

# Washington Notepad

By Roy Beck

## Finally, An EPA Population Person

It was deep in the stacks of the federal Environmental Protection Agency's library where David Rejeski recently discovered his uniqueness as an EPA official. In an apparently revolutionary act, he checked out the report from the "Rockefeller Population Commission" and its volume of material on the linkage between population growth and the country's ability to meet its environmental goals.

At the librarian's desk, he made a remarkable finding: he was the first person at the EPA ever to check out the report released in 1972.

"I thought: this can't be true," said Rejeski, head of the EPA's fledgling Future Studies Unit. For years, environmentalists concerned about sustainability have pleaded for the EPA to have a population office or desk. Now, Rejeski has emerged as someone willing to use his EPA niche in something like that role.

His startling library anecdote is indicative of the way U.S. environmental policy has operated with near obliviousness to the population issues raised by the Rockefeller Commission. That joint presidential-congressional body conducted a two-year study at great expense and found no benefits to be had from future U.S. population growth. To those knowledgeable about the issue, it never seemed like the EPA was paying attention to the wealth of information gathered during the study. Rejeski's library experience seems to confirm that. The EPA has failed even to alert the public that each year's additional three million Americans adds to the costs and restrictions necessary to meet environmental goals. In the summer 1993 issue of **THE SOCIAL CONTRACT**, I recounted my unsuccessful Diogenes-like search over the previous year to find one EPA official able even to talk about population-environmental links. Obviously, none of the people with whom I talked in various headquarters offices knew enough to refer me to Rejeski.

"The unfortunate thing is that this place has a very high level of demographic ignorance and bliss," Rejeski told **THE SOCIAL CONTRACT** in a pre-Christmas interview. "There simply is no demographer around here. I'm not a demographer, but I'm learning fast to represent that point of view. There will be a roomful of economists. But without a demographer, you can't have an enlightened environmental policy."

Rejeski is quick to emphasize that he believes the EPA to be no worse on this score than most federal agencies: "Except for the Census Bureau, the agencies don't have demographic expertise. So the necessary questions don't get raised when making policies."

The EPA's Future Studies Unit was started three years ago to look at underlying pervasive changes in the society that could have major impact on the way the EPA does its work over the next 30 to 50 years.

Rejeski has decided no trend needs more attention during the coming year than that of demographic change. He said about 80 percent of his unit's budget next year will be on demographics. That's not saying a lot, however, since the unit has only a three-member staff.

Nonetheless, it means that at least one small part of the federal government finally will be looking at ramifications of the Census Bureau's announcement in December of 1992 that this country's population will be more than 80 million higher in 2050 than had previously been thought.

"That probably was one of the most critical documents ever put out by the government," Rejeski said. "Every agency in Washington should have been meeting immediately to discuss how their plans would have to change because of the extra 80 million people." Instead, nobody seemed to have blinked an eye.

Rejeski, a U.S. native, is an EPA outsider, having come from Germany where he was an environmental planner and public policy analyst for the German government. His two EPA co-workers are a geologist and a philosopher. "The only way to

### **EPA's Beginning Work On Population-Environment**

The Future Studies Unit within EPA's Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation is beginning a project to examine demographic change in the U.S. and its implications for long-term environmental quality and policies. The project is designed to broaden our understanding of population-environment linkages and to facilitate the integration of population issues into long-range environmental policy and planning.

The project will focus on the following broad goals:

(1) Develop a comprehensive survey of the "state of our knowledge" on population-environment dynamics and issues (paying particular attention to the United States). Also illustrate conceptual models which could help structure our thinking about population-environment relationships.

(2) Break future U.S. population into its components (age structure, ethnicity, etc.) and drivers (fertility, immigration, mortality) and discuss the potential environmental implications of these characteristics at a macro (national) level within the context of global demographic change. Special attention will be focused on combining population projections with long-term trends and projections of human consumption (energy use, materials, etc.). Examples and issues will be linked specifically to EPA strategies and programs.

(3) Undertake two to three case studies which examine population-environment issues at a greater level of detail (micro-scale studies). These case studies may focus on areas such as migration and eco-system protection, aging and vulnerability, ethnic/racial diversity and environmental justice, etc.

(4) Develop a long-range research agenda and a set of policy recommendations.

The research support for the project will be provided by Battelle's Human Affairs Research Center in Seattle under a cooperative agreement with the Energy Department. Focus groups will be used during the course of the project to sharpen our understanding of specific issues, to structure the research, and to peer review and disseminate results. The findings and recommendations of the project will be made available for discussion and comment on the Internet system.

— from an EPA press release (Dec. 1993)

do this is through interdisciplinary research," Rejeski said. He has filled a file cabinet full of material gathered during the last few months of talking with non-governmental people in the population/environmental field. He plans to develop a few case studies that will make compelling arguments to the EPA that the population link is an important one.

Hypersensitivity about population issues in the previous administrations kept the EPA from dealing with that essential aspect of environmental protection, Rejeski said. "The EPA simply has to go back and read the 1969 National Environmental Protection Act to know we have to do this. It is a very eloquent statement on sustainable development."

The Carrying Capacity Network (a national environmental organization) has encouraged its members to contact EPA to back the unit's population work: "Request that they focus on the economic and environmental benefits of stabilizing the U.S. population in addition to enumerating the costs of continued population growth, and let them know that any rate of population growth eventually results in environmental degradation."

Support for the Future Studies Unit's work can be expressed to the EPA chief, Carol Browner, 401 "M" St. SW, Washington, D.C. 20460. Rejeski also can be contacted at that address, or by telephone at (202) 260-6523.

For people desiring to keep track of the unit's work through E-Mail, the pertinent information is: (rejeski.dave@epamail.epa.gov, GOPHER Server: futures.wic.epa.gov).

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## **At Last, Legislation To Slow U.S. Population Growth**

Some members of Congress aren't waiting for the EPA's studies; they believe they have enough evidence that burgeoning U.S. population growth is damaging the nation. Comprehensive legislation to move this country toward population stabilization has been introduced in the Senate and the House.

The key sponsor in each chamber is a Democrat from Nevada. Why Nevada? Perhaps the answer would be a bit clearer if one stood on the border and watched the volume of discontented Californians spilling into Nevada each week and pondered how

many more of the 30 million people left behind will flee later as the federal government each year adds hundreds of thousands of foreign workers and their families to an already overpopulated California.

The very introduction of the bills by Sen. Harry Reid and Rep. James H. Bilbray ends a long drought in which not one member of Congress would propose action to allow the U.S. population eventually to stabilize. The bills recognize that the massive annual U.S. population growth each year is somewhat artificial, caused almost entirely by past congressional action that boosted immigration far above historical averages.

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***"If Congress does not act to change its immigration laws, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the current population of 258 million will soar to 392 million by 2050..."***

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If Congress does not act to change its immigration laws, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the current population of 258 million will soar to 392 million by 2050, with no peak in sight.

Key components of Reid's and Bilbray's Immigration Stabilization Act (H.R.3320/S.1351):

- Put an absolute cap on all immigrants, refugees and asylees at about one-third the present level. Reid's cap is 300,000; Bilbray's is 350,000.
- Make sponsors of family-based immigrants financially accountable for any social welfare costs.
- Reform asylum law to discourage bogus claims and expedite review of claims.
- Strengthen employer sanctions by creating a tamper-proof Social Security card and alien registration cards as means of ID while establishing a telephone verification system.
- Increase Border Patrol positions to 9,900, from 6,900 today.
- Establish border crossing fees to fund expanded border security.
- Streamline the process for deporting criminal aliens as soon as they finish their prison terms.

- Require cooperation of local and state law enforcement authorities with the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

- Ban from any future legal entry persons caught illegally crossing the border or overstaying visas.

For those U.S. interests which profit from high population growth and high immigration, Reid's cap of 300,000 a year represents a drastic cut.

But for environmental protection and other quality-of-life factors dependent on a stabilized population, the 300,000 cap remains very high. For example, if current fertility holds and immigration runs no higher than 160,000 a year, the Census Bureau projects the U.S. population will rise from the current 258 million and surpass 300 million before leveling off. Unfortunately under the Reid cap, U.S. population would balloon to considerably higher than 300 million, although far below the nearly 400 million under current immigration trends.

Reid is said to have chosen the "high" 300,000 cap for a couple of reasons: it may not be politically possible at this time to go any lower; it is near the 1820-1965 annual immigration average of 291,000.

Interestingly, during the 1820-1880 period of mass immigration before the American frontier was declared closed, annual average admissions ran only around 160,000.

Reid and Bilbray had begun to attract co-sponsors for their bills before the Christmas break. Backers thus far are:

In the Senate — Democrats James Exon of Nebraska and Richard Shelby of Alabama; Republican Lauch Faircloth of North Carolina.

In the House — Democrats Richard Lehman of California, Charles Wilson of Texas and James Traficant Jr. of Ohio; Republicans Duncan Hunter and Buck McKeon of California, James Sensenbrenner Jr. of Wisconsin and Robert Goodlatte of Virginia.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which early last year campaigned for an immigration moratorium (excepting spouses and minor children) is throwing its support behind Reid and Bilbray.

"The important thing right now is for people to contact their senators and member of the House," said Laura Uhl, senior government affairs associate for FAIR. "Most members of Congress just aren't



familiar with the bills yet. They need to understand that these are the only comprehensive bills. Otherwise, Congress will have to deal with some 60 separate bills to do the same thing. We need to get enough co-sponsors on these bills to persuade members of the Judiciary committees to hold hearings next year."

Even though S.1351 and H.R.3320 would allow significant population growth for another half-century, they are the only immigration reform bills that would make major dents in current growth trends.

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## Art Exhibition Portrays U.S. Blacks' Move North After Immigration Cuts

Americans are exposed frequently to emotionally moving photographs in the news media of international immigrants, past and present. But a traveling exhibition of a 60-mural series by Jacob Lawrence turns the canvass over to internal migrants — the masses of rural southern blacks who migrated to the industrial North and West earlier this century.

Reviewers have praised the exhibit for showing American blacks and recent immigrants that they have had a common-ground experience.

Such reviews, however, have missed a much more interesting historical point that the exhibit makes no effort to hide: the opportunity for **domestic** southern blacks to migrate for higher-paying industrial jobs was only possible when the opportunity for **foreign** workers to migrate was reduced or shut off.

The exhibition at the Phillips Collection, a Washington gallery, will leave in January and appear in eight states during the next two years. The 60 paintings were split in purchases by the Phillips and the Museum of Modern Art in New York soon after they were completed in 1941, a time when the black migration to better jobs was continuing. It is interesting that the first time the paintings have been reassembled is now during a period when resumed high foreign migration apparently has once again shut blacks off from many job migration opportunities. Several researchers have documented the net migration of blacks out of higher-wage but high-immigration cities since the 1970s.

In 1940, a 23-year-old Lawrence (who is still living) secured a Harlem studio through a grant. He began to document the migration that had occurred around him all his life. Lawrence had been born in 1917 while his parents were *en route* north as an early part of that migration. Through his childhood he watched the northern cities fill up with the black migrants.

As his narration under Panel #2 explains, the migration began during World War I when immigration of foreign workers almost came to a halt and many young white workers went to Europe for the war. Faced with a labor shortage, northern industrialists finally made their jobs available to the horribly underemployed descendants of slaves in the South.

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Lawrence drew immediate acclaim for his historical perspective and what has been called his marriage of tempera technique with a synthetic cubist style. *Fortune* magazine catapulted the young artist into a position of pre-eminence among black artists when it published the 60-painting series in its November 1941 issue.

The magazine article introducing the series explicitly stated that the black migration was made possible by the shutting off of foreign immigration during World War I and during the decade of the 1920s by restrictive immigration legislation. (The restrictions held until 1965.)

"All other sources of labor having been exhausted, the migrants (southern blacks) were the last resource," reads the narration under Panel #4 showing a solitary black man driving a spike. American history is full of examples of moving the black worker to the back of the line. Lawrence Fuchs has written of the disappearance of black tradesmen in the North during the heavy foreign immigration following the Civil War. In the 1890s, Booker T. Washington pleaded with industrialists to hire freed slaves instead of importing workers from Europe.

Lawrence's haunting panel testifies to the sad truth that black Americans could only get their chance when there was no other alternative for American employers. The next panels show that, given a tight labor market, industries not only actively recruited black workers but creatively found ways to match them to jobs. [See the summer 1992 issue of *THE SOCIAL CONTRACT*, page 215, for an article by Roy Beck and Otis L. Graham, Jr. alluding to Booker T. Washington's famous "Cast Down Your Buckets" speech at the Atlanta Exposition of 1895.]

Gallery notes state that Lawrence's series has more in common "with a filmmaker's storyboards than a muralist's frescoes." Indeed, a viewer can feel transported by panels as if by a movie into poignant but not sensationalized scenes of the southern culture in which families of freed slaves had been trapped because of the 1880-1914 wave of foreign workers. They were stuck in a culture of low wages, economic and educational deprivation, injustice and even lynching. Viewing these panels today would be a healthy antidote to those with romanticized understandings of the Great Immigration Wave as a phenomenon with only positive effects on Americans. They are paintings of opportunity lost.

The second 30 panels reveal universal truths about migrations, whether internal or international. The first black migrants in the North found better housing and jobs. They wrote letters back home, telling of the better life. More migrants came. After awhile, the migrants began to crowd the existing

facilities in the North. The migrants still came because worsening conditions there remained better than those fled in the South. The rapid arrival of a new population eventually created social tensions and resulted in violence. Lawrence is remarkably objective in his portrayal of resentment of the migrants by native northern workers who saw them as strikebreakers and wage depressors. There appears to be a recognition that through no intent on the part of migrants, it was possible for the employer class to exploit them at the expense of other workers.

Migrations have a way of perpetuating themselves. Under his last panel, Lawrence wrote: "The migrants kept coming." It is an observation surely on the minds of today's black residents of the great northern and western industrial cities where most of the 30 million foreign immigrants and their descendants have settled during the last 25 years. The re-emergence of Lawrence's work, "The Migration Series," raises a powerful question: How might today's marginalized American populations be emancipated if immigration again was shrunk and, "all other sources of labor having been exhausted, the American underclass was the last resource."

*The Lawrence exhibition can be seen in Milwaukee (Jan. 28-March 20), Portland (April 19-June 12), Birmingham (July 10-Sept. 4), St. Louis (Sept. 30-Nov. 27), New York City (Jan. 12-Apr. 11, 1995), Atlanta (Apr. 25-June 27, 1995), Denver (July 15-Sept. 9, 1995), Chicago (Sept. 22-Nov. 26, 1995).*

## Who Pays the Bill?

It does not follow, however, that a state should bear the costs of educating children whose illegal presence in this country results from the default of the political branches of the Federal Government. A state has no power to prevent unlawful immigration, and no power to deport illegal aliens; those powers are reserved exclusively to the Congress and the Executive. If the Federal Government, properly chargeable with deporting illegal aliens, fails to do so, it should bear the burdens of their presence here. Surely if illegal alien children can be identified for purposes of this litigation, their parents can be identified for purposes of prompt deportation.

— Chief Justice Warren Burger in his dissent,  
*Plyler v. Doe*, 1982, which mandated public education  
for the children of illegal aliens

# Conference: Ethics of Immigration

Reportage by Robert McConnell

On November 5, 1993 nearly one hundred concerned citizens, minority spokespersons, social and natural scientists, journalists and philosophers gathered in Los Angeles for a landmark conference on the "Ethics of Immigration." The conference was organized and sponsored by the Washington D.C.-based Carrying Capacity Network, with the Fossil Fuel Policy Action Institute as co-sponsor.

Philosopher John Lachs of Vanderbilt University eloquently described moral problems in immigration policy. In his words,

*With regard to immigration policy, those who maintain that we must respect everyone's right to free movement ... operate with abstract principles that fail to capture the complexity of the moral situation. One's own children cannot be told to get in line with all those needing to be fed; the fact that they are ours gives them priority and imposes overriding obligations on us ... [W]e cannot think clearly about ... ethical problems if we begin by asserting the moral irrelevance of nations ... [they] exist, and [provide] the defining context and the structuring elements of the moral problems that surround immigration.*

He suggested that the right to settle in a country is a privilege, not an entitlement, and declared that decisions on immigration are sound only if they express the nation's values and promote its interests.

*We can be unapologetic in taking our own interest seriously for ... two reasons. First, we must not confuse morality with saintliness. The moral injunction is to take due account of others, not to refuse to take ourselves into account ... Second, self-interest in such cases is not morally selfish ...*

However, he went on to describe such an immigration policy, based on national values and economic self-interest, as open to "serious moral objection," due in part to the feeling of "the

heartbreak of a dream denied." The pain of people denied the opportunity for self-improvement causes discomfort for us, and makes us feel "embarrassed at our undeserved good fortune."

In the long run, Lachs concluded, moral dilemmas (but realistic imperatives) such as limiting immigration have no fully satisfactory solutions.

*Even with the best of intentions, we cannot revise the moral structure of the world. But we can be fair and forthright in our procedures, we can avoid ... discrimination and ... promote [community interests]. In a world in which more cannot be done, that should be enough.*

Some other highlights of the conference:

- In perhaps the most powerful presentation of the day, keynote speaker Richard Estrada of the *Dallas Morning News* (who is presently serving a six-year term on the Congressionally-mandated Immigration Reform Commission) maintained that "the American family needs time to heal itself." He focused on the impact of 1.5 million annual immigrants on America's Hispanic community, and reminded attendees that the United States is admitting more refugees than *the rest of the world combined*.

He further remarked that there are presently over 100 million people living in countries other than their birth country: can they all be accommodated in the United States should they desire to migrate here?

He countered the oft-stated opinion that "we can't stop illegal immigration, so why try" with the fact that deterrence works. At El Paso, illegal entries have dropped 95 percent since the Border Patrol switched from chasing illegals to interdiction. He described as a "false choice" the proposal to counter violence against undocumented migrants with completely open borders. To be effective, he declared, immigration control must be color- and ethnic/national-origin blind. Estrada proposed a plan to control the problem with the following elements: