

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
RESEARCH GROUP

THE  
FORD  
FOUNDATION:

Founder of Modern  
Population Control

Martin Morse Wooster

*Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	v
Stage One: Origins of Ford Population Programs .....	1
The Ford Foundation, the Population Council and John D. Rockefeller 3 <sup>rd</sup> .....	4
Early Years of the Population Council .....	8
Ford Funds the IUD .....	10
Stage Two: Ford and the US Embrace of Population Control ....	20
Stage Three: From Population Control to “Reproductive Rights” .....	26
Stage Four: The “Mother’s Day Massacre” and the Embrace of Advocacy .....	33
Recent Ford Advocacy Efforts .....	43
Conclusion .....	52



## INTRODUCTION

It has now been 52 years since the Ford Foundation began funding population control programs in the developing world. In those decades, the Foundation's decisions, especially in the dispersal of grant money, but also in the use of high-level influence within the United States and many foreign governments, have proven pivotal in the advancement of a broad anti-life campaign, a campaign that has held human population growth responsible for many of the most serious environmental and developmental problems facing the globe. As a result, the Foundation has sought a wide spectrum of technological, governmental, and even theological solutions to this "problem" of human population. For instance, Ford grants helped to fund the research that resulted in the creation of the intra uterine device (IUD), a contraceptive device with abortifacient properties, as a highly useful tool to stanch population growth in the developing world.<sup>1</sup> The Ford Foundation was also instrumental in convincing the government of India of the dire need to control its population growth, and in teaching the government about contraceptives. The government then conducted a vast population control program, replete with coercion and serious human rights violations. Today, as talk of population control has been replaced largely by talk of women's "reproductive rights," the Ford Foundation funds groups in the vanguard of the fight for the establishment of an internationally recognized right to abortion on demand for women and girls. In addition, Ford provides substantial financial support to groups that exist to attack the Catholic Church as one of the last major institutional bulwarks against the international abortion rights agenda.

Thus, a study of the Ford Foundation also provides a concise history of the evolution of post-World War II anti-life initiatives in general. Ford funding of population control programs can be divided into four stages. (I) Between 1952-1965, Ford began funding

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<sup>1</sup> "The IUD causes an inflammatory reaction in the lining of the uterus that interferes with egg and sperm transport. Copper enhances this inflammatory response. Studies indicate that this reaction significantly decreases the rate of fertilization and lowers the chances of survival for any embryo that may be formed, even before it reaches the uterus." University of Washington Hall Health Primary Care Center, <http://depts.washington.edu/hhpccweb/women/IUD.html>.

population and demographic research, with its grants increasing significantly after 1959. Ford funds helped maintain the Population Council, the Population Research Bureau, and other key population control organizations. (II) From 1965-1974, Ford completed the creation of a population control establishment and ensured that this establishment would be subordinate to the efforts of national and international agencies. Ford Foundation population grants peaked at \$124 million in 1966. As the US government and the United Nations dramatically expanded their population control activities after 1965, at least in part in response to the Foundation's recommendations, Ford grants helped underwrite calls for expanding these programs even further. (III) From 1974-1990, Ford population programs were substantially cut, falling to a low point of \$1 million in 1985. This decline reflects earlier Ford Foundation successes in developing effective contraceptives as well as in convincing national and international agencies to fund their massive distribution throughout the world. This decline also reflects a realization that the ultimate success of population control now rests in convincing women to use contraceptives by the hundreds of millions, and that advocacy towards this end is the most important current mission for Ford. (IV) As a result, after 1990 Ford has spent slightly more on population control through the funding of international advocacy; the program now stresses the feminist agenda and provides funding for groups that attack institutional and philosophical barriers to their agenda, especially the Catholic Church. Most importantly, abortion advocacy is now recognized as a central Ford funding priority.

## STAGE ONE: ORIGINS OF FORD POPULATION PROGRAMS

When the industrialist and automobile manufacturer Henry Ford died in 1947, he left most of his fortune to the Ford Foundation, which immediately became the richest foundation in America. Only five years later, in 1952, the Foundation made its first donations to population programs. The most authoritative source on these early years of Ford Foundation population programming is Bernard Berelson, who served as a Ford program officer between 1951-57. In an interview given in 1973 for a proposed history of the Ford Foundation, Berelson stated that Ford ventured into population at the encouragement of Ford associate director Rowan Gaither,

...not because anybody saw this as a big emerging issue in the modern world, or anything like that...The Foundation got into population because Rowan Gaither...knew that two board members were interested in population because their wives were Planned Parenthood nuts and were always bugging them, 'Well, what are you doing about population?'...Rowan said, 'Let's do that. Let's have a study. Let's see what we can do about population.'<sup>2</sup>

According to Oskar Harkavy, who worked on Ford population programs for over thirty years (between 1953-1988), the two referenced women were Elizabeth Cowles, wife of *Minneapolis Tribune* publisher John Cowles, and Mrs. Frank Abrams, wife of the chairman of Standard Oil of New Jersey. Elizabeth Cowles was known as the "Margaret Sanger of the West" for her ardor for birth control. According to Harkavy, neither woman was particularly interested in the effects of population growth on global resources; both were primarily interested in providing birth control to thin the ranks of the poor.<sup>3</sup>

Under Gaither's direction, Ford began with a small grant to a demographic institute and advocacy group called the Population Reference Bureau. Gaither also commissioned a report by Ford staffer

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<sup>2</sup> Bernard Berelson, cited in Oskar Harkavy, *Curbing Population Growth: An Insider's Perspective on the Population Movement* (New York: Plenum Press, 1995), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.



Waldemar Nielsen, who concluded that Ford ought to spend more money on international population programs.<sup>4</sup> Ford's leadership approved Nielsen's report, and began to award limited grants, including one to the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, to send delegates from the developing world to the 1954 World Population Conference in Rome, the United Nation's first major foray into population issues.

Several factors, however, would ensure that Ford program officers limited their initial population grants. Between 1952-54, the United States Congress launched two major investigations of foundations (known as the Cox and Reece Committees), and many program officers, including those at Ford, were therefore wary of giving any money to controversial activities. In addition, Harkavy reports, Ford associate director Robert Maynard Hutchins, former president of the University of Chicago, claimed that Ford should not fund demographic studies because demography was not a science and was "dominated by charlatans." Noting that demographers in the 1930s failed to foresee the post-1946 baby boom, Hutchins stated that demographers "are no good and I'll have nothing to do with them."<sup>5</sup>

The program officers, however, were most apprehensive of Ford Foundation's chairman, Henry Ford II, and his potential reaction to the inclusion of population control within Foundation programming. In 1953, Henry Ford II was not only the chairman of the Foundation, he was also president of Ford Motor Company, itself, and the Foundation's vast endowment consisted entirely of Ford Motor Company stock. So, even though Henry Ford II had signed a document in 1948 stating that he would have no more influence on the Ford Foundation than any other trustee, Foundation staffers knew to tread carefully. What worried them most was that Henry Ford II had just married Anne McDonnell, a Roman Catholic. Would he therefore find population control programs objectionable?

Foundation officers fears' proved unfounded, however. Ford program officer Berelson recalled that Henry Ford II voiced no objec-

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

tion to population control when he was queried on the subject by a member of the Ford Foundation board. "I don't give a damn," he said, "as long as [Archbishop] Fulton Sheen doesn't get after my wife. I don't give a damn what you do."<sup>6</sup>

What is more, all of the other obstacles to Ford population grants disappeared in the period from 1954-56. Congress launched no more investigations of foundations and Henry Ford II resigned as Ford Foundation chairman in 1956. Finally, the Fund for the Republic, which was headed by Robert Maynard Hutchins, proved so controversial in its grants to civil rights and civil liberties organizations that Ford spun off the Fund – and Hutchins – in 1957.<sup>7</sup>

With these major barriers gone, the Ford Foundation gave its first grant to a population control organization, the Population Council, in 1954. This initiated a series of grants that would total \$88 million between 1954-1993, with occasional grants since then. The Population Council, the brainchild of John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup>, would become a seminal organization in the population control movement, a clearinghouse for vast sums of money invested in research into demographics and, most significantly, in the development of various contraceptive drugs and devices.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Morse Wooster, *The Great Philanthropists and the Problem of 'Donor Intent'*, revised edition (Washington, D.C.: Capital Research Center, 1998), p. 24-28.

## THE FORD FOUNDATION, THE POPULATION COUNCIL AND JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER 3<sup>RD</sup>

For the first 25 years of Ford's grants on population, its funding was intertwined with the population control efforts of John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> (1902-78). The Ford Foundation was the second-largest contributor to the Population Council, behind only the various Rockefeller funds and foundations. Moreover, the Ford Foundation would occasionally fund a population control project that John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> would chair. Therefore, to understand the Population Council's origins, the Ford Foundation's work with the Council, as well as some of the Ford Foundation's other important population control initiatives, it is essential to understand Rockefeller's own interests and contributions to the field.

The official history of the Population Council states that Rockefeller's first known interest in birth control and population arose in 1934, when he wrote to his father, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., stating that population control "is the field in which I will be interested – as I feel it is so fundamental and underlying."<sup>8</sup> In 1948, he convinced the Rockefeller Foundation to send a team of researchers to Asia, where they determined that over-population would be a major problem on that continent.

After the trip, Rockefeller, as a Rockefeller Foundation trustee, tried to convince the other members of the foundation board to establish a division on population. His request was rejected. According to Frank Notestein, who was a member of the Rockefeller research team and later served as the Population Council's third president, some Rockefeller Foundation program officers thought that any funds spent on population control might come from "funds devoted to established programs." Others believed the best way to aid the poor was by the Foundation's research on improving agriculture and food production. Still others were opposed because of

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<sup>8</sup> *The Population Council: A Chronicle of the First Twenty-Five Years, 1952-1977* (New York: Population Council, 1978), p. 9.

the typical “bureaucratic reaction to the introduction of ‘sensitive’ work.”<sup>9</sup>

Opposition also came from the Catholic Church. Historian Donald T. Critchlow states that, in 1950, some Rockefeller Foundation staffers met with Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York, who forcefully stated his opposition to the move to embrace population control. In addition, according to Critchlow, some Rockefeller Foundation staffers feared that establishing a birth-control program “might antagonize leaders of the many Catholic countries they worked in, especially in Latin America.”<sup>10</sup>

Given these concerns, as well as the fact that Rockefeller’s control over the Rockefeller Foundation was no more than that of any other trustee, he decided to establish an independent organization to advance the cause. In a private memorandum written in 1952, Rockefeller’s legal counsel, Donald Maclean, stated that Rockefeller not only should head a new population control group, but that his client “has the time to do it and that one of the things he most needs is some activity which will occupy his full time five days a week.”<sup>11</sup>

So in June 1952, 31 population researchers convened in Williamsburg, Virginia to create the Population Council. Many of these experts came out of the eugenics movement, the drive to improve the quality of the human population through controlling aspects of human reproduction. Historian Linda Gordon notes that these eugenicists, while rejecting the “racism [and] the vicious coercion” of Nazi eugenics programs, nonetheless believed that planners could “improve” the population through various active measures. She counts six out of ten members of the Population Council’s original medical and advisory boards as having been associated with the eugenics movement.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Frank Notestein, “John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup>: A Personal Appreciation,” *Population and Development Review*, September 1978.

<sup>10</sup> Donald T. Critchlow, *Intended Consequences: Birth Control, Abortion and the Federal Government in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Donald Maclean, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Linda Gordon, *Woman’s Body, Woman’s Right: Birth Control in America*, revised edition (New York: Penguin, 1990), p. 388-89.

In his memoirs, Frederick Osborn, who served as the Population Council's second president, between 1957-59, observed that he would not have joined the Council if he could not simultaneously continue his work with the Eugenics Society:

The Population Council was concerned with the growth and quantity of populations and the Eugenic Society was concerned with the quality of populations, and both were concerned with the differential rates of reproduction between people of different kinds and between individuals at different levels of education and intelligence. Both were in the field of biosocial evolution. Both discussed their common interests...along with the geneticists, anthropologists, and others who had a similar interest.<sup>13</sup>

It is little wonder that one of the Population Council's first grants in 1955 was a three-year matching grant to the *Eugenics Quarterly*, a journal dedicated to the study and dissemination of information on improving the quality of the human population. The connection between the Population Council and the eugenics movement, however, runs even deeper. Donald Critchlow observes that when the Williamsburg Conference came around to issuing a report, one proposal would have called for research to promote "positive eugenics," the desire that, "within every social and economic grouping, persons who are above the average in intelligence, quality of personality and affection, will tend to have larger than average families." The paragraph was dropped on the objections of former US Surgeon General Thomas Parran (a Catholic), who convinced Rockefeller that "the implications of this, which I know are intended to have a eugenic implication, could easily be misunderstood as a 'Nazi master-race philosophy.'" <sup>14</sup>

Critchlow also finds evidence of concern among many of the participants at the Williamsburg Conference with the influence of the Catholic Church. Warren Weaver, a delegate from the Rockefeller Foundation, observed, "I will be blunt...we are talking about population from the viewpoint of Western Protestant philosophy and what

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<sup>13</sup> Frederick Osborn, *Voyage to a New World, 1889-1979: A Personal Narrative* (Garrison, New York: privately printed, 1979), p. 135.

<sup>14</sup> Critchlow, op. cit., p. 23.

is from the point of view of the majority of the planet, a minority point of view.” When asked if the Council should also include Catholics, demographer Kingsley Davis of the University of California, Berkeley, responded that “If the committee were required to have representation of diametrically opposed points of view, it would be hamstrung. To get this thing really moving, we have to assume the committee will have in mind people with similar points of view.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

## EARLY YEARS OF THE POPULATION COUNCIL

Donald Critchlow observes that when the Population Council was created, one person who was concerned about its existence was John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup>'s brother, Nelson, who was worried that the Council's very existence – and the Rockefeller money behind it – could prove damaging to his political career. The two brothers met at the Knickerbocker Club in Manhattan, and John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> dictated a summary of the meeting to legal counsel Donald Maclean. According to Maclean, John told Nelson that most newspapers had ignored the creation of the Council, and that since the council had “a responsible board of directors whose integrity and motives could not be reasonably questioned by the outside world,” the Council could not be used as a weapon by political rivals.<sup>16</sup>

For its first five years, the Population Council stayed small, and limited its grants to funding demographic research. This was partially due to the problems faced by any startup nonprofit, but also due to restrictions placed on grants by Ford and other donors. Oskar Harkavy notes that a Ford grant of \$600,000 in 1954 to the Council could not be used “for biomedical research or family planning,” in part because Ford members feared that Henry Ford II would object.<sup>17</sup>

This Ford grant, even with such restrictions, was still significant, because the Council had previously received its entire budget from John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup>'s personal fortune. The Ford grant, note historians John Ensor Harr and Peter D. Johnson, “broke the ice for outsiders,”<sup>18</sup> including the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, David Rockefeller, and a second Ford grant of \$1 million in 1957.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> Harkavy, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> John Ensor Harr and Peter D. Johnson, *The Rockefeller Conscience: An American Family in Public and in Private* (New York: Scribner's Press, 1991), p. 42.

<sup>19</sup> Between 1915-20, the Rockefellers relinquished control of the Rockefeller Foundation. In 1941, John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup>, along with his brothers David, Laurance, and Nelson, created the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to pursue their charitable interests. Each brother, however, continued to give on his own.

By 1959, the Population Council was an established organization, with its members' concerns about population *quality* effectively cloaked by the seemingly-more-legitimate concern about population *quantity*. One research project funded by the Council, although small, would have profound implications. The Population Council sponsored demographer Ansley Coale's research into the question of whether civilization's ability to feed humanity could keep pace with population growth. The logic was simple: if farmers cannot be more productive, then drastic population control measures would be necessary.

Working in collaboration with fellow scholar Edgar M. Hoover, Coale constructed a computer model and concluded that countries with high fertility rates and low incomes would continue to stagnate economically unless some measures were introduced to cause fertility rates to drop. The scholars predicted that per capita incomes in low-income countries with high fertility rates would rise by 38 percent between 1956-86 if fertility rates remained high, but that wages would rise by a much more significant 95 percent during the same period if fertility was substantially reduced. "At any stage in the foreseeable future of the low-income countries with high fertility," Coale and Hoover concluded, "a reduction in fertility would produce important economic advantages. Since these advantages are cumulative, the ultimate benefits of fertility reduction are greater, the sooner it occurs."<sup>20</sup> Coale and Hoover's study was a major influence on population control advocates, and was used as proof that population control programs were essential in order to achieve substantial poverty reduction and development.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ansley J. Coale and Edgar M. Hoover, Population Growth and Economic Development in Low-Income Countries: A Case Study for India's Prospects (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 311.

<sup>21</sup> Subsequent research by Julian L. Simon found that the Coale/Hoover study was flawed because their model looked at incomes, but said nothing about how productive workers were, and as workers become more productive, national income rises. Coale and Hoover assumed that wages would rise, not because workers produced more, but that low fertility ensured fewer workers in the labor force. Coale and Hoover's study, Simon wrote, offered no evidence about "the relationship of fertility to economic development." Julian L. Simon, The Economics of Population Growth (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 237.



## FORD FUNDS THE IUD

Historians John Ensor Harr and Peter D. Johnson observe that the mid-to-late 1950s were a “period of quiescence” in the population-control movement, at least in public.<sup>22</sup> But by 1959, the Population Council had become an established organization (with the financial support of Ford), and if Henry Ford II had ever been a roadblock to Ford involvement in population control, by this time, his role at the Foundation had been substantially reduced.

In March 1959, Ford funded the first of what would eventually total approximately \$150 million in grants for research on birth control, with grants peaking at \$18 million in 1969.<sup>23</sup> The first grant of \$1.05 million to the Population Council (to be used for postdoctoral fellowships at the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology) was extremely large for the time; Oskar Harkavy, the Ford population staffer, notes that *Fortune* estimated that the *entire* amount spent on birth control research for the previous year was only \$900,000.<sup>24</sup>

By 1960, Harkavy was able to announce Ford’s birth control goals, which included the invention of “an inexpensive, absolutely safe and effective pill that need be taken only once a month to insure against conception during this period.”<sup>25</sup> How successful was Ford money in developing birth control devices? The answer needs some qualification. While Ford Foundation grants paid for half the Population Council’s budget during this period, and this budget was used on contraceptive research and development, other donors’ contributions, while small, were also important. For example, Donald Critchlow observes that two 1962 grants to the Population Council from the Scaife Foundation (\$500,000) and from Cordelia Scaife May (\$3 million) enabled the Council to give one hundred grants to researchers in the Third World to study the effectiveness of the IUD and to hold international birth control conferences.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Harr and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>23</sup> Roy Hertz, “A Quest for Better Contraception: The Ford Foundation’s Contribution to Reproductive Science and Contraception Development, 1959-1983,” *Contraception*, February 1984.

<sup>24</sup> Harkavy, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>26</sup> Critchlow, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

It is certain, however, that Ford's grants to biomedical researchers had long-term consequences. One such grant was to Cambridge University's Marshall Laboratories to support the work of R.G. Edwards throughout the 1960s. In 1978 Edwards, working with obstetrician Patrick Steptoe, delivered Louise Joy Brown, the world's first baby conceived through *in vitro* fertilization. Edwards credits Ford with providing long-term support for this endeavor, and in a report sent to the Ford Foundation, declared that "without the help of the foundation in the 1960s, it would have been impossible for me to have continued the work that led to the birth of Louise Brown, work that is now exploding all over the world and which is going to open wide so many fundamental studies on human conception."<sup>27</sup>

Edwards's response to Ford's aid was typical. John Caldwell and Pat Caldwell, authors of the official history of Ford population programs, state that "all the institutions that received Foundation money in the early 1960s now attest that they were able to do so much with it because it was flexible and had so few strings."<sup>28</sup> Ford grantees – most notably at the University of Wisconsin, the Harvard Medical School, Columbia University, Sweden's Karolinska Institute, and Israel's Weizmann Institute – used Ford money to refine such contraceptive pills as Depo-Provera and the Pill. While these two pills were developed by pharmaceutical companies, Ford Foundation grants made these drugs easier for women to use. Ford funds were also essential in tracking how the new contraceptives were accepted and used in the developing world.

As for grants to the Population Council's Biomedical Division, a distinction must be made between the Biomedical Division's activities before and after massive US government funding for population control began in 1965. For example, the Population Council's research in the late 1960s on chemical abortifacients seemed to lead to a dead-end, but the French firm Roussel-Uclaf used the Council's research as the basis for the abortion drug RU-486, which was introduced in 1982 (and is now available in the United States). But

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<sup>27</sup> Cited in Harkavy, *op. cit.*, p. 99-100.

<sup>28</sup> John Caldwell and Pat Caldwell, Limiting Population Growth and the Ford Foundation Contribution (London: Frances Pinter, 1986), p. 59.

because the Council's research was funded by a grant from the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the responsibility for RU-486 must be placed on the US government, not the Ford Foundation.<sup>29</sup>

Oscar Harkavy does, however, credit Ford money with helping to bring about the creation of the intra uterine device (IUD). For example, pre-1965 Ford grants to the Population Council enabled the development of several forms of IUD, most notably the "Lippes Loop." Harkavy also mentions Ford money as being essential to the creation of Norplant, matchstick-sized hormonal contraceptives placed under the skin of the upper arm.

In 1971, the Population Council reorganized part of its Biomedical Division, and created the International Center for Clinical Research (ICCR) from \$5 million in start-up funds from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. ICCR, explains Harkavy, not only perfected Norplant (which was introduced in 1990 after decades of clinical trials) but also created other "new contraceptive methods, including injectables, pills taken weekly, monthly menses-inducing pills, pills taken before intercourse, transcervical sterilization, and reversible vasectomies."<sup>30</sup> It is difficult to know how many of these innovations could have abortifacient properties, but it is clear from both the Population Council's and the Ford Foundation's enthusiastic embrace of the IUD, that neither organizations consider the destruction of the early embryo, at least before implantation in the uterus, to be of major concern. In fact, both groups continued to call the IUD a contraceptive device, even though the IUD often works after conception, to stop an already-conceived embryo from implanting.

All of these new contraceptive devices, including the IUD, are irrelevant for population control if they are not widely distributed, and here Ford money filtered through the Population Council proved to be crucial. Historian Donald Critchlow notes that in the early 1960s, the Population Council licensed rights to the Lippes Loop to South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Pakistan, and

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<sup>29</sup> Harkavy, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Egypt. At least seven million IUDs were manufactured under these licenses.<sup>31</sup>

Frederick Osborn, the Ford Foundation's second president, notes that the Population Council not only spent \$2 million between 1961-63 in order to develop the IUD, but then was able, through another division, to place the IUD "into immediate large-scale use in the underdeveloped countries." Within one year after the IUD was introduced in 1963, Population Council funds had ensured the device would be used by 50,000 women in Taiwan, 100,000 in South Korea, and had been declared by the Tunisian government to be part of that nation's birth-control policy.<sup>32</sup>

In 1979, Richard Magat conducted the only independent review ever done of Ford Foundation activities. While crediting Ford with helping to develop the IUD and other contraceptives (thanks to Ford's support of the Population Council), Magat observes that Ford thought its work in contraceptives was far less successful than the Rockefeller Foundation's "Green Revolution," which improved Third World agriculture through the introduction of, among other things, genetically-engineered rice. "As to results," Magat concluded, "Foundation funding has surely contributed to an explosion of fundamental knowledge in reproduction, although *the* device – the 'miracle rice' of birth control – has not been invented."<sup>33</sup>

## CASE STUDY: FORD IN INDIA

In the 1960s, Ford began to dramatically increase its funding on population control, until it reached an all-time peak of \$25 million in 1966. Throughout the 1960s, the Ford Foundation approached the Third World with "can-do" activism. Frank Notestein, the third president of the Population Council, provides a typical example of the attitudes of this period when he describes a meeting he had with John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> in the early 1960s. At the time, Rockefeller

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<sup>31</sup> Critchlow, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>32</sup> Frederick Osborn, "American Foundations and Population Problems," in Warren Weaver, ed., U.S. Philanthropic Foundations: Their History, Structure, Management, and Record (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 371.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Magat, The Ford Foundation at Work: Philanthropic Choices, Methods, and Styles (New York: Plenum Press, 1979), p. 95.

told Notestein that “his effort to slow the rate of population growth” was not “an end in itself, but as one of the important means of fostering the attainment of the basic goals of aiding the poor and finding a more abundant life for all the world’s people.”<sup>34</sup>

Ford advisers were active in many parts of the world, including Pakistan, Taiwan, South Korea, and several Latin American nations. But its largest operation was in India, where the Ford Foundation compound in New Delhi was the second-largest American building, trumped only by the US Embassy. According to political scientist Meredith Minkler, Ford officials had so much power that they called themselves “Ford wallahs,” a Hindi term denoting people of particular importance and influence.<sup>35</sup>

Ford’s operations in India date back to 1950. In the 1950s, Douglas Ensminger, the head of Ford’s Indian programming, grew close to Indian Prime Minister Jawarahal Nehru. According to historian Kathleen D. McCarthy, Prime Minister Nehru repeatedly asked Ford and US government agencies for family-planning funds, and his requests were rejected because at the time the Foundation was still wary of the controversial subject of population control. After 1959, however, Ford’s population control programs in India began to expand. In 1960, Ensminger requested \$2.5 million from Ford to “launch an attack on all phases of the population problem.”<sup>36</sup> After this grant was approved, Ford sent Population Council researcher Sheldon Sagal and gynecologist Anna Southam to India. On Sagal’s recommendation, Ford contributed \$1.7 million in 1962-63 to eight Indian research institutions to subsidize research into birth control.

According to McCarthy, in 1962 Ensminger asked the Ford board of directors for \$12 million. His goal was to create two new organizations: the Central Family Planning Institute, or CPPI, which was designed to carry out the family-planning activities approved by the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>35</sup> Meredith Minkler, “Consultants or Colleagues: the Role of U.S. Population Advisers in India,” *Population and Development Review*, December 1977.

<sup>36</sup> Kathleen D. McCarthy, “From Government to Grassroots Reform: The Ford Foundation’s Population Programs in South Asia, 1959-1981,” in Soma Heva and Philo Hove, eds., *Philanthropy and Cultural Context: Western Philanthropy in South, East, and Southeast Asia in the 20th Century* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1997), p. 133.

Indian government as part of that nation's Third Five Year Plan, and the National Institute of Health Administration and Education (NIHAE), designed to critique how family-planning was carried out in 19 test sites.

From the start, McCarthy charges, Ford's Indian population-control effort was "an extremely troubled enterprise."<sup>37</sup> Ensminger's request was too much for the Ford board of directors, which slashed it to \$5 million. As part of the cuts, the number of test sites was reduced from 19 to 4. At the same time, the cuts aroused ire in the Indian Health Ministry, which complained that Ford was not honoring its original commitments. Ensminger, in turn, charged that Indian Health Minister Sushila Nayar wanted the Ford funds for her own projects; "her every move," Ensminger recalled afterwards, "was directed toward diverting budgeted funds from family planning activities to build up the public health infrastructure."<sup>38</sup> This point is particularly instructive: the Ford Foundation representative complained when a government minister wanted to spend money in line with government-defined priorities – building the public health infrastructure – instead of using it on Western-inspired population control.

Despite these difficulties, by 1963, Ford's family planning program in India began in earnest; Sheldon Sagal, the Population Council researcher sponsored by Ford, personally helped to smuggle the first Lippes Loop IUDs into India disguised as Christmas ornaments.<sup>39</sup> Ford's operations expanded dramatically after 1965, when the Indian government made population control an official priority and USAID began to commit government funds to population control on a massive scale.

It is difficult, in hindsight, to determine the operational boundaries between Ford's population control activities in India and those of USAID. The boundaries were certainly porous; the head of Ford's

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>39</sup> "The Lippes Loop had to be smuggled because the devices had not been approved for use in India. Minister Nayar gave conditional approval for the loop's use early in 1964, after being personally assured by population controller Alan Guttmacher that the device was safe. The Indian government approved use of the loop in 1965." *Ibid.*, p. 136.

International Division after 1966, David Bell, came to Ford from USAID. But one way to view the boundary is provided by historian Peter J. Donaldson, who agrees with a USAID development specialist of the period named C.P. Fitzgerald. According to Fitzgerald, Ford, along with the Rockefeller Foundation and the Population Council, tried to “convert the throne” – to persuade high-level government officials to accept the dire need for population control and to develop policies that responded to this dire need. In contrast, USAID development experts tried “to win a wider audience and convert the people” directly, by going to villages and the countryside in what Donaldson calls “house-to-house contraceptive distribution schemes.”<sup>40</sup> So, although there was undoubtedly coordination between Ford and USAID, it is likely that in India, Ford can be held more responsible for official Indian government policies than USAID.

However, Ford did not neglect the role of public advocate for contraceptives. In fact, Ford helped provide ideas and advertising campaigns to convince Indians to use contraceptive devices. Ford officials were particular enthusiastic about condoms. According to former USAID officer John P. Lewis, one Ford plan, introduced by Ford consultant Peter King in 1968, involved USAID funds being used to reduce the price of condoms to three for two cents. And, for the first time, Indian men did not have to go to a clinic to get condoms, but could go to local convenience stores to buy condoms when they needed soap, tea, or flashlight batteries, thanks to USAID grants given to multinational corporations including Unilever, Imperial Tobacco, and Union Carbide. Lewis notes that this project had some success, but was thwarted by Indian government bureaucrats, who demanded that the condoms be distributed through the state and that state officials create the ad campaigns.<sup>41</sup> Historian Kathleen McCarthy, however, declares this campaign (known as “Ninodh,” or “protection”) “an immediate success,” as it ensured that Indian men devel-

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<sup>40</sup> Peter J. Donaldson, *Nature Against Us: The United States and the World Population Crisis, 1965-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 66.

<sup>41</sup> John P. Lewis, “Population Control in India,” in Harrison Brown and Edward Hutchings, Jr., eds., *Are Our Descendants Doomed? Technological Change and Population Growth* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), p. 258.



oped such a fondness for condoms that Indian condom sales hit the 400 million mark by 1970.<sup>42</sup>

McCarthy describes another Ford condom campaign, created in 1968 by Ford consultant Frank Wilder and Indian Assistant Family Planning Commissioner D.K. Tyagi. This was the campaign of the “four faces,” a four-member family that symbolized how happy parents would be if they limited themselves to two children. Advertisements for this campaign, McCarthy writes, were plastered on “billboards, buses, locomotives – anything that moved and many things that did not were adorned with the new symbols in an attempt to raise consciousness about contraceptive use.” At one point, this campaign featured an elephant named “Lal Tikon” (“Red Triangle”), that traveled from village to village, “passing out condoms from her trunk.”<sup>43</sup>

Ford population controllers also spent much of their time advising Indian government officials. During many periods, they even ran divisions of the Central Family Planning Institute, which was supposed to be an indigenous Indian enterprise. From the start, Ford met resistance from Indian government bureaucrats. At this time, Indian leaders were enthralled with Soviet-style central planning schemes. John P. Lewis notes that the Indians’ population control plan placed “maximum reliance on the quick, successful building of an enormously large and complicated, conceptually centralized bureaucracy” that would “awaken individuals to their own best interests.”<sup>44</sup> Moreover, Lewis observes, these planners assumed that there would be no religious or cultural resistance to the enterprise, even though Mohandas Gandhi had forbade Indians from using any means of artificial birth-control.

Tensions also arose between Ford advisers and the Indian bureaucrats, since some Indians questioned the concept of “tied aid,” where funding would only be provided as long as foreign advisers were accepted along with it. According to political scientist Meredith Minkler, at least one American condom shipment was blocked by the Indian government when it discovered that the condoms would

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<sup>42</sup> McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>44</sup> Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 250-51.



only be given if the government accepted the service of six American advisers – whose salaries cost far more than the condoms. Two Indian scientists interviewed by Minkler stated that they believed that Ford advisers were condescending; the “Ford Foundation felt they needed to keep an eye on me,” one said.<sup>45</sup>

Indians retaliated by imposing bureaucratic roadblocks. Research in the remaining four areas (of the 19 test areas Douglas Ensminger proposed to the Ford board) took up \$3 million of the \$5 million Ford budget. But in 1967, the Indian government blocked access to the four areas; as a result, the plan, known as the “Intensive District Scheme,” never took place. Four Ford population control experts, Minkler writes, found themselves “with nonexistent assignments in a nonexistent project.” Ford team leader David E. Price cabled Ford headquarters in New York that the Intensive District Scheme failed in part because “it is perceived by many Indian officials more as a Ford scheme than as an Indian scheme. I think this may account in part for the unenthusiastic response the plan has received with the [Indian] government.”<sup>46</sup>

How successful was the Ford family-planning enterprise in India? USAID officer John P. Lewis cites some evidence that the different programs failed on their own terms. Indian government statistics showed that the number of IUD insertions fell from 813,000 in 1965-66 to 480,000 in 1968-69. The fall in condom use followed a similar trajectory. And Indian enthusiasm for sterilization (two million Indians, allegedly “volunteers,” were sterilized in 1967-68) declined quickly as a result of international outrage over Indian mass sterilization schemes.<sup>47</sup> What is more, there is evidence that the Indian government statistics are themselves inflated, that these programs were therefore even less effective. Political scientist Edward Pohlman questions statistics based on payments to district officials for meeting assigned contraceptive quotas. One consultant told Pohlman that when counting vasectomies, district public health officials would routinely say they performed 30 vasectomies when

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<sup>45</sup> Minkler, *op. cit.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

they actually did 20, keeping the extra fees for the remaining 10 and dividing the money among the staff. When these officials would be asked by advisers for the list of men on whom they performed the operation, the officials would routinely say that a third of the men “could not be found.”<sup>48</sup>

Corruption also took place in Indian programs designed to pay women for avoiding pregnancy. Women would receive six rupees every three months for not getting pregnant; however, pregnant women would often still receive the money, as long as they gave a portion of the money to an inspector, “and both would be ahead financially.”<sup>49</sup> To fool honest inspectors, women would often carry the urine of non-pregnant friends with them, and switch urine samples when required.

Overall, a system of population control based upon financial incentives for government officials, contraceptive providers and potential users creates a climate where corruption and coercion can flourish. The Ford Foundation helped to design this system of quotas and incentives, and there is no evidence that Ford seriously considered the possibility that corruption would become commonplace.

Even more troubling, Ford advisers, along with other Western observers, raised no moral objections to Indian government programs of forced sterilization and other forms of mandatory birth control. There is no evidence that Ford warned the Indian government when actual coercion became apparent. Nor is there any evidence that Ford called upon the Indian government to redesign its population control programs to eliminate this coercion. Indeed, according to Lewis, Ford planners, along with their colleagues in USAID, thought that the policy environment in India, an environment in which coercion flourished, was particularly helpful to population control. “The policy design,” Lewis writes, “implicitly assumed that population control was a *politically neutral* issue in India. Statesmanship could be exercised without great cost. There was pride in the fact that formal, doctrinal religious opposition was minimal.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Edward Pohlman, *How to Kill Population* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 141.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>50</sup> Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

## STAGE TWO: FORD AND THE US EMBRACE OF POPULATION CONTROL

In 1960, international population control was largely funded by foundations. The only government agency actively funding birth control at the time was the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). By 1970, however, population control had been embraced by both national governments and international agencies. Ford Foundation leaders enthusiastically supported this fundamental change, which allowed them to divert their own funding streams towards other programs, secure in the knowledge that population control would still be heavily subsidized. In fact, the Ford Foundation was at least partly responsible in bringing about this shift, in convincing the governments of the developed world – especially the United States – that it was in their own national interests to promote population control in the developing world.

During his presidency (1953-1961), Dwight D. Eisenhower was against government involvement in overseas population control programs. “When I was President I opposed the use of federal funds to provide birth-control in countries we were aiding,” he wrote in a 1963 *Saturday Evening Post* article, “because I felt this would violate the deepest religious convictions of large groups of taxpayers.”<sup>51</sup>

But in 1959, General William Draper, chairman of a presidential commission on military assistance, first suggested that population control was essential for US national security reasons. He was denounced at the time, by President Eisenhower as well as by other administration officials. The Kennedy Administration, by contrast, was more open to the arguments of population controllers. Kennedy’s Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was himself previously president of the Rockefeller Foundation, and was well-connected to the non-profit world. In December 1961, the Department of State hired its first population adviser, career Foreign Service officer Robert A. Barnett. According to historian Phyllis Tilson Piotrow, Barnett began covert meetings with staff of the Rockefeller and Ford Founda-

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<sup>51</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Let’s Be Honest About Ourselves,” part II, *Saturday Evening Post*, October 26, 1963.

tions, the Population Reference Bureau, Planned Parenthood, as well as with John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> himself. Piotrow reports that Barnett was advised to “talk about the problem [of population] all you can, but don’t put anything in writing.” Accordingly, Barnett was “talking so constantly about population that people began to avoid him in the elevators.”<sup>52</sup>

President Kennedy, according to Piotrow, was skeptical of population control, although he never explicitly condemned it. He stated in a 1961 press conference that “population control is a matter which goes very much to the life of a country. It is a personal decision and a national decision which those nations must make.”<sup>53</sup> However, in the summer of 1962, President Kennedy asked General Draper (who was already well known as a leading population controller) to visit Brazil to assess the stability of the Brazilian government in light of what population control advocates considered to be unsustainable population growth. Robert Kennedy arranged for Draper to present his findings in a fifteen-minute audience with the president. Piotrow reports that Draper asked, “Do you have ten or fifteen minutes, Mr. President, to hear about the population problem which is especially serious in Northeast Brazil?”

Draper then gave his presentation, stating that the population in that region was growing faster than food or jobs. “Why doesn’t the Ford Foundation concentrate all of its resources on the population problem around the world?” President Kennedy asked. Draper replied that Ford was intensely involved in population issues, and that he had personally asked Ford Foundation chairman John McCloy to increase Ford’s population control activities. As Draper was about to leave, President Kennedy again said, “I don’t see why the Ford Foundation doesn’t concentrate on this issue.”<sup>54</sup>

This exchange is President Kennedy’s only known comment on the Ford population program. But the Kennedy Administration and the nonprofit world kept in close contact. In November 1962, Sec-

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<sup>52</sup> Phyllis T. Piotrow, *World Population Crisis: The United States Response* (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 60-61.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73-74.

retary of State Rusk held a secret meeting with the heads of 30 large foundations, including Ford, to discuss population control matters. The meeting, organized by John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup>, deliberately excluded Planned Parenthood president Cass Canfield on the grounds that he was too controversial and might draw unwanted attention and criticism. At the meeting, Piotrow reports, Secretary Rusk urged that government “needed the stimulus of private ideas and research,” but that the American government should not offer population-control assistance unless other countries requested it.<sup>55</sup>

While there was never an explicit link between foreign aid and birth control in the Kennedy Administration, the barriers were starting to crack. In 1962, restrictions preventing USAID from using government funds for population control were quietly removed. In October 1963, the US ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, met openly with Planned Parenthood leaders.

Unlike President Kennedy, President Johnson felt no compunction about spending government funds on population control. In 1965, USAID formally set up an Office of Population and appointed Reimert Ravenholt to head the office. In fiscal year 1965, this office gave out eight grants, worth \$892,000 in total; by fiscal year 1971, the number of USAID population grants had risen to 54, worth \$36.2 million.<sup>56</sup> By 1970, USAID was spending \$20 million in India alone while Ford, in contrast, was now spending \$15 million on all population programs combined.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, from the late-1960s onward, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Bank also began to spend massive sums on population control.

Faced with being a smaller piece of a larger population control pie, Ford Foundation leaders increasingly shifted their emphasis to lobbying for even more government aid. One sign of this change came in 1967, when the Ford Foundation announced \$15.7 million of grants for research on contraception. The grants (including \$5 million to the Population Council) made the front page of the *New York Times* – along with Ford president McGeorge Bundy’s state-

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>57</sup> McCarthy, op. cit., p. 140.

ment that the US government needed to shoulder an even greater burden of population control funding. Bundy said that there were limits to what the Ford Foundation could do to create new contraceptives. "In this, as in other fields," Bundy said, "the foundation and other private sources can hope only to drive an opening wedge for more extensive, publicly supported efforts."<sup>58</sup>

A second Ford effort to lobby for more government money, this time from the international community, took place in 1968-69. According to Phyllis Tilson Piotrow, many advocates thought that the United Nations was not spending enough on population control, and that it was more willing to fund demographic research rather than programs in the field. General Draper, working with at least four State Department officials, "unofficially conveyed" to Secretary General U Thant "that the US and other governments would support a UNDP [United Nation Development Programme] population assistance effort based on separate voluntary contributions" from UN member states.<sup>59</sup>

As part of this effort, Ford gave a grant to the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) to convene a "National Policy Panel on World Population." The panel was chaired by John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> and included prominent population controllers, including Ansley Coale and Frank Notestein. Two Ford Foundation program officers – Oskar Harkavy and David Bell – also served on the panel. The panel's report, written by British economist Stanley Johnson, concluded that "the population crisis is the world's concern. It is as important as peace itself."<sup>60</sup> The report praised the UN for spending money on population, but argued that it was not spending enough. "Though the population cake has been sliced this way and that," the panel argued, "very few crumbs have fallen into the lap of a hungry world."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Martin Gansburg, "\$15.7 Million Given to Spur Research on Contraception," *New York Times*, November 6, 1967.

<sup>59</sup> Piotrow, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>60</sup> "World Population: A Challenge to the United Nations and Its System of Agencies" (New York: United Nations Association of the United States of America, 1969), p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

The panel called on the UN to create a Commissioner for Population, that the budget of the Population Trust Fund rise from \$1.5 million to \$100 million by the end of 1972, and that the Commissioner for Population be able to cut red tape that prevented international population funds from being spent in the Third World.

Moreover, given the importance of family planning, “a Population Fund of substantial proportions is required...It may also be necessary to take a much more liberal attitude to the financing of certain recurrent costs, e.g., incentive programs to family planning field-workers and vasectomy clients, or supplemental payments to doctors and nurses.” While in the long term these tasks ought to be paid for by UN member states, “*in the short run*, while the delicate plant is taking root and before it begins to grow, some imaginative forms of ‘bridging’ assistance may be essential.”<sup>62</sup>

When the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA, later shortened to the United Nations Population Fund) was created in 1969, it did not precisely follow the Ford-funded plan. For one, it took a few years to separate what UNFPA would do from the tasks already being performed by the United Nations Population Division, which is the office that carries out demographic and statistical research. It is clear, however, that Ford’s efforts played a crucial role in convincing the UN to reorganize and spend more money on population control, and for launching the United Nations, through the United Nations Population Fund, into active population control programming.

Ford also began to attempt to alter Roman Catholic thinking on population issues and birth control, and to convince Catholic laymen to disregard the authoritative teachings of Church leaders, an effort that Ford still funds. Along with the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford co-sponsored a series of “Conferences on Population Problems” at the University of Notre Dame between 1963-67. The conferences were organized by George Shuster, special assistant to Notre Dame president Rev. Theodore Hesburgh. Donald Critchlow writes, “Only liberal Catholic academics were invited to these conferences,

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 35.



which were designed to introduce them to experts on population.”<sup>63</sup> The academics selected were thought to be most open to accepting dissent from Church teaching.

Aside from one column by Russell Kirk in *National Review* that condemned the conferences as “sexumenical,” it is not clear that these meetings received much other attention. But the population controllers seemed grateful that some Catholics were willing to listen to them, and perhaps even agree with them. Father Hesburgh was even appointed to the Rockefeller Foundation’s executive committee in 1966 – on the pre-condition that he would remain silent on all Rockefeller programs involving contraception, sterilization, and abortion.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Critchlow, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.



## STAGE THREE: FROM POPULATION CONTROL TO “REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS”

By 1970, the Ford and Rockefeller funds had done what they were designed to do: first, they had sponsored the successful creation of new contraceptive and abortifacient technologies – the means of population control – second, they had formed a national and international population control establishment that would fund the manufacture and distribution of these technologies into the developing world on a massive scale.

In a kind of “interlocking directorate,” population control advocates often worked simultaneously for nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Political scientists Peter Bachrach and Elihu Bergman examined this establishment in their book Power and Choice. Bachrach and Bergman looked at 26 high-ranking population controllers who had affiliations with more than one institution, and found that these figures had between two and five affiliations. One Population Council senior officer, for example, was also a Ford consultant and a consultant to USAID’s Population Advisory Group. A university professor was a Ford consultant, a member of a Planned Parenthood advisory council, and a USAID consultant. Another person was simultaneously on the boards of Ford, the Population Council, Planned Parenthood, and USAID. Still another person was a USAID advisor and also served on the executive committee of the National Academy of Sciences’ Study of the Consequences of Population Change.<sup>65</sup>

Despite this power and organization, the population control establishment was on the verge of dramatic change. The first tremors occurred in Ford’s domestic policy programs. In Louisiana, Ford funds supported Dr. Joseph Beasley, whose Family Planning Foundation began with one clinic in 1965 and had expanded to 148 clinics by 1972. These were public health clinics at which contraceptives were provided and abortions were performed. Beasley had obtained funds from Ford for at least five years, as well as \$14 million in federal

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<sup>65</sup> Peter Bachrach and Elihu Bergman, Power and Choice: The Formation of American Population Policy (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1973), p. 55.

funds. In 1972, Ford Foundation vice-president David Bell wrote his boss, McGeorge Bundy, secure that Beasley's work proved

...beyond a doubt that the combination of strong leadership, sophisticated management techniques, high quality services, and adequate funding ensure a high degree of family acceptance [of fertility control] in urban and rural areas. It is a useful model not only for other parts of the United States, but to some extent for other countries as well.<sup>66</sup>

Six months later, however, Beasley's empire collapsed. Investigators from the Louisiana State Medical Society discovered that the Family Health Foundation had simultaneously obtained funds from the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for the same programs. Federal funds had also been used, according to Donald Critchlow, "for entertainment, foreign travel, liquor, flowers, and apartments."<sup>67</sup> In addition, the Family Health Foundation used its funds for campaign contributions to two governors, two state senators, and a Louisiana Supreme Court justice, as well as for annual retainers of \$40,000 to former US senator Joseph Tydings and \$20,000 to Harry Dent, a former counsel to President Nixon. While investigators found no evidence that Ford Foundation program officers knew about Beasley's fraudulent schemes, they did show that Ford money was used to lobby the 38 federal agencies that gave the Family Health Foundation grants.

Beasley was found to have used \$6.2 million in federal funds fraudulently, and was sentenced to two years in jail. Freed after 17 months, he then obtained a fellowship at Bard College – thanks to a Ford Foundation grant.<sup>68</sup>

Ford programs also began to suffer setbacks in India. In 1970, K.K. Das became Indian minister of health and family planning. He had spent the 1969-70 academic year on a Ford grant studying at Harvard, but when he rejoined the Indian government, Das ordered

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<sup>66</sup> David Bell, cited in Donald T. Critchlow, "Implementing Family Planning Policy: Philanthropic Foundations and the Modern Welfare State," in Donald T. Critchlow and Charles H. Parker, eds., *With Us Always: A History of Private Charity and Public Welfare* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), p. 225.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

a ban on all official contacts with Ford advisers. As Oskar Harkavy recalled, Das “made it abundantly clear that the government’s family-planning program was prepared to operate without the day-to-day advice of foreign experts.”<sup>69</sup> In fact, two years after the Ford advisers were barred from Indian government offices, India ordered the departure of all USAID staff as a response to the US’s “tilt” towards Pakistan in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war.

In 1970, Douglas Ensminger was removed as head of Ford’s Indian operations. “Ensminger’s imperial style and expensive programs had been making the senior officers in New York increasingly uneasy,” Harkavy recalled. “He had entrenched himself through close personal ties with powerful members of the Board of Trustees who appreciated his vision and accomplishments and who were royally treated on their visits to India. Hunting parties on the backs of elephants were among the attractions Ensminger offered the more intrepid trustees.”<sup>70</sup>

The 1970s, overall, were a decade when Ford was determined to scale back its population control activities. Two trends – one financial, one ideological – ensured that Ford’s population programs would dramatically shrink. Financially, the 1970s were a difficult time for Ford. Ford witnessed one of the largest declines in its endowment in foundation history, as Ford attempted to maintain its high spending levels of the 1960s in the bear market of 1972-74. As a result, Ford lost a billion dollars, or one-third of its endowment. “No disaster of comparable magnitude has ever been recorded,” notes Foundation historian Waldemar Nielsen.<sup>71</sup>

As a result, the Ford population programs were cut back substantially. From 1975 onwards, general grants in contraceptive research were only awarded to programs deemed under funded by other agencies. In India, under Douglas Ensminger’s successor, Harry Wilhelm, Ford funded only what it called “Indian-inspired research” on contraception. Ford did, however, maintain a presence in India during the 1970s, even as population control was discredited during the

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<sup>69</sup> Harkavy, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145-46.

<sup>71</sup> Waldemar Nielsen, *The Golden Donors*, cited in Wooster, *op. cit.*, p. 30-31.

state of emergency imposed in India between 1975-77. During this period, Kathleen McCarthy notes, the Indian government performed 11 million sterilizations, replete with rampant mismanagement and coercion, “and studies showed that many of those treated were not even among the reproductive cohort the government was trying to reach.”<sup>72</sup>

While this cut in funds was going on, the population controllers at Ford and the other foundations also lost a major ideological battle with a new generation of feminists, who successfully switched the terms of the debate to the advocacy of reproductive “rights,” including abortion rights. The population control officers at Ford had seen themselves as offering “scientific” solutions to population problems. They thought they were navigating a middle ground between unchecked population growth and the draconian proposals made by more radical population groups such as Zero Population Growth. One of the ways they expressed this middle-ground stance was by being moderate foes of abortion (or at least not public proponents). However, the entire terms of this debate, and abortion’s place in the debate, would be transformed by the ascendant feminist notion of reproductive rights.

The Population Council, for instance, officially took no position on abortion until 1971, when it cautiously began to tilt towards abortion. “If we do not watch out,” former Population Council president Frank Notestein warned in 1973,

... we shall justify the assertion of our enemies that we are basically against life... The world needs some respected group that moves carefully where humanitarian considerations are involved. We can do all that if we constantly and firmly take the anti-abortion stance and use every occasion to point out that the need for abortions is the proof of program failure in the field of family planning and public health education.<sup>73</sup>

This statement captures the sentiment of the mainstream population control movement, including the Ford Foundation, concerning the topic of abortion. It is a sentiment that would not survive the 1970s.

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<sup>72</sup> McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>73</sup> Frank Notestein, cited in Critchlow, *Intended Consequences*, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

The explicit ideological fracture occurred at the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest. In contrast to the relatively mild 1964 conference, the Bucharest conference featured both angry women demanding a right to their bodies (and therefore abortion) and angry citizens of the developing world demanding radical schemes of forced income redistribution from rich to poor nations. “America’s promotion of global control of population growth,” one official observer summarized in an *aide-memoire*, “given a studied unwillingness of United States diplomats to admit that their nation is by far the greatest per capita consumer of world resources, and in light of the decidedly smug American presentation in Bucharest, smacked of hypocrisy to many delegates.”<sup>74</sup>

As an official observer to the conference, John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> prepared to give a major address, a speech that would communicate just where he stood in this growing debate, and what his considerable influence and financial support would now favor. By the early 1970s, it had already become clear that his thinking towards population had shifted. He had become enamored by the potential of sex education, funding the controversial Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).<sup>75</sup> He hired as his personal assistant Joan Dunlop, who had worked on Ford anti-poverty programs for seven years. Rockefeller sent Dunlop on a thorough study of sex education in America (including a trip to the Masters and Johnson sex clinic). He then had her work on drafting his speech for the Bucharest conference.

Long-time population control officers at Ford and the Population Council had become quite suspicious of Dunlop and the speechwriting team she had hired to help Rockefeller prepare for Bucharest. Bernard Berelson, who was about to retire as Population Council president, even sent Rockefeller a memorandum entitled “Marxist Perspectives on Population,” inferring that Dunlop was a “neo-Marxist” out to subvert their patron.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Cited in Harr and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 426.

<sup>76</sup> Critchlow, *Intended Consequences*, p. 180.

The older population controllers certainly had reasons to worry. In his speech, John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> switched sides in this internecine struggle. "The evidence has been mounting, particularly in the past decade, to indicate that family planning alone is not adequate," Rockefeller said. "I come to Bucharest with an urgent call for a deep and probing reappraisal of all that has been done in the population field."<sup>77</sup>

Rockefeller called for the agenda of the radical left, broaching the subjects of consumption and wealth redistribution, as well as feminist concerns over women's rights. "The internal task of the developed world is clear," he said, "to stabilize their own populations and moderate their levels of consumption in a sensible and orderly way." The developed world, moreover, often imposed its "own methods and values in the process of giving assistance." On women's issues, he stated that women "are often discriminated against in education and employment...what happens to women in the course of development efforts needs to receive careful consideration from both internal planners and external supporters."<sup>78</sup>

Rockefeller's defection from the population control movement (a movement he had had a large hand in creating) was followed by a vitriolic internal battle in 1975-76 over the Population Council presidency. Bernard Berelson had announced his retirement in 1973, but by 1975 no successor had been found. Several younger population controllers had been proposed for the presidency, but instead of endorsing one of them, Rockefeller selected Joan Dunlop to lead the search team for the replacement. She eventually came up with a candidate: George Zeidenstein, head of Ford's operations in Bangladesh. Zeidenstein was a lawyer, not a scholar, who had never published original research. But John Ensor Harr and Peter Johnson note that he had two essential qualifications: "he believed that population should be viewed as a sector of development, and he had made the first grants at the Ford Foundation for research on the role and status of women in developing societies."<sup>79</sup> In other words, he

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<sup>77</sup> John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup>, "Population Growth: The Role of the Developed World," *Population and Development Review*, September 1978.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Harr and Johnson, op. cit., p. 438.

accepted the new paradigm outlined in Rockefeller's Bucharest speech.

Some members of the Population Council board were worried about Zeidenstein's failure to produce scholarship. But led by John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup>, the board voted 11-2 (with two abstentions) to support Zeidenstein. The two dissenters, Frank Notestein and Bernard Berelson, resigned from the board. With their resignations, the Population Council moved away from more explicit population control and embraced development strategies and women's rights.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Zeidenstein became Population Council president in 1976, and stayed on until 1993. He faithfully followed the feminist agenda.

## STAGE FOUR: THE “MOTHER’S DAY MASSACRE” AND THE EMBRACE OF ADVOCACY

The currents of this debate roiled the Ford Foundation during the late 1970s. In 1979, McGeorge Bundy resigned as Ford’s president, and the new president, Franklin Thomas, showed decided ambivalence towards traditional Ford programs for population control. Five months after Thomas took over, a blood-letting at the Ford population program took place. Three-quarters of the Ford population staff were fired, with Oskar Harkavy and one assistant the only survivors. Harkavy labeled these firings the “Mother’s Day Massacre.” The upcoming years would witness a steep decline in Ford funding for explicit population control. Ford ended most of its funding of demographic research and cut back on its contributions to the Population Council (although grants to the council were never terminated). In fiscal year 1976, Ford spent \$21.9 million on population activities, including \$10 million on contraceptive research, \$3.7 million on the Population Council, and \$1.1 million on family planning. By fiscal year 1983, Ford was spending the relatively smaller sum of \$7 million on population, including \$4.9 million on contraceptive research, \$1.8 million on the Population Council, and just \$74,000 on family planning.<sup>81</sup>

Basic economics were part of this decline. As has been noted, Ford, like most foundations, was under the strain of Carter-era stagflation. Thus, new president Franklin Thomas’s first task was scaling back many established programs, including the population program. Ford population control programs became vulnerable to cuts due to this new leadership. But there were two other reasons for the cuts, reasons much more profound than a temporary economic downturn. First, the Ford Foundation had largely achieved what it had set out to do. In some regards, it succeeded beyond even population controllers’ wildest expectations. The remaining struggle would not be one of technology: with the help of Ford funds, various effective means of temporary and permanent contraception (including abor-

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<sup>81</sup> “The Ford Foundation’s Work on Population” (New York: Ford Foundation, 1985), p. 28.



tifacients) had been developed. Also, the remaining struggle would not be for government commitment to population control – Ford had convinced countries in the developing world, especially India, that they should limit their people’s fertility rates, and Ford had convinced countries in the developed world, especially the United States, that they possessed their own interests in funding population control in the developing world. Quite simply, since Ford had helped to produce contraceptives, and had convinced governments and the United Nations to pay for contraceptives, and pay for them on a scale that no foundation, however well-endowed, could hope to equal, Ford could move on to other areas of concern.

Thomas mentioned much of this in a December 1980 interview with the *New York Times*. Summarizing Thomas’s comments, the *Times* reporter wrote that some Ford programs

...may be refocused...in shifts such as the one from population and family planning toward expanded interest in nutrition and health-related problems. Population is now on the ‘world agenda’ and getting far larger support from United Nations agencies and governments than the foundation could provide, Mr. Thomas said. ‘The field and the needs have passed us by,’ he said, adding that he would prefer that Ford seek out areas where it could have a greater impact.”<sup>82</sup>

In some ways, Thomas felt comfortable in scaling back the population program, since Ford had already convinced governments to fund such programs at higher levels than Ford could meet, especially with its current financial difficulties.

The second reason for the decline in Ford’s population programs follows from the first: since contraceptives now existed, and the international community was now willing to fund their production and distribution on a massive worldwide scale, the last piece of the puzzle for effectively curbing population growth would be to convince people to use them. This would not be the work of demographers or biomedical scientists (the traditional recipients of population funds). This new work would be the responsibility of advocates,

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<sup>82</sup> Kathleen Teltsch, “3 Vice Presidents Stepping Down at Ford Foundation, in Major Shift,” *New York Times*, December 9, 1980.

especially the feminist advocates now gaining ascendancy within the liberal establishment. An added bonus is that, relatively speaking, this new work could be performed cheaply. Ford president Franklin Thomas explained the rationale for these changes in his President's Letter in the 1984 Ford annual report. "Our new course," Thomas wrote, "was influenced by the knowledge that improved contraceptives and their availability through effective family-planning programs would not by themselves reduce excessive rates of population growth. It had become increasingly clear that the success of population programs would depend on millions of individual decisions by men and women making personal choices about sexual activity, contraception, and childbearing."<sup>83</sup> Much of this new funding for advocacy to influence the "millions of individual decisions" would seek to establish international recognition of "reproductive rights" and "women's rights," including a right to abortion.

These sentiments were repeated in a seminal 1985 Ford review of population programs. Noting that Ford had spent \$260 million between 1952-83 on population programs, the study claimed that Ford slashed its population programs as international agencies boosted their own annual family-planning spending to \$500 million and developing countries added another \$1.5 billion. With this enormous increase in government funding, "the Foundation's trustees decided that the Foundation's role in population should be further modified...the Foundation had reason to be proud of its contribution. It was time to turn our orientation to new frontiers where we might also be able to make a contribution."<sup>84</sup> The report implicitly concluded that traditional population control programs, usually imposed from above, would need to be augmented by programs that sought to influence the previously private decisions of women and their families, a kind of revolution from below.<sup>85</sup>

An early example of Ford's new appetite for advocacy came at the 1984 World Population Conference in Mexico City. At Mexico

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<sup>83</sup> *Ford Foundation Annual Report*, 1984, p. xi.

<sup>84</sup> "The Ford Foundation's Work on Population," *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

City, Ford began to attack political and religious conservatives, the forces that could impede the spread of the new ethos among women in the developing world to accept limitations on births. According to Oscar Harkavy, when the the Reagan Administration announced that it would no longer issue government grants to oversees groups that provided or promoted abortion (what came to be called the Mexico City Policy), Ford board member Rodrigo Botero, a former minister of finance in Colombia, announced that the new policy resulted from “an unholy alliance between Reagan and the Pope.” Botero demanded that Ford take action in response to the Mexico City Policy.<sup>86</sup> Botero’s remarks also illustrate the beginning of an explicit embrace by long-time population control organizations like the Ford Foundation of a right to abortion (something they had been wary of before). This link would become even more pronounced in the years to come.

The 1985-90 period marked the financial low point of the old-time Ford population program. It still survived as a line item in the Ford grants budget, with annual grants of between \$1-2 million, but Oskar Harkavy notes that, in those years, population grants had to be approved by “an ever-increasing number of program officers with different interests and agendas.”<sup>87</sup> Overall, the influence of the Ford population program in this period “was marginal.”<sup>88</sup>

If Ford was not willing to fund “population” policies, though, it was eager to fund research on “reproductive health.” In 1990, the population program was even renamed “Reproductive Health and Population,” which reflected a growing unease within the international community with the “science” of population control, and at least a partial victory for feminist viewpoints. In 1991, Ford issued a paper stating that it was prepared to spend a good deal on reproductive health research, but in contrast to the pursuit of the demographic and biomedical expertise of the population control era, the new Ford programs would “create a new body of knowledge in the social sciences capable of collaboration on equal terms with the bio-

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<sup>86</sup> Harkavy, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>87</sup> Harkavy, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

medical sciences."The report boasted that of the 14 Ford staff members "working full or part-time" in reproductive health and population, twelve were social scientists.<sup>89</sup>

Among the items Ford proposed to fund were the creation of "one dozen multidisciplinary research and training sites in the social sciences and health" which would "pay special attention to the diversity of their staff in terms of gender and representation of the country's population." The centers would "inform programs and policies to improve reproductive health and further recognition of reproductive rights." Ford also proposed to establish "women-centered models of reproductive health care that would be sensitive to women's needs." And finally, the report proposed that staffers at Ford headquarters in New York "will also promote an informed dialogue on reproductive health issues in the United States and at the international level."<sup>90</sup>

Ford president Franklin Thomas continued this theme in his 1992 President's Letter. Thomas stated that in the 1980s Ford "engaged in an extensive review of its work on reproductive health, rights, and population."<sup>91</sup> Thomas said that the new reproductive health program would have three parts: grants to social scientists to study reproductive health policies, grants for programs that "strengthen efforts that enable women, but also men, to participate in decisions aimed at improving reproductive health," and funding for "groups that encourage a more open dialogue about reproductive health issues."<sup>92</sup> This is the funding of political action on reproductive policies, informed by feminist beliefs.

One document that summarizes Ford's thinking about population in the 1990s was the Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life. The Commission was a Rockefeller Foundation idea, but Ford was a major sponsor, and as such the report can be considered another Rockefeller-Ford joint venture. The Com-

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<sup>89</sup> "Reproductive Health: A Strategy for the 1990s" (New York: Ford Foundation, 1991), p. 22-23.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27-35.

<sup>91</sup> *Ford Foundation Annual Report*, 1992, p. xv.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xv.

mission, chaired by Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo of Portugal, consisted of 20 delegates from 19 countries and the Palestinian Authority. The Independent Commission met many times between 1990-94; their report was issued in 1996.

The Commission unanimously concluded that “reproductive rights” – which it defined as “the integrity of one’s body, informed consent concerning all interventions on or in one’s body, safe motherhood, freedom to decide as to how one enters the chain of successive generations” – were non-negotiable human rights. The commissioners argued that abortion, as a fundamental “reproductive right,” should be decriminalized. The Commission did reject coerced abortion – “using abortion as an instrument of control or of State policy for demographic regulation” – as well the use of abortion as a means of sex selection or as a “means of contraception,” although it is unclear what is meant by the last point, since abortion by definition can only occur after conception has taken place.<sup>93</sup>

The Commission reached several other conclusions, perhaps the most important of which was for all UN member states to endorse the major UN conventions, as well as to remove any formal reservations from the conventions. By writing reservations, nations that ratify UN documents voice concerns they may have over portions of the text, and even announce those portions that they will choose not to honor. Reservations also serve as a way for nations to insert what they consider to be the proper interpretations of controversial sections of the text into the international record. Thus, these reservations serve as an important limitation on international documents, and discourage those documents from being radically reinterpreted by international bodies like compliance committees, committees that are established to monitor the actions of nations in light of the conventions.

The Commission especially embraced the UN’s women’s rights convention, called the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As part of its endorse-

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<sup>93</sup> Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life, *Caring for the Future: Making the Next Decades Provide a Life Worth Living* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 223-24.

ment of CEDAW, the Commission's recommendations also stated that member states should agree to enforce mandatory pay for housewives, nationally-subsidized day care, national anti-sexual harassment policies, and mandatory affirmative action and equal pay laws.<sup>94</sup>

Also, by asking member states to remove their reservations from the CEDAW document, the Commission was seeking to increase the authority of the CEDAW Compliance Committee to interpret what the document obliged nations to do. For instance, many such reservations establish that individual member states would recognize no pro-abortion interpretations of the CEDAW document. This has proven to be important, since the CEDAW Compliance Committee has in fact "found" abortion rights in the original document – although the word is not mentioned – and has called upon a number of nations to legalize or increase access to abortion if they would like to remain in compliance with the Convention.

In addition, the Commission suggested that developing countries should implement a "comprehensive health policy," including "nutrition, family planning, and safe motherhood [which has also come to include calls for abortion rights], as well as food-price policy, the prevention of smoking among young women and girls, the promotion of sport and exercise, and proper transport and environmental facilities."<sup>95</sup>

The Commission also proposed that UNFPA, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) create a document defining minimally acceptable levels of reproductive health care to be provided to the Third World.

The commissioners called for the creation of a "new social contract" that would include a "commitment by all to strive together towards improvement...in the quality of life everywhere." The contract was to "articulate a new equilibrium able to create harmony between different age-groups throughout any demographic transition [i.e., population decline]."<sup>96</sup> The commissioners gave no guid-

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<sup>94</sup> Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life, *op. cit.*, p.240.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

ance as to who should write this contract or how it should be enforced. Its only concrete recommendation was that the contract should include clauses allowing for the expansion of the powers of non-governmental organizations in international agencies – another essential ingredient of the new advocacy that Ford would begin to subsidize.<sup>97</sup>

The Commission also urged developed countries to provide substantial debt relief to the Third World, as well as reduce or eliminate tariffs from goods produced by developing countries. Developed countries should increase their aid, and direct it to countries with per capita incomes of less than \$3,000. To pay for all of this new aid, the UN should create a transfer tax on all international financial transactions, and create a new agency to administer the funds collected by this tax. The UN should also pursue other “innovative financing mechanisms,” such as additional new international taxes.

Overall, these recommendations illustrate significant developments – as Ford embraced the struggle for reproductive rights, it also embraced international legal documents (like CEDAW), the non governmental organizations (NGOs) that could lobby on behalf of new documents, as well as new interpretations of existing documents, and the international organizations (like UNFPA) that would provide the reproductive services, themselves. Ford was learning the importance of international legal advocacy to achieve its radical feminist objectives.

Ford’s remaining population efforts in the early 1990s included a grant to “Women’s Voices 1994,” a meeting that resulted in a declaration about “women-centered population policies,” that was endorsed by 2000 women’s groups around the world.<sup>98</sup> Another grant went to Columbia University’s Development Law and Policy Program, which gathered 20 population experts to discuss ethical and legal issues relating to reproductive health.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> See Jeremy Rabkin, *Why Sovereignty Matters* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1998).

<sup>98</sup> Elizabeth Coleman. “From Population Control to Reproductive Health,” *Ford Foundation Report*. Summer 1994.

<sup>99</sup> See “Ruth Macklin on Ethics and Reproductive Health,” *Ford Foundation Report*, Summer 1994.



Ford awarded a grant to the Park Ridge Center to hold a conference in Genval, Belgium on the world's major religions and their positions on reproductive rights. Martin Marty, a University of Chicago professor of Christian history who served as the conference's *rapporteur*, said in an interview that the conference was "virtually unified in its positive evaluation of contraception," the lone holdout being one of the Catholics in attendance. Many of the non-Catholics that participated endorsed abortion rights, agreeing that "the fetus has rights but not all of the rights." The group also endorsed sex education, provided it was done in a way that enhanced "...human dignity. You can have sex education and treat it like plumbing, but if you have the concept that the religions have about human dignity you teach it in a different way. Religions stress nurturing and intergenerational communication. These things are not attended to very much in clinics and instructional videos."<sup>100</sup>

Ford also funded the production of a report on the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt. The ICPD outcome document, the Program of Action, reflected many of the same philosophical changes that were already underway at Ford, such as the move away from explicit population control programs and the new emphasis on reproductive rights. Overall, the scientific language of demography was replaced by the feminist language of women's empowerment, as well as the international legal language of human rights.

Ford's evaluation of ICPD, by Elizabeth Coleman and Christopher Reardon, appeared in the Fall 1994 Ford Foundation Report. The article endorsed the Cairo Program of Action, including its call for massive increases in population aid from national governments and international organizations. The program, Coleman and Reardon wrote:

...by giving new attention to the needs and concerns of women, sets a new and more humane basis for future population programs... This profound shift – eclipsed by news coverage of the prolonged wrangling over abortion despite winning the endorsement of 180 governments –

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<sup>100</sup> "Martin Marty on Religion and Population," *Ford Foundation Report*, Summer 1994.



will help billions of women determine the course of their lives and improve their families' well-being.<sup>101</sup>

Ford also gave a grant to an abortion advocacy group called the International Women's Health Coalition to produce a document summarizing the ICPD Program of Action and endorsing the "Cairo Consensus"<sup>102</sup> on reproductive rights that emerged from the conference.

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<sup>101</sup> Elizabeth Coleman and Christopher Reardon, "Out of Cairo: Forging a New Population Policy," *Ford Foundation Report*, Fall 1994.

<sup>102</sup> Adrienne Germain and Rachel Kyte, "The Cairo Consensus: The Right Agenda for the Right Time" (New York: International Women's Health Coalition, 1994.).

## RECENT FORD ADVOCACY EFFORTS

An internal reorganization in 1997 combined the Reproductive Health and Population section with Ford's domestic welfare programs into a new section, labeled "Human Development and Reproductive Health." Because of this reorganization, it is not possible to make accurate monetary comparisons between Ford's post-1997 population grants and earlier funding. In fact, having shifted from the population-control era of targets, quotas, and campaigns to the quieter era of "empowerment" and "reproductive health and rights," it is much harder to find out what Ford's population grants now fund. Nor have there been many newspaper articles promoting Ford activities or scholars analyzing recent successes or failures of Ford's population programs. Ford does continue to fund population control groups, though they too have long since altered much of their own language from explicit population control to women's rights; between 1997-2001, Ford's old ally, the Population Council, received \$6 million from Ford, while the Alan Guttmacher Institute received \$1.6 million.

Perhaps the most effective way to evaluate Ford's current population priorities is to examine what groups are now receiving large Ford contributions. The following organizations all received Ford funds sometime in the past five years.

### *Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC)*

Catholics for a Free Choice received \$418,000 (1998), \$1.2 million (1999), \$334,000 (2000), and \$1.2 million (2002) from the Ford Foundation.<sup>103</sup> Writing in *Insight on the News*, Joel Mowbray identifies the Ford Foundation as Catholics for a Free Choice's largest donor since 1997.<sup>104</sup> Catholics for a Free Choice exists almost solely to attack Church teaching on sexual morality, especially the Church's teaching on the sanctity of unborn human life. CFFC has a long-running campaign, called the "See Change" campaign, to have the Vatican's status at the UN revoked. Catholics for a Free Choice presi-

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<sup>103</sup> Ford Foundation Grants Database, [http://www.fordfound.org/grants\\_db/view\\_grant\\_detail.cfm?grant\\_id=163758](http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_detail.cfm?grant_id=163758).

<sup>104</sup> Joel Mowbray, "The Anti-Catholic Catholic Group," *Insight on the News*, August 2, 2002.

dent Frances Kissling, in a 2001 article in *USA Today*, attacked the Vatican's Permanent Observer status, stating that "the Vatican, relying on sectarian religious positions, can, and does, obstruct consensus reached by member nations at international meetings on critical issues such as family planning and public health policy....With the church's rigid insistence on its position as universal – to which all people, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, are subject – its UN role is increasingly viewed as inappropriate and untenable."<sup>105</sup>

In April 2002, it demanded that the UN launch an investigation of the Church as a violator of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also demanded that the Holy See "apologize to the world" at the UN Special Session on Children and that the Vatican reinstate its contributions to UNICEF (which had been withheld since UNICEF had become involved in the promotion of abortion) "in concrete reparations for the world's children."<sup>106</sup>

In January 2003, Catholics for a Free Choice attacked the Church's Doctrinal Note that Catholic legislators should base their decisions on Catholic principles because it "seems to be a throw-back to a pre-Vatican II conception of the relationship between the Roman Catholic church and the state...The views of the Roman Catholic leadership on these issues are closed to even thoughtful debate of differences" on abortion.<sup>107</sup>

In general, CFFC disagrees with the majority of Church teachings on family life and sexuality, including abortion, birth control and homosexuality, and disagrees with the Church on a host of other doctrinal issues not immediately related to abortion.<sup>108</sup> In a press release on the groups website dated November 5, 2003, CFFC's European branch demanded that the European Union repeal an exemption that permitted Catholic hospitals and schools to accept

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<sup>105</sup> Frances Kissling, "Church and State at the United Nations," *USA Today*, November, 2001.

<sup>106</sup> CFFC Petition. <http://www.cath4choice.org/new/Sexual%20Abuse%20Petition.htm>.

<sup>107</sup> CFFC Press Release, January 17, 2003. <http://www.cath4choice.org/new/pressrelease/011703VaticanStatement.htm>.

<sup>108</sup> For a complete account of Catholics for a Free Choice, see Dr. Thomas E. Woods, Jr., "War on the Faith, How Catholics for a Free Choice Seeks to Undermine the Catholic Church," International Organizations Research Group, (New York: Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, 2001.).

EU funds (which it claimed amounted to 99 million euros between 1997 to 2002) without being required to comply with EU non-discrimination employment mandates. The group says Catholic institutions accepting EU funds should be forced to hire gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and divorced people, as well as anyone who opposes Church teachings on abortion and other issues.<sup>109</sup>

### *Catholics for the Right to Decide*

A pro-abortion lobbying group that appears to be part of CFFC's effort to undermine the Catholic Church in Latin America, Catholics for the Right to Decide received \$418,000 (1998), \$300,000 (1999), \$486,500 (2000), \$100,000 (2002), \$420,000 (2003), and \$120,000 (2004)<sup>110</sup> in Ford grants. It claims to be a part of an "international network" with Catholics for a Free Choice within the US, and has branches in Mexico, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. It also asserts that it "works democratically and jointly for a woman's right to control her own body and for the full enjoyment of her sexuality without discrimination based on class, race, ethnicity, creed, age or sexual preference."<sup>111</sup>

### *International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)*

IPPF received \$300,000 (1997), \$300,000 (2000), \$150,000 (2001), \$200,000 (2003), and \$100,000 (2004) in Ford grants.<sup>112</sup> IPPF is the one of the world's largest abortion providers. Since the Bush administration has reinstated the Mexico City Policy, and since IPPF has refused to abide by the policy, the group has lost all of its US government financial support. IPPF director-general Steven Sinding has claimed that the loss of funding was part of a Bush administration "war on women" and that President Bush "is single-handedly

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<sup>109</sup> CFFC Press Release, November 5, 2003.

<sup>110</sup> Ford Foundation Grants Database, [http://www.fordfound.org/grants\\_db/view\\_grant\\_by\\_keyword.cfm?keyword=Catholics](http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_by_keyword.cfm?keyword=Catholics).

<sup>111</sup> Catholics for a Right to Decide, <http://www.cath4choice.org/lowbandwidth/engmexico.html>.

<sup>112</sup> Ford Foundation Grants Database, [http://www.fordfound.org/grants\\_db/view\\_grant\\_by\\_keyword.cfm?keyword=International+Planned+Parenthood+Federation](http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_by_keyword.cfm?keyword=International+Planned+Parenthood+Federation).

attempting to roll back commitments...and to ignore agreed-upon human rights and fundamental freedoms.”<sup>113</sup> In January 2003, IPPF declared that the Bush administration’s international social policies were a “stealth campaign” which was “systematically working to undermine reproductive freedom around the world.”<sup>114</sup>

### *International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC)*

The International Women’s Health Coalition received \$1,300,000 (1999) and \$1,250,000 (2002) in funding from Ford.<sup>115</sup> IWHC works to establish universal abortion on demand for women and girls. As with IPPF, IWHC has been a vocal critic of the Bush administration. IWHC continues to be one of the key players in the International Sexual and Reproductive Rights Coalition, which is made up of 18 non-governmental organizations devoted to promoting an international right to unrestricted abortions. In an April 2002 address to the UN Commission on Population and Development, the IWHC president asked UN delegates to “reaffirm the commitments regarding adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights that they have already made,” including an assurance that adolescents “have access to high quality, user-friendly, confidential sexual and reproductive health services, without discrimination.”<sup>116</sup> In UN parlance, reproductive health services include abortion.

### *Planned Parenthood Federation of America*

Planned Parenthood received \$75,000 (1997), \$300,000 (1998), \$1,000,000 (2001), and \$550,000 (2003) from Ford grants.<sup>117</sup> Like other pro-abortion groups, Planned Parenthood denounced the Bush

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<sup>113</sup> Thalif Deen, “Bush Under Fire Over Threat to Quit Population Pact,” *Inter Press Service*, November 4, 2002.

<sup>114</sup> [http://www.heldtoransom.org/Bush\\_War.htm](http://www.heldtoransom.org/Bush_War.htm).

<sup>115</sup> Ford Foundation Grants Database, [http://www.fordfound.org/grants\\_db/view\\_grant\\_detail.cfm?grant\\_id=164651](http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_detail.cfm?grant_id=164651).

<sup>116</sup> International Women’s Health Coalition, <http://www.iwhc.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page&pageID=459>.

<sup>117</sup> Ford Foundation Grants Database, [http://www.fordfound.org/grants\\_db/view\\_grant\\_by\\_keyword.cfm?keyword=Planned+Parenthood](http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_by_keyword.cfm?keyword=Planned+Parenthood).

Administration's defunding of UNFPA after UNFPA was found complicit in forced abortions in China,<sup>118</sup> and stated that the move "is further evidence that [President Bush's] alleged support for women's rights is shallow and insincere."<sup>119</sup> The organization also supported the Fifth Asian and Pacific Conference's decision in November 2002 to endorse the Cairo Population Conference's call for billions of dollars for "reproductive health." Planned Parenthood applauded the conference's rejection of US diplomatic efforts to encourage abstinence education.

In 2002, Planned Parenthood issued "George Bush's War on Women," a report which charged, in the words of Planned Parenthood president Gloria Feldt, that President Bush was engaged in a "single-minded determination to strip women of reproductive rights and access to the panoply of reproductive health services."<sup>120</sup> When President Bush decided to spend the unprecedented sum of \$15 billion to fight AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean in February 2003, Planned Parenthood urged its supporters to celebrate "National Condom Week" by sending a condom to the White House, to demand that condoms remain the centerpiece of any international AIDS prevention effort.<sup>121</sup>

### *Population Communications International (PCI)*

Population Communications International received \$400,000 (1997), \$210,000 (1999), \$550,000 (2000), \$495,000 (2002), and \$125,000 (2003) in Ford grants.<sup>122</sup> Population Communications International (PCI) injects population control messages into popular

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<sup>118</sup> For a complete account of UNFPA and China, see Dr. Douglas A. Sylva, "United Nations Population Fund: Assault on the World's People," International Organizations Research Group (New York: Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, 2002).

<sup>119</sup> Planned Parenthood Federation of America, <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/global/news/viewer.asp?ID=215>.

<sup>120</sup> Planned Parenthood Federation of America, <http://www.saveroe.com/content/index.php?pid=24>.

<sup>121</sup> Planned Parenthood Federation of America, [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about/pr/030214\\_condoms.html](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about/pr/030214_condoms.html).

<sup>122</sup> Ford Foundation Grants Database, [http://www.fordfound.org/grants\\_db/view\\_grant\\_by\\_keyword.cfm?keyword=Population+Communications+International](http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_by_keyword.cfm?keyword=Population+Communications+International).

culture around the world. The group has held seven “Soap Summits” featuring writers and producers of US soap operas. The most recent “Soap Summit” featured as keynote speaker Arianna Huffington, who said, “in order to change things, you have to be able to tell stories, whether in politics, in culture, or in soaps.”<sup>123</sup> PCI also tries to influence writers of Brazilian *telenovelas*, and in India was a partner in creating the radio soap opera “Taru,” in which “early marriage, son preference, birth spacing, and other critical health and social issues” are used as the basis for stories. The heroine of “Taru” works for a “reproductive health” clinic; numerous commercials in the series urge women to visit “reproductive health” clinics regularly.<sup>124</sup>

### *Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice Educational Fund*

The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice Educational Fund received \$350,000 (2000), \$300,000 (2002), and \$100,000 (2003) in Ford grants.<sup>125</sup> A group of abortion advocates connected with various liberal religious denominations, including the Unitarian Universalists, Reform Judaism, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, as well as Catholics for a Free Choice. They have denounced the Bush administration for “eleven instances of extremist interference in reproductive health,” including increases in the budget for abstinence education, nominating Charles Pickering, Jr., Priscilla Owen, and Michael McConnell to appellate courts, appointing Alma Golden as deputy assistant secretary for population affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services, appointing former congressman Tom Coburn to the President’s Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, and restricting funding of stem cell research.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Population Communications International, [http://www.population.org/newsarchive/archive\\_03winter\\_soapsummit7.shtm](http://www.population.org/newsarchive/archive_03winter_soapsummit7.shtm).

<sup>124</sup> Population Communications International, [http://www.population.org/newsarchive/archive\\_02fall\\_tarulaunches.shtm](http://www.population.org/newsarchive/archive_02fall_tarulaunches.shtm).

<sup>125</sup> Ford Foundation Grants Database, [http://www.fordfound.org/grants\\_db/view\\_grant\\_by\\_keyword.cfm?keyword=Religious+Coalition](http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_by_keyword.cfm?keyword=Religious+Coalition).

<sup>126</sup> Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, [http://www.rcrc.org/press/releases/2002/10\\_22\\_02.htm](http://www.rcrc.org/press/releases/2002/10_22_02.htm).

The coalition offers “A Community Prayer for Choice” by Rosemary Radford Ruether of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, which includes these opening and closing paragraphs: “

...God of our mothers and fathers, source of all life and new life, we are saddened by the conflicts we often experience, conflicts between life and life, between the affirmation of potential new life and the ongoing life that we have committed to nurture and strengthen, our own life and the lives of those we uphold and sustain... We stand together as a community today to bear witness to the ability and right of women and their families to make the best choice, based on their religious convictions, with faith and with trust.<sup>127</sup>

### *Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health and Ethics*

A group headed by Marquette University theologian Daniel C. Maguire, which has received a number of three-year general support grants from Ford, as well as funding from the MacArthur and Packard Foundations.<sup>128</sup> Maguire admits that “all of our scholars are recruited from the feminist, progressive zones of their religious. All are aware of the downside and debits of their traditions regarding our issues.”<sup>129</sup>

Maguire has a special animus towards both capitalism and the Catholic Church. The Consultation, he writes, recognizes “the market economy not just as a pattern of global business, but as a surrogate religion generating visions and value judgments and permeating and transforming cultures throughout the world in ways that are generally noxious.”<sup>130</sup> “Capitalism functions as a religion and an ethic for the gluttons of the earth,” Maguire writes in his *Ethics for a Small Planet*.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, [http://www.rcrc.org/resources/sermons\\_prayers/community\\_prayer.htm](http://www.rcrc.org/resources/sermons_prayers/community_prayer.htm).

<sup>128</sup> Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health and Ethics, [http://www.religiousconsultation.org/newsletters/May\\_2000.htm](http://www.religiousconsultation.org/newsletters/May_2000.htm).

<sup>129</sup> John C. Raines and Daniel C. Maguire, eds, *What Men Owe to Women: Men's Voices from World Religions* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), p. 281.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>131</sup> Daniel C. Maguire and Larry L. Rasmussen, *Ethics for a Small Planet: New Horizons on Population, Consumption, and Ecology* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. 8.



Maguire's most concise statement about the Catholic Church comes in his 2000 book *Sacred Energies*, where he endorses the ideas of Jesuit "liberation theologian" Alberto Munera. "Many people think that Catholic thought is obsessively focused on pelvic issues, on sexual and reproductive matters. On these matters, all that most people see is a bunch of pelvic taboos."<sup>132</sup>

Maguire has also shown ambivalence towards the Chinese government's "one-child" population-control policies, which have resulted in tens of millions of forced abortions and forced sterilizations. While granting that these policies are "morally outrageous," Maguire adds that "a readiness to believe the worst of Communist regimes may have discolored a lot of reporting on the one-child policy." He then proposes this thought experiment, which seems to endorse the ends, and therefore perhaps the means, of the one-child policy: suppose that the pro-democracy forces were not crushed at Tiananmen Square in 1989 and that communism was overthrown. "One possible result is that, with all coercive restraints on reproduction suddenly dissolved in what many in the West assumed to be a hunger for individualistic freedom and libertarian capitalism, the demographic lid on one fifth of the world might have blown off! Is our love of freedom enough to welcome that?"<sup>133</sup>

### *Sexuality Information and Educational Council of the United States (SIECUS)*

SIECUS received \$550,000 (1997), \$100,000 (1999), \$215,500 (2000), \$523,500 (2001), and \$400,000 (2003) in Ford grants.<sup>134</sup> Just as when John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> endorsed it in the 1970s, SIECUS is the leading advocate of liberal sex education in the US. Along with its allies, SIECUS has condemned the Bush Administration's support of abstinence education, stating that "federally-funded programs often rely on messages of fear and shame; deny young people lifesav-

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<sup>132</sup> Daniel C. Maguire, *Sacred Energies: When the World's Religions Sit Down to Talk About the Future of Human life and the Plight of This Planet* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 123.

<sup>133</sup> Maguire and Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>134</sup> Ford Foundation Grants Database, [http://www.fordfound.org/grants\\_db/view\\_grant\\_detail.cfm?grant\\_id=168015](http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_detail.cfm?grant_id=168015).

ing knowledge about pregnancy and disease prevention methods; present inaccurate, biased, and exaggerated information as fact; and teach specific religious beliefs.” It calls for cutbacks for abstinence programs funded through the Adolescent Family life Act and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program. SIECUS also demands that the Bush Administration chose the State Department – instead of the Department of Health and Human Services – as the agency that selects delegates to international meetings where matters of reproductive health and rights will be discussed; SEICUS seems to believe that diplomats will be more amenable to its agenda.

## CONCLUSION

What did the Ford Foundation get for its money? Along with the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford created the international population control establishment. Nearly every population organization created after 1950 was created with Ford seed money, and most major contraceptive and abortifacient technologies were developed with at least some Ford funding. As we have seen, this establishment was founded on the premise that there was a “science” of population control and that moral objections to this science were irrelevant. When the Catholic Church raised objections to Ford’s plans, Ford grantees unsuccessfully attempted to subvert the Church’s teachings.

After 1965, and at the behest of the Ford Foundation, national and international agencies took over the task of funding population control. This was a profound political accomplishment for Ford, since its grants of tens of millions of dollars could now be supplemented by – even replaced by – the hundreds of millions of dollars now available from developed countries and international organizations like the UN Population Fund.

Since then, its efforts on behalf of population reduction have now been largely replaced by funding for advocacy of women’s rights, including a right to abortion. While the older generation of population controllers was neutral or even hostile towards abortion, the new advocates of “reproductive health” and “reproductive rights” have claimed abortion to be a fundamental human right.

In this regard, the new advocates have also identified the Catholic Church as their primary enemy, and the Ford Foundation has willingly become their patron. Presently, Ford money continues to be a vital source of funds for some of the Catholic Church’s fiercest foes, such as Catholics for a Free Choice. Many of the groups listed above have ties to CFFC, which suggests that Ford now considers the repudiation of Catholic moral teaching, especially the Church’s teaching on sexuality, reproduction, family life and abortion, to be the primary purpose of its population/women’s rights programs. Considering how influential many of these organizations happen to be, and how they operate at the international level to develop new

and radical understandings of international law, the Ford Foundation – and the groups that it funds – should continue to be closely monitored.

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