

Paul Ehrlich was the Karl Marx of population control

How to succeed by being wrong about everything

[Washington Times](#), By Don Feder, April 6, 2026

Paul Ehrlich, who passed away last month at age 93, was Karl Marx 2.0. Like the father of communism, the father of population control was wrong about everything. That didn't stop either from attracting millions of followers and doing untold damage.

Ehrlich's 1968 book, "The Population Bomb," was the environmentalist equivalent of "The Communist Manifesto."

Marx and Ehrlich were both miserable misanthropes who disguised their hatred of humanity with noble sounding rhetoric.

Marx said capitalism was responsible for human suffering. Ehrlich believed population growth would destroy the planet.

Marx predicted that communist revolution would happen in the most developed countries first and revolution in one country would spark worldwide revolution. He was wrong on both counts.

He said that under communism, the state would wither away. Instead, it grew like The Blob. You might say the German economist was the "Wrong Way" Corrigan of prophecy.

Ehrlich was just as spectacularly wrong.

The Stanford University entomologist believed population growth would lead to worldwide starvation and people were like cancer consuming the planet. The real cancer was his ideas. Yet it's impossible to name a late-20th-century writer who was more influential.

"The Population Bomb" went through 20 printings and sold 2 million to 3 million copies. Ehrlich became a media icon who appeared on "The Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson 20 times. His advocacy helped shape the foreign aid policies of the Johnson, Nixon and Ford administrations.

It's no coincidence that Roe v. Wade legalized abortion in the United States five years after the publication of Ehrlich's book (abortion limits population) or that China's catastrophic one-child policy, which led to an estimated 400 million deaths, began 10 years after Ehrlich's bomb.

Ehrlich predicted that the population would continue to grow exponentially until the planet was teeming with people, a la "Soylent Green," the Earth's resources were

exhausted, and we either died of starvation or choked to death from pollution. “Human sacrifice. Seas boiling over. Dogs and cats living together!”

Ehrlich insisted that “the battle to feed humanity is over” and there would be worldwide starvation in the 1970s, when hundreds of millions would die. Instead, Earth’s population, which was 3.5 billion in 1968, grew to 8 billion by 2022. Most were better fed, clothed and housed than at any other time in history.

Besides legalized abortion in the United States, Ehrlich’s prophecies of doom led to forced abortion in China, forced sterilization in India and Peru, and coercive contraception throughout developing nations.

Dr. Doom wanted more. For the U.S., he proposed requiring licenses to have children and punitive taxes on large families.

Ehrlich missed the obvious: that each person is more than a mouth to feed. He also has two hands to build and a brain to innovate.

The Green Revolution increased agricultural production worldwide. The growing demand for natural resources spurred new methods of exploration and extraction and more efficient use.

Instead of runaway population growth, we now confront ominous population decline.

In 1968, worldwide fertility — the number of children the average woman will have in her lifetime — was around five. Today it’s 2.2 to 2.4 and falling. In the United States, it’s a pathetic 1.62.

To replace the current population, a fertility rate of 2.1 is needed. Sometime in the next decade, the world’s population will begin falling. Once it starts, the decline will accelerate.

An industrial civilization requires people. It needs a population, sufficient to grow the food, work on the assembly line, invest and build, and provide essential services. It needs taxpayers to finance pensions and the rest of government. With fewer people in each generation than the last, where will they come from?

Marx gave us a century of communist tyranny. His ideas animate the regimes in power in China, Cuba, North Korea and New York City.

Marxism also dominates academia and influences the mainstream media.

Despite the reality of demographic winter, many politicians and media hacks act as if the population bomb is a reality. Governments continue to subsidize abortion and

contraception, to discourage parenthood with various disincentives and to lecture us incessantly about carbon footprints.

Yet the public is waking up. In a March 25 Rasmussen poll, 51% said our low birth rate is a serious problem.

Marx and Ehrlich inflicted some truly awful ideas on humanity. Given their popularity with elites, they will continue to do incalculable damage in the future.

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