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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Control Population to Ease Poverty

To the Editor:

In his essay "[America's Shame](#)" (*The Chronicle Review*, March 13), Peter Singer expands at length on the vast extent of extreme poverty in many parts of the world. He then argues that the wealthier countries — and the United States in particular — have a moral obligation to feed and otherwise aid these people. He presses for disease control, education, shelter, and clothing.

But nowhere in the essay do I see the term "population control." To a very great extent, the poorest people of the world are poor because there are too many of them. Jared Diamond has shown clearly, for instance, that the bloody civil war in Rwanda arose from the gross shortage of arable land.

I would have felt more sympathetic to Singer's view if he had pressed for increased financing of family planning and population control, rather than simply feeding people whose improved nutrition will soon engender more mouths to feed. Simply stated, if we double the daily caloric intake of a starving population, a doubling of the population will negate our efforts.

Now that Singer has completed *The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty*, perhaps he will consider writing *The Life You Can Make Precious: Acting Now to End Population Glut*.

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