

Bankers' looting is leading cause of childhood death

by Richard Freeman

A society's moral fitness to survive can be judged by the way that it treats its children.

Worldwide, each year, approximately 12 million children under the age of 5, die. The overwhelming majority of these deaths are in Africa and Asia. More than 95% of them could have been prevented. Millions of children die because of enforced backwardness and genocide imposed by the same British-American-Commonwealth (BAC) crowd whose attempt to save its bloated speculative world financial system has put the world on the brink of ruin. Between 35 and 40% of these deaths are due, in the final stage of illness, to diarrhea, pneumonia, and malaria—three diseases from which most people ought not die, given today's medical knowledge and technology. Seven percent of all deaths of children under 5—more than three-quarters of a million—are attributable to measles, another disease that ought not be a killer.

But while deaths in the final stages do occur because of such diseases as diarrhea and pneumonia, fully 50% of all deaths are actually attributable to malnutrition. The diseases merely latch onto bodies that lack sufficient protein intake, and therefore have a weakened immune system. And along with enforced underdevelopment comes a lack of basic infrastructure for supporting life: a shortage or lack of clean water systems, sewage systems, and sanitation systems; housing is in short supply, and part of what does exist is disease-infested. There is also a shortage, and in some places, total absence, of hospitals, doctors, and medications.

Into this petri dish of malnutrition, lack of basic infrastructure, and disease, comes AIDS. It is this state of enforced underdevelopment that allows AIDS to spread, often as a co-factor.

The BAC clique is currently conducting an air war in the Balkans, using as its pretext, the violation of human rights.

But, even if we leave aside the fact that, for geopolitical reasons, for many years the BAC has been fostering the policy conditions for the burning of villages and killings in the Balkans, leading to a policy of out-of-area NATO deployment, the BAC has shown remarkably little concern—save for a few rhetorical flourishes—to halt the vast genocide that its policies are inflicting worldwide. Indeed, the BAC has been working to block any true correction of human rights violations and genocide, and is doing everything in its power to sabotage the adoption of Lyndon LaRouche's proposal for a new development-based monetary system, pivoted around the Eurasian Land-Bridge.

In our cover story on April 16, 1999, "London Unleashes the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," *EIR* warned that War, Pestilence, Famine, and Death are stalking the Earth, placing us on the threshold of a return to the Black Death that swept Europe during the four decades between 1340 and 1380, which killed up to half the populations of some European cities. Below, we document how the lawful, systematic outcome of the BAC's policy, is the extermination of young lives under 5. We also look at the growth of illiteracy.

Figure 1 shows the nations in the world where between 2% and 8.4% of children in those nations die before reaching their fifth birthday. This spans 53 nations. It amounts to the premeditated murder of these children.

Sierra Leone, a small nation on the northern Atlantic coast of Africa, has the highest death rate of children under 5. In Sierra Leone, 84 out of every 1,000 children under 5, or 8.4% of all children, die each year. The African nation of Niger is next, with an 8.0% rate. (Most figures in this article are based on data taken from the United Nations Children's Fund—UNICEF—*State of the World's Children, 1999*.)

At first blush, a death rate of between 2% and 8.4% of

FIGURE 1
High death rate of children, 1997



<p>■ Nations where more than 5% of children die before the age of 5</p> <p>Country / Deaths per 1,000</p> <p>Africa</p> <p>Sierra Leone 84 Niger 80 Angola 72 Liberia 72 Mali 59 Guinea-Bissau 55 Malawi 55 Somalia 54 Guinea 50 Mozambique 50</p> <p>Asia</p> <p>Afghanistan 76</p>	<p>■ Nations where 3.5-4.9% of children die before the age of 5</p> <p>Country / Deaths per 1,000</p> <p>Africa</p> <p>Chad 48 Democratic Republic of the Congo 48 Zambia 48 Ethiopia 44 Mauritania 44 Nigeria 44 Rwanda 44 Burundi 42 Equatorial Guinea 42 Burkina Faso 41 Central African Republic 40 Djibouti 40 Benin 38 Madagascar 37 Cote D'Ivoire 35</p> <p>Asia</p> <p>Cambodia 38 Mongolia 35</p>	<p>■ Nations where 2.0-3.4% of children die before the age of 5</p> <p>Country / Deaths per 1,000</p> <p>Africa</p> <p>Gabon 34 Tanzania 33 Lesotho 30 Senegal 30 Togo 29 Bhutan 28 Eritrea 27 Sudan 27 Congo 26 Ghana 25 Cameroon 23 Gambia 21 Kenya 21</p> <p>Asia</p> <p>Pakistan 31 People's Democratic Republic of Laos 30 Iraq 29 Bangladesh 26 Myanmar 25 Papua New Guinea 25 India 24 Nepal 24 Yemen 24 Maldives 21</p> <p>Ibero-America</p> <p>Haiti 30 Bolivia 21</p>
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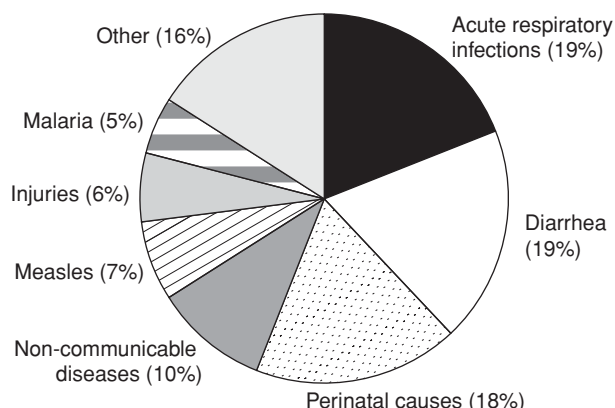
Source: UNICEF report, "State of the World's Children," 1999.

children under 5 may not seem that large; it is actually huge. The average for the United States and Germany, two of the leading industrialized nations, is 0.125%. The death rate for

children under 5 from Sierra Leone, therefore, is 67 times greater than the comparable rate for the United States and Germany. Put another way: *A child under 5 in Sierra Leone*

FIGURE 2

Cause of death of children under 5



Source: Adapted from *Global Burden of Disease*, published by World Health Organization, Harvard University School of Public Health, and the World Bank, 1996.

has 67 times greater chance of dying than in the United States and Germany.

AIDS is a symptom, not a cause

With the growth of the AIDS epidemic in Africa and Asia, it has become fashionable to blame all or most deaths in Africa and Asia on AIDS. Indeed, AIDS is a scourge, and must be addressed forcefully. But the attempt to put the blame for most deaths in Africa and Asia on AIDS covers up the deeper reality: the persisting truth that the primary cause of death is the BAC policy of enforced economic backwardness, and the gale winds of world economic disintegration. As represented by LaRouche's famous "Triple Curve," or Typical Collapse Function, the BAC, now faced with a bankrupt world financial system, is attempting to meet the increasing claims of financial instruments through sucking the real wealth out of the physical economy.

Figure 2 shows the leading causes of death of children under 5. It is adapted from a 1996 report, *Global Burden of Disease*, prepared by the Harvard University School of Public Health, the World Health Organization, and the World Bank. It shows that acute respiratory infections (ARI) kill 19% of all children under 5. Pneumonia is the main killer in the ARI category. Diarrhea also kills 19% of all children under 5. Diarrhea that becomes serious enough to kill, usually comes from contaminated or unsafe water, and is often associated with intestinal diseases that have developed within the young child. Thus, ARI, mainly pneumonia, and diarrhea, are the cause, in the final stages, of 2 million deaths each, among the 12 million children under 5 who die each year. Since diarrhea can be treated initially by a tablet, and prevented in the long term by an adequate and safe water system, these deaths are senseless.

Figure 2 also shows that perinatal causes (at the time of birth), measles, and malaria claim, respectively, 18%, 7%, and 5% of all deaths annually of children under 5. A very large share of these deaths could have been prevented by the building of adequate infrastructure, the provision of sufficient medical care, doctors and medicine, and other standard measures.

Two diseases that are not separately shown in Figure 2, are tuberculosis and AIDS/HIV. Both are included in the "other" category. The *Burden of Global Disease* report was released in 1996, and was based on data from earlier in the 1990s. Since that time, AIDS/HIV has come to play a role in a greater share of deaths. But two points must be recognized: First, AIDS is still a less significant cause of death, than the combined effects of pneumonia, diarrhea, perinatal causes, malaria, and measles, which, as of the 1996 report, together accounted for two-thirds of all deaths of children under 5. Second, AIDS enters the petri dish of spreading non-AIDS diseases, poor infrastructure, and malnutrition, as a co-factor, often attaching itself to other diseases, such as tuberculosis, or spreading once other diseases have already weakened a child's or adult's immune system.

Malnutrition, the great killer

Malnutrition, the denial of provision of adequate and nutritious food, including proper protein intake, is associated with more than half the deaths depicted in Figure 2. Independently, malnutrition is listed in Figure 2, under the category of "other," and is said to account for only 3% of all deaths. But here we get to the heart of the matter: The classification in Figure 2, while accurate with regard to the *final cause of death*, and extremely helpful in providing an overview, obscures the fact that death is not usually an event with a single cause, but rather is a process with several, overlapping causes. In particular, it is the conspiracy between malnutrition and infection, which pulls many children into the downward spiral of poor growth and early death.

According to a 1995 study, completed under the direction of David Pelletier of Cornell University ("The Effect of Malnutrition on Child Mortality in Developing Countries," published in the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, Vol. 73, No. 4), using data from 53 countries, more than half of deaths of children under 5 each year are associated with malnutrition.

The study also found that nearly three-quarters of all malnutrition-associated deaths "are linked not to severe malnutrition but to mild and moderate forms." This contradicts the commonplace notion of malnutrition. Most people associate children dying of malnutrition as occurring when they are emaciated, or have the protein deficiency disease kwashiorkor, in which the child's belly is distended, and the legs and arms become stick-thin. But most children suffering from malnutrition never make it to that stage, because disease attacks long before that, attacking their weakened immune sys-

TABLE 1

Percentage of under-five deaths linked to malnutrition

Country	% of under-5 deaths associated with malnutrition	% of malnutrition-related deaths where malnutrition was mild or moderate only
India	67%	74%
Bangladesh	66%	73%
Nepal	65%	80%
Vietnam	56%	78%
Pakistan	55%	79%
Indonesia	54%	92%
Haiti	53%	79%
Tanzania	53%	93%
Burundi	52%	83%
Nigeria	52%	80%

Source: David L. Pelletier et al., "The Effects of Malnutrition on Child Mortality in Developing Countries," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, vol. 73, no. 4, 1995.

tems. The children die before the severe stage of malnutrition ever sets in.

The first column in **Table 1**, taken from the study of Dr. Pelletier and others, shows the percentage of children under 5 deaths associated with malnutrition in the ten worst cases among nations. In the case of India, 67%, or two-thirds of childhood deaths, are associated with—that is, caused in part by—malnutrition. The second column shows the percentage of all malnutrition-associated deaths, that can be ascribed to "mild or moderate only" malnutrition. Thus, in India, out of all malnutrition-linked deaths, 74% stemmed from mild or moderate malnutrition. Only one-quarter of the deaths came from severe malnutrition.

One need not wait until a child is skin and bones to know that he or she may die of malnutrition-related maladies. Moreover, malnutrition results in stunting, whereby the body does not develop sufficiently. Stunting is associated with below average height; but it is also associated with weakened immunity and impaired cognitive capacity. UNICEF's "The Progress of Nations, 1997" report, relates that there are 35 countries in the world in which 33% or more of the children under 5 are stunted.

Denial of infrastructure

The lack of basic infrastructure—water management, sanitation, housing, energy generation, transportation, hospital services—plays an immense role in the death of children under 5. Naturally, people recognize that hospital and medical services have a role in supporting life, but they will completely overlook the role of infrastructure. Without clean water, waste and sewage removal, and adequate sanitation, dis-

TABLE 2

Infrastructure determines life or death

Country	% of population with access to adequate sanitation	% of 1-year-olds immunized for DPT	Life expectancy at birth	% of primary school entrants reaching grade 5
Sierra Leone	11%	26%	37	NA
Niger	17%	28%	48	54%
Afghanistan	8%	45%	45	43%
Angola	40%	41%	47	34%
Liberia	30%	26%	50	NA
Mali	6%	74%	48	72%
Malawi	3%	95%	41	94%
Guinea-Bissau	46%	60%	44	80%
Somalia	NA	19%	49	NA
Mozambique	54%	59%	47	47%
Japan	NA	90%	77	100%
United States	NA	94%	77	99%

Source: UNICEF, "The State of the World's Children, 1999."

ease can be transmitted, though water-borne diseases, and—when there is food—through food-borne diseases. If raw sewage runs open down a canal flowing through a housing area, and if it overflows, this will carry bacteria-rich fecal matter and become a breeding ground for disease. Think of energy-generation. A hospital without electricity cannot refrigerate vaccines, medications, or blood products; it cannot run diagnostic equipment, from EKGs to nuclear magnetic resonance imaging machines. Lack of electricity turns the operating room into a primitive place, without even proper lighting. And without roads or sufficient transportation, there may be no way to get an acutely sick or injured person to a hospital in a timely fashion.

Indeed, on the highest level, it is solely the advance of civilization, including economic development, and the matrix of infrastructure, capital-intensive industrialization, and mechanized agriculture, that provides for human life.

Table 2 shows the infrastructure that determines life or death for the ten nations with the highest childhood death rates. In Sierra Leone, for example, where 84 out every 1,000 children die before age 5, only 11% of the population has access to adequate sanitation, and only one-quarter of infants, under one year old, are immunized against the childhood killers diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus.

Compare these figures with the numbers in each of these categories in the United States and Japan.

Unnecessary deaths

As a matter of deliberate policy, the BAC, in order to prop up its dying, bankrupt monetary system, has imposed, and

TABLE 3

Excessive under-five deaths for 53 nations, 1997

Country	Annual under-5 deaths (thousands)	Deaths if U.S.-German rate prevailed	Excessive deaths
Sierra Leone	66,000	1,000	65,000
Niger	159,000	2,600	156,400
Afghanistan	309,000	5,300	303,700
Angola	162,000	2,900	159,100
Liberia	29,000	500	28,500
Mali	131,000	2,900	128,100
Malawi	105,000	2,500	102,500
Guinea-Bissau	10,000	200	9,800
Somalia	110,000	2,600	107,400
Mozambique	162,000	4,200	157,800
Guinea	73,000	1,900	71,100
Congo Democratic Republic	449,000	12,100	436,900
Other 41 nations	6,960,000	313,100	6,646,900
Total, 53 nations	8,725,000	351,800	8,373,200

Source: UNICEF, "The State of the World's Children, 1999"; *EIR*.

enforces underdevelopment in the so-called developing world. This includes the heavy-handed work of the BAC's International Monetary Fund, through the imposition of its hated "Structural Adjustment Policies."

Table 3 makes a comparison. In the first column, it gives the actual number of deaths of children under 5, in 1997, in the countries with the highest death rates of children under 5. Out of the 53 nations in which at least 2% of all children under 5 die, the first 12 are specifically listed, followed by the summation of the other 41 nations, and the grand total. So, for example, in 1997, some 66,000 children under the age of 5 in Sierra Leone died.

The second column shows how many children in each of these countries would have died, had these countries had the same average childhood death rate as in the United States and Germany. In Sierra Leone, for example, had the average U.S. and German death rate for children under 5 prevailed, there would have been only 1,000 childhood deaths in 1997. The third column shows the difference, the excess of 65,000 unnecessary deaths in Sierra Leone.

This is not a matter of mere statistics. What this comparison presumes, is that Sierra Leone were industrialized as a matter of conscious policy—that it were developed to the level of clean water provision, nutritional and protein intake, energy-generation, ratios of hospitals, doctors, and medicine, etc., as exists in the United States and Germany. In the case of the 53 nations under consideration, in which at minimum 2% of all children under the age of 5 die, a total of 8.725 million children under the age of 5 actually died

in 1997. However, had the U.S. and German death rate for children under 5 prevailed in those 53 countries, then only 352,800 children under 5 would have died in 1997. As a result, in these 53 nations, *8.373 million children died unnecessarily*.

If one factors in all the children under 5 in the other developing nations, as well as the adults in all developing and some developed countries, who died needlessly, by the standard established above, then during the 1990s, *between 200 and 300 million people died unnecessarily*. BAC policies have therefore committed *a deliberate, premeditated genocide against poor people, 100 times worse than Hitler*.

Spread of illiteracy

There is a corollary feature to the BAC policies of imposed backwardness and genocide: the spread of illiteracy. According to UNICEF's report, *The State of the World's Children, 1999*, there are 625 million primary school-age children worldwide. Of these, 130 million, or 21%, do not attend any school at all. In addition, more than 150 million children, or another 24%, in developing countries, start school, but drop out before reaching grade 5. Thus, a combined 45% of the world's primary school-age children have either no education, or do not reach grade 5. This leaves them qualified for nothing more than primitive, back-breaking underemployment, or worse.

UNICEF's report presents some regional pictures. It should be pointed out that BAC operatives infect UNICEF, which biases some of its reporting. Also, countries will often overstate their educational achievements. That notwithstanding, UNICEF reports the following:

Commonwealth of Independent States; central and eastern Europe: According to Executive Director Carol Bellamy, "Across the region, more than 32,000 pre-schools have closed, 23,000 in Russia alone, and the number of children attending kindergarten has fallen from 61 to 44%." Conditions for teachers also deteriorated, because of "a lack of pay." Several CIS states still maintain high primary school attendance.

Sub-Saharan Africa: More than 40 million primary school-age children are not in school. Of those in school, for the following nations, these are the rates of primary school entrants who get only as far as grade 5: Benin, 61%; Congo, 54%; Burundi, 50%; Central African Republic, 24%; Chad, 28%; Kenya, 68%; Guinea-Bissau, 20%.

South Asia: More than 50 million primary school-age children are not in school. Between 1992 and 1997, in Afghanistan, primary school attendance was only 36% for boys, and 11% for girls.

The BAC's publicly stated attitude is that mass illiteracy is acceptable, because most human beings should serve—and are only fit to serve—in menial jobs. This coheres with its policy that has snuffed out the lives of so many children under the age of 5. For those clamoring the loudest about human rights violations and genocide, here is the place to start.