

CASS CANFIELD

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October 3, 1962

Professor Joshua Lederberg  
Department of Biological Sciences  
Stanford University  
Palo Alto, California

Dear Professor Lederberg:

Two years ago, I am pleased to reflect, you added your signature to a "Statement of Conviction About Overpopulation" which Sir Julian Huxley and I circulated. Subsequently, the Statement was presented to Mr. Hammarskjold at the United Nations. Thirty-eight Nobel Laureates were among the more than 200 distinguished citizens from 20 nations who signed the Statement.

This declaration contributed substantially to three recent developments: The scheduling of a full-fledged discussion on population problems at the current U.N. General Assembly. Broader recognition at the top levels of U.S. Government of the gravity of the world population crisis. And much wider understanding and concern for the problem by the general public.

Now I am writing on behalf of Professor Edward C. Kendall of Princeton, one of the signers of the original Statement, and winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 1950. Dr. Kendall and I believe that this moment is most propitious for circulating another Statement of a somewhat more specific nature. In behalf of Dr. Kendall, therefore, I am enclosing a draft of this new Statement.

The draft particularly emphasizes the need for U.S. Government action to assist other nations, when they request it, in developing programs to aid voluntary population control. We are seeking signatures immediately from U.S. Nobelists who concurred in the 1960 petition.

It is our hope to present the Statement signed by Dr. Kendall, yourself and the others, at the Dinner meeting of the conference in New York on Monday, October 22. This conference on "The Economic Consequences of the Population Explosion" is being sponsored by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America-World Population Emergency Campaign, of which I am Chairman. I wrote you in August inviting you to attend and we still hope that you will be able to do so. If this is at all possible, the Federation will be glad to pay your expenses.

October 3, 1962

You will note that the draft of the new Statement urges "formation of a strong union" -- between leaders in the sciences and the humanities on the one hand and leaders of commerce and industry on the other -- to help stimulate much greater Governmental as well as private action to deal with the world population crisis. Therefore it is especially fitting that this Statement be presented at the October conference which will bring together distinguished American scientists and others with leading businessmen.

We are so convinced of the need for such cooperative action, and so optimistic about the value of discussion among these different kinds of leaders, that I want to re-emphasize our earlier invitation to this meeting. Of course we want you to attend the conference during the day as well as the Dinner at which the Statement will be presented.

So I look forward to your concurrence in the Statement, and also to the prospect of meeting with you on the twenty-second. A preliminary program for the Conference is also enclosed. There is no printed program yet for the Dinner, because it will be attended only on private invitation, such as this one.

Sincerely,



Cass Canfield

CC:rc  
Enclosures

P.S. To expedite matters, let me add that you may communicate directly with me at my office here at Harper & Row publishers, or at the offices of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 501 Madison Avenue, New York 22, New York (PL 5-8600, Mr. Winfield Best).

THE POPULATION CRISIS - A STATEMENT BY U.S. WINNERS OF THE NOBEL PRIZE

(For presentation October 22, 1962, at the PPFA-WPEC Conference on the Economic Consequences of the Population Explosion.)

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Two years ago, we joined with Nobel Prize Winners and distinguished citizens of many countries in calling attention to the gravity of the world population problem. We urged programs of international action to avert a Dark Age of human misery, stemming from the pressure of burgeoning populations on available resources. Since then one hundred million people have been added to the world's population total.

Fortunately some nations and peoples are beginning to take steps against the impending disaster. Most recently, Egypt and Chile have adopted affirmative policies on population limitation. In many Latin American countries, public officials, medical authorities and experts on economic affairs are becoming increasingly concerned with the crippling effects of continued rapid population growth. In Asia, the leaders of several countries are keenly aware of the need for action, and governmental as well as private programs are being expanded.

In addition, a modest but hopeful expansion of biological, demographic and sociological research in fertility control has taken place. The great religious groups of our nation, including the Roman Catholic Church, have achieved a deeper understanding of the population problem. The U.S. Government has begun to clarify its approach and has announced that it will respond affirmatively to requests from other nations for certain kinds of demographic assistance in this field.

These steps and others of a similar nature are positive and welcome; but the urgency of the problem calls for much faster progress.

Increasing evidence from around the world adds emphasis to the grim warning issued last year by Mr. Eugene Black, in his capacity as President of the World Bank: "Population growth threatens to nullify all our efforts to raise living standards in many of the poorer countries....Unless population growth can be restrained, we may have to abandon for this generation our hopes of economic progress in the crowded lands of Asia and the Middle East."

Clearly the urgent, indisputable need today is for intensified action to decelerate world population growth. Population trends must become a central consideration in all national and international plans for health, economic development and world peace.

Therefore, as Americans, we most strongly urge the United States Government to adopt forthright policies which will permit the resources and skills of our nation to be concentrated on the population problem. Our government should assist other nations which request help on voluntary population control, and should intensify research for improved methods of regulating fertility -- methods acceptable to peoples of diverse cultures, creeds and ways of life. And we strongly urge once again that the United Nations take the lead in world-wide programs to cope with overpopulation.

In recent decades, the partnership of industry and science has contributed immeasurably to many fields of human activity; it is time that this partnership address itself squarely to the population dilemma. As representatives of the sciences and humanities, we therefore also urge formation of a strong union between the leaders in these fields and the leaders of commerce and industry, to the end that action may be stimulated on a level commensurate with the magnitude of the problem.

The actions we suggest require that the timidities and conflicts of the past be cast aside. We appeal to all men to have faith that existing differences can be resolved, so that rapid progress can be made in checking excessive population growth, and so that children everywhere may grow up in a world that offers the prospect of peace and progress.