by the character of the writers,” with seventy-five percent of the authors listed in *Who’s Who*.⁴⁹ This older, established, moneyed demographic to which the Hugh Moore Fund appealed was a conscious choice and one

48 Julia Henderson, Telegram to Gen William Draper, 28 November 1972, Box 1, Folder 1.

49 Hugh Moore, “State Department Visit,” personal notes, 13 March 1962, Box 17, Folder 18.

that would come to clash with other movements of the same time period, as they came to emphasize more grassroots and popular efforts.

The elitist nature of the movement was a conscious choice by Hugh Moore and was controversial even inside of the elite membership of the cause. As early as 1962, Frank Abrams, the former Chairman of Standard Oil advised that “instead of engaging in the impossible task of wooing business men away from their pet objectives of ‘expanding markets’...why don’t we... try a direct approach of reaching the general population...There seems to be no real effort being made to reach the average man concerning the population problem. I talk with some of my friends about it and they seem without any real understanding of the subject.”⁵⁰ Moore responded to this letter by saying that the movement needed elite voices to keep their publicity high and that “meantime, I think it is important to get the message across to businessmen—the fraternity to which you and I belong—dumb though they may be!”⁵¹ It is clear, then, that Moore’s elite followers could have seen that the message was tailored for them. The list of businessmen actively involved in the movement is long, including ones mentioned earlier as well as Thomas Cabot, a member of the elite Cabot family and Chairman of Cabot Corporation, which remains a prominent chemical company,⁵² Lamont DuPont Copeland, Chairman of the DuPont chemical company, and Harold Bostrom, an industrialist who made his money manufacturing hydraulic tractor seats.⁵³ When confronted with this elitist aspect of his crusade, Moore did not deny and embraced it as his preferred strategy. Many of Moore’s publications for mailings explicitly catered to businesspeople, including a booklet entitled “The Population Explosion: Asset or Liability?” which included such sections as “More People—More Government,” “Business Pays for Foreign Aid,” and “Loss of Raw Materials.” Moore also

50 Frank Abrams, Letter to Hugh Moore, 15 December 1962, Box 16, Folder 3.

51 Hugh Moore, Letter to Frank Abrams, 21 December 1962, Box 16, Folder 3.

52 Lader, 67.

53 Ibid., 64.

published a different booklet entitled “The Population Explosion and Your Taxes” written former head of the Federal Reserve System, and “Business Profits and the Population Explosion” by Adolph Schmidt of T. Mellon and Sons. Compared to the other, more prominently remembered movements of the 1960s, this exclusive base of support and appeal to big business would have seemed out of place and against their beliefs in grassroots organization and participation.

Besides businessmen and men involved in politics like the aforementioned Eccles and Draper group, another key component of Moore’s following was men who had made their names in the advertising business. These men used their skills to help further the movement and to extend Moore’s plan in this area. By the mid-sixties, Moore had turned his attentions to recruiting more broad support and using advertising techniques to appeal to a more popular audience. In an internal Hugh Moore Fund memorandum, the second point of a three-pronged approach to spread the message about overpopulation was “Arouse the general public from its still widespread apathy.” It is in this memorandum that the movement’s focus on propaganda and incendiary tactics first became prominent. In its second point, the memorandum advocated that the Fund continue to:

Hammer home—through advertisements, magazine articles, letters to the Editor, mailings, etc.—the acute danger of the population explosion...If we are able to connect this danger with the individual and his family then we wake him to the peril and get him to do something about it. We should try to convince him that the population explosion is immediately threatening the well-being of his children and grandchildren and will inevitably lead to war. We should not hesitate to put out real ‘scare’ literature...⁵⁴

This stated goal of the Hugh Moore Fund encouraged propagandist techniques to appeal to a mass audience. In advocating such techniques as scare literature, the Fund was signaling that truth and moderation were not to be its considerations, only using whatever tactics necessary to amass a following.

⁵⁴ Tom Griessemer, Memorandum to Hugh Moore, 5 January 1965, PUA, HMFC, Box 17, Folder 2.

The main thrust of this movement and its propagandist goals were fully realized in the Hugh Moore Fund's next endeavor. On July 27, 1967, Moore wrote to William Draper about his intended use of propaganda and persuasion to advance the cause. Writing that low-key advertisements were not enough to attract sufficient attention, he suggested, "We must gather the best and most clever public relations people, motivation experts, advertising specialists, sociologists...who can contribute to a no-fail campaign...There are geniuses in communications and selling who have sold the American public every gee-gaw and gimmick conceivable..."⁵⁵ Being so blunt as to almost describe his beloved movement as a "gee-gaw" gimmick, Moore's statement to Draper does reveal that he planned on bringing attention to his cause using marketing techniques such as those that might have necessarily been employed for the sale of less worthy products. In September 1967, it seems that Moore had finally become convinced that the movement needed widespread public involvement to succeed. In his notes titled "Mobilizing Public Opinion for Population Control," Moore wrote about the history of the Fund and its successes, but concluded that, "all of the publicity thus created cannot become a crusade unless thousands of citizens are actively involved. This lack has been the weakness of the movement up to the present. The Hugh Moore Fund has tried within its slender resources to meet this need by using paid space, *for in paid space you can tell people what they should do, when they should do it and where.* (emphasis added)"⁵⁶ It is clear from this stated tactic, that Hugh Moore had little respect for the intellectual capacities of those he sought to recruit, merely focused on doing whatever necessary to bring them to his side.

In late 1967, the Fund spawned an ad hoc committee called the Campaign to Check the Population Explosion with a budget of \$500,000 to accomplish this goal of dictating public

⁵⁵ Hugh Moore, Letter to William Draper, 27 July 1967, PUA, HMFC, Box 17, Folder 13.

⁵⁶ Hugh Moore, "Mobilizing Public Opinion for Population Control," Personal notes, 5 September 1967, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 2.

sentiment and the express purpose of publishing full-page advertisements in newspapers and magazines in support of the cause.⁵⁷ Dubbed the “Manhattan Project,” the advertising venture aimed to bring the cause of population control to mainstream American attention. In 1965, General Draper had testified at the Gruening Committee Senate hearings that “a new Manhattan Project is needed—not to build another atomic bomb, but a grand and noble project for knowledge and demographic understanding around the world—a project to defuse the population bomb—so that mankind does not multiply itself into oblivion.”⁵⁸ By comparing its sensationalist campaign to the Manhattan Project—and thus to the creation of the atomic bomb—the Hugh Moore Fund was explicitly linking the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and overpopulation. This naming can also testify to Mandelbaum’s and others’ assertions that the “bomb” was never far from the minds of Americans and that Hugh Moore and his followers did intend to exploit this consciousness in the activities of their version of the Manhattan Project.

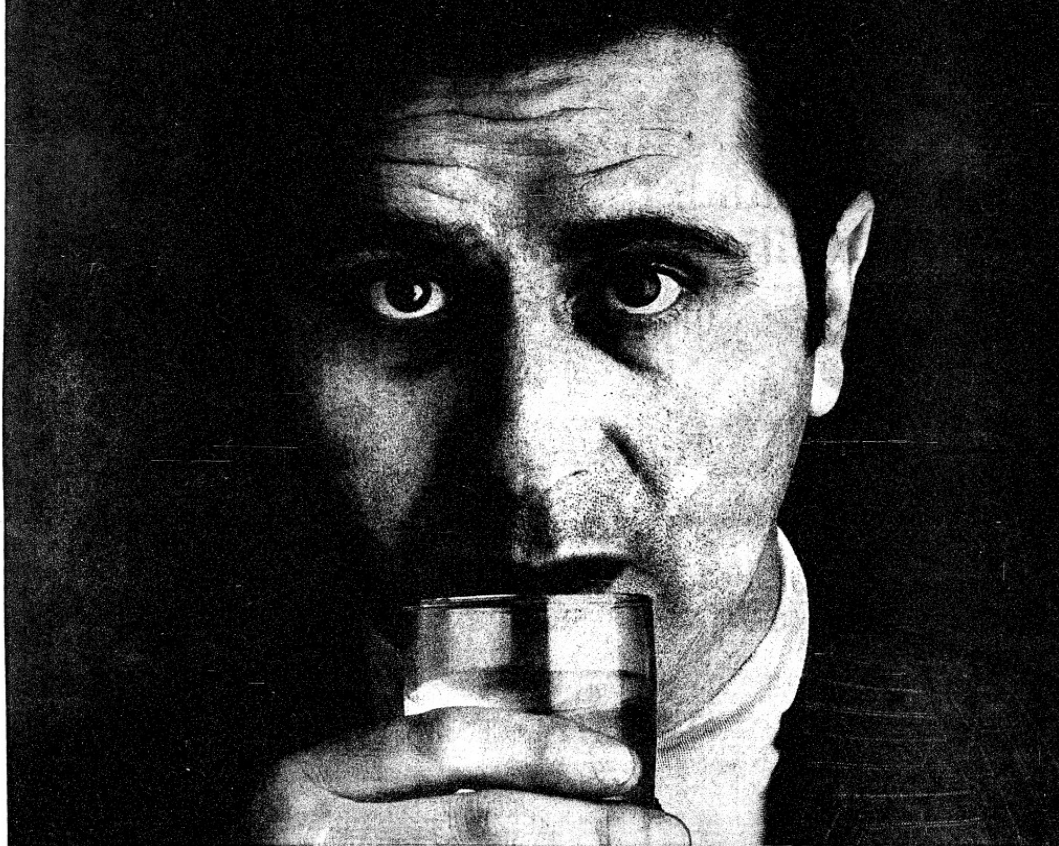
As expressed in a memorandum to the Campaign’s Chairpeople by Moore himself, there were to be two tests of each advertisement: firstly, “will this ad help persuade the Government in Washington to set up a massive birth control program?” and secondly, “will this ad persuade the American people that such a program is in their vital interest and one about which they will bestir themselves?”⁵⁹ In their efforts to cause the American people to become so bestirred, the Hugh Moore Fund would end its contributions to the 1960s in a sensational and controversial bang. In their subject matter and messages, these advertisements show the population control movement’s interweaving of other social concerns with its own.

⁵⁷ Lader, 66-7.

⁵⁸ General William H. Draper, Testimony at Gruening Committee Senate hearings, 1965, Box 17, Folder 22.

⁵⁹ Hugh Moore, “Manhattan Project Future Advertisements,” memorandum to Emerson Foote, Harry Hicks, and J. Drew Catlin, 5 January 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 17, Folder 15.

WARNING: THE WATER YOU ARE DRINKING MAY BE POLLUTED



Much of our drinking water is below Federal standards according to a recent study.

Two things are causing this rise in water pollution. One is the increase in waste products. Every day we pour thousands of tons of sewage, garbage, toxic chemicals, insecticides, herbicides and industrial discharges into our water. It is literally enough to make you sick!

But the basic cause is the rising population of the United States. As recently as 1920 we had only 100 million people. Since that date we have added another 100 million! And at the present rate of increase there will be a third 100 million in 30 or 35 years.

The rising tide of people in impoverished

countries is even greater—constituting a threat to the peace of the world in which we live.

Hundreds of millions of people actually do not have enough to eat. There is the prospect of social upheavals, revolutions and wars in Latin America, Asia and elsewhere unless this rising flood of humanity can be controlled.

This urgent problem is receiving relatively little attention from our Government, as you can see from the accompanying table. However, a high-level Presidential Committee after months of study has now come up with recommendations of practical measures which can be taken to help stabilize our numbers. These include improved methods of contraception,

basic research on the physiology of reproduction, and the utilization of modern communications techniques—television and other mass media—for breaking down the barriers of illiteracy and misinformation.

You may use the coupon on this page to obtain a summary of those recommendations. And send this advertisement to President Nixon urging him to institute a crash program to deal with the population problem without delay. Also contact anyone else in Washington you think might be helpful.

It is up to you—and citizens like you—to take action. The well-being of your children and your children's children is at stake.

CURRENT FEDERAL PROGRAMS IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS (APPROXIMATE)

DEFENSE	\$80,000
FEDERAL HEALTH PROGRAMS	\$10,000
SPACE PROGRAM	\$ 4,000
WELFARE GRANTS TO STATES	\$ 3,000
POPULATION PROGRAMS*	\$ 116

*Man's greatest problem is the fearful race between food and population. If we lose that race our hopes for the future will turn to ashes.

—FORMER PRESIDENT JOHNSON

CAMPAIGN TO CHECK THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

40 EAST 42ND STREET, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017
EMERSON FOOTE, CHAIRMAN

CAMPAIGN TO CHECK THE POPULATION EXPLOSION
40 EAST 42ND STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 PHONE: (212) 984-6469

☐ Send me a summary of the recommendations of the President's Committee.

☐ Send me _____ free copies of this ad for distribution.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EUGENIE R. BLACK, former Chairman, World Bank
HAROLD W. BOSTROM,
UOP Transportation Equipment Group
GEORGE CHAMPION, Director,
The Chase Manhattan Bank
FRANK W. ABRAMS, former Chairman,
Standard Oil Co. of N.J.
THOMAS D. CAROT, Chairman, Cabot Corporation
LAMMOT duRoi, COPELAND, Chairman,
E. I. duPont de Nemours & Co., Inc.
GENERAL WILLIAM H. DRAPER, JR.,
former Ambassador to NATO
DR. PHILIP M. HAUSSER, University of Chicago
L. H. FOSTER, President, Tuskegee Institute

MARRINER S. ECCLES, former head,
Federal Reserve System
RABBI WOLFE KELMAN, Rabbinical Assembly
MRS. ALBERT D. LASKER
HENRY C. FLOWER, JR., former Vice Chairman,
J. Walter Thompson Co.
JOHN L. LOEB, Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades & Co.
MRS. CORDELLA S. MAY, Laurel Foundation
DAVID E. LILIENTHAL, former Director,
Tennessee Valley Authority
WILLIAM F. MAY, Chairman, American Can Co.
DR. REINHOLD NIEBUHR, Union Theological Seminary
MARK LEVA, former Assistant Secretary of Defense
HUGH MOORE, Founder, Dixie Cup Company

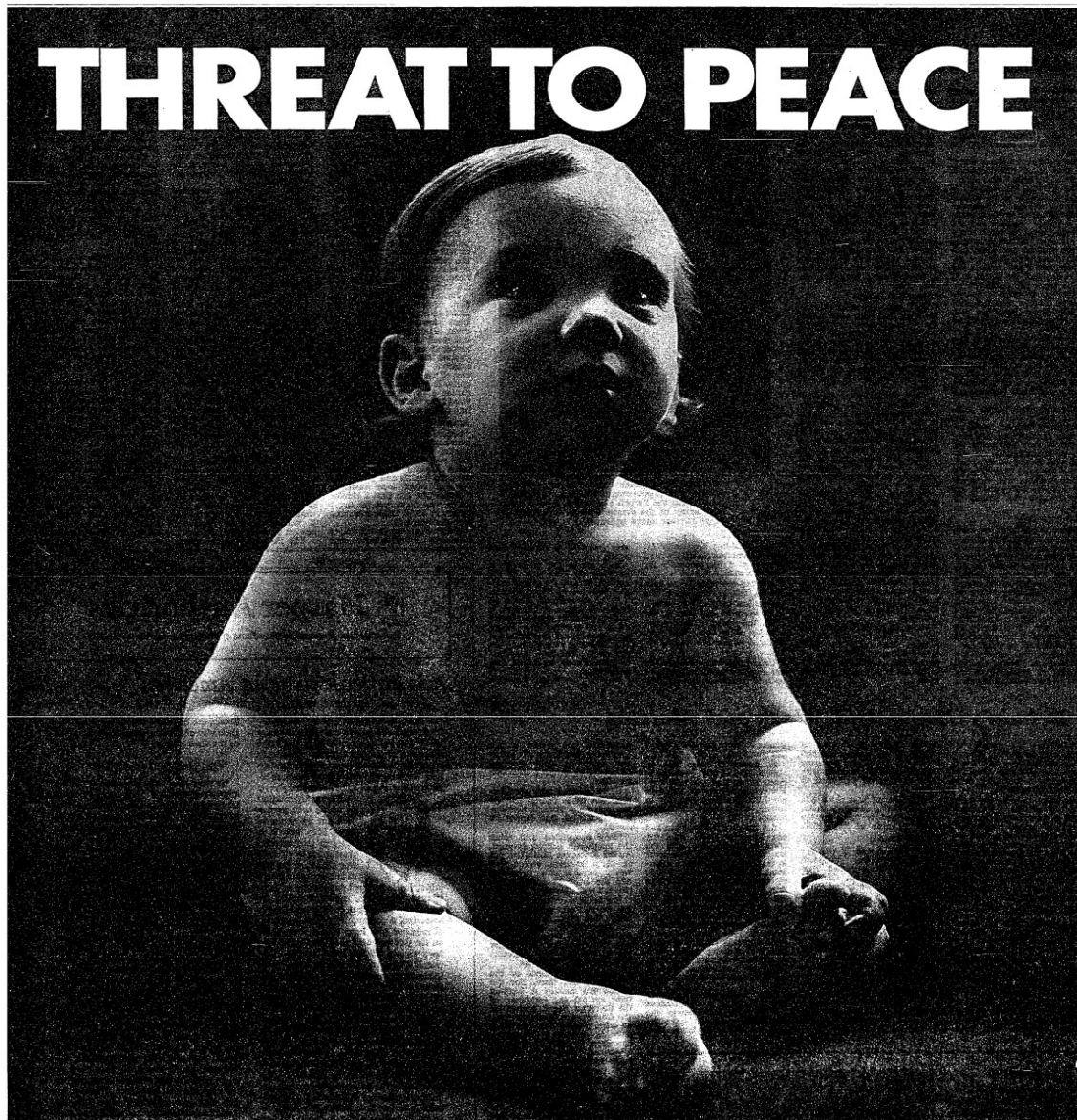
DR. JOHN H. NORTHROP, Nobel Prize Winner
ROCKEFELLER PRENTICE
JOHN ROCK, M.D., Harvard Medical School
FRANCIS T. P. FLIMPTON,
former Deputy U.S. Representative to the United Nations
ELMO ROOPER, Public Opinion Analyst
ADOLPH W. SCHMIDT, T. Mellon & Sons
CHARLES E. SCRIPPS, Chairman,
Scraps-Howard Newspapers
RT. REV. HENRY KNOX SHERRILL,
World Council of Churches
ERNEST L. STEBBINS, M.D., Johns Hopkins University
LEWIS L. STRAUSS, former Secretary of Commerce

Those signing this statement do so in their personal and individual capacity. The institutional and business affiliations are purely descriptive carrying no implication of authorization or participation by the organization named.

HUGH & GRIEST, INC.
JOB NO. PG-20 REV. 4-1—FULL PAGE B/W
NEW YORK TIMES WEEK IN REVIEW—JUNE 8, 1968
WASHINGTON POST—WEEK OF JUNE 9, 1969

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Fig. 1. Campaign to Check the Population Explosion advertisement published in the Washington Post on June 8, 1968 and the New York Times on June 15, 1969.



THREAT TO PEACE

How can one helpless child possibly affect the peace of the world?

When you multiply him by 2 million—the number of children born every week in the world—the problem begins to come into focus.

Births now so far exceed deaths, due to world-wide health measures, that 70 million people are added to the earth's population annually.

This means that still another billion people will appear on this small planet of ours within the next 15 years—unless something is done about it.

More than half the people alive today are poorly fed and housed. With the flood of humanity now inundating the earth it is easy to see that we are headed for a period of famine, unrest, riots and probably war—which may make our experience in Vietnam seem minor by comparison.

It is only being realistic to say that skyrocketing population growth may doom the world we live in.

The accompanying chart reflects the relatively small amount of attention the population emergency is currently receiving from our Government. President Johnson

is now proposing an increase of \$25 million annually, but that is minuscule in terms of the total need.

This is your problem and you can do something about it. Tear out this ad and send it to anyone in Washington you think might be helpful. Urge the Government to initiate a crash program to deal with the population problem. And write us for two things: (1) Measures the Government can take to implement such a program. (2) Additional things you can do to help.

We can't afford to wait much longer. Every day lost only compounds the problem. The time to act is now.

CURRENT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS (1968 Estimates from 1969 Budget)

Space Program	..... \$5 billion
Grants to States for Welfare	..... \$2 billion
Health and Death Control Programs	..... \$2.5 billion
Food for Peace Exports	..... \$1.2 billion
Supersonic Plane (Pilot Model)	..... \$175 million
Water and Air Pollution Control	..... \$150 million
Crime Control	..... \$100 million
Rail Control	..... \$50 million
Population Control (United States)	..... \$35 million
Population Control (Foreign)	..... \$35 million

CAMPAIGN TO CHECK THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

EMERSON FOOTE, CHAIRMAN

CAMPAIGN TO CHECK THE POPULATION EXPLOSION
60 EAST 42ND STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 PHONE: (212) 956-6469

☐ Please send me more information and tell me how I can help.

☐ Please send me _____ free reprints of this ad.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

WINTHROP W. ALDRICH,
former U.S. Ambassador to Court of St. James
GEORGE V. ALLEN, former Director,
U.S. Information Agency
THURMAN W. ARNOLD,
former Assistant U.S. Attorney General
EUGENE B. BLACK, former head, World Bank
HAROLD W. BOSTROM,
UCP Transportation Equipment Group
DR. DETLEV BRONK, President, Rockefeller University
THOMAS D. CABOT, Cabot Corporation
JOHN COVIES, President,
Minneapolis Star & Tribune
VIRGINIUS DABNEY, Editor,
Richmond Times-Dispatch

GENERAL WILLIAM H. DRAPER, JR.,
former Ambassador to NATO
DR. LOUIS DUPE, Georgetown University
HARRISON S. ECCLES, former Chairman,
Federal Reserve Board
HENRY C. FLOVEY, JR., former Vice Chairman,
J. Walter Thompson Co.
DR. PHILIP M. HAUSER, University of Chicago
HENRY HITESON, JR., Honorary Chairman,
C.I.T. Financial Corp.
MRS. ALBERT D. IASER
MRS. CORDELLA S. MAY, Laurel Foundation
FORBES MCCORMACK, former Chairman,
International Harvester Co.

HUGH MOORE, former Chairman,
St. Lawrence Society
ALLAN NEVINS, President,
American Academy of Arts & Letters
ROCKEFELLER PRENTICE
JOHN ROCK, M.D., Harvard Medical School
ELMO ROFFER, Public Opinion Analyst
LESSING J. ROSENWALD
ALBERT S. SARNI, M.D.,
Cincinnati College of Medicine
A. W. SCHMIDT, T. Mellon & Sons
DR. WILLIAM SHOCKLEY, Nobel Laureate
LEWIS L. STRAUSS, former Secretary of Commerce
ROBERT G. WERLE, Genesee Brewing Company



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Fig. 2. Campaign to Check the Population Explosion advertisement published in *The New York Times* on June 30, 1968.

The Manhattan Project advertisements followed a simple formula: a short, prominent headline over a similarly large picture, an explanation and appeal of about 200 to 250 words, and at the bottom, a list of signatories to the Campaign, their positions in society, and a cut-out form where a reader could request information or copies of the advertisement from the Campaign. The ads generally linked the subject of the graphic and headline to the problem of overpopulation. These subjects and headlines were often the object of other social movements such as environmental degradation, poverty, and war/violence. Figure 1 shows one such Campaign advertisement, which showed a close-up of a man drinking a glass of water under the headline “WARNING: THE WATER YOU ARE DRINKING MAY BE POLLUTED.” It went on to describe the rising problem of pollution as caused by an increase in waste products and the increase in waste products on increasing world population, but that the pollution problem in the United States was explicitly caused by the “rising population in the United States.”⁶⁰ Another Campaign advertisements (Figure 2) depicted a close-up of a baby sitting by itself under the headline “THREAT TO PEACE.” The explanation read in part,

How can one helpless child possibly affect the peace of the world? When you multiply him by 2 million—the number of children born every week in the world—the problem comes into focus...With the flood of humanity now inundating the earth it is easy to see that we are headed for a period of famine, unrest, riots, and probably war...It is only realistic to say that skyrocketing population growth may doom the world we live in.⁶¹

In these two advertisements, Moore and the Campaign linked the problem of population to impending environmental and violent crises. By using these other issues, the Campaign was also attempting to muster support from a variety of sources. By relating its issue to others that might be more tangible or apparent in every day life, the Campaign was attempting to draw support from all segments of the population. Anyone concerned about environmental degradation or

60 “Warning” Advertisement, New York Times, June 15, 1969, E5.

61 “Threat to Peace” Advertisement, New York Times, June 30, 1968, E5.

world peace might be convinced to support efforts of population control through these Campaign advertisements.

It is clear that these advertisements and other efforts of the population control movement to alert the public did have a significant impact on popular opinion and the public discourse on the matter. In popular sources such as newspapers and magazines, there is a distinctly escalating concern about overpopulation and a more and more certain feeling that overpopulation would have catastrophic consequences for the world and for the United States. This climate is an underacknowledged one, but one that is readily apparent in an investigation of popular sources of the time. A proliferation of books and pamphlets on overpopulation were published throughout the 1960s and 70s, some of which remain popular today. These publications and the large quantity of articles on the same theme in magazines and newspapers demonstrate the definite impact of the population control movement on the public discourse of the time.

Probably the most well-known of these primary source publications is Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, whose title was taken from Hugh Moore's pamphlet of the same name. Ehrlich's book concentrates on what he saw as an impending population-resource crisis where the number of people would exceed available resources and cause worldwide famine and catastrophe. His book depicts the problem of population largely in relation to foreign populations. In the very beginning, he describes describes a "stinking hot night in Dehli," observing "the streets seemed alive with people. People eating, people washing, people sleeping. People visiting, arguing, and screaming. People thrusting their hands through the taxi window, begging...People, people, people, people...Would we ever get to our hotel? All three of us were, frankly, frightened."⁶² This description demonstrates the traditional American discourse on overpopulation. Americans worried about and were sometimes disgusted by the teeming hordes

62 Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), 1.

of people abroad, especially in underdeveloped countries. Similarly, William Vogt's similarly popular book People! Challenge to Survival consists of a series of vignettes, mostly from other, less-developed countries, portraying scenes of enormous crowding and misery featuring people like an Indian man in the opening chapter, described as "as brown and wrinkled as an old bladder...about him something of the same collapsed look...His gray beard was scraggly and his clothes were liberally mended...He might have been anything from forty to seventy" because of his hard life in an overcrowded Indian village.⁶³ These racialized views of overpopulation were certainly reminiscent of a eugenicist discourse and reveal an almost outwardly eugenicist theme to the population control movement's literature.

Ehrlich and Vogt's racialized depictions of overpopulation are familiar to a modern audience, but it is clear that throughout the decade, a closer-to-home idea about overpopulation was also taking root. By the mid to late 1960s, Americans had caught the overpopulation fever and were starting to apply it to their own circumstances. This trend is well-represented in the popular press of the time and is couched in language as incendiary and graphic as Hugh Moore's ads. In a January 1966 *New York Times Magazine* article, David Lilienthal expressed this coming-home of overpopulation paranoia, musing that "great differences in resources, technology and education help explain why Americans regard overpopulation as a menace only to other peoples. It can't happen here, they think. I used to think so, too; I don't any more," adding that, in fact, "most of the nation's most serious problems are caused largely by the pressures of a too rapidly rising population."⁶⁴ In the same article, economist Kenneth Galbraith commented that, "It is hard to suppose that penultimate Western man, stalled in the ultimate traffic jam and slowly succumbing to carbon monoxide will be especially enchanted to hear from

63 William Vogt, *People! Challenge to Survival* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1960), 1.

64 David Lilienthal, "300,000,000 Americans Would Be Wrong." *The New York Times Magazine*, 9 January 1966.

the last survivor that in the preceding year Gross National Product went up by a record amount.”⁶⁵ Lilienthal and Galbraith's comments are especially revealing because they express the view that America's technological and economic superiority are little help in preventing the tides of overpopulation from impacting the nation. In these articles, the themes of catastrophism and helplessness figured prominently. Overpopulation is taken as an alarming given. Also, these articles and ones like it speak to the impact of globalization on the cause. Once considered only a foreign problem, overpopulation was becoming seen as a worldwide problem with ramifications for all people at the same time.

Other articles spoke to the American feelings of doom and reflect the fatalist mindset of the time even more clearly. For example, an article entitled “A Self-Corrective for the Population Explosion?” in *Time* magazine from 1964 observed that,

Nature...has its own subtle systems for choking off excessive breeding...Horrible things happen among jammed-up flour beetles. Females destroy their eggs; they turn cannibalistic and eat one another. Males lose interest in females, and though plenty of flour is left for food, the beetle population reaches a statistical plateau... Mammals are much the same. The population cycles of jack rabbits in Minnesota seem to have little to do with the food supply. When the cycle approaches its peak, rabbits begin to die in horrible convulsions, with wild leaps and running movements. Their corpses are well nourished and show no signs of epidemic disease....Overcrowding seems somehow to upset the rabbits' pituitary and adrenal glands, causing a...long chain of fatal troubles.⁶⁶

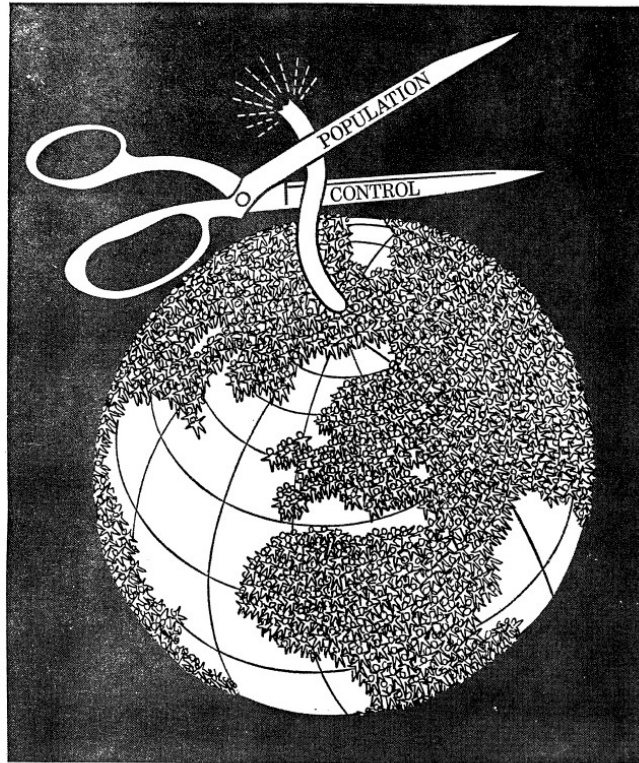
The very idea that overcrowded, urban populations spontaneously convulsing and dying à la Minnesotan jack rabbits might seem slightly ludicrous today, but such was the rhetoric of the issue in a hysterical time. Notably, the article used thinly-veiled animal world problems to represent the worries of many Americans. Male flour beetles losing interest in female flour beetles is a direct allusion to the alarming growth of homosexuality in American cities. Equally current, the jack rabbits in Minnesota had “no signs of epidemic disease,” as Americans were

⁶⁵ Lilienthal.

⁶⁶ “A Self-Corrective for the Population Explosion?” *Time*, 28 February 1964, 56.

ridding their society of many of the diseases of the past that had caused a reasonable and population-controlling death rate. Above all, this spontaneous death was inevitable, programmed by nature and caused by the simple act of the age-old practice of procreation.

THE POPULATION BOMB THREATENS THE PEACE OF THE WORLD



SO WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT?

Fifteen years ago there were 2.5 billion people on earth. Today there are 3.5 billion—and newcomers are arriving on the scene at the rate of more than one million a week! In another fifteen short years there will be at least 4.5 billion people on this small planet of ours. Most of them hungry. And make no mistake about it, America cannot long remain an island of prosperity in a sea of poverty and hunger.

If corrective measures to check this human flood are not taken right here and now, the resulting world-wide

misery, strife, revolutions and wars will make our experience in Viet Nam appear minor by comparison.

President Johnson has said that the population crisis is the greatest problem humanity faces. And the National Academy of Sciences has said that the Population Bomb "can be successfully attacked by developing new methods of fertility regulation and implementing programs of family planning widely and rapidly throughout the world." Yet the accompanying chart reflects the scant amount of attention the population problem is currently

receiving from our Government.

This is your problem and you can do something about it! Tear out this ad and send it to anyone in Washington you think might be helpful. Urge the Government to initiate a crash program for population stabilization. And write us for two things: (1) Measures the Government can take to implement such a program. (2) Additional things you can do to help.

We can't afford to wait much longer. Every day lost only compounds the problem. The time to act is now.

CURRENT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS (1968 Estimates from 1969 Budget)

Space Program	\$5 billion
Grants to States for Welfare	\$3 billion
Health and Death Control Programs	\$2.2 billion
Food for Peace Exports	\$1.2 billion
Supersonic Plane (F14 Model)	\$170 million
Air Pollution Control	\$100 million
Come Control	\$100 million
Rice Control	\$50 million
Population Control (United States)	\$25 million
Population Control (Foreign)	\$25 million

CAMPAIGN TO CHECK THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

EMERSON FOOTE, CHAIRMAN

CAMPAIGN TO CHECK THE POPULATION EXPLOSION
60 EAST 42ND STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 PHONE: (212) 966-6469
☐ Please send me more information.
☐ Please send me free reprints of this ad.
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EUGENE R. BLACK, former head, World Bank
HAROLD W. BOSTROM,
UCP Transportation Equipment Group
DR. DETLEV BRONK, President, Rockefeller University
THOMAS D. CABOT, Chairman, Cabot Corporation
VIRGINIA DUNN, Editor, Richmond Times-Dispatch
AUGUST DREHER, Author
GENERAL WILLIAM H. DRAVER, JR.,
former Ambassador to NATO
MARRINET S. ECCLES, former Chairman,
Federal Reserve Board
ROBERT B. FISKE, Director, Pillsbury Company

HENRY C. FLOWER, JR., former Vice Chairman,
J. Walter Thompson Co.
DR. PHILIP M. HAUSER, University of Chicago
ELIAND HAZARD, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co.
RABBI WOLFE KELMAN, The Rabbinical Assembly
MRS. ALBERT D. JASSER
MRS. CORDILIA S. MAY
DR. ASHLEY MONTAGU, Anthropologist
HUGH MOORE, former Chairman,
St. Lawrence Seaway Corporation
DR. REINOLD NEUBAUER, Union Theological Seminary
JOHN NUVEEN

DR. LINUS PAULING, Nobel Laureate
FRANCIS T. P. PLUMPTON,
former Deputy U.S. Rep. to the United Nations
ROCKEFELLER PRENTICE
EDMUND ROYER, Public Opinion Analyst
JONAS SALK, Director, The Salk Institute
ADOLPH W. SCHMIDT, Governor, T. Mellon & Sons
CHARLES E. SCHWEP, Chairman,
Scripps-Howard Newspapers
LEWIS L. STRAUSS, former Secretary of Commerce
ROBERT G. WYCK, Genesee Brewing Company
DR. DON M. YOST, California Institute of Technology



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Fig. 3. Campaign to Check the Population Explosion published in the *New York Times* on February 9, 1969 and the *Washington Post* February 11, 1969.

Other apocalyptic imagery associated with the issue of overpopulation is framed in nuclear terms. Another of Hugh Moore's Campaign to Check the Population Explosion full-page advertisements (Figure 3) proclaimed "THE POPULATION BOMB THREATENS THE PEACE OF THE WORLD" and depicted the entire globe as a bomb with a lit fuse, its land masses made up of swarms of human-like figures. A giant pair of scissors marked "population control" are poised to cut the lit fuse and, presumably, avoid explosion.⁶⁷ Many publications even went so far as to explicitly compare the overpopulation concern to nuclear annihilation concerns. Marriner Eccles commented earlier in the decade that world population growth was "more explosive than the atomic or hydrogen bomb" and in editorial soon after, the *New York Times* agreed.⁶⁸ Feelings of an impending apocalypse were easily transferred from concerns about "*the* bomb" to concerns about "*the population* bomb." There are countless examples of the population control issue mirroring nuclear and apocalyptic imagery, but these two examples show the pervasiveness of this issue and the degree to which it was accepted and promoted.

Those who proposed human solutions to the problem of population also suggest the issue's pervasiveness in the minds of Americans at large. Many of these solutions were incredibly drastic and seem outlandish to the modern reader. But their mainstream publication speaks to their acceptance by at least a segment of Americans and proves the issue's mainstream recognition. Paul Ehrlich, in the defining *Population Bomb*, suggesting an "often mentioned" plan to enforce compulsory birth control via the "addition of temporary sterilants to water supplies or staple food...carefully rationed by the government to produce the desired effect on population size."⁶⁹ He also advocated reduced tax deductions for dependent family members and

67 Campaign to Check the Population Explosion Advertisement ("Population Bomb"), *The Washington Post*, 13 May 1968, A24.

68 "The Population Explosion," *The New York Times*, 15 May 1961, 30.

69 Ehrlich, 130-131.

luxury taxes on “layettes, cribs, diapers, diaper services, (and) expensive toys.”⁷⁰ Globally, Ehrlich derided “the assorted do-gooders who are deeply involved in the apparatus of international food charity” and recommended that the United States simply stop funding third world countries who experienced chronic food shortages.⁷¹ Furthermore, he supported forced sterilization India for all Indian men with three or more children as a condition for American food aid. “Coercion?” he asks, “Perhaps, but coercion in a good cause.”⁷² A similar domestic solution that did almost come into vogue during the 1960s, was the idea of compulsory birth control. Dr. Edgar Chasteen, who went so far as to advocate a law instituting a maximum two children per household, mused that,

Some future historian will look back on the 20th century and write that in 19__, laws were passed which struck down forever that anachronistic practice to which we had too long adhered—the right to have as many children as one wanted...Some will object to compulsory birth control, contending that it smacks of Big Brother and *1984*. On the contrary, it would seem that such Orwellian conditions are inevitable *without* a policy of compulsory birth control. For the quality of human life is irreversibly lowered as the numbers of Homo sapiens incessantly mount.⁷³

Thus, Chasteen explicitly invokes the “quality of life” model of population growth analysis. His prophecy has not come to bear in American society, but his prediction of its rationality speaks volumes about the tense anxiety caused by population growth, including as a domestic issue in the United States.

It is clear that the population control cause was taken up by the American public and became a well-integrated into the public discourse. This popularity proves that the population control movement was successful in its efforts to “bestir” America. Further proof of the movement’s success is apparent in the degree to which it was supported by government and in federal policy. As Phyllis Piotrow discusses, President Eisenhower, bringing the United States

⁷⁰ Ibid., 132.

⁷¹ Ibid., 147-148.

⁷² Ibid., 151.

⁷³ Edgar Chasteen, “The Case for Compulsory Birth Control.” *Mademoiselle Magazine*, January 1970, 27.

into the 1960s, had declared that birth control was none of the government's business. President Kennedy, although a Catholic and understandably reticent to address the issue of birth control, did make some small steps towards federal policy on the matter. He requested a National Institute of Health survey of research in reproductive physiology, appointed a full-time State Department population officer, encouraged more population activities in the United Nations, and reversed the Eisenhower-era ban on foreign aid for birth control.⁷⁴ Kennedy's tenure as president, then, represents the recognizable American interest in foreign populations more than viewing overpopulation as a domestic issue, a theme which developed later in the decade.

As the decade proceeded, this domestic aspect of the issue did become apparent in federal policy. President Johnson's "Great Society" platform was the perfect forum for this development because of the national focus of his policies. Specifically, the Johnson administration war on US poverty focused the debate onto large US families and lack of adequate birth control facilities *at home*. In fact, as Phyllis Piotrow observes, "television scenes of large, impoverished families (in the US) became in effect the best advertisement for Planned Parenthood."⁷⁵ President Johnson could not be silent on the issue, as his predecessors had been. In fact, Johnson did indeed advance the cause for international birth control aid exponentially. In his 1965 State of the Union Message, he pledged, "I will seek new ways to use our knowledge to help deal with the explosion in world population and the growing scarcity in world resources."⁷⁶ Later in the year, at the twentieth-anniversary celebration of the United Nations, Johnson urged, "Let us in all our lands—including this land—face forthrightly the multiplying problems of our multiplying populations and seek the answers to this most profound challenge to the future of all the world.

Let us act on the fact that less than five dollars invested in population control is worth a hundred

⁷⁴ Piotrow, 56.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 91.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 89.

dollars invested in economic growth.” (emphasis added)⁷⁷ Thus, President Johnson had boldly embraced the population growth limitation movement, ending governmental ambiguity on the issue.

It was Richard Nixon’s administration, however, that truly came to accept neo-Malthusianism and integrate it into government rhetoric and policy. Moreover, evidence exists to suggest that President Nixon was influenced directly by Hugh Moore and his followers to support the cause of population control. As mentioned earlier, in Moore’s visit to the State Department, he was told that the office had received numerous letters about the material his Fund and Campaign had been distributing and publishing. Late in the 1960s, at the very end of its ad campaign, Hugh Moore was able to publish several advertisements directly addressing President Nixon. In June 1969, the Hugh Moore Fund (the Campaign’s funds had officially dried up) published an ad featuring a large picture of World Bank President Robert McNamara and quoted him as saying, “A humane but massive reduction in the world rate of population growth must be made.”⁷⁸ McNamara answered the advertisement positively, writing to Moore that he was “convinced that controlling population growth is a precondition of world progress. In bringing this issue to the attention of the public,” he told Moore, “you are doing an important public service.”⁷⁹ Several months later, President Nixon himself sent a letter to Hugh Moore. On White House stationery, cited Nixon’s personal appreciation of Moore’s ads, and continued, “Your dedication to easing the problems of world population growth has led to a significant public service and the people of the world are in your debt.”⁸⁰ A personal acknowledgement by such highly placed people is a definite sign of acceptance in a national discourse.

Nixon also made his acceptance of this issue public and a part of his policy. In 1969, he

⁷⁷ Piotrow, 90.

⁷⁸ Hugh Moore Fund Advertisement (Robert McNamara), *The Washington Post*, June 1969, E5.

⁷⁹ Lader, 73.

⁸⁰ Richard Nixon, Letter to Hugh Moore, 23 October 1969, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 3.

established the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. In inaugurating this Commission, Nixon expressed his belief that “many of our present social problems may be related to the fact that we have had only fifty years in which to accommodate the second hundred million Americans” and asked, as many of his fellow Americans were, such questions as “Where...will the next hundred million Americans live?” and “How will we educate and employ such a large number of people?” and “How will we provide adequate health care when our population reaches 300 million?”⁸¹ He had few answers. It is clear that Moore’s efforts had had a weighty effect on Nixon’s praise of the movement and explicit and unprecedented incorporation of it into his rhetoric and policy. This governmental acknowledgement coupled with the issue’s clear and vivid expression in the popular press proves that the movement was extremely successful and deeply entrenched in the public discourse and mindset.

It is also important to note that Nixon’s acceptance of the cause of population control cannot be separated from a government acceptance of birth control. When President Nixon embraced limiting population growth, he embraced using and promoting birth control to meet this end. In the later years of the 1960s, as the population control movement received the aforementioned and widespread support, the birth control movement strove to break its ties with Moore and his followers. But this story must be prefaced with the fact that the two movements, although their physical and rhetorical ties could be broken, could and would never be separated where the cause of birth control was concerned.

Although successful in reaching both elite and popular segments of society, the population control movement did end up losing its footing and is today barely remembered for the immensely recognized movement it was at the time. The reason for this phenomenon can be

81 Richard Nixon, “Special Message to the Congress on Problems of Population Growth, July 18, 1969,” *The American Presidency Project* available from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=2132>; Internet; accessed 5 May 2007.

found in the actions of its organizers and the consequent perceptions of its by its contemporaneous movements. Plagued by its perceived reminiscence of eugenics and likewise old-fashioned and elite leadership, the population control movement was never accepted by its peers. It was considered incendiary, irresponsible and tied to the establishment. Most damaging, Moore and his associates never tried to distance themselves from these accusations, openly embracing the legacy of Margaret Sanger in a time when such associations were no longer socially permissible.



HAVE YOU EVER BEEN MUGGED? WELL, YOU MAY BE!

There is an aggravated assault in this country every 3 minutes. A forcible rape every 26 minutes. A murder every hour—11,000 a year.

These are the ones that have been reported. The Presidential Crime Commission estimates that several times that number are unreported.

This has come with the population explosion in the United States, where our numbers have doubled—from 100 million people to more than 200 million people—in the lifetime of many of us.

City slums—jam-packed with juveniles, thousands of them idle—breed discontent, drug addiction and chaos. And crime in the cities is not the only problem. We

have air and water pollution in wide areas. And the quality of life in this great country of ours is deteriorating before our eyes with the rapid increase of people.

Is there an answer? Yes—birth control is one.

And the quicker the better. For the population explosion if not checked will compound itself—adding millions of idle youngsters to our streets—in just a few short years.

A fraction of the vast amounts we spend on health and welfare if devoted to birth control could help check our skyrocketing numbers. And incidentally, help balance the badly imbalanced national budget and save money for hard-pressed taxpayers.

President Johnson has said that the population problem is the greatest humanity faces. Yet the accompanying chart reflects the amount of attention it is actually getting. The expenditures this year are more than last, but they are pitifully small considering the dimensions of the problem—and may quite likely be too late.

What can you do about it? Tear out this ad and send it to anyone in Washington you think might be helpful. Urge the Government to initiate a crash program for population stabilization. And write us for a list of things the Government can do to implement such a program.

And a list of things you can do to help.
Do it now. Before you walk home tonight.

CURRENT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS (1968 Estimates from 1969 Budget)

Space Program	..... \$5 billion
Orbits to Space for Veterans	..... \$3 billion
Health and Death Control Programs	..... \$2.5 billion
Food for Peace Exports	..... \$1.2 billion
Supersonic Plane (Pilot Model)	..... \$170 million
Air Pollution	..... \$100 million
Crime Control	..... \$50 million
Rat Control	..... \$35 million
Population Control (United States)	..... \$35 million
Population Control (Foreign)	..... \$35 million

CAMPAIGN TO CHECK THE POPULATION EXPLOSION
60 EAST 42ND STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 PHONE: (212) 956-6469

☐ Please send me more information and tell me how I can help.

☐ Please send me.....free reprints of this ad.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CAMPAIGN TO CHECK THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

EMERSON FOOTE, CHAIRMAN

EUGENE R. BLACK, former head, World Bank
MRS. ALBERT D. LASKER
HAROLD W. BOSTROM, Vice President,
UOP Transportation Equipment Group
THOMAS D. CABOT, Chairman, Cabot Corporation
JOHN COWLES, President, Minneapolis Star Tribune
FRANK W. ABRAMS, former Chairman,
Standard Oil Co. of N.J.

GENERAL WILLIAM H. DRAPER, JR.,
former Ambassador to NATO
MARRINER S. ECCLES, former Chairman,
Federal Reserve Board
HENRY C. FLOWER, JR., former Vice Chairman,
J. Walter Thompson Co.
HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK, Pastor Emeritus,
Riverside Church

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH, Author
NICHOLAS MACDONALD, former Chairman,
Dr. Lawrence Seaway Corporation
ROCKEFELLER PRENTICE
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LESLIE J. ROSENWALD
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Fig. 4. Campaign to Check the Population Explosion “mugging ad,” published in the *New York Times* on March 10, 1968 and the *Washington Post* March 12, 1968.

These differences between the population control movement and its colleagues came to a head in the case of the “mugging ad” issued by the Campaign in 1968. The so-called “mugging ad” (Figure 4) was the first in a series of “crime ads” seeking to appeal to Americans’ innate anxieties about violence in a sensational manner. Under the large heading “HAVE YOU EVER BEEN MUGGED? WELL, YOU MAY BE!” this advertisement depicted a shadowy figure in a dark coat gripping a clearly terrified elderly person from behind and aiming a sharp knife downwards towards the elderly person’s heart or throat. The explanation under the picture read, in part,

There is an aggravated assault in this country every 3 minutes...a forcible rape every 26 minutes. A murder every hour—11,000 a year...several times that number are unreported...This has come with the population explosion in the US...City slums—jam-packed with juveniles...breed discontent and chaos...And the quality of life in this great country of ours is deteriorating before our eyes with the rapid increase of people. Is there an answer? Yes—birth control is one.⁸²

In its explanation, the mugging ad definitively portrays the fight against overpopulation as one critical to the safety of US citizens, not just tourists in India. It also appealed to a country wracked with perennial race riots and very tangible examples of urban violence. By tying itself to fears of this urban crime, the Campaign sought to bestir people to previously unreach levels.

Hugh Moore wrote often about the “crime series” that would follow the mugging ad, and had at least one concrete idea for a future ad. In his notes, he wrote that, with an illustration already in hand, the “rape ad” would have the heading ““Is this your wife or daughter”” and would “follow with a dark street city.”⁸³ Such a series of advertisements would certainly have fulfilled Tom Griessemer’s 1965 proposal that the movement “scare” the American people into acknowledging the problem. The domestic quality of the ad also certainly contributed to its

82 Campaign to Check the Population Explosion, “Have You Ever Been Mugged? Well, You May Be!” *New York Times*, March 10, 1968, E5.

83 Hugh Moore, “Rape Ad,” Personal note, undated, PUA, HMFC, Box 16, Folder 23.

appeal. Instead of bemoaning the poor conditions of those teeming hordes overseas, it portrayed a very American concern, one that affected the millions of Americans living in cities or who may have occasion to pass through urban centers. As a representative example of the movement's tactics and motivations, the mugging ad is also an important case study of its interactions not only with its audience, but also with the other movements and concerns of the 1960s. This last interaction would not end favorably for the population control movement and would remove it from the mainstream acceptance of its contemporaries.

First published in March 1968, the ad attracted immediate attention and also immediate criticism. The severe and immediate backlash against the ad, especially by leaders of Planned Parenthood, makes the mugging ad an extremely representative case study of interactions among the movements of the 1960s. Criticized by the leading organization in the birth control movement in the name of Black Power, the population control movement found itself vilified for discriminatory rhetoric and disavowed by its fellow movements and, consequentially, many of its key members. The fallout from the mugging ad marks a turning point for the population control movement, most noticeably in its repudiation by Planned Parenthood, but also proves the movement's overwhelming distinctiveness from its contemporaneous movements.

The mugging ad appeared in the *New York Times* on March 10, 1968. It included seventeen signatories in their usual spot at the bottom of the advertisement. This number was down from thirty on the nearest Campaign ad from January 1968, but there is no way to tell if this was because any of the previous signers had asked to be removed from the advertisement or if they did so because of the particular content of March's ad. In any case, the reaction, particularly from Planned Parenthood was immediate and thorough. On the day after it appeared in the *Times*, George Lindsay, Chairman of Planned Parenthood-World Population (PP-WP)

issued a statement against the ad. Explicitly stating that the Campaign was “a group not connected with Planned Parenthood,” Lindsay went on to lambast the ad for blaming the population problem on the poor. Affirming Planned Parenthood’s opposition to any “coercive action” by government to dictate how many children any class of people should be allowed, Lindsay cautioned against “mix(ing) up ‘Population control’ with family planning.”⁸⁴ This distinguishing of population control (which Lindsay mentions several times, always inside of quotation marks) and family planning is the main message of Lindsay’s statement and an explicit separation of two groups once united—Moore’s movement and Planned Parenthood, born of the same funding less than a decade before.

Only two days later, the PP-WP issued a one-page, strongly worded resolution officially disavowing the ad and the Campaign at large. Heavily underlined by Moore, the resolution read, in part, “It is our belief that (the ad’s) utter lack of humanity, its fallacious single focus on the poor and its implicit plea for coercive control of the fertility of certain segments of the U.S. population are destructive of the deep human concern for the rights, dignity and health of the individual...” The Committee “resolved that the Executive Committee of Planned Parenthood-World Population disavows any association with the philosophy now expressed in this ad by the Campaign to Check the Population Explosion, and expresses its repugnance of it.”⁸⁵ The next day, March 15, PP-WP sent a letter to all of the seventeen signatories of the ad. This letter largely restated the same argument of the March 14 Resolution, but added that “(the ad) feeds the suspicion being promulgated by nationalist groups that birth control is a ‘genocidal plot’ against Negroes... This kind of propaganda could endanger the expansion of government-financed programs by generating once again—unnecessarily—the kind of ugly controversies that used to

84 George Lindsay, “George Lindsay Statement in Response to ‘Have You Ever Been Mugged?’ Ad,” Planned Parenthood-World Population, 11 March 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

85 Planned Parenthood-World Population, “Resolution: Planned Parenthood-World Population Executive Committee, March 14, 1968,” 14 March 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

surround the very words birth control.”⁸⁶ This addition to the argument against the ad mentions race for the first time and speaks to the sensitivities of the time—the birth control movement (represented here by PP-WP) feared upsetting elements of the nascent Black Power movement for fear of appearing too far outside of the mainstream to procure government support. Furthermore, PP-WP explicitly feared a return to the post-World War II climate of skepticism towards all matters of birth control.

It is not clear how much racism (as opposed to classism) critics saw in the mugging ad by its critics. But in perhaps the only mention of the response to the ad in a major newspaper, Reverend Raymond Kemp, the Assistant Pastor at the Rectory of Saints Paul and Augustine wrote in his Letter to the Editor in the *Washington Post* that “the March 13 ad by the Campaign to Check the Population Explosion...further proves that American society is racist. Subtly racist, perhaps, but definitely racist...” Continuing, Kemp cautioned that, “to connect population explosion with crime in the cities inevitably leads to...incorrect conclusions...that one of the cures for this social ill is for slum dwellers (largely Negroes) to cease having so many children.”⁸⁷ If Hugh Moore’s official response to the controversy, however, is any indication, perceived racism in the ad was a critique he felt the need to confront. Noting that “both characters in the mugging scene are white,” he claimed that the Campaign in no way meant to imply that “Negroes” or the poor were to blame for the population problems. Still, Moore almost defended the use of such incendiary tactics by saying,

If now, through timidity or ultra-conservatism we yield to the opposition, we could hardly say we have inherited Margaret Sanger’s mantle. She stood up alone against greater odds. The controversy which she created started the birth control movement...If Black Power were to now unjustly attack us it is not unlikely that the ensuing controversy would once again advance rather than retard the cause we serve (underlining original).⁸⁸

86 George Lindsay, Alan Guttmacher, Paul Todd, Letter to Marriner Eccles, 15 March 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

87 Reverend Raymond Kemp, “Scare Tactics.” Letter to the Editor. *Washington Post*, March 23, 1968, A12.

88 Hugh Moore, “Campaign to Check the Population Explosion Future Program,” personal statement, 28 March

In this statement, Moore reiterated his belief in controversy as a tactic for attracting followings and claimed the legacy of Sanger. But his remarks also display a deeper set of truths about the culture of movements in the 1960s. The opposition that Moore identified was not explicitly opposed to the cause he advocates, but against the tactics employed to promote it. Ultimately, individuals involved with other movements opposed the mugging ad because of perceived underlying motives that would be discordant with the ideologies and goals of their movements and other movements of the time. The cause of population control had long been viewed as distinguishable from these other movements in its ideology, leadership, and, now, its tactics. It is no wonder that Planned Parenthood was ready to issue a statement against the Campaign and the Hugh Moore Fund the day after the mugging ad first appeared—it had long viewed the population control movement with suspicion. In a seemingly incongruous reversal, the Hugh Moore Fund now appeared the radical movement while its colleague movements kept an eye towards, as the Planned Parenthood letter to the ad’s signatories said, preserving government funding and “avoiding ugly controversies.” And it is no wonder that other social movements would adopt this stance against association with Moore. The climate of post-World War II heavily discouraged anything that could be perceived as racially discriminatory. The older demographics did not help the cause seem relevant and contemporary and others were primed to see Moore’s movement in the light of eugenicism, given his voluntary association and idolization of Margaret Sanger.

In a specific sense, opposition to the mugging ad was based on perceived prejudices expressed in its subject matter. In a more general sense, however, the opposition was what would later be termed political correctness coupled with a concern that such salaciousness would

1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

endanger the movement's chances of governmental support, along with any movement seemingly in league with it. And in a historical sense, the advertisement was deemed uncomfortably close to the abandoned ideals of involuntary sterilization and eugenics forced out by World War II.

The members of the population control movement were not immune to these sensitivities. In fact, it appears that the fallout from the ad created deep divisions inside of the movement, divisions that persisted until the end of the movement's lifespan. On March 26, 1968, John Cowles, President of the Minneapolis *Star* and *Tribune*, wrote to Moore to say that his son had authorized his name be attached to the ad but that, had he seen the copy himself, he would not have authorized it.⁸⁹ Moore defended the ad's contentiousness; he wrote back to John Cowles and claimed the ad was the Campaign's most successful to date.⁹⁰ To another critic, Reverend John Lascoe, Jr., an official in the Episcopal Church, Emerson Foote wrote that, "it is interesting...that no protest was expressed by the Negro community, although its newspaper—the *Amsterdam News*—called to compliment on the series of ads."⁹¹ In a March 21st telegram to Harold Bostrom, a wealthy industrialist and one of the movement's most fervent allies, Moore claimed that he had received fewer than a dozen criticisms from the public about the ad and over six hundred favorable responses.⁹² Curiously, although Moore was an extremely fastidious keeper of correspondence, none of these positive responses are in the files. Furthermore, no minutes of the Campaign's executive committee meetings for the months surrounding the mugging ad controversy exist in Moore's papers so it is impossible to know what opinions members expressed there.

The most surprising insider critic of the mugging ad was General William Draper, who

89 John Cowles, letter to Hugh Moore, 26 March 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

90 Hugh Moore, letter to John Cowles, 10 April 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

91 Emerson Foote, letter to John Lascoe, Jr., 14 April 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

92 Hugh Moore, Western Union telegram to Harold Bostrom, 21 March 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

had been actively involved in the movement and with Moore from its inception and was the uncompensated head of the Population Crisis Committee, another movement spearheaded by Moore and which wielded considerable influence in Congress.⁹³ On March 23, General Draper wrote to Moore complaining that his name was on the mugging ad when, he claimed, he had asked for it to be omitted.⁹⁴ Most significantly, two days later, Draper wrote a similar letter to George Lindsay.⁹⁵ Although Moore wrote an apology letter to Draper and claimed a misunderstanding had resulted in his name being on the ad,⁹⁶ it is clear that even core and longstanding members of the Campaign had serious misgivings about the tactics advocated by Moore and valued the support that came from not alienating elements of other movements.

Other members of Moore's movement, of course, supported the advertisement, including Elmo Roper⁹⁷ and Harold Bostrom, who was so upset by Planned Parenthood's "unwarranted attack impugning the motives of Mr. Hugh Moore and the Campaign to Check the Population Explosion" that he withdrew his annual donation of \$25,000.⁹⁸ Ultimately, however, in a move indicative of the intense pressure both external and internal, the Campaign decided to "hold in abeyance" any more crime ads and to instead run a series of ads concentrating on pollution.⁹⁹ The ads would continue for several years, until Hugh Moore's death in 1972 and would retain in their loud character, but would never revisit the salaciousness of the mugging ad. Furthermore, the backlash from the mugging ad does seem to have weakened the cohesiveness of the movement and the dedication of some of its members.

In August 1972, almost three months to the day before Moore's death, his most staunch

93 Lader, 44.

94 William Draper, letter to Hugh Moore, 23 March 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

95 William Draper, letter to George Lindsay, 25 March 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

96 Hugh Moore, letter to William Draper, 8 April 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

97 Elmo Roper, letter to George Lindsay, 29 April 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

98 Harold Bostrom, letter to George Lindsay, 10 May 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

99 Harold Bostrom, letter to Alan Guttmacher, 5 May 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

ally, Harold Bostrom, wrote a distressed telegram to Moore, reading, in part, “Even John D. III considers our environmental posture too radical, forms his own citizens committee in affect disowning population institute. So does Bill D. For we should not mention pollution-finite resources—only population control even though it is the human specie that pollute...What therefore shall be our action. Shall we too disband...You are the master what are your thoughts?”¹⁰⁰ Basically signaling the end of the movement as Moore knew it, this telegram is ironic on many levels. The crime ads had been replaced by ads linking population growth and pollution and, apparently, even that was deemed inappropriate and too “radical.” There is little context with which to analyze Bostrom’s desperate appeal, but it seems that any invocation of other movements’ causes (first implicit toe-stepping on Black Power and then using environmentalism as a justification) was unacceptable to many people, including key supporters of the population control cause. But the question can be asked, in such a highly charged time as the 1960s, so full of simultaneous social movements, could a campaign be run *without* impinging on someone else’s cause? If the answer to this is no, then it is clear that no successful social movement could take place without the tacit approval of its colleague movements. Not accepted by these movements, Moore’s was doomed to failure.

Perhaps Raymond Kemp summed up the sentiments of others towards the population control movement best in his letter to the editor on March 23 when he wrote, “This campaign may well prove to be warfare against population. Sex education, yes; campaigns against the slums waged by scare tactics of white liberals—God spare us!”¹⁰¹ Kemp’s description shows a distrust of the extremism of the population control movement. While sex education was considered acceptable, sensationalist scare tactics were considered too extreme. His image of

100 Harold Bostrom, telegram to Hugh Moore, 20 August 1972, PUA, HMFC, Box 20, Folder 21.

101 Kemp, A12.

warfare against a certain segment of the population is also reminiscent of the taboo ideals of genetics with which the US had once dangerously flirted. The Hugh Moore Fund and its ad hoc Campaign to Check the Population Explosion never fit in with the other movements of its time, but, perhaps even more importantly, it did not fit in with the changing ideological current of the times. In his defense of the mugging ad, Hugh Moore wrote, “Our campaign has not claimed that it spoke for the whole movement or that it reflected the views or the philosophy of the PP-WP. I therefore see no reason why PP-WP should undertake to break into print to publicly disavow our program. On the contrary, it would appear to be a disservice to the cause.”¹⁰² Although it is true that the Campaign never claimed to speak for the entire birth control movement, it is clear from Hugh Moore’s own experiences that a movement did not have to claim anything for others to perceive differently. And although Planned Parenthood’s disavowal may have done most of the work in ostracizing the population control movement, it was a necessary move on the part of Planned Parenthood if it desired to avoid any controversy that might arise from the clearly intentionally incendiary tactics of the Campaign.

The case of the mugging ad and the backlash against it is extremely illustrative of the population control movement in general. It used incendiary language to communicate a point that tied the cause of overpopulation to another social fear—urban violence. It unabashedly stretched the limits of acceptable marketing and verged on manipulation. Inside sources, however, confirm that the Campaign intended to do just that—to alarm people and alert them to the cause by any means necessary. In its tactics and unwillingness to conform to the preferences of other social movements of the time, it condemned itself. The outcome of the mugging ad fracas would be the beginning of the end for a movement that never fit in to begin with.

¹⁰² Hugh Moore, “Campaign to Check the Population Explosion Future Program,” personal notes, 28 March 1968, PUA, HMFC, Box 18, Folder 8.

At Hugh Moore's funeral in 1972, Reverend Rodney Shaw eulogized that,

Throughout his life Hugh Moore was not interested in promoting himself but in promoting the cause...So while it may seem presumptuous to say so now, I believe history will place Hugh Moore side by side with Margaret Sanger in greatness of leadership and in helping individuals and the world to solve family planning problems and to end the population explosion...Have we lost Hugh Moore now that death has come? No. His impact will be felt through all future history. The waves of his influence will move out as ripples from a stone cast in the water.¹⁰³

Obviously, Hugh Moore is not remembered as prominently as Margaret Sanger. But Hugh Moore did have more influence than history has credited him. Moore's movement was highly successful in influencing the public mindset about overpopulation. And just as eugenics did not die out when its leaders' ideologies were pushed out of fashion, Moore's framing of the population problem did not leave the minds of many Americans. Moore's movement brought overpopulation into the domestic arena and encouraged Americans to fear increase in their own numbers as well as in the numbers of foreigners. His legacy does live on wherever these ideas dwell.

In the end, the population control movement of the 1960s and 70s was a separate and identifiable movement of its own. This separateness was intentional, in that it rejected the anti-propagandist stances of many other movements and clung to its roots in an older, eugenicist-influenced period. However, the movement's outsider status was also imposed by other movements who feared association with it and its perceived ties to taboo topics like eugenics and racial discrimination. Ultimately, though, it seems that the population control movement had the perfect opportunity to modernize its image and become a more acceptable movement when it merged with Planned Parenthood in the early 1960s. Although the PPFA was certainly also tied to former eugenicists at this time, its image and cause changed somewhere in the 1960s for the purpose of viability. This was an opportunity that Hugh Moore and his associates did not seize

103 Reverend Rodney Shaw, Hugh Moore Funeral Speech, 28 November 1972, PUA, HMFC, Box 1, Folder 1.

and this failure doomed the movement to collapse and historical obscurity.

In the final analysis, the population control movement was a bridge between an older and a newer time. It accurately reflected many of the concerns of its time period and accrued an unrecognized amount of attention and support. Its leaders, however, were men from an older time period, both unwilling and unable to adapt to a more grassroots-oriented social movement structure of the 1960s. Because of these more old-fashioned characteristics, it was shunned by its fellow movements and, by a traditional definition, failed. It failed to institutionalize much of its core platform such as government incentives for fewer children and other measures to ensure declining birth rates. But the population control movement did have success in being, for a time, a successful movement, helping to bring the birth control movement into mainstream acceptance, and influencing the way overpopulation is perceived to this day.