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*These end me a report of your second article.*

*J.*

*SAM*

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*Have you seen review of Law and Society by Blaustein. I have seen only hostile.*

*J. L.*

## Life and Freedom Right to Breed

Then

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- Report

J. LEDERBERG

rise lagged t humani-

The per-  
fectly safe, reliable, cheap  
and unobtrusive method has  
still to be developed. Never-  
theless, the obstacles to pop-  
ulation control can hardly  
be labeled as technological  
gaps. Nor could the eccle-  
siastical dogmas persist as  
long as they have without  
reinforcement from some  
even more primitive, irra-  
tional myths. (In any case,  
the crisis in Roman Catholic  
theology must now reach its  
own resolution regardless of  
outside comment.)

AS PROF. GARRETT  
HARDIN, in an article in  
Science magazine, and many  
before him have pointed  
out, man's heritage rein-  
forces a will to multiply  
against a now obsolete set of  
odds of infant death. He  
goes on to compare the  
planet to a common pasture,  
and reviews the economics  
of a system where a com-  
mon good is left to the  
greediest harvesters.

He suggest that voluntry

the world's most critical  
problem, the population ex-  
plosion?"

The cold logic of Malthu-  
sian arithmetic is of course  
inescapable. The sheer mass  
of humanity cannot long in-  
crease at its present rate of  
a doubling every 40 years.  
There will be an inexorable  
halt to human increase  
within, at most, a few gener-  
ations. We can hardly doubt  
that the quality of life and  
the odds of peaceful sur-  
vival are deteriorating  
under the impact of that in-  
crease long before we reach  
the biological limit.

As everyone knows, West-  
ern science and medicine  
have contributed to the  
problem: directly, by per-  
fecting our techniques of  
preserving life and of reme-  
dying infertility, and indi-  
rectly, by underpinning the  
humanitarian outlook that  
cherishes the value of each  
individual life.

The technology of contra-

restraint will b  
nating. A syste

social conscience will  
merely raise the general  
level of guilty anxiety  
among the well-intentioned  
("Was it morally right for us  
to have had those twins?")  
without achieving practi-  
cally useful results. He  
would invoke lawful coer-  
cion to achieve the ends of  
the social consensus. In fact,  
the main aim of his dis-  
course is to attack the un-  
limited "right to breed"  
which now stands as a basic  
personal freedom.

One has to question the  
merits of such a freedom in  
a crowded world. Neverthe-  
less, I believe that Prof.  
Hardin has grossly underes-  
timated the difficulty of ac-  
tually policing explicit so-  
cial controls on reproduc-  
tion without trampling on  
every other personal free-  
dom.

I would not willingly  
abandon our cumbersome  
system of due process that  
protects the security of my  
person against arbitrary as-

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ready concern the  
ble minor inequities in the  
allotment of positive incen-  
tives and rewards that can  
achieve the same ends.

THIS MAY seem a feeble  
answer to the population  
problem in poor countries,  
but their basic problem is  
poverty. Overbreeding is no  
less a consequence of their  
poverty than a cause of it,  
and no amount of gloomy  
exhortation or diplomatic  
pressure will get very far  
unless accompanied by an-  
swers to their desperate  
problems of economic devel-  
opment.

Knowing Prof. Hardin's  
background as a biologist, I  
expected him to insist that  
action be preceded by more  
detailed knowledge of the  
motivational causes of over-  
breeding. In middle-class  
America, they may be inter-  
twined with our dismal fail-  
ure to solve the problem  
epitomized by the title of Si-  
mone de Beauvoir's "The  
Second Sex." What other  
creative role in life do  
women play after they have  
dutifully produced exactly  
two children?

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D. Hardin-

I understood your point about the philosophical necessities  
of lawful coercion. But I think you overlook the problems of due  
process when this takes the form of direct and punitive compulsion.  
And I am afraid many readers would misunderstand the breadth of your  
intended usage of "coercion". As for AID, I am quite concerned that  
the difficulties faced by underdeveloped countries in controlling popu-  
lation growth (as we must encourage them to do) will be used as an excuse  
to minimize our technological and economic support of their development.

P.S. By all means consider a  
rebuttal via letter to editor

*J. Lederberg*