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The World Population Conference

The UN World Population Conference and Population Tribune in Bucharest were held 19-30 August with an estimated total participation of 5,000 people. Naturally such an immense meeting, consisting of hundreds of sessions of different committees, sub-committees, panels, expert groups, ad hoc meetings etc. makes a synthesis and evaluation of the meetings impossible. Instead I will confine myself to a very general impression, and to remarks and conclusions as they concern our Region.

The Conference was not the first world conference on population—conferences were held in Rome (1954) and Belgrade (1965)—but the 1974 conference was unique in that for the first time official government delegations met. Whereas in Rome and Belgrade only scientists and other experts were gathered, this category was included in governmental delegations at the Bucharest conference as consultants or advisers. The Conference had the task of elaborating a global population strategy and an agreed World Plan of Action, which made the achievement of conference goals more difficult than at the earlier conferences.

The Conference was a political meeting, embracing the numerous contradictions and controversies which reflect existing divisions in the world. The debates reflected economic, cultural and ideological differences, and made it extremely difficult to reach agreement on the World Plan of Action. The Plan attracted many amendments on the part of individual countries and groups of

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WORLD POPULATION YEAR

Mikolaj Kozakiewicz reports on the World Population Conference held in Bucharest 19-30 August, and Julian Heddy gives a personal impression of the Tribune held at the same time.

Mogens Vemmer describes a Danish radio/TV project to provide information on contraception and VD to young people.

Some findings of a survey on contraceptive practice in Finland are summarised.

The recently published report of the Regional working group on Induced Abortion and Family Health: A European View is reviewed.

countries, so that day by day, the hope of arriving at a satisfactory consensus on this document appeared increasingly illusory. In the event, the clarity of formulation was lost; many different interpretations became possible, and the optional implementation of the Plan itself was assured.

Those who expected a clearly formulated and binding anti-natalist Plan were obviously disappointed, but from the first they suffered from wishful thinking and were evidently unaware of the very real difference in attitudes to the subject of population and family planning. For such people Bucharest was a bitter lesson in political realism. The majority of observers were however, fully satisfied with the results, even if it will take time for the practical effects of the Conference to be felt. The outcome of the Conference reflects the need for compromise in the divided world in which we presently live.

The scale of disagreement was large. For example, the basic question of

the relationship between population growth and socio-economic development provoked widely divergent views among governments. The so-called American recommendation for zero population growth, or plan for stabilised population, as the basic prerequisite for a nation's welfare and development was in total opposition to the Chinese statement which argued against any effort to limit and regulate population growth, since 'each man always produces more than he can eat himself.' Population increase in a given country, according to the Chinese statement should *always* be considered a positive factor in the development of the country. This thesis of the Chinese delegation came as a surprise to those who were informed on the considerable activities of the Chinese Government in the field of family planning at the domestic level, but this was not the only instance in which a delegation preached for external use, something rather different to that practised in its own country!

The Soviet delegation professed a 'golden mean', whereby population growth was considered as an important factor in development problems. The key problem in development, according to their viewpoint, consists in a more just and equitable distribution of goods and resources, the elimination of economic inequalities (20% of the world's population now uses over 80% of its natural resources,) and the elimination of political dependence and exploitation of one country by another. Birth rates, according to this view, would automatically decline, and population stability follow education and economic development. The Soviet delegation did not regard special efforts in the field of family planning as necessary.

Between these extremes a wide diversity of intermediate positions were assumed by different govern-

ments. Some African and Asian delegations expressed a suspicion that encouragement of family planning in the Third World might overlay racism and economic imperialism on the part of the largely white industrialised countries. This suspicion was even more clearly expressed in discussions and meetings at the *Tribune*.

Third World problems and the well known objections of the governments of these countries led those governments known for their policies favourable to family planning to carefully formulate their statements on this subject. Thus a Swedish delegate began a speech with the phrase 'Family planning is a notion regarded by many with some suspicion, and we must recognise that sometimes the suspicion is justified and reasonable.....'

The reason for such a careful statement needs to be seen in the context of the anti-neomalthusian mood which prevailed at both the Conference and *Tribune*. The restriction of family planning to birth control and fertility limitation was rejected by a large majority of participants at the Conference and by many *Tribune* participants. The finally accepted formulation was "responsible parenthood," a much more human and wider phrase. Personally, I found it satisfactory that this broader approach—what might be termed the *European* concept of family planning—was proved in Bucharest to be acceptable to other continents and other countries. This broader concept of family planning becomes important particularly in the field of education. As a member of an IPPF panel on the subject of family planners and population, I expressed the opinion that the interpretation of family planning as responsible parenthood, if properly understood and im-

plemented, far from limiting the scope of IPPF, enriches its educational activities.

The general impression of the Conference was that this meeting had become a forum for the clash between two different views of world development; the first, the global view, regarding the planet earth as a whole, and the second the regional view, limiting its horizons to single countries, continents or blocks of countries. Possibly the global perspective will prove to have been correct in the not so distant future, but at the time of the Conference it appeared that a global policy and strategy was premature at a time when the conflicts, inequalities, divergences and enmities were evident.

The clearly defined demand for policies appropriate to local needs and conditions led to a dilution of the draft World Plan of Action. Amendments such as 'at the request of people' or 'at the request of a given country', 'if so requested' etc., transformed the Plan (particularly as it affected family planning, the role of the NGOs, educational activities, the application of contraceptive techniques and the provision of contraceptives) from an obligatory document to an optional one.

Was this really a threat to or a defeat for family planning, as several IPPF delegates at the Conference feared? In my opinion it was not. Countries which have for long accepted these ideas will continue their policies regardless of what has been stated in the final conclusions and recommendations; countries which hitherto have not accepted the concept of family planning, or which indeed have prohibited it, in accepting a document which gives them the option of promoting responsible parenthood, are open to great progress and the necessary first step to full acceptance of the idea in the future.

Important for IPPF policy—and not only in relation to the Europe Region—is the clear message that family planning ideology and programmes cannot be exported, but that a very general common framework of basic principles and goals, carefully adapted to local ideological, political, cultural and economic situations, is possible. The Conference demonstrated very clearly the need for elasticity on the part of the IPPF, which can follow no one course, and the need to respect the autonomy of the national family planning associations, permitting them to choose their own goals and means of implementation. Only in this way can family planning activities be properly conducted in a particular country.

Family planning in itself is not an autonomous ideology or independent activity, but is only an instrument subservient to many ideologies and many nationally formulated policies. In the future, a more global approach to the population problem may be realised if international cooperation comes to outweigh national sovereignty but this moment has not yet come. Premature efforts to impose such a policy can only harm the main goal by increasing the level of political suspicion and reinforcing the impression of industrialised countries interference in the internal affairs of the developing countries, whose aspirations and needs are sacrificed for the sake of perpetuating standards of living in the rich countries.

The manifold conclusions of the Conference and *Tribune* should be carefully studied by IPPF member organisations, and taken carefully into consideration in their ideology, plans and programmes.

Mikolaj Kozakiewicz
Polish Academy of Science
Warsaw

The Population Tribune

The sideshow *Tribune* held concurrently with the World Population Conference was not, so they say, at all like the *Forum* held at the time of the 1972 Stockholm Environment Conference. It was in comparison a well mannered event in which, predictably, no unscheduled 'happenings' occurred. Predictably because the organising committee, consisting of 9 NGOs (including the IPPF) was at pains from the beginning to ensure that no 'embarrassing' incidents occurred. In the event perhaps the only embarrassment was the heavy security which surrounded John D. Rockefeller III's IUSSP lecture, an occasion marked more by establishment paranoia than dissident fireworks.

The *Tribune* was open to all comers. Those who attended were either sponsored by organisations, or paid their own way. Most arrived by plane, a few hitch-hiked; one group, from the USA, incredibly named Yogert II, made Bucharest a port of call as it bussed through Europe in search of college credits. 300 attended as official representatives of NGOS, 1100 as individuals. Many represented nobody but themselves, and for obvious reasons it was they who cut loose and overtly used the *Tribune* as a lobby for their respective causes.

A loose coalition of 'non Malthusians', consisting of the *International Working Group on Population and Social Development* (whose statement was reproduced in the July issue of the *Bulletin*), *Emerging Population Alternatives* and *Oi International* established an information desk and organised a series of open meetings which by the end had evoked considerable interest. A press conference called by the coalition after JDR III's presentation attracted over 100 people. Unlike an earlier, though sparsely attended press conference called by *Oi*, this conference was strangely not reported in the *Tribune* paper 'Planet'.

'Planet', a daily paper nicely produced by the IPPF, contained news of *Tribune* activities and the latest Conference developments. Widely read by participants, it seems also to have been a useful source of information for many of the journalists (there were over 650) covering the Conference proper.

The *Tribune* was a cafeteria offering a wide variety of dishes (32 concurrent sessions, 6 plenaries and 5 IUSSP lectures) differing in palatability. But above all it provided the opportunity for old friends (and enemies) to embrace each other and causes old and new. There was a bazaar-like atmosphere, with literature stalls cheek by jowl, varying in sophistication according to the wealth of organisation involved. The 'right to lifers' had a line in glossy leaflets in several languages, featuring a foetus on the cover, while at the adjacent desk posters proclaimed the right to abortion in the Italian womens lib context. A variety of buttons were displayed—the two most popular being 'Control the Pillage not the People', and 'My body belongs to me'. Display of the latter evoked a memorable response from the organisers, paraphrased in 'Planet', "They (the management and planning committee) have now reaffirmed the 'My Body Belongs to Me' buttons are not conducive to rational argument and may offend more sensitive parties." Ah well, good copy for 'Planet'.

Little coloured cards (it made a change from condoms) were distributed at one stage, featuring: "World Food Crisis?" on one side and "Eat the Rich" on the obverse. Some took this in good part—others were offended.

However, it would be pushing prejudice to the limit to convey the impression that such publicity activities were typical—on the contrary they were at least partly a reaction to the predominant propaganda put out by the rich organisations. The

sea of NGO publications and their limitless availability made one wonder whether all this talk of a world paper shortage were not some III World plot to cut down on industrialised bureaucracy. This quite apart from the official conference documentation. The *London Times* reported that the Romanian authorities wisely had ordered 5 times the quantity of paper requested by the UN (although in the event 10 times the amount was required). "I've never seen a conference with so many pieces of paper to distribute" said a UN staff member.

Tribune participants not possessing a press card (the real stuff was at the press centre) were fed a poor diet of Conference documentation, but perhaps they were better off in the end. A classic document aptly portraying bureaucracy at its most assinine was available. It concerned PRC objections to being at all featured in Conference Documentation: "The Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations has requested the Secretary-General of the World Population Conference that any reference or comments concerning its country contained in any official or background paper be deleted. All participants in the Conference are therefore requested to disregard those references or comments".

Various celebrities flitted on and off stage. Margaret Mead ("Pornography is manufactured by those who will never do it for those who can't do it") strode around like a bishop, with a cleft stick which never seemed to touch the ground. Rene Dumont bounced around speaking of cannibals and doom, not at all looking his age.

All in all a good natured circus—which is more than could be said of the Conference by all accounts.

Julian Heddy
Regional Office

Contraception in Finland, 1971

With a view to studying sexual behaviour and contraceptive practice in Finland, a representative sample of nearly 2500 Finnish men and women aged 18–54 years were interviewed by suitably trained public health nurses and midwives in November–December 1971, with a response rate of 92%. The following abstract is confined to certain findings on contraception.

Methods of contraception currently used (i.e. during the month before interview) by Finnish women aged 18–44 years are shown in the table below. The 39% using no contraception comprised: 21% without coitus; 15% infecund, pregnant or trying to get pregnant; and 3% with coitus, but without contraception or desire for pregnancy. The condom was used by 27%, oral contraceptives by 17%, withdrawal by 12%, and other methods (rhythm, IUD, diaphragm and/or spermicide) by only 5%.

Condom-users dominated pill-users among both single and married women. Younger women were more likely than older women to use the pill, but no more likely to use the condom. Consequently, in one age-group (20–24 years), pill-users (29%) exceeded condom-users (24%). Among married women, older women more than younger women, less-educated more than more-educated, and (among older women) working class more than upper and middle class women, and strongly religious more than weakly religious women, used withdrawal.

There appears little educational or social class differential in the use of oral contraception. Strongly religious women, particularly those under 30 years old, used the pill less than weakly religious women.

Category	Contraceptive Method (%)					
	Condom	Pill	Withdrawal	Other	None	
ALL	27	17	12	5	39	
Marital Status						
Single	21	14	7	0	58	
Married	30	20	15	7	28	
MARRIED WOMEN ONLY						
Age (years)						
Under 30	32	27	10	4	27	
30 & over	30	14	19	8	29	
Age/Social Class						
Under 30	(Upper/Middle)	34	26	8	4	28
	(Working)	35	27	8	4	26
30 & over	(Upper/Middle)	34	14	14	11	27
	(Working)	28	14	22	10	26
Age/School (years)						
Under 30	(Under 9)	30	26	15	5	24
	(9 & over)	33	27	6	4	30
30 & over	(Under 9)	26	13	23	8	30
	(9 & over)	35	16	14	10	25
Age/Religiosity						
Under 30	(Strong)	34	15	11	7	33
	(Weak)	30	33	9	5	23
30 & over	(Strong)	25	13	22	9	31
	(Weak)	34	16	16	8	26

Source: Leppo, K *et al* (1974): Contraceptive Practices in Finland in 1971: *Yearbook of Population Research in Finland* 8,47.

Danish Radio/TV 'Project P'

Most people were born by accident! is a slogan used by Denmark's Radio Children & Youth Department in its current campaign on radio and television, aimed at those aged 14–18 years.

After a series of informative (albeit rather dull) broadcasts on contraception and venereal disease between 1968–1973, we decided to change the style of our broadcasts, in order to reach young people who would never think of turning on a programme announced as an "information broadcast on sex life". We called the idea *Project P*, and held a number of meetings with governmental and private organisations engaged in sexual information activities in Denmark.

We described *Project P* thus: the Children & Youth Department plans a radio and TV campaign based on brief spots, slogans, mini-reports and profiles of young people. The half to two minute items will be broadcast before and after youth programmes and between features in magazine-type broadcasts. Film sequences will be broadcast mainly on Saturday afternoons, when youth programmes are normally broadcast.

The following subjects will be covered:

1. Contraception – the broadcasts will promote condoms and caps.
Form: serious information spots, humorous, anti-advertising spots, eg. with comedians.
2. Hygiene – illustrated by drawings and animated cartoons—eg. washing the girl's and boy's genitals.
3. Venereal Disease – illustrated by real films showing the symptoms of gonorrhoea in particular.
4. Morals – mini-profiles of different young people evaluating sexual intercourse at different ages; the right of any girl and boy to say "no" without being ridiculed.
5. Pregnancy – *Oh, how romantic!* – sardonic comments on the romantic concept of having a child at a very early age, before marriage; what having children means; and the material prerequisites of child rearing.

In addition to Denmark's Radio Council

and its subcommittee—The Children & Youth Committee—other organisations/committees agreed that the campaign should be as described above.

While there was no doubt about the intention of the broadcasts, the problem of language was raised. Were the words used for sexual activities and genitals identical in all social classes in Denmark, or did we run a risk of putting off the very people whom we wanted to reach? Discussion with teachers with practical experience in sexual guidance convinced us that the problem was not significant, as modern Danish usage among 14–18 year-olds was fairly uniform throughout the country.

Another difficulty anticipated was the reaction of adults to the use of words on radio and TV which might be considered offensive. We chose to ignore this problem, and fortunately received very few negative reactions, probably because the majority of adults agreed with the aim of the campaign, and that the end justified the means. Also anticipated was opposition from religious groups which might consider intercourse between unmarried young people sinful. However, the religious members of the Radio Council accepted the need for information in this field. All that remained was to get started!

Project P can probably best be described by examples of features recently included in the nationwide youth radio programmes broadcast on Sunday evenings between 20.00–23.00 hours, and on the Saturday afternoon TV programmes. A number of spots deal with the simple problem of remembering to use contraceptives.
Example – two young people are giggling and kissing, then say together "You did remember, didn't you?"
She: "what do you mean?"
He: "what do you mean?"
She: "no, what do you mean?"
He: "I mean we should remember..." – at this point children's voices are heard shouting "Contraception! contraception! contraception!"
She: "Oh, that – of course I remembered!"

We attach importance to sharing responsibility for contraception between the two partners, so the boy and girl alternately say "yes, of course, I remembered!"

In 1973, we mentioned condoms and caps (the latter supplied free-of-charge to girls over 15 years of age by the Mothers Aid centres), as well as oral contraceptives, obtained privately through a physician or from a family planning centre. However, with the increasing debate on the dangers of oral contraceptives we decided at the beginning of 1974 to omit these entirely.

The cap too was relegated to a less prominent position in the campaign, because it offers no protection against gonorrhoea, which is increasing in Denmark. That left only the condom (sold in pharmacies, hairdressers, many supermarkets, from street vending machines, and in restaurant toilets). As we considered that the responsibility for protection against unwanted pregnancy and gonorrhoea should be equally shared by the two partners, we tried to show that it is equally advisable for girls to take condoms with them when they go out.

Example – a close-up of a girl's handbag is shown, and a girl's hand searching.

She: "Now, let me see, I've got my bus-ticket, my keys, there is money in the purse, and the hairbrush is there too.....and there is a packet of condoms. Well then, I don't think I've forgotten anything!"

Other films have depicted girls in intimate situations handing the boy a condom. It has been essential to use a smile for making conversation about contraception among the young unembarrassing—a tactic employed brilliantly by the Swedes for several years.

Example – there is a rustling sound of leaves on the forest floor –

He: "Be careful!"

She: "What? you mean the ants?"

He: "Yes, those too, but...."

She: "Oh, you mean the nettles?"

He: "Oh yes, we will have to look out for those too, but what I meant was that we should also remember...."

She: "Now tell me what you mean we should remember....." etc.

Another group of spots dealing with gonorrhoea attempt to lessen the drama surrounding the disease, particularly the fear among many young people of disclosing that they suffer from gonorrhoea,

and of having it treated. The campaign is conducted under the slogan: "It's not your fault if you have gonorrhoea, but it is your fault if it goes any further...!"

Example – Female commentator: "Sadly enough, gonorrhoea is infectious, and gonorrhoea is a difficult venereal disease. If you aren't careful, it can lead to sterility, so you can't have children. It is more difficult for a woman than for a man to discover whether she has caught gonorrhoea, but if you have a yellowish discharge and smarting when you pee, it may be gonorrhoea. See your doctor immediately! Advice and treatment are free-of-charge. No matter how faint the symptoms are, you may infect others. And it is so easy to avoid getting gonorrhoea. Just use a condom every time".

The symptoms of gonorrhoea in boys and girls are illustrated with accompanying commentaries.

Here is an example of the way in which the necessary visit to the physician is made less dramatic:

She: "What happened when you saw the physician to be examined for gonorrhoea?"

He: "Well, first she took a sample of the mucus in my urethra with a swab. I'll know pretty soon if I have caught venereal disease. If I have, I'll get some penicillin. Later on, I must have a check-up, and they will take another sample."

She: "Did it hurt?"

He: "Oh yes, a little, but I'd rather be on the safe side".

She: "If you have the slightest suspicion that you may have been infected with gonorrhoea, call (telephone.....) and get information about the nearest place for treatment."

Other descriptions deal with the girl's visit to the physician.

We have no firm proof that anything we have done has helped, but we hope it has.

Mogens Vemmer
Head of Denmark's Radio
Children and Youth Department

Induced Abortion and Family Health: A European View

Thus the title of a report on a three-day meeting of an IPPF Europe Regional Working Group, held in Belgium in December 1973, published this month. The report expresses the views of the Working Group, whose 10 participants were drawn from Belgium, Britain, France, the German Democratic Republic, Sweden and Yugoslavia, with an observer from the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Why a distinctively *European* viewpoint? The IPPF's policymaking Governing Body has no policy on induced abortion, despite its 1971 resolution urging the provision of postabortion contraception, and the humane treatment of incomplete abortion. However, the attitude of the IPPF towards abortion has not always seemed entirely clear and, in order to clarify a changing situation, it was decided to convene a Europe Regional meeting.

The report is concerned with European problems, although the basic problem is universal: "the argument for liberalising abortion laws and practice gains nothing from contemplating the high birth rates in the Third World, and loses nothing from contemplating the low birth rates characteristic of contemporary Europe".

This short volume ranges widely: from cultural trends in fertility regulation and unwanted pregnancy, through counselling, to abortion techniques and ethics. Although not

highly original in content, its straightforward and mainly non-controversial tone should appeal both to those already well-versed in the subject, and to those who approach it afresh.

The Working Group's *Conclusions* (which do not necessarily reflect Regional policy) are remarkably similar to the conclusions of a WHO Regional Office for Europe Working Group, held in Finland in 1971, which are endorsed here, and reproduced in an appendix. Other appendices, containing material not readily accessible elsewhere, include English translations of the October 1973 Hungarian Decision on the Tasks of Population Policy (which restricted the availability of legal abortion from January 1974); and of September 1972 and October 1973 Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare circulars on Early Abortion: Technique and Patient Care; and Organisation and Resources.

Induced Abortion and Family Health: A European View is available, price £1.00 (plus postage), from the IPPF Europe Regional Office, 64 Sloane Street, London SW1X 9SJ.

International Planned Parenthood Federation
Europe Region
64 Sloane Street
London SW1X 9SJ.