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THE DANGERS OF EUROPE'S POPULATION DECLINE

Practically everywhere in Europe the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is below the level of population replacement. The TFR is the average number of children per female. In the richest countries, an average of 2.1 children is required for replacement.

According to *Eurostat* (1993) – the most authoritative source on this subject – the TFR was 2.61 in 1960, and 1.51 in 1991. All the countries of the EC, except Ireland, are below the threshold of 2.1 children. Here are some telling examples: U.K. – 1.82; Belgium – 1.62; Germany – 1.33; Spain – 1.33; Italy – 1.26; France – 1.65. The decline is still more evident in some countries outside the EC.

In former East Germany, the TFR has declined to 0.83 in 1992: an historical record; in Russia, within two years (1990-1992) it declined from 1.9 to 1.56; in Poland and in Slovakia it reached 1.95 in 1992.

Let us have a look now at one particular case: France. What happened there in 1993? We can observe the following negative records:

1. The number of births was the lowest since 1945.
2. The birth rate was the lowest since 1945: 12.3 per million.
3. The TFR was the lowest since 1914: 1.65 children per female, whereas, I repeat, 2.10 children are required in the rich countries to replace the population.

4. The reproduction rate of 0.79 is the lowest ever reported. This means that if the fertility rate remains static at 1.65 children per female, only 79% of the population would be replaced. This also means that without considering other demographic phenomena (such as migration), the population of France would decline to 21% of its current population within one generation.

5. The proportion of people below the age of 20 is the lowest ever reported. Thus it is evident that France is losing its demographic vitality. And so is the whole of Europe.

The causes of this population decline are, of course, very complex. However, one of them deserves to be mentioned as a case in point for our exposé. Indeed, for contraception, abortion and sterilization to be accepted in poor countries, Europe has to set the example for such practices. This was considered as a condition of credibility for the Third World.

As early as 1973, René Dumont, a French agronomist and close advisor of François Mitterand, wrote:

Authoritative steps to contain birth rates will become more and more necessary, but those steps will be acceptable only if they are taken, first of all, in the rich countries and by educating the poor ones.

The European example had the effect of being imitated in the Third World but, most of all, has had a boomerang effect in Europe itself. This is a new version of the story of the gardener watering himself. Europe has been and still is the first victim of the “anti-life” practices that she was willing to export to the Third World for the purpose of controlling it.

Of course, in the USA we can also observe a demographic decline. The TFR is 2.0: too low for replacement. But despite appearances, the American situation is quite different from the European one. First of all, the TFR of 2.0 is clearly higher than that of the EC where the rate is 1.51. Besides, it is frequently emphasized that in the USA the fertility rate varies according to ethnic groups. For example, TFR is higher among black people or among hispanic people than among white. We can also observe that the population pyramid is more balanced than in Europe, and that the proportion of young people is also higher than in Europe.

We must also underline that “pro-life” movements are much more active and better organized in the USA than in Europe. Their influence on the media, political leaders, abortion clinics, and pharmaceutical firms is very effective.

The difference between the situations that we can observe in Europe and in the USA gives rise to a very important question: Should the population decline in Europe be of special concern for the USA?

The answer to this question will reveal the ambiguity of the relationship between Europe and the United States.

From one point of view, the USA and the Anglo-Saxon countries have been pioneers in contraception, sterilization and abortion. The main Malthusian and Neomalthusian arguments are always being spread from centres based both in the States and in the United Kingdom. Europe, being influenced by those countries, shares their concern for what I call “demographic security” in the Third World, the expansion of which is feared by all rich nations. This community of interests drives Europe and the USA to organize a common front with the aim of being able to contain what they call the population pressure of the poor nations. This is why the USA and Europe do not hesitate to resort to international institutions to achieve their aim. They are even looking to the new North-South antagonism for a new cohesiveness which can no longer be found in the East-West antagonism.

But from another point of view, the community of interests that we have just examined disappears. Indeed, it becomes more and more clear that the

USA, obsessed by its security, is willing to prevent the emergence of new rivals, no matter who this may be.

In the long run, the Third World in general is a potential rival the rise of which must be checked. Let us consider two examples:

– China was “granted aid” to check its population growth. The bulk and efficiency of this aid have been recently denounced by authoritative specialists.

– Mexico, a developing country situated at the very southern border of the USA, had to submit to closer control. This goal was achieved by integrating this country with a “free market” consortium of Mexico, the USA and Canada.

Although the progress of developing countries is of great concern for the USA, much more bothersome in the prospect of a reinforced European power and the organization of a dynamic and enlarged European community.

Hence some questions arise:

1. Should Europe itself not destroy its capacity in the Third World's favour? Consenting to its demographic fall, Europe would give a free hand to the USA. Ahead of the USA, Europe is able to offer an alternative partnership with the poor countries, but has itself been trapped.

2. There is still another question: Should the US government not rejoice over the demographic collapse of Europe? Since Europe is perceived as the main rival, the answer to this question is evidently affirmative. It is only logical that the USA should be pleased with the aging of Europe's population. Given time, however, there will be no one to stand between the onrushing hordes of Muslims.

We must now consider some consequences of the fertility decline in Europe and the developed countries. It is evident that the demographic collapse of the North will cause a decline in the overall vitality of mankind. Two consequences, however, are especially relevant.

1. The first consequence is that the demographic decline of the rich countries will reinforce the migratory trends in the poor people of the South. This is already evident in the USA, and the arrival of new Hispanic blood is a sign of hope. But on this point, Europe has adopted a position quite different from that of the States. Europe is not prepared to welcome immigrants. This is particularly true regarding North Africans. Since European manpower is diminishing, the North African population – younger, more fertile and sometimes inspired by a spirit of crusade – will exert an increasing pressure upon Europe. This issue will become increasingly serious, the more so since Europe – in contrast to the USA – did not favour the integration of the North African population already established on its territory.

2. The second consequence is still more harmful. We must mention here the weakening and the vanishing of our cultural and scientific tradition. Man is indeed the unique bearer of culture, knowledge and religion. Thanks to man, and only thanks to man, this rich patrimony of mankind is transmitted and

enhanced at the same time. Mankind's memory is a living one; it invents, discovers, creates. Written documents are dead realities if nobody exists to investigate them, to conduct dialogue with them, and to proceed further. Due to the decrease, the greatest risk for Europe is that its culture may weaken and disappear.

The consequence of this trend for the Third World will be tragic: poor countries will stagnate in their underdeveloped state.