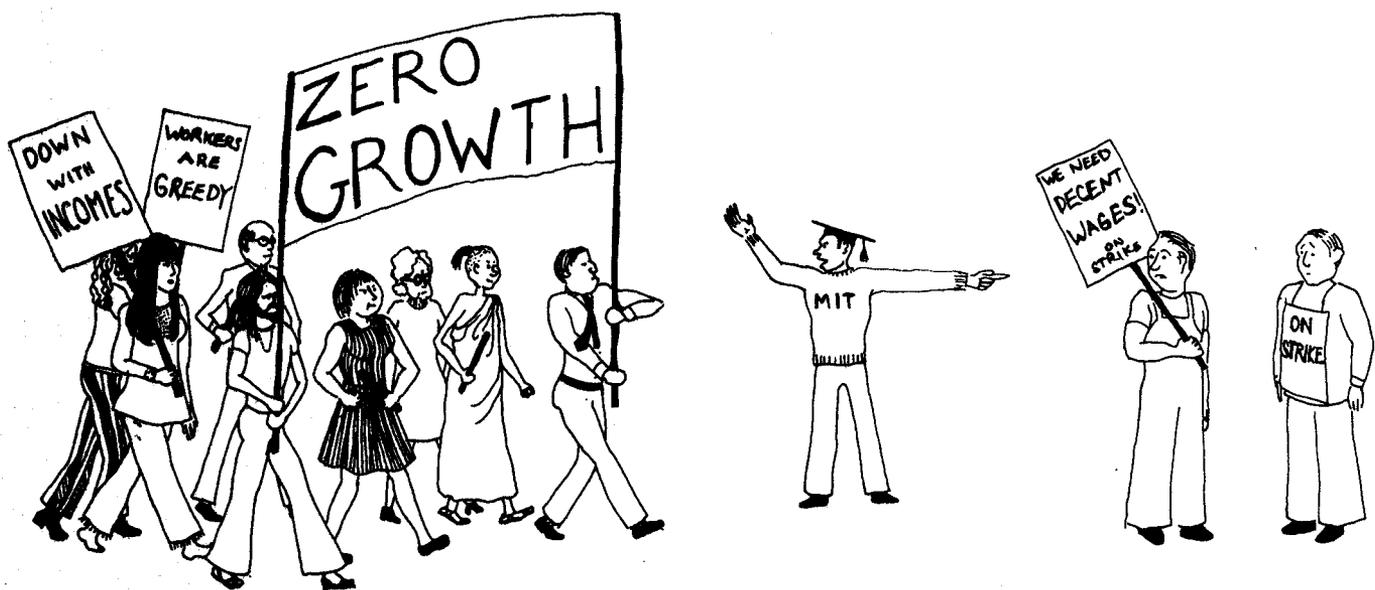


# A Critique of the Zero Growth Movement

## **BLUEPRINT FOR EXTINCTION**

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Unless socialist governments are established in the USA and Western Europe during the next several years, the capitalists' inability to expand useful production will mean an end to the existence of humanity as we know it. The National Caucus of Labor Committees is now working to establish a nationwide network of strike support coalitions uniting the organized, the unorganized and the unemployed, welfare victims, students and socialists on the basis of a common interest program for socialist reindustrialization at capitalist expense. The articles in this pamphlet originally appeared in *New Solidarity* and the *Campaigner*. This edition published July 1972.

# Capitalism's Limits to Growth

Under "normal" conditions of capitalist development political democracy and liberalism are the norms of politics and social thought. Liberal ideology insists (among other things) that the answer to social ills lies in continued economic expansion. Today this notion finds itself under vigorous attack.

Indeed at first glance it does appear, superficially, that "economic growth" has produced the hydra of slums, pollution, crowding, resource depletion — in short, the much publicized and all too real "ecology crisis." A closer look reveals that actual economic stagnation rather than purported growth produced the present grim prospects.

Although GNP and capitalist profits have continued to accumulate almost unabated, the U.S. industrial production index indicates that industrial output has stagnated for the last four years at the 1968 level. The capital goods production index, an even more sensitive indicator of real economic growth, is still below the 1967 level. (The qualification must be made here that these figures are merely a conservative reflection of the real depths of stagnation since they include wasteful production such as the military sector; furthermore no consideration is given here to actual production requirements created merely through depreciation with respect to advanced technology.) Meanwhile cancerous, speculative expansion of all forms of credit, (the "growth") coincident with this stagnation of real productive output has created the conditions for a classic general breakdown crisis or depression.

The rise in corporate profits reported for the last quarter of 1971 indicates the success of government wage gouging policies rather than any health of the capitalist economy. Likewise Hosannas recently heard around the Nixon administration praising improved unemployment and production rates merely reflect a desperate attempt to parlay short term results of massive inflationary credit extensions into political capital. This is indicated in part by a total GNP inflationary price index rise of 6.2% in the first quarter of this year compared to 1.7% in the last quarter of 1971. Phase II, and similar austerity measures throughout the advanced capitalist sector, are required to stave off runaway bankruptcies or monetary panic, either of which could now rapidly lead to exacerbated depression conditions.

Austerity policies require for their implementation the breaking of organized labor's resistance. This requires the breaking of the trade unions themselves. It is this reality which has changed the face of politics in the advanced capitalist countries. In the United States sector this change is manifested in the break-up of the Democratic Party-labor-minority-group alliance as the economic conditions permitting such "concensus" politics have eroded.

Naturally enough such "material" assaults on pluralist politics are beginning to expose liberal thought for the mere ideology that it actually is. The universities, chief center for the production of the most advanced ideology, are, obligingly, mounting attacks on the now stale and increasingly

useless liberal wisdom. That old liberal humanism was mainly an abstract ethical notion, rather than an understanding of real material men in society, is now revealed by the failure of liberal science to effectively counter the proliferating outright fascist-tendencies represented by the likes of Jensen, Herrnstein, Koestler, and Skinner.

But all of this is not without its own rhyme or reason. As we have indicated, ruling circles now require a policy of austerity so that the capitalist economy can be propped up through the transfer of former wage and social service expenditures to profits. No ruling class has ever justified its rule on the basis of its openly declared self-interest. The capitalist class is no exception. The bungling crisis-mongering of the capitalist class must somehow be represented as policy in the interest of society as a whole.

Bourgeois economics is increasingly unable to apply the necessary progressive veneer to the rotting capitalist hulk. Last year's monetary shake-up and the continuing runaway "stagflation" have strained the credibility of any Pollyannaish Keynesianism to the breaking point. The working class finds it increasingly hard to swallow the notion that wage increases are responsible for inflation, as the relative success of Nixon's Phase II wage gouging is producing no let-up in both rising prices and unemployment.

More far sighted elements of the ruling class have been sloshing around in certain academic swamps, searching for a replacement for the failed economics professors. In this process the zero-growth ecologists have been fished out. This is not to suggest that ruling class propaganda requirements have automatically created the necessary innovations. The Zero Growth movement is a unique asset to present capitalist austerity policies, but it is social and economic forces rather than capitalist propaganda needs per se which have given rise to it. Various embodiments of capitalist "enlightened" self-interest have merely financed and encouraged ideas which have sprung "spontaneously" from the alienated consciousness of the bourgeois scientist contemplating the decay of capitalist society.

The support of the MIT business school's "project on the predicament of mankind" by Italian industrialist Aurelio Peccei's "Club of Rome" and the Volkswagen Foundation is an

instructive case in point. Dennis Meadows' "Limits to Growth," the published initial results of the MIT "project," envisions a breakdown of the "world system" within one hundred years, caused by exponentially increasing rates of population, industrial output, and pollution on a world-wide scale.

To achieve this result, "Limits to Growth" extrapolates world population and industrial production rates since 1900 into the future. With the help of a computer program designed by their MIT business school colleague Jay W. Forrester, exponentially-increasing population and industrialization are seen to run up against the supposedly finite store of world natural resources upon which industry depends, the capacity of the biosphere to absorb pollution, and the Malthusian spectre of mass starvation caused by the dwindling supply of arable land.

The MIT group's "solution" to this crisis is to halt economic and population growth. A policy which they call an "equilibrium state." Such a policy is seen as maintaining the population at a stable level through Zero Population Growth (ZPG) by limiting annual births to a level merely sufficient to offset annual deaths. At the same time, economic growth is halted by limiting capital investment to that level required to merely replace depreciated capital.

The question immediately arises, "what interest do prominent industrialists, the Volkswagen corporation, the OECD, and other capitalist interests represented in the Club of Rome, have in halting population and economic growth?" The answer is — none. Is Volkswagen interested in reducing its profits by cutbacks in economic growth; is it interested in losing prospective customers through a cutback in population growth? Obviously not.

The identity of interest between the Zero Growth movement and capitalist policy makers lies not in the latter's intentions to consciously adopt a zero-growth policy. The usefulness of Zero Growth ideology lies rather in the domain of propaganda, with which to break working class resistance to austerity measures, by clothing these measures in the sheepskin of "respectable" social theory.

The Zero Growth movement, seeing industrial

production inevitably leading to pollution and exhaustion of what they consider to be finite natural resources, recommends halting population growth and reducing consumption demand, as a means to slow down industrial growth and thus "prevent" ecological breakdown. The ruling class (that is its more prescient members) has been quick to pick up the notion of reduced consumption demand as anti-pollution and conservation measures, in order to produce strike-breaking propaganda. Now the "greed" of striking workers is not only "fueling inflation," it is also "causing pollution and using up non-renewable resources."

We warned against this potential insidious use of the ecology movement two years ago when that "movement" was almost universally lauded as the new Savior (see "Ecology Crisis: Who's polluting Whom" **Campaigner**, May-June, 1970.) The use of ZPG ideology as a cover for attacks on the working class has now moved out of the realm of speculation and into the front lines of class warfare. The *New York Times*, always in the vanguard where attacks on the working class are concerned, joined the fray with an Anthony Lewis column attacking the British coal strikers with arguments gleaned from the British "Blueprint for Survival" ecology tract, which the *Times* had just editorially endorsed on February 4. (*New York Times*, February 14.)

More recently a *Times* editorial entitled "Energy Crisis Ahead" (*New York Times*, April 10) has called for either a "tax on all fuel and power [to] discourage frivolous (sic) energy consumption. . ." or "alternatively, the possibility has to be faced that eventually fuel and power may have to be rationed, perhaps by setting an upper limit per person on family electricity consumption." Thus the *Times*, teaming up with Secretary of Interior Rogers C.B. Morton who has asked Congress for power rate hikes, adds fuel to the Power Utilities' increasingly strident demands for rate price hikes. A *Times* article appearing several weeks earlier (see "We're Running Out of Gas," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, March 19) had, by the way, shown convincingly that the case for dwindling known reserves of gas and oil has been cooked up by the depletion allowance-bloated oil industry itself.

We do not by any means intend to suggest that the "ecology crisis" does not exist; we do insist that the crisis be seen for what it actually is. We

denounce the swinish ideological defense of capitalist economic and social relations that is the unifying element of the so-called "ecology movement," from the "moderate" anti-technology stand of Barry Commoner, to the rabid and hysterical anti-human approach of MIT's Meadows and Forrester.

The ecology crisis is actually subsumed by the general breakdown of capitalist economic relations and therefore only adequately comprehended in such connection. The question of ecological and developmental problems in the Soviet Union as an apparent refutation of this position often arises immediately. To merely indicate the solution here the Soviet Union and East European economies must be seen for what they actually are: worker state sub-sectors of the world capitalist economy trying to defend their limited existence in a profoundly economically hostile environment. Thus we are actually still dealing with problems of capitalism rather than of socialism (which does not exist in any real sense in the present "worker states.") We here refer readers to E. Preobrazhensky's *New Economics*, and the numerous works by Trotsky and Deutscher concerning this matter. The inherent capitalist tendency toward capital investment stagnation, as a means of self-protection against the devaluation of individual capital assets, mediated through declining consumer demand and apparent capital shortages, is especially exacerbated in the resulting present period of inflationary recession and monetary instability. The crisis is manifested as a general inability of the capitalist class to maintain its collective credit obligations (to itself) on the basis of declining income rates from stagnated real production.

In this situation, any income which can be shifted from actually necessary social reproductive costs to service capitalist debt can be accounted as profit, and thus as a short term "solution" to the immediate problem as it appears to the capitalist class. That this process is an essential feature of capitalism in general can be indicated by the fact that capitalist accounting does not even recognize the problem as it actually exists. To capitalist accounting as well as to its "theoretical" formulation — bourgeois economics — social reproductive costs are generally represented merely as immediate costs of production, the underpayment of same yielding the short term "optimum" result of increased profitability of the

individual capital.

This systematic blindness — the “price-earnings” ratio optimizing criterion of capitalist investment — fails to recognize the role of expanded consumption and environmental maintenance as regular requirements of continuously expanding social productivity. Thus in addition to normal or real accumulation of capital a “fictitious accumulation” occurs in the form of wage-gouging, social service cutbacks, “savings” at the expense to mankind of industrial pollution, and the imperialist looting of natural and human resources of the underdeveloped world. Luxemburg properly identified such behavior as the continual “primitive accumulation” feature of capitalist development which acts to “resolve” the capitalist “realization crisis.” This can otherwise be seen as the capitalist practice of attempting to resolve the discrepancies created by the necessity to maintain fictitious accumulation on the premise of stagnating real accumulation, through the intensification of the very fictitious accumulation which is the cause of the problem.

Of course all this “cost-cutting” and fictitious growth actually reduces social productivity, artificially raising the price of all necessary social investments (including pollution control), thus limiting apparent “choice” to either “growth” with pollution or no growth at all. In part the Zero Growth argument for the notion of finite resources falls apart upon consideration of the question of the productivity of labor. As a careful examination of, for example, the Club of Rome’s “Limits to Growth” reveals, the “finiteness” of depleted resources appears in their analysis as “unsupportably high costs” of bringing new resources into use (marginal land, low grade ores etc.), rather than absolute exhaustion.

It is of course capitalist stagnation which makes such costs apparently untenable. By mislocating the problem in some kind of universalized, absolute cost barriers the “ecologists” hide from view the systematic historic untenability of capitalist development. We do not mean to imply, however, that development limited to an extension of a qualitatively unchanging technology will not ultimately exhaust the finite resources appropriate to such development. No computers are necessary to adduce such a result. However, it is precisely on this point that capitalism stands condemned.

Successful human evolution has been characterized by periodic “productive revolutions” where mere quantitative extensions of man’s “energy capturing” capacities have led to qualitative transformations of established modes of life, and thus repeatedly saved mankind from apparently “inevitable crises.” The revolution which produced the human species as such, the invention of agriculture, the steam engine, nuclear power, all have created the so-called natural resources from previously “useless” nature.

Under the reign of capitalism humanity has produced countless revolutions of productive technology. If this process could continue unabated there would be no real, material basis in need for socialism, but such is not the case. The pressing question of alternatives to the finite supply of fossil fuels, to supply the ever-expanding need of developing humanity for energy, reveals the incapacity of capitalist economy.

It is not surprising that Zero Growth advocates give short shrift to the possibilities for developing a practical plasma fusion reactor for the production of electrical energy. The fusion of the nuclei within a deuterium (or deuterium-tritium) plasma releases enormous energy but yields no dangerous radio-active waste products. The fuel, deuterium, a “heavy” isotope of hydrogen, is easily separable from sea water and would be virtually inexhaustible, thus virtually eliminating the finite resource problem with respect to fossil fuels and fissionable materials. The great heats generated would provide such great efficiency in heat transfer methods of electricity generation that thermal pollution connected with energy production would cease being problematical. In addition, applications of the process such as the “fusion torch” might make the recycling of industrial materials cheap enough to be almost universal.

Is such a development possible? At present no theoretical obstacles remain to block the realization of this advance (for references on the matter of fusion power see the above cited “Ecology Crisis: Who’s polluting Whom” and “Zero Growth” in *New Solidarity*, April 10-14.) Leading researchers in the field of plasma physics, Eastlund and Gough, have stated that a practical prototype fusion reactor could be created within ten years if such development were seen as a “national goal.”

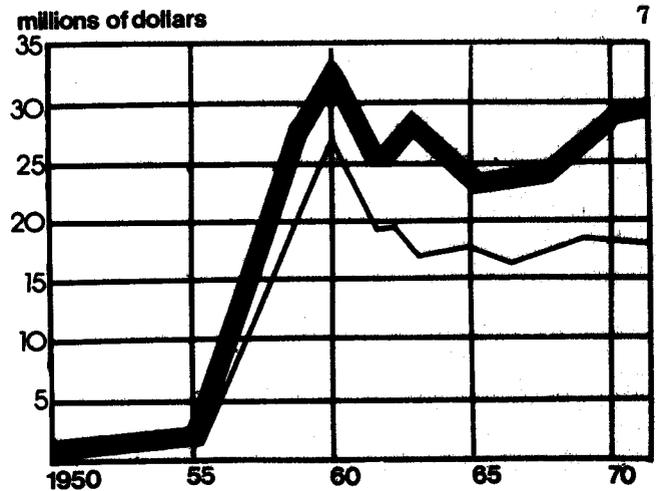
Whereas in a rational world the "ecology movement" would jump on such a development and lend all its efforts toward propagandizing the need for development of fusion power, in the "real" world it is not merely that such a development would dissolve the case for Zero Growth that these warriors are mum on the subject. They cannot see the development of fusion power as a real possibility because it is not on the immediate capitalist investment agenda. Having limited themselves entirely to the outlook of the actual capitalist future, ZPGers can see no future that does not include stagnation of productive technology.

While vast expenditures of productive resources will be required to develop fusion power as a practical source of energy, the utility industry, eating itself through government porkbarrels in the form of "welfare" measures, such as "oil depletion allowances" and enormous capital advances by the AEC in the development of fission power, is spending next to nothing on fusion research. The AEC itself has so far spent less than the cost of one Apollo moonshot on fusion power research and the fiscal 1971 budget for such research of \$30 million was \$3 million less than the 1960 budget!

Again, it is capitalism and the private property nature of capitalist capitals that is responsible for this stagnation in research development. Capitalist optimizing criteria demand not only that "full value" be milked out of the development of fission power before its replacement, but also that the ancient plant and equipment of the fossil fuel generating plants be maintained at "book value" so that the edifice of the debt structure built on such rotten foundations does not crumble.

The "equilibrium economy" recommended by ZPGers would of course mean that adequate funds required for the realization of fusion power could never be generated. Thus, Zero Growth is a well argued case for the extinction of mankind.

Zero Growth unfortunately need no longer be studied from the standpoint of the future through the "creative" capitalist imagination of the ZPG ecologist. In many respects it has already descended upon us. Rather than the utopia predicted for it, it has turned out to be in different



THE MAIN OBSTACLE to the development of fusion power is capitalist investment policy. The solid curve shows the annual operating and equipment expenditures for the U.S. fusion program. The thin curve shows these expenditures adjusted for inflation.

aspects both cause and effect of the economic crisis. We have already indicated that capitalist induced stagnation of industrial output is a primary source of the current economic crisis. This industrial stagnation, rather than moderating existing rates of pollution, makes the serious task of repairing damage done to the environment and prevention of future pollution through the development of pollution control techniques economically impossible under capitalism.

Not only has industrial production stagnated. The population growth rates of the "advanced" industrial countries have been moderating for a considerable period under the influence of both increased productivity and accompanied "cost" of producing labor power. This translates into decreased desire for large families, due to increased costs of education and longer social maturation times. However, in addition to this moderate long-term trend (which ZPGers blithely ignore), analysis of the 1970 United States Census reveals a sharp downturn in U.S. fertility rates which could rapidly produce Zero Population Growth within a few years!

Doubting readers are invited to read an analysis of the latest U.S. census data by George Grier, titled "The Baby Bust," (Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, 1971.) Entirely on the basis of published U.S. Census data, Grier shows that despite the fact that the generally fertile part of the population (15 to 34 year olds) has grown by 29% in the last ten years, due to the post-war baby

boom (this increase was exceeded only in the 1870's and 80's, due to immigration), the under-five population has decreased by 15.5% in the same period (by far the largest of such decreases which have only previously occurred in 1920-29 and 1930-39.) Thus as the post war boom babies have matured to fertile age they have failed to produce the "population boom" that both most authoritative "sources" and ZPG crackpots alike have long been predicting.

Declining fertility rates are responsible for this drastic drop in the under-five population since death rates have in fact been only slowly increasing. The recent decline in fertility rates (that is the number of children actually born per specified population unit) dates from the '57-58 recession, continuing in a long and sharp slide into the present economic crisis. The long slide into the Great Depression after WW I created a similar decline in fertility rates.

This decline has been so steep that if the rate of decline experienced since 1960 continues only two more years we could hit the population replacement level — the famous ZPG (see "The Baby Bust," p. 22.) Far from ushering in an era of peace and light this threatening ZPG (and likely actual population decline) is a response to profound economic crisis. Families are increasingly, "voluntarily" limiting their size because of social instability, economic necessity, poor educational facilities, and so forth — due to a collapsing economy.

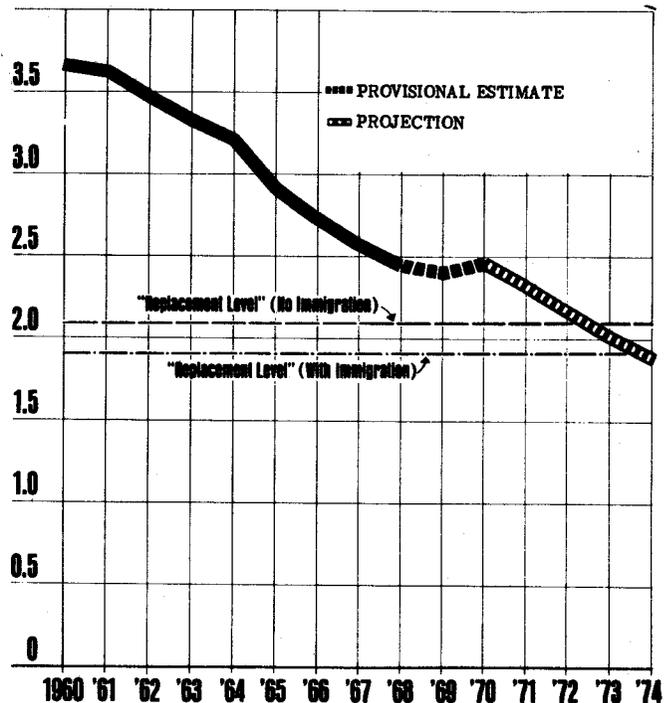
The rather consistent failures of "authoritative" demographers — including the U.S. Census Department — is a striking example of the dismal failure of empiricist method in the social sciences generally. Criticism of the rather naive statistical, computer program systems methods of the Club of Rome's "Limits to Growth" from many scientific quarters should not prevent us from seeing that, in general, "Limits to Growth" is merely a caricature of the best of empiricist methods. Social science's slavish commitment to "objective fact" and "objective trends" among those "facts" in the behaviorist schools, and to pure subjectivity in the "idealist" schools, prevents a real comprehension of the essential duality of all social processes. It is precisely a comprehension of this duality — the subjectivity of human deliberative processes and actions and the resulting objective consequences

for social reproduction — that is required for making any sorts of predictions whatsoever. And the character of such predictions is, therefore, inevitably "political."

The zero growth ecologists, however, are at least consistent with reality in their pessimism as long as they view capitalist social and economic relations as the only reality. But they are unwittingly (or not, as the particular case or morality is concerned) projecting capitalist relations of production into the future to predict a crisis which is already upon us. Not only are they doing that; they are embracing its negative aspects (stagnation of production and population) as a solution, while falsifying and hiding from criticism the actually crippling nature of capitalist "economic growth."

Liberal critics of the "ecology" doomsayers criticize from the point of view of "progressive capitalism." Those who claim that technology and continued "growth" will solve the problem in and of itself are probably more foolish (or deceitful) than their ZPG quack antagonists, in that they utterly fail to see the immediate political threat to human existence generated by impending economic collapse. (The London Economist and

Children per woman



IF RECENT TRENDS CONTINUE, the "total fertility rate" will reach the ZPG transition level of 2.1 children per woman by mid-1972.

Nature attacks on "Limits to Growth" must be seen as such). Under such conditions (we must realize that we have in a sense already reached such conditions) no technological breakthroughs nor rapid real economic development necessary to avert crisis are going to take place.

The Nixon administration's official attitude toward ZPG appears well calculated. While the ZPG movement will be an essential part of the propaganda attack on the working class, it uncomfortably indicates in an indirect way the present crisis of world capitalism. In addition, cretaceous layers of the capitalist class, not possessing much subtlety of thought, tend to take ZPG pronouncements seriously rather than as useful propaganda ("an end to accumulation, what kind of capitalism is that?") Thus a balancing act results. The President's Commission on Population headed by John D. Rockefeller III gives ZPG Inc. rope by endorsing eventual ZPG, and Secretary of HEW Elliot Richardson has been running around the country attending ZPG forums and symposia decrying the undemocratic implications of ZPG while endorsing its "ultimate aims."

The official attitude that no crisis actually exists is an echo of the "liberal progressive" view that no crisis exists for capitalism as such. The difference being that the former is a canny professional guise and the latter a true conviction.

Is there then any basis for optimism? If human productive forces remain constrained within the stranglehold of capitalism, there is not; however, if socialists use the present conjunctural crisis to wrest control of the economy from the capitalist class there is no reason why both economic and ecological crisis cannot be avoided and the vast unmet needs of mankind be satisfied.

Socialism, not having to maintain fictitious inflated value of past capital investments, will be able to carry out rapid industrialization of the underdeveloped world on the basis of re-industrialization of the stagnated "advanced" economies, and thus will be able to generate the required sufficient social surplus to rapidly improve world-wide living standards, while cleaning up the environment and maintaining it in a productive state. It will also be able to develop technical advances such as fusion power production which will create vast new (previously unexploitable) resources and give us capacities for

recycling existing industrial materials.

Such investments will actually vastly increase the productivity of labor on a world scale, making real growth, without the negative aspects epitomized by capitalist accumulation, possible for the first time in human history. Such a transformation is definitely not of the pie-in-the-sky sort envisioned apocalyptically by both anarcho-"marxist" left sects, and ZPGers alike. The tactical approximation of socialist investment policy and the social forces necessary to carry it out in this period, is the political strike-support policy of the NCLC. Both training in actual socialist economics and political organization are accomplished at the same time.

The "ecology movement" as it stands today is a deadly foe of such a policy, since it does not see the potential for human development in squandered capitalist speculative income and the unrealized social capital thus represented. By condemning expanded working class consumption (and thus production) the "ecology movement" becomes an ally of capitalist austerity regimes.

Socialist development will require the creative talents of every scientist to make creative contributions to theory and technology. The socialist movement now requires that Zero Growth ideology be exposed as such, so that it is not confused with actual science. Scientists and scientific socialists, both students and teachers alike, who recognize that advances in human knowledge can only be predicated upon the actual material advance of society, must locate their counter-attacks against Zero Growth ideology upon support for working class-for-itself political strike activity.

Ironically, the "Blueprint for Survival," one of the more egregious ZPG tracts, calls for "a Copernican revolution of the mind" to deal with present-day world problems. We could not agree more with that sentiment, but we also recognize that such revolutions of the mind are not the autonomous result of the individual minds of isolated geniuses. To paraphrase Marx, human society only sets tasks for itself that it is capable of solving. Only a society based on continued, expanding material control over nature will produce the genius required to prevent our

self-destruction. So-called "equilibrium economy" or "no-growth economy" only exists, or could exist, under present conditions of vast material deprivation, as disastrous stagnation. We have evidence enough of this fact as capitalist breakdown repeatedly produces "no-growth economy" for us in periodic depressions. The ZPG movement itself is evidence enough to show that such conditions make "Copernican revolutions" of the mind rare enough indeed.

Just as the question of the material expansion of society is inseparable from that of social relations, the production of human consciousness is also inseparable from the organization of human society. Empiricist method arises from the alienation of man in bourgeois society, which forces the individual to regard his limited domain of experience as the predicate for human knowledge in general.

The recent release of the Einstein papers refreshes our knowledge of how little scientific advance owes to empiricist "scientific method." That Einstein achieved his revolutionary breakthrough in the comprehension of the material universe on the basis of intuition of whole processes, rather than contemplation upon alienated "experimental conditions," is quite clear. To the call of the ecology freak of the academic or "communal" variety for "ecological conscience," we must counterpose "ecological consciousness" which is nothing but **class-for-itself** consciousness. The political working class for itself as the self-conscious producer of human ecology as a whole has an inherent understanding of the necessities of development and the consequently increasing freedom of the human spirit as these forces really exist for man.

Man's relationship to nature is not that of some individual beast to his environment. Man's relationship to nature in general is a mediated connection, in which the individual significantly affects and is affected by his environment through the mediation of the totality of man's social relations. Therefore, the widespread conceit, that isolated man is in "communion" with "natural nature," is a self-deception. Man's self-consciousness, his willful development of himself as an individual in and for the totality of human society, is the only form of behavior and achievement which is in "harmony with nature" as

nature exists, or could possibly exist, for man.

What distinguishes man from other animals generally, the mere beasts, is the principal fact of human existence. That is the fact, on the one hand, that lower animal species, such as rats, pigeons, and so forth, are governed by forms of behavior which are more or less narrowly fixed by their genetic inheritance and essentially inalterable forms of egg and uterine (and extra-uterine) gestation. Man is fundamentally distinguished from the lower animals by the fact of his historical existence, that he has shifted the focus of evolution of the dominant life-forms from the realm of genetic variations into the realm of more or less deliberately and successfully altering his basic modes of social organization and behavior, a fact which is merely epitomized by the accelerating progress of man's development of his technology from the early Pleistocene beginnings of a "baboon-like" existence. Whenever a group of individuals, deluded by the pathetic conceit that they are "scientists," takes extant modes of behavior and technology, such as those of present-day capitalist society, and projects future human development on the basis of a simple perpetuation of transient modes of individualized behaviors, such as technologies, that "scientist" has defined man, not as man, but as a mere hominid beast. Of course, consistence demands that his such conceptions be applied to himself. Man is not a hominid beast, but the "scientist" who proceeds on such assumptions has thereby demonstrated the actuality of his own bestialized world-outlook.

It is not accidental that Zero Growth ideology, which is itself a product of persons permeated with the ideology of human bestialization, can propose only intensified bestialization. As long as alienation persists, there have been and will be terminal cases of this ideology as exemplified by Meadows, et al. Ordinarily, such wretched persons are simply an endemic disorder of capitalist society in particular. It is under conditions of great capitalist economic crisis, as in the crisis of Nazi Germany, or the onset of a new monetary breakdown today, that capitalism seizes upon these endemic, most-bestialized tendencies among its academics — Skinner, Jensen, Herrnstein, Meadows, et al. — to thus provide a "scientific" rationale for programs such as the Nazi slave-labor/extermination-camp system, or the ultimately identical programmatic goals of Zero Growth, the "Blueprint for Survival," or the "Limits of Growth."

# Zero Growth

## Extinction for the Human Race on the Time Plan

The "ecology movement's" latest and most heavily publicized attack on economic growth recently arrived in the form of a book entitled "The Limits To Growth" published for the Club of Rome, a group of about 70 technocrats and industrialists who describe themselves as an "invisible college" convened to solve world problems. The authors are a team of MIT systems analysts who used a computer program devised by MIT systems analyst Jay W. Forrester to project current economic and population trends into the future.

The group contends that if present rates of economic and population growth continue, both these rates will fall sharply within the next hundred years or so. They claim that pollution, non-renewable resource depletion, and declining per capita food production will cause a precipitous drop in population and industrial capacity in the relatively near future unless these trends are halted now.

Their basic argument is that the material resources upon which our existence depends are finite. Therefore, exponential increases (that is, accelerated rather than linear increases) in the rate of population and capital growth will rapidly run up against the limited resources and pollution-absorbing capacities of the earth. Simply stated, burgeoning industry and population will soon run out of the raw materials and food necessary to sustain such growth while we simultaneously poison ourselves in the process.

### NO-GROWTH ADVOCACY

As a solution to this apparent dilemma the MIT group propose what they call an equilibrium or no-growth economy and population policy. Such a policy would limit births to the level necessary to merely offset deaths in the world population. In addition, capital investment would be limited to the rate required merely to replace that capital lost through

depreciation of fixed capital stocks.

This equilibrium state is then presumed capable of maintaining human society "far into the future" without reaching the limits imposed by over-pollution and exhausted natural resources. If at first blush this sounds attractive as a solution then ponder the following problem: A large portion of the U.S. population (perhaps one half) presently finds its wages inadequate to prepare its children to play a useful role in society through advanced technology jobs (as if indeed such jobs actually existed in adequate numbers). In addition our hospitals, schools and housing stock are, to put it mildly, inadequate and rapidly deteriorating.

Such are the conditions prevailing in the U.S. today; conditions throughout the world and in the underdeveloped world in particular are a nightmare by comparison. A no growth economy would not only force the freezing of all wages and standards of living at their present miserable levels; it would in all likelihood plunge them lower still.

By way of anticipating such objections, the MIT group advocates continued industrial growth until 1995 so that a worldwide standard of living measuring half the current U.S. level may prevail before calling a halt to growth. Since the authors certify themselves as egalitarians, presumably they are also advocating a halving of U.S. and European wage-earners' income! More importantly, it is assumed that a capitalist world economy presently on the brink of depression will still be creating any real growth at all. The U.S. sector of the world capitalist economy has in fact produced a steady fall in real incomes since 1965 and shown an absolute stagnation in industrial output for the last several years.

The report is strewn throughout with impressive looking graphs produced by computer print-outs. The authors claim superiority for their "formal models" over mere "mental models" which do not utilize computers. Actually, a computer is no more capable of

producing conceptual knowledge of the world than is a pencil. A computer is merely a highly sophisticated adding and collecting machine. As a recent New York Times review of "Limits to Growth" stated, "garbage in, garbage out" is an old computer programmer's adage.

#### GARBAGE IN

Indeed it is precisely in its fundamental assumptions (its garbage input) that the whole zero-growth argument falls apart. The argument that exponential growth will finally be halted by finite resources holds up in neither premise.

First, the method of extrapolating developmental trends into the future on the basis of a limited period with NO THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO THE ACTUAL CAUSES OF SUCH RATES is nothing less than intellectual charlatany. The case of the blind man confidently trudging toward the destruction of a cliffside assured of his safety by the fact that each of his previous footfalls has been on solid ground is no more to be pitied than the MIT variety of blindmen.

Their population extrapolations are a case in point. Seen from the perspective of the world as a whole, population has indeed been expanding exponentially; this increase is apparently causally associated with an exponential increase in industrial output. However, when the industrially developed and underdeveloped countries are examined SEPARATELY in this regard, a different picture emerges. The industrially developed countries have actually exhibited a decline in population rates to a linear expansion, while the underdeveloped countries which are generally exhibiting little or no real growth in industrial output have exponentially increasing populations.

The reason for this is the "value" and "cost" of the addition of a new human being to society (in particular to the family) in each case. In the "industrially advanced" countries each new human being is potentially far more productive than in the under-

developed world; however the "cost of producing" him is correspondingly greater (food, housing, education, etc.). Also, the time delay before he or she will become actually productive is greater due to increased education and social maturation time. Thus there are strong pressures on the family to employ birth control techniques which will limit their family size, and this reduces birth rates in society as a whole.

The situation in the underdeveloped world is the opposite. Especially since the vicious capitalist looting of the "Third World" throughout this century, jobs are characterized by labor intensity, low wages, and generally low levels of skill or educational requirements. This type of "industry" has absorbed — we should say consumed — millions of children in the Third World. Thus, although to the average family in the underdeveloped world the "cost" of raising children is actually relatively great compared to his income, each new child rapidly becomes an additional source of family sustenance.

The problem of birth control programs in the underdeveloped world today is that where such methods are available there is no desire or motivation on the part of families to use them. Whether or not such attitudes are "traditional" is beside the point. The point is that such attitudes are actually appropriate to family survival. Such families' daily experience and observation confirm over and over for them the principle that larger families are wealthier families.

Thus the population problem in such areas is not how do we supply birth control techniques, but rather how to offer incentive for their use which will not destroy families by lowering their already miserable income. The answer, strangely enough, is industrialization! The real need is for high-wage, highly capitalized productive jobs which will also produce the desperately wanting material values for the underdeveloped world. The more likely conclusion to draw from all this is that the only real solution to the world population problem is the most rapid, balanced WORLDWIDE industrial development.

Thus the abstract statistical method of the MIT report, alienated from any real theoretical concern with actual social and economic causes of behavior consistently produces conclusions which are opposite from reality. Most telling on this point is that the book itself actually contains all the statistical information needed to indicate the above point.

#### EXHAUSTED RESOURCES?

In addition to the demonstrably false method of arbitrary projection of theoretically unanalyzed growth rates into the future, the second major premise of the MIT report, namely the finiteness of natural resources, also crumbles upon investigation.

Had the MIT group been around at the late Paleolithic (end of the Old Stone Age) period of man's history, they no doubt would have confidently predicted (on the basis of the latest methods of pebble counting) the end of the human race due to the combination of climatic changes and man's own success as a hunter, which was then causing the rapid extinction of large grazing animal species upon which he depended for survival. Nevertheless man did survive. He invented



THE ONLY REAL SOLUTION to apparent overpopulation is worldwide industrial development.

agriculture and on the basis of this invention his population increased by a factor of 60 in the Near East site of this invention within about six millenia.

In a similar vein the London Economist chided the authors of "Limits." They would have predicted the downfall of urban civilization in the 19th century by statistically proving that London was inexorably drowning itself in horse manure as the horse carriage multiplied beyond control.

Resources are not finite. The reason is that they are a product of man's civilization, of his transformation of nature into his own subjective or active purposeful life-process. Man is continually creating new natural resources by inventing new processes of transforming nature to his purpose. Despite this dominant trend of human history the MIT group claim that we have now reached the end of the line.

### ENERGY BREAKTHROUGH

In this connection it is significant that the authors have made only one brief and indirect reference to the most promising new scientific and technological breakthrough to appear since the steam engine — fusion power — and in the process they have deliberately confused it with the dangerous and highly polluting nuclear fission process. Fusion reactions create immense energy by fusing or joining two light nuclei atoms. The process reduces their mass, producing energy plus the harmless (non-radioactive) by-product of a nucleus, a proton or a helium isotope depending on the process and the fuel used.

The most likely fuel for this process is deuterium, a "heavy" isotope of hydrogen (an atom of hydrogen with an "extra" neutron added to the single proton nucleus). Deuterium is easily separated from sea water. This "resource" is essentially unlimited. William Gough and Bernard Eastlund, the two most prominent publicists of recent advances in fusion research, have estimated that the supply of usable deuterium is essentially "infinite" with a lower limit of at least 2.7 BILLION years (see "The Prospects of Fusion Power," Scientific American, Feb. 1971).

Since the process of separating deuterium from sea water is easy and cheap, fusion power will present mankind with essentially unlimited amounts of energy.

The fusion process produces such great heats that thermal or heat pollution due to inefficient heat transfer will cease to be a major problem. These heats can be used to ionize all waste products and convert them cheaply and directly back to their original constituent elements thus making a total recycling economy feasible. This can solve both the material resource shortages and a great deal of pollution problems at one blow. In addition, since agricultural productivity is actually a function of the additional energy applied to the process — the "capitalization" of agriculture — the presence of almost limitless energy will solve the world's food problems.

Is fusion power a real possibility? At present there are no longer any theoretical obstacles to its production. The only present obstacle is a lack of funds available to make the process a technical reality.

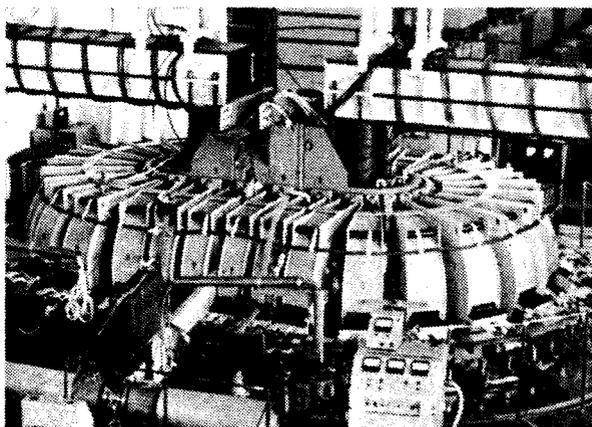
Ironically, the steady-state equilibrium economy would ensure that resources remain finite by failing to produce the social surplus wealth necessary to develop new technology such as fusion power. Eastlund and Gough estimate that if fusion power were seen as a national goal a practical prototype reactor could be developed in as little as ten years. A no growth economy can NEVER produce such breakthroughs, since it cannot generate enough surplus value required to realize scientific discoveries. It thus would doom human existence — perhaps just a little further into the future than the MIT group is presently looking — but nevertheless doom us to ultimate extinction.

### CURRENT STAGNATION

But the MIT group is actually correct in claiming as they do that no technical inventions ALONE can solve the problems created by human development. However, they render themselves incapable of seeing the real problem of present "development" by regarding "social and economic factors" as external to the implicit assumptions of their "formal model" (see p. 46 of "Limits to Growth").

The stagnation of fusion power research is a case in point demonstrating that it is actually capitalist induced stagnation which is now preventing real growth on a world wide scale. In the U.S. there are almost no "private funds" (i.e. capitalist profits) going into fusion research; and annual AEC funds for this research — \$30 million in 1971 — have dropped 3 million since 1960. Total expenditures on fusion research have been less than the cost of one Apollo moonshot.

The reason for this is that vast government pork-barrels to private utility companies (through the AEC) have built up enormous existing interests in fission reactors. Effective fusion power would render fission reactors obsolete, thus threatening the whole credit structure built upon existing power plants.



RECENT ADVANCES IN THE PERFORMANCE of experimental plasma confinement machines like the one above have brought fusion power to the brink of scientific feasibility.

In a similar manner world food production is presently constrained by high prices through price supports and "land retirement subsidies," in order to maintain the liquidity of large food production and distribution empires, commodity speculators, and land mortgages.

The reason why the MIT group fails to see the potential development of fusion power is indicative of a basic flaw in their approach. They cannot perceive fusion power around the bend because it is not on the capitalist investment agenda. Throughout their analysis, where they think they are indicting economic growth or industrial investment for human use, they are actually blaming, and in a sense accurately portraying, capitalist degeneration or involuted growth — and they are extrapolating it into the future.

Capitalism necessarily pollutes because individual capitalists reckon pollution as cost-cutting. Thus capitalism as a whole has no mechanism for regarding environmental maintenance and improvement as the real constant capital costs which these maintenance activities actually represent. By initially UNDER-estimating the actual social costs of production, capitalism ends up overvaluing such costs when faced with the job of cleaning up its own mess.

In a similar manner, investment in military hard-

ware and speculative finance are also seen as actual capital "investments" rather than the actual wasteful deductions from social surplus that they are. These systematic expenditures are rapidly increasing the price of capital and thus strangling actual real investment. What the authors of "Limits of Growth" have obscured in their work is that capitalist hegemony over world production resources is robbing humanity of its ability to solve our problems.

By mere extrapolation of the direction of capitalist relations of production, the "Limits" authors rightly foresee disaster. But by hiding the premise of capitalist relations and calling for a halt to "growth" as such, they have created a potent propaganda tool for the capitalist class.

Doesn't almost every capitalist know that a recession is here and he will cut production? Each cut measurably reduces the standard of living of the world's population, — and now a group of ultra-respectable scientists discovers that this is a good thing! In the sense that science is nothing more than the abstract systematic form of the knowledge appropriate to progressive human development, the zero-growth movement adherents have ceased earning the right to be called scientists no matter what their academic qualifications may be.

# The Economic Crisis Spurs Growth of No-Growth Mov't

While the Aug. 15 monetary shakeup stripped Samuelson and bourgeois economists generally of their serendipity and their sheepskins, the void created by this exposure has sent the bourgeoisie scrambling after new propaganda talent. The contest is one analagous to Alfred Krupp's turn of the century essay contest on "What can we learn from the principles of Darwinism for application to inner political development and the laws of the state?" The zero growth theorists have won a first prize, now being delivered in the form of fat commissions for "no growth" research.

The "Club of Rome," the most prominent supporters of the "academic" zero growth movement, is offering generous research and publication grants to the zero growth academics. The zero growth system dynamics group culled from the Alfred P. Sloan School of (business) Management of MIT has been the first grateful recipient.

The Club of Rome, according to its own self-description, does not "seek to express any single ideological, political or national point of view." Nevertheless the group's founder, Dr. Aurelio Peccei, is a prominent industrial manager who just happens to own Europe's largest industrial management firm — Halconsult. This "man of vision" is also affiliated with Fiat and Olivetti, where his presumably "non-political" vision includes strike-breaking and wage-going techniques as well as "the present and future predicament of man."

The "varied backgrounds" of the Club of Rome membership include Alexander King, scientific director of the OECD, and considerable profits from Volkswagen Co. contributed through their tax dodge, the Volkswagen Foundation.

Perhaps it is just coincidence that has led the Club of Rome-sponsored MIT business management-zero growth group to conclude that "traditional" consumption demand attitude is the evil genius of the pollution and resources crises? Perhaps it is coincidence that strike-breaking, wage cutting and social services cutbacks "logically" follow from this point of view? Perhaps Jay Forrester, professor of Business Management at MIT (inventor of the computer program upon which Dennis Meadows' "The Limits To Growth" is based) has not been influenced by all the "cost-cutting" techniques that a successful businessman (or, as in his case, teacher of businessmen) must assimilate? Who are we, mere "ideological" non-business-connected mortals, to point any accusing fingers?

While the actual "scientific" methods of Dr. Meadows and the Club of Rome have been shown to bear as

much relation to actual science as bourgeois economics to reality, the task remains to demonstrate the immediate usefulness of such ideology to the present austerity measures of the ruling class.

Despite the anxiety of a section of the bourgeoisie at prohibitions on investment proposed by the overzealous academics, the ruling class has agreed on the usefulness of zero growth ideology. As inflation continues to rise rapidly despite increased joblessness and depressed wages, the wage-push theory of inflation is ripe to be replaced. The "consumption pollutes" theory will enter the vanguard of the propaganda assault against workers' living standards.

## OVERCOMING DIFFERENCES

The anxiety of certain capitalist layers has manifested itself in the London Economist and a recent New York Times Book Review, which have sharply criticized the Club of Rome study for ignoring the role of technological revolutions in overcoming previous ecological crises.

What the Economist is reacting to is the following: the emergence of the no growth ideology signifies a scrapping of the bourgeois notion of "progress." In a nutshell these theories discredit the government's lie that no crisis actually exists, and that present austerity measures are temporary programs which will result in a rapid recovery. The economics of the solution offered by the zero growth ecologists is likewise unpalatable, the oft-mentioned "equilibrium" smelling too much like a depression. Nonetheless, the zero growth ideology is useful to the extent that it uses its "depression psychology" to break strikes and impose austerity.

The practicality of this "new" strikebreaking device was captured by Anthony Lewis in a New York Times column of Feb. 14, entitled "End of An Ideology," aimed at the British coal miner's strike: "The implications of the miners' strike are especially acute if we think of a future without the idea of economic growth. Until now we have told ourselves we can keep on giving everyone larger shares of the economic pie because the pie as a whole will grow: That has allowed us to avoid the really hard questions of social justice."

Lewis went on: "But that illusion is coming to an end. Politicians do not admit it yet, but some day soon people will be aware that the upward curve of production will have to be stopped if we want to avoid a natural calamity on earth. Human beings will still

be able to yearn for more education, more leisure, more beauty — but not rationally for more things.”

The same point was made in the Feb. 4 New York Times editorial on the “Blueprint for Survival,” the British zero growth program: “Even within a single nation, could such a program be initiated without setting off bitter struggles about the degree of sacrifice to be demanded of different groups? The current bickering in this country over the minor dislocations caused by wage and price controls provides a basis for pessimism. Nevertheless, there may still be time — but not much — to face up to the reality that a finite earth has finite resources and therefore cannot be subjected to endlessly escalating demands and drains.”

“The Limits to Growth” as well as the “Blueprint for Survival” and similar efforts by Jay W. Forrester are the “intellectual” guts of the preceding argument, “scientifically” showing that expectations for decent living standards are obsolete because of nature’s finiteness and the approaching limits of industrial growth. By attributing the finitude of industrial growth to man’s relationship to nature generally, the ecologists are able to blame capitalists’ economic problems on the preordained course of nature. “Progress” is the ecology scapegoat, rather than the inability of capitalists to repay nature what has been used. In this view strikes and other defensive struggles become irrational acts on the part of “short-sighted” individuals and groups.

#### MAYOR OF THE FUTURE — JAY W. FORRESTER

While the “limits to industrial growth” argument adds another ideological weapon to the capitalist arsenal for breaking strikes, Jay W. Forrester has prepared plans for prosecuting an intensified program of urban decay.

The Club of Rome study, the “Limits to Growth,” is based directly on Forrester’s “system dynamics” computer techniques, developed in the 50’s by Forrester as “industrial dynamics.” The first application of this technique to social problems emerged when Forrester’s work converged with that of the former “businessmen’s” Mayor of Boston, John F. Collins. The first results of this collusion are published in “Urban Dynamics.”

In “Urban Dynamics” the problem of the cities is posed by Forrester in the following terms: What is the best method for molding each city as an economic unit in itself into a self-subsisting and export-generating unit? To effect such a denial of world economic interdependence, Forrester saw intervention into the “normal” process of deterioration of the cities as necessary.

Examining current programs for “revival” of the cities, such as welfare and low-cost housing construction, Forrester concludes any “direct action” programs are superficial and in fact, detrimental. He claims that such efforts inevitably create the following chain reaction: As poor people are directly aided this increases the all-important variable “attractiveness” which tends to draw more “underemployed” and “misfits,” in Forrester’s terms, into the city. The resulting slum conditions and increase in slum dwellers gives that section of the population

more “political power,” causing an increase in taxes for more social services, low cost housing, etc. Perhaps newspaper accounts of cuts in services are only fables? The demands of the poor make the city a leech rather than the self-subsisting economic unit Forrester has in mind. He writes: “People are the fundamental generator of municipal expenditure. People require transportation. People use schools. People demand city services. Unless the people are economically able to support these services and politically responsible for authorizing them, the urban system is sure to be self-defeating.”

Hence, in Forrester’s view, we must eliminate demanding people — by one means or another.

Forrester devises a rather simple plan for solving the crises of the cities. Clear the land of slums for industry and remove the “politically irresponsible” (those demanding decent wages and housing?); decrease the amount of available low-cost housing, as a permanent solution to the “misfit problem,” and increase the opportunities for industry to expand. To accomplish this, Forrester encourages further revision in the tax structure in favor of industries. “The tax structure tends to penalize those who can contribute most to the well-being of the city, while favoring those who generate costs to the city,” he laments. People should pay for the “irresponsibility” of being poor.

Forrester’s “new” tax structure would remove rent ceilings, on the one hand, while simultaneously placing a tax on the structure determined by the level of income of the dweller, “assessing the residential tax more nearly in proportion to the city costs generated by the different classes of the population . . .” Forrester knows well how to chop down trees to clear the land, although he has not yet formulated his final solution for the “dead wood” problem.

A new attitude has to be taken towards industry, Forrester contends. “Industry has been perceived as a politically impotent sector of the city onto which to load rising demands for revenue. But industry has retaliatory power. It can leave, and it does.” To General Motors workers at the Frigidaire plant in Dayton, given the choice between a pay cut or a closed plant and no job, the “runaway shop” ruse is not new. Forrester’s proposals, however, put the speed-up and wage cuts imposed by Dayton’s businessmen to shame.

Forrester’s plan, while providing a “rational” cover for cuts in city services, increased taxes on workers, and higher rents, nonetheless includes attracting industry to the rotting cities, to provide more jobs. He realizes that investment into new production cannot be guaranteed and “solves” this dilemma by proposing greater zoning restrictions on housing construction, and a tax on plants according to space occupied, replacing the depreciation allowances.

Don’t get him wrong, Forrester thinks it would also be nice if industries paid high wages. But the major task remains, despite the occasional wild rantings, to reduce the “attractiveness” of the city to poor people by decreasing services and available housing, and to make them “useful” to whatever industry the cities can attract.



ZERO GROWTH QUACKS would tell these striking British miners to cut their selfish and polluting intake of food.

## WORLD DYNAMICS

Beyond "Urban Dynamics," Forrester begins to develop his world model, which is the basis of the Club of Rome study. Forrester's own "World Dynamics" contains the major assumptions and results of the Limits to Growth study, urging a restriction of industrialization and population growth. He prophesies: "Rising pressures are necessary to hasten the day when population is stabilized. Pressures can be increased by reducing food production, reducing health services, and reducing industrialization."

Obviously Forrester has made a major break from Urban Dynamics, where increased industrialization was part of its solution to the urban crisis. The way Forrester resolves this contradictory turnabout in his own views is somewhat incredible. He rewrites history.

"The Quality of Life" variable, according to Forrester's history graph, peaks around the year 1960. "It has declined very little by the year 1970," says Forrester. He continues, "Is this reasonable? How can one explain an historical maximum in quality of life at a time when the world shows rising social unrest? The two become consistent if we compare expectations with reality."

Forrester then "shows" how during the 30's as the quality of life rose, expectations rose at the same rapid rate. (Evidently no Great Depression occurred.) However, as the actual quality of life began to peak, expectations did not. Continues Forrester, "the sense of disappointment is explained by Edward Banfield in arguing that although cities are actually in better condition than ever before in history, yet they fall the furthest short of what we expect them to be." The urban crisis is solved! We have rats and roaches only in our heads!

More Forrestian city planning: "What does this mean? Instead of automatically accepting the need for new towns and the desirability of locating new industry in rural areas, we should consider confining our cities. If it were possible to prohibit the encroachment by housing and industry into even a simple additional area of farm and forest, the resulting social pressures would hasten the day when we stabilize population." Barbed wire, anyone?

Forrester's systems models are a thin veil for capitalist austerity policies, policies pioneered by the industrial concentration camps of the Nazi era and slated to become more than academic as capitalism falls apart.

The capitalist "solution" to economic crisis and imminent depression demands increasing attacks against the wages and services of every sector of the working class. The ruling class will attempt to mobilize the entire population, including the working class, against any section of that class which attempts to defend its standard of living in this period. As a weapon in the capitalist arsenal the zero growth ideology portrays every legitimate demand arising from any sector of the working class for increased consumption or employment as a threat to "humanity."

Thus despite the fraudulent "scientific" character of the zero growth school the appropriateness of these ideas to ruling class austerity policies assures such "scientists" of financial support and widespread publicity. In capitalist society, especially as in the present period of profound malaise created by the frightening portents of depression, science and scientists, as long as they continue to identify their interests with those of capitalism and the capitalist class, are no more immune from prostitution than are liberal politicians.

mize everything for everyone, it must begin to make choices."

In this climate, proto-Nazi professors come forward, such as Harvard's Herrenstein, who "prove" that blacks and workers are genetically inferior. These are the theories that will be useful to capitalist society when it "begins to make choices."

#### FROM BROWN-NOSE TO ...

Such ideas as Herrenstein's become increasingly attractive to a desperate population of white collar, unemployed, etc., who see the trade-union-organized section of the population at least managing to defend its actual physical existence during the breakdown crisis, while they, the unorganized, are even more vulnerable to runaway inflation, outright income gouging and layoffs. They tend to become susceptible to pro-capitalist propaganda which blames the crisis on "the greedy union workers who are robbing the middle class person with strikes that cause price increases, or who ruin the environment with their consumption," and similar nonsense.

Zero Growth movements, because of their pseudo-scientific aura and other professorial underpinnings will tend to begin on university campuses. Here the Grand Academic mouthpieces reside and around them the necessary cliques of their dutiful students. The brown-nose students who can sit without rebellion through the lectures of a "Doctor" Banfield have taken the first step toward becoming brown-shirts.

Vigorous intellectual confrontation by socialist, as well as other honest students and faculty, will quickly send these idiots scurrying back to their cucumber patches and astrology books. Students will come to realize that without jobs they too could become a "cost-reducible" surplus population. If the Zero Growth movement is destroyed as a cadre school for fascist organizers, it will be unable to spread its pollution beyond the campus, where it would otherwise incite hysteria among de-classed and intermediate layers of the population.

Indeed there are many features of the Zero Growth movement's program which already cohere with prevalent silly notions held by petty bourgeois persons — and are therefore of the utmost danger.

The concept of an "equilibrium society," for example, rings favorably with the petty bourgeois person such as the shopkeeper or professional, for whom "disequilibrium," "progress," history itself means being thrown down into the suffering mass of wage laborers or worse.

Similarly, the notion of sacrificing "quantity for quality" also sits well with the petty bourgeois person. Has the professional person not always, virtuous fellow that he is, practiced Zero Population Growth with his family of one or two children, eschewing

quantity in favor of quality. He asks: Why do these people not restrain themselves like me. Here I am paying rising taxes for their welfare. They're driving me under. Something drastic needs to be done to get them off my back.

To the declassed hippy, the holistic or universal pretensions of the Zero Growth movement have an appeal. Unable to make head or tail of the incoherent trivia mouthed by his professors, he has been looking for some time now for a snort cut to the center of the universe. He tries drugs, scientology, the Orient, and now along come these cats who have got their things together about the whole earth. Dig it!

That the Zero Growth movement sports a certain anti-capitalist facade is also for its purposes an indispensable virtue. It seems to talk about human needs "objectively," as though one could be objective without talking about existing social relations.

In breakdown conditions, as capitalism itself becomes almost universally discredited, a fascist movement must disguise itself as anti-capitalist, indeed dress itself up in a "drag" version of socialism to fool those who have come to hate capitalism but do not yet understand the actual scientific content of socialism. Thus did Hitler fight "despicable capitalism" — only after he had redefined capitalism as "the Jews"!

During the breakdown crisis of the First Depression the natural solution for German capitalism — which had lost its few colonies during the First World War — was a national-imperialist one. The Nazi movement, cultivating itself within the deep-rooted jungle of German "Volkisch" or "People's" counter-culture — celebrated the notion that superior German "blood" would go out and conquer the "soil" of inferior foreigners.

Today, since capital has essentially internationalized itself under U.S. tutelage, an optimal fascist movement from the capitalist point of view would be one that has a universal form and potentiality — a Whole Earth movement — to cannibalize population, industrial resources, and incomes. The Zero Growth movement offers itself as a cadre school for beginning such efforts among technocratic layers in the advanced capitalist countries — on university campuses and among the college-educated middle classes generally.

Even before Hitler came to power in Nazi Germany, the faculty and student bodies of the universities had already gone over to the Nazis. Today an even larger proportion of the total North American population attends the universities. How much more important, then, that we stop the universities from becoming a recruiting ground for anti-working-class activity.