

Here in North America we sometimes get the false impression that we are the only people with immigration control problems. The following three articles highlight the view from Europe in particular. The essay below is from The American Enterprise of May/June 1990 and is reprinted with permission from New York Times Syndication Sales.

# THE AFRICANIZATION OF EUROPE?

By Jean-Claude Chesnais

A major demographic shift occurred in Europe during the last two decades. Fertility dropped well below replacement levels. This change is not yet considered alarming, because the number of births is still larger than the number of deaths in most European countries. But the long-term implications for European employment and competitiveness are significant, and they have received much attention. Less well appreciated is another demographic transition affecting Europe. The differential between population growth in the more-developed world of Europe and the less-developed world of northern Africa is increasing. Europe faces an Islamization or Africanization as the demographic and economic gap between the two banks of the Mediterranean Sea widens and people move from south to north. This gap is the greatest ever seen in the history of mankind, and it has serious social and political implications.

## SOME POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

The current and expected differential in population growth between more- and less-developed countries will further increase the proportion of people of the less-developed world in the total world population. The rate of growth in the developing countries is twice that experienced by Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century when the continent's population expansion was at its maximum. While Asia and Latin America have reached a peak phase of their population expansions, the major increase in the rate of population growth still lies ahead in sub-Saharan Africa (where the death rate is still relatively high).

Clearly, Africa and the Near East have the greatest potential for population growth. At the end of the 1990s, Turkey, for example, will have more inhabitants than the Federal Republic of Germany or

France but less than a reunited Germany. In the next several decades, the population of Turkey could ultimately reach 100 million persons. A number of African countries that are currently considered small or medium-sized will exceed the present populations of the biggest EEC countries--Federal Republic of Germany, France, and the United Kingdom (55 - 60 million each) by the year 2025. These African countries include the Sudan (projected to be 55 million in 2025), Algeria and Morocco (60 million), and Egypt (95 million).

---

***"The abrupt and massive changes in world population distribution resulting from the demographic trends of the next few decades will lead to a reshaping of world political geography."***

---

The abrupt and massive changes in world population distribution resulting from the demographic trends of the next few decades will lead to a reshaping of world political geography whose general outline can already be foreseen. Young powers will emerge, basing their strength in large part on their population size and the stimulus it creates, and old powers will fade as their populations decline.

## TOWARD PLURI-ETHNIC SOCIETIES

During the 1950s and especially the 1960s, foreign immigration to the countries of Europe assumed sizeable proportions. The need for foreign labor was linked to strong economic growth and, to some extent at least at the beginning of this period, to the dearth of the country's own new entry-level local workers to the labor market. With the economic recession, migration policy changed and immigrant labor stopped arriving (1973-1974). Taking on new

workers at that time seemed less necessary because the supply of new local workers had by then reached a relatively high level. The large cohorts of the postwar baby boom continued to mature and provide new workers, a development that was reinforced by the increased level of female employment. Policies of encouraging migrants to return home were pursued in various countries with little effect, and the migration balance, although clearly declining, tended to remain positive. Three factors in this trend contributed to the positive migration balance: ongoing efforts to reunite families of immigrants, the admission of political refugees, and clandestine immigration. Foreign populations tend to grow faster than national populations in every country because of their youth, age structure and higher fertility, particularly in the case of communities of non-European origin.

In the 1970s, the countries of southern Europe, which had long been countries of immigration, began to record sizeable return movements of migrant workers and in turn became countries of emigration.

---

***"Demographic forecasts show that in those African and Asian countries most closely tied to Europe (former colonies), the age groups potentially most prone to emigration will grow substantially in the decades ahead."***

---

Migratory movements are tricky to predict, more so than other demographic patterns. Labor deficits may emerge in some areas in the 1990s when the small birth cohorts born since the end of the 1960s begin to arrive on the local labor markets. A renewed need for immigrant labor may arise. Two arguments point in that direction: past experience in Europe and the emergence of increasingly massive population surpluses in the countries of the southern hemisphere. Given the economic gap, important migration streams are also possible from Eastern Europe to Western Europe (or even from the USSR to Europe). As the history of demographic change in the various regions of Europe shows, there is a close interdependence in the long term between a country's fertility level and migratory patterns--first emigration in high fertility periods, then immigration as fertility declines.

Demographic forecasts show that in those African and Asian countries most closely tied to Europe (former colonies), the age groups potentially most prone to emigration will grow substantially in the decades ahead.

But migratory pressure is influenced not only by this demographic imbalance: it also depends on other factors, particularly the comparative economic and political situation in both the departure and receiving countries. Future trends are highly uncertain, particularly concerning public receptivity to immigrants in the receiving countries. The demographic imbalance is such, however, that the migratory pressure would seem at first sight to make flows toward the richer countries inevitable, even though the scale of those movements is impossible to predict. Such a trend toward pluri-ethnic societies would call for major adjustments.

#### THE MEDITERRANEAN DIVIDE AND THE GREAT MIGRATIONS OF TOMORROW

Fertility rates between regions sometimes only a few hundred kilometers apart may vary enormously. This is the case in Mediterranean countries. On the northern shore, fertility is falling year by year, foreshadowing major depopulation in a not-too-distant future hence a threat to the survival of the institutions and the cultural heritage of the societies concerned. On the southern shore, the population is going through its phase of maximum growth, and fertility ranges between four and six children on average per woman according to country.

This proximity of areas of population depression to areas of high population pressure is liable to give rise to considerable potential for migration. Consider the extreme case of Liguria in northwest Italy, where deaths are today 2.5 more numerous than births. Should fertility stay at its present level (one child per woman on average), the potential flow of entrants to the labor market (age group 15-24) that is today more or less equal to the potential flow of those leaving it (age group 55-64) would be some 3.5 times less in 2025. In other words, with unchanged rates, the proportion of outside individuals needed to keep the supply of working population constant would then have to approach 70 percent (2.5-3.5) among the generations of entrants!

Such a prospect of massive immigration is all the more likely when differences in standards of living are considered. In Italy, the real average standard of living (measured by using purchasing power parities) is four times what it is in Egypt; for many countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the ratio, again in relation to Italy, is as high as 1:10. Between Africa's average and that of the European Community, the ratio is 1:7.

The demographic pressure from southern countries and the economic attraction of northern countries create the conditions for people to leave. As French demographer Alfred Sauvy wrote: "If wealth does not go where people are, people naturally go where wealth is." Even on the unlikely assumption of massive transfers of capital from Europe, or, more generally, the rich world to Africa, it is hard to see African economies absorbing without disruption their active populations that are increasing at the rate of 3 or 4 percent per year. People will leave the south for the north, setting off in search of survival. This is one way that the complementary relationship between the north, rich in capital and poor in people, and the south, rich in people and poor in capital, might operate. It remains to be seen to what extent the imbalances on each side correspond and may permit these complementary adjustments.

The asymmetry in both capital and people is destined to grow during forthcoming decades. The cumulative birth deficit for the European Community is on the order of 13 million for the period 1975-1989, and today is close to 1.2 million per year, while for Africa, the annual surplus of births over the replacement rate reaches 15 million.

The greatest imbalance in the world is the one between Europe and Africa. The population of Europe is close to 500 million (400 million without the previously so-called socialist countries) and 700 million with Russia (west of the Urals).

Africa, which in 1950 had half the population of Europe, now has 600 million. According to the United Nations middle-series of projections (which exclude the impact of AIDS, which is now having significant effect on total populations of some countries), it could have 1 billion extra inhabitants 40 years from now. Population in the Middle East (including Iran)--another potential area of departure to Europe--might reach 300-400 million inhabitants, considerably more than the expected numbers of survivors and

descendants of the resident population of the present European Community. But in the long run, immigration could concern all the European continent, especially if economic reforms give fruitful results.

#### MEDITERRANEAN MIGRATIONS

The economic gap between the United States and Latin America is about one-half the gap between the EEC and Africa (measured in purchasing power parities, the ratio is 4:1 between the United States and Latin America, and 7:1 between the EEC and Africa). That difference can only grow, because African countries are industrializing much less rapidly than the countries of Latin America. Fertility gaps are striking, too. Latin America has already gone through the major part of demographic transition as the overall fertility index in 1988 is barely over 3.5, having peaked at around 6 in 1960. In Africa, by contrast, fertility is at its historical maximum.

---

***"...there will be...an excess  
of young people by comparison  
with the economic system's  
capacity to absorb them."***

---

There are close to one million more births annually in northern Africa than in the European Community. The contrast in age distribution among these two populations is clear and brings out the complementarity of the demographic structures. In Europe, there will be a surplus of old people, straining the capacity of economies to finance their retirements, and in northern Africa, an excess of young people by comparison with the economic system's capacity to absorb them. These imbalances will in all likelihood be mitigated by massive transfers of young people from south to north, thus reducing the burden of demographic aging in the north and that of unemployment in the south. If today the region of highest immigration is the United States, two or three decades from now it might be in Europe.

In the long term the shift in center of gravity of population, and no doubt of economic activity, the political weakening of the countries of the old continent, pressure from the southern countries, and worsening of tensions in the Mediterranean and the



Middle East might lead to reduced resistance in Europe to immigration. The 200-300 million survivors and descendants of present inhabitants of the EEC might be augmented by tens of millions of inhabitants originating in Africa and the Near East. Among these, the great majority would be made up of Moslems originating in the Mediterranean crescent running from Marrakesh to Istanbul. However extreme it may seem from a European viewpoint, the scenario of heavy migration is, from the viewpoint of the countries of emigration, relatively moderate. A Moslem population of 50 million in two or three decades coming from Mediterranean countries would represent only 10 percent of the potential population of that region in 2025, and only 20 percent of the forecast increase in population for the period 1985-2025.

---

***"The contrast between the two banks  
of the Mediterranean Sea  
has no equivalent in the  
history of mankind,  
and it raises serious questions."***

---

#### DEMOGRAPHIC TIME BOMB

A society's capacity for integration by no means depends only on the relative number of foreigners settling in its territory; it also depends on sociocultural characteristics, the geographical distribution of the

communities in question, and the effectiveness of local integration policies. But the question of numbers cannot be overlooked because of its political implications. Thus, security issues could emerge, and racial conflict could become a major problem on the political agenda.

European leaders will finally be forced to face up to the inescapable realities of the demographic time bomb. The shift is now slowly but inexorably altering the political, economic, and security future of many European nations. Migration to Europe from former colonies is expected; despite restrictive policies, it is going on now. Nonwhite migrants will settle in old Europe to take up the jobs abandoned by a fast-aging West European population. Europe will experience an "Africanization" and "Islamization," bringing tremendous transformation in the life of the old continent.

The contrast between the two banks of the Mediterranean Sea has no equivalent in the history of mankind, and it raises serious questions. Will rising populations in the south tend to produce political extremism and the breakdown of law and order in cities that will be major threats for regional relations and security? Conversely, will declining populations in European nations cause a sudden loss of dynamism? What kinds of needs or conflicts will two diverging worlds produce? One can at least predict very serious tension. The demographic challenge has never been so critical as it is now in Europe.

\* \* \* \* \*

---

## A Correction and An Update

In our reporting of "the Immigration Debates of the 1990s" in the Winter 1990-1991 issue of *The Social Contract* we made an error that needs correcting. We said that in his presentation Dr. Otis L. Graham, Jr. pointed toward a population of 500 million Americans by the year 2020 if the present California fertility rate of 2.3 children per woman were projected nation-wide.

Actually, the population of the US would be 500 million by the year 2050 if the California fertility rate pertained to the nation as a whole. It is also true that the population of California is projected to be 50 million by 2020.

We are informed by Dr. Leon Bouvier that the most recent figures released by the Demographic Unit of the California Department of Finance indicate the state's fertility rate is up to 2.5 in 1989. Dr. Bouvier went on to say, "What appears to be a significant gain in overall fertility is explained, at least in part, by the fact that California's Hispanic minority increased its share of the population and increased its fertility more than any other group."

*For another viewpoint on the effect on Europe of open borders between itself and the burgeoning populations of North Africa we present an editorial comment from the August 4, 1990 issue of THE ECONOMIST. In the new European Community the border of each nation-state will be only as secure as the most lax border-control of any member-state. The author takes it for granted that assimilation into European culture will be a necessity. Not only the United States is confronted with the three fundamental questions of immigration policy: How many to admit, who gets these visas, and how to enforce the rules humanely.*

## THE WOULD-BE EUROPEANS

### How Western Europe Should Respond to the Immigrants at Its Doorstep

Trainloads and Trabants forced the pace of German unification. That was just a foretaste of how the mass movement of people, or the mere threat of it, is about to drive European politics. Rich Western Europe is about to face an invasion from its poorer neighbors. This will not only confront governments with painful choices about whom to let in, and on what terms. It could crash through the cozy frontier-free European Community planned after 1992.

Rich Europe, for centuries a net exporter of people, is now an importer, attracting immigrants from two main areas. From the East come the fellow-Europeans, those whom communism has kept poor. Now that their own government lets them travel freely, Poles have been flocking to the West, where they can earn as much in a month as they do in a year back home. Not far behind will be millions of Russians, eager to flee economic misery when they are free to travel.

Bigger by far is the potential influx from the south. Just across the Mediterranean are North Africans who are even poorer than the Poles and Russians, so all the more attracted to western Europe's wealth. And their numbers are growing fast. The population of the three Maghreb countries--Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia--may double to 120 million or more over the next 30-40 years. For many of these huddled millions, prosperity will seem just a boat trip away.

As it happens, more young people are exactly what rich Europe will need. Low birth rates are turning the old continent grey. Unless some ingenious alternatives are found--automated builders, numerically controlled nurses, robotized cleaners, packers and waiters--there will be a huge demand for imported labor to do the jobs the natives leave vacant.

Demand-pull in greying Europe plus supply push from baby-booming North Africa: it sounds like a perfect match.

Wait. It is already plain that many people in rich Europe will not relish the invasion. Are they welcoming the new migrants from Europe's own East? Hardly. Some governments, having urged the former communist regimes to let people out, are now making it inexcusably hard for East Europeans to come in. In Germany, where so much effort is having to be spent on finding jobs and homes for fellow-Germans, it is becoming no joke to be a migrant Pole, let alone a Turk. East Europeans can be forgiven for feeling that they have demolished their Iron Curtain only to see the ramparts of a Fortress Europe rising up on the other side.

---

*"...the mass movement of people,  
or the mere threat of it,  
is about to drive European politics."*

---

As for newcomers from North Africa, they often face downright hostility. A lot of Europeans already think they have taken in too many. They dislike the competition for jobs and homes, they feel threatened by the arrival of large numbers of people with a different skin color, different habits, and, most often, a different religion, Islam. In France, which has taken in the most North Africans, from its ex-colonies, the backlash shows in 15 percent support for the anti-immigrant National Front. In Italy, race attacks are making regular headlines. All over Western Europe, politicians wonder how to build barriers against the expected flood.