

Population Implosion

***Many nations are aborting their future generations
creating a worldwide underpopulation crisis.***

By Gene Edward Veith

**From: *World Magazine* (www.worldmag.com)
February 15, 2003 (Vol. 18, Num. 6)**

Reprinted with permission

The president of Estonia goes on national TV to urge his countrymen to have more children. Russian President Vladimir Putin warns his parliament about “a serious crisis threatening Russia's survival”: the nation's low birth rate. The government of Singapore is trying to reverse that country's birth dearth by sponsoring a massive taxpayer-funded matchmaking service.

In 1968, Paul Ehrlich published *The Population Bomb*, panicking the world with dire predictions of a population explosion. By the year 2000, he predicted, the world would be so crowded that hundreds of millions would die of starvation. Although Mr. Ehrlich's prophecies have turned out to be almost comically wrong, PBS has produced a documentary taking him seriously, and philanthropists like Ted Turner still donate millions to combat population growth.

But the problem today is not overpopulation; it's underpopulation. For a population to reproduce itself, the fertility rate must average 2.1 children per woman. (The .1 allows for child mortality.) The fertility rate today among major developed nations is only 1.6.

The United States is rare among its peers in keeping its fertility rate at around the replacement level of 2.1, according to the Population Reference Bureau, which provided the fertility data cited here. Europe, though, is shrinking. Germany's rate is 1.3. Despite the stereotype of large Catholic families, France has a fertility rate of 1.9 and Italy has one of the lowest in Europe, 1.3. At this rate, there will be only about half as many Italians in the next generation. There will also be fewer Russians, whose fertility rate is 1.3.

Even nations that were once notorious for booming populations have drastically slowed down in reproducing themselves. In the last 20 years, India's fertility rate has gone from over four children per woman to about three. Mexico has gone from over four to just under three. China has a fertility rate of 1.8.

African nations continue to have very high fertility rates, up to five or six children per woman, but those lands are ravaged by AIDS, which is decimating their population. Muslim nations, on the other hand, tend to have booming population growth—Yemen's fertility rate is 7.2 children per woman.

Demographers predict that the world's population will level off at 9 billion, reports The Wall Street Journal. Then it will start dropping. There may well be nearly 500 million fewer people by 2075.

Isn't this a good thing? Why are so many governments panicking at the drop in their populations?

Although radical environmentalists like Mr. Ehrlich see human beings only as “consumers of the earth's resources,” human beings are in fact the most valuable resource of all. Citizens are not just consumers but producers. Having fewer people can wreak havoc on an economy, creating both a labor shortage and a shortage of buyers. A government with a shrinking population faces a smaller military and fewer taxpayers. Dwindling populations have always signaled cultural decline, with less creativity, energy, and vitality on every level of society.

Already Japan—fertility rate 1.3—is facing the problem of having fewer taxpaying young people to support the burgeoning number of retirees, something that will hit the generous welfare states of Europe especially hard.

Already Europe has had to import large numbers of immigrants to bolster the labor force, most of them from the Middle East. Fewer and fewer native Europeans—along with the dwindling influence of Christianity—and more and more Muslims raise the prospect of the Islamification of Western Europe. One reason “old Europe” is not supporting the United States in a war with Iraq is that politicians in France and Germany fear the reaction among their Muslim voters.

Why the population decline? The worldwide collapse of what are, literally, family values. Thanks to contraceptive technology, sex has become separated from childbearing. With women pursuing careers of their own and men getting sex without the responsibilities of marriage, why bother with children? For many women and men, pregnancy has become an unpleasant side effect, something to prevent with contraceptives or easily treat with a trip to the abortion clinic.

The dirty little secret of the population implosion, one seldom mentioned by demographers, is that the world is aborting its future generations. China has shrunk its fertility rate by its cruel policy of forced abortion. (The website of the International Planned Parenthood Federation has only good things to say about China and does not even mention how the government coerces women to have abortions. So much for “choice.”)

In the United States, abortion ends between one-third and one-fifth of all pregnancies, and the U.S. abortion rate is relatively low. In Russia, the average woman may have as many as four abortions in her lifetime. There are two abortions for every live birth. That is to say, Russians kill two-thirds of their children before they are born. That, Mr. Putin, is the “serious crisis threatening Russia's survival.”