

## Editorial

### *Locusts threaten Europe*

On April 4, the Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* reported that the locust plague which is now devastating northern Africa, has made its first foray into Western Europe.

Sometime in the course of the week, several tens of thousands of these creatures were found on a beach south of Rome, Italy. Fortuitously, thanks to the cooler climate, this swarm of locusts died.

But this will not be the end of the plague. It is predicted that the insects will spread en masse into Sicily, Greece, and Turkey, as well as moving through the Middle East, into Pakistan.

The spread of the locusts is the direct result of International Monetary Fund and United Nations policies which have deprived the continent of Africa of pesticides and high-technology, broad-scale methods of spraying. These policies have been aided and abetted by the United States States Department.

It has been estimated that 500 million people may die as a result if the locusts are not controlled.

This is one out of every ten people now alive, yet even these figures have not moved the ideologues who control the policy toward insect control (in particular those at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization).

What is needed is an emergency, crash program to eradicate these insects, and instead we still see only relatively modest efforts at insect control. Perhaps the shock of having the locusts invade the international headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization, located in Rome, will have the necessary salutary effect.

Nor is this disaster confined to areas close to the African continent. It may not be locusts right now, but the declining investment in sanitation infrastructure in the U.S. has brought other problems to the fore.

As warm weather hits the United States, cities as far north as Chicago are being threatened by infestations of the so-far uncontrolled tiger mosquito. This mosquito is the carrier of the dengue fever, which has moved from the tropics to North America.

The fever itself is particularly dangerous to young children, where it appears to cause brain damage; but all of its victims are susceptible to reinfection by hemorrhagic dengue which is a killer.

In the face of this infestation, however, state governments and cities in the U.S. are cutting mosquito control programs, because of budgetary problems.

The problem is one of malthusianism. Parson Thomas Malthus, as an employee of the British East India Company, at the time of the American Revolution, coined the convenient rationale for British colonial practices, that plagues and famines were the natural outgrowth of increases in population, rather than of the deliberate decision to enforce usury and destroy the infrastructure of those nations now known as "Third World" countries.

This is the ideology of the U. S. State Department and its Agency for International Development (AID) and of the FAO, today. It is the policy enforced by the International Monetary Fund. It is the end result of the insanities of Reaganomics.

The oligarchs who are served by these agencies would rather accept the threatened death of one out of every ten people alive today, than risk the continuity of their power by accepting a restructuring of international debt and a massive investment program in the developing sector.

We are now seeing the beginning devolution of the biosphere as a whole. Rapid increase of plagues is a lawful outgrowth of this violation of natural law.

As Warren Hamerman shows in the *Science & Technology* section of this issue, we can adapt the most advanced technologies which are available today, in order to deploy radiation weapons against the locusts. It is precisely this kind of approach to the problem of insect control, which applied more broadly to problems, can not only reverse the current degradation of the biosphere, but open up a new era of abundance for all of the world's population.