

THE
BIRTH
DEARTH

What Happens
When People in Free
Countries Don't Have
Enough Babies?

BEN J. WATTENBERG

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What happens when people in free countries don't have enough babies? What can we do about it?

In this important book, a well known optimist sounds an unexpected alarm about a looming crisis that he believes could shake our economy, erode our global influence, and harm many young women and men in their personal lives.

Ben Wattenberg is known widely as a columnist, political activist, and student of the social sciences, particularly demography. His call to attention cannot be ignored.

For nearly a generation, the people in the nations of the free, modern, industrial world have not had enough children to reproduce themselves over an extended period of time.

The Baby Boom has come and gone. In this book, Wattenberg describes the Birth Dearth, which is every bit as real and much more disturbing.

Drawing on current demographic data, Wattenberg describes a future where, by the end of the next century, there will be about half a billion people in the free world—and about 9.5 billion in the rest of the world.

(continued on back flap)



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Ben J. Wattenberg

*“Be fruitful and multiply,
and replenish the earth . . .”*

GENESIS, 1:28

For Ruth, Daniel, Sarah and Rachel

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Acknowledgments

Off and on, I have been writing about demographics for about 25 years now. I have been particularly interested in the American situation. Like almost everyone who has written on the topic, I have been fascinated by the Baby Boom. I never did think it was a harmful phenomenon that would crowd us out and pollute the environment. I didn't believe there was a population bomb, a population explosion, or a population crisis, certainly not in America.

And so, as the Baby Boom began its recession, I wrote about that. In 1965, with Richard Scammon, I co-authored a piece in the old *Reporter* magazine entitled "Our Population: The Statistics Explosion." In 1970, I wrote what turned out to be a very controversial cover story for *The New Republic* entitled "The Nonsense Explosion."

I wrote about the decline from high fertility rates in books as well as magazines: "This USA" (with Scammon in 1965), "The Real America" in 1974, and in "The Good News Is The Bad News Is Wrong" in 1984. In the course of writing the latter book, I had occasion to carefully review the data, and came to realize just how long it has been that America has maintained a fertility rate that was below replacement level, what I call here a "Birth Dearth" level. It began in 1972, and it's still very much with us in 1987—fifteen consecutive years.

As I came to understand the changes, I came to the realization that my early views had both remained consistent and yet evolved. I still believe the Baby Boom wasn't harmful and, obviously, it hasn't lasted. But as the fertility rates went low and lower still, and stayed very low, I have come to the belief that these new rates in America (and Europe, and Japan) have now gone so low as to be harmful and that they will likely last—unless people understand the magnitude of the problem and respond by changing their reproductive behavior. The result of that thinking is this book.

I have learned at least one thing in the course of writing books on demographics. You need lots of help, particularly when the subject matter ranges so broadly, as it does here, from fertility, to personal lifestyle, to Social Security, to the medicine of fertility enhancement, to economic theorizing, to tax policy, to military theory, and so on.

My first debt of thanks is to my home base, the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C. I have been associated with A.E.I. for a decade now. The “think tank” is a particularly American invention, and a good one, that has placed an important footprint on American policy. It’s a particularly good place for an itinerant peddler like me, offering not only logistical help, but most importantly, in the case of AEI, a quite remarkable collection of intelligent, resourceful, and knowledgeable colleagues.

I should first thank Karl Zinsmeister, my former research assistant at AEI. He is a brilliant young man, now out on his own.

I shall not list all my AEI colleagues who helped indirectly in this work. I talk with many of them frequently and as a matter of course. I did receive specific help from John Weicher, John Makin, Michael Novak, Doug Besharov, Eugene Steurle, William Haraf, Evelyn Caldwell, Norman Ornstein, and Herbert Stein.

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It seems as if every book I write I end up with a special debt to the superb professionals at the Census Bureau. An early draft of many sections of this manuscript was reviewed, and sometimes criticized, by experts there. Of course, the views here are my own, but many of the statistics have been verified by Census experts. Of great specific help were: Godfrey Baldwin, Martha Barger, Campbell Gibson, Gordon Green, Prithuis Das Gupta, Don Hernandez, Roger Herriot, Ward Kingkade, Arthur Norton, Martin O'Connell, Jeff Passell, Silvia Quick, Arlene Saluter, Greg Spencer, Barbara Boyle Torrey.

During the writing of this book I participated in a number of demographically-oriented events. I learned something everywhere. I was a member of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. World Population Conference in Mexico City in 1984. I was on demographic panels of the Population Association of America, the National Academy of Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences. In addition, AEI was the host of two population symposia: "Are World Population Trends a Problem" in December of 1984 and "Consequences of Population Decline in the West" in December of 1985.

At these occasions, among the people I listened to, or argued with, or both, were: Mickhail Bernstam, Hoover Institution; Charles Westoff and Norman Ryder of Princeton University; Sam Baum, then of the U.S. Census Bureau; Bob Clarke, North Carolina State University; Ray Cline and Edward Luttwak, Center for Strategic International Studies; Allan Carlson, Rockford Institute; Murray Feshbach, Georgetown U.; Richard Grenier, *Washington Times*; Richard Perle, Department of Defense; John Lenczowski, National Security Council; Alison McIntosh, University of Michigan; Paul Demeny and Geoffrey McNicoll, Population Council; Michael Teitelbaum,

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Whitey Karlsson helped design, and ably executed, the charts here—under tight deadlines.

As always, I received help from my immediate family, Judah and Regina Wattenberg, Rebecca and Gene Schull, my older children, Ruth, Daniel, and Sarah Wattenberg. My youngest child, Rachel, now three, taught me a great deal about some of the circumstances this volume deals with.

Of course, without the patience and counsel of my wife, Diane, this book could not have been written. I have promised not to write another one for a few years.

Ben Wattenberg
Washington, D.C., March 1987

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Chapter 1

The Birth Dearth

Most of this small book is a speculation and a provocation. It is mostly about the future, but it is based on facts of the past and present.

Of course, no one ever knows how the future will turn out, but the facts discussed here are not only quite remarkable but also seem to me to have an extraordinary amount of predictive power. I believe that these facts are so potent, and so different from what has come before, that they can frame the shape of much of what is yet to come. In doing so, they lay out the terrain of the playing field upon which we can act to mold—and try to change—our destiny.

Let me begin with an unscientific but, I think, instructive piece of evidence. In 1985, as I was beginning this book, I gave a speech in Linden, Michigan, to an assembly of several hundred high school students. Linden is a small community which is more or less a suburb of Flint. These young Lindeners were not precisely a typical group of

young Americans, but they were pretty close: middle-class, disproportionately white, fresh-faced, fun, alert, perhaps a little less-educated than they ought to be.

A part of my talk dealt with demographics, and I tried to fill the youngsters in on where they fit into the demographic scheme of things.

I mentioned the fact that the United States had a Baby Boom that went on for almost 20 years following World War II. I noted further that the median age of the students in the auditorium was currently about 17, and that they typically were born in 1968. I explained that their mothers—typically—had borne them somewhat after the Baby Boom had ended, although at a time when birth rates were much higher than the rates that now prevail.

As a matter of demographic fact, at the time I spoke to these 17-year-old students, their mothers would most typically have been in their early forties. For all intents and purposes, the cohort of American women into which those mothers would fall had already completed their child-bearing years and their total fertility had been measured by the Census Bureau at 2.4 children per woman. That rate is derived by adding up how many children were born to the women in that cohort and dividing by the total number of women in that cohort. In terms of child distribution per woman, it works out this way for the age group of the mothers of those young Lindeners.

**NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN FOR WHITE
WOMEN AGE 40-44 IN 1985**

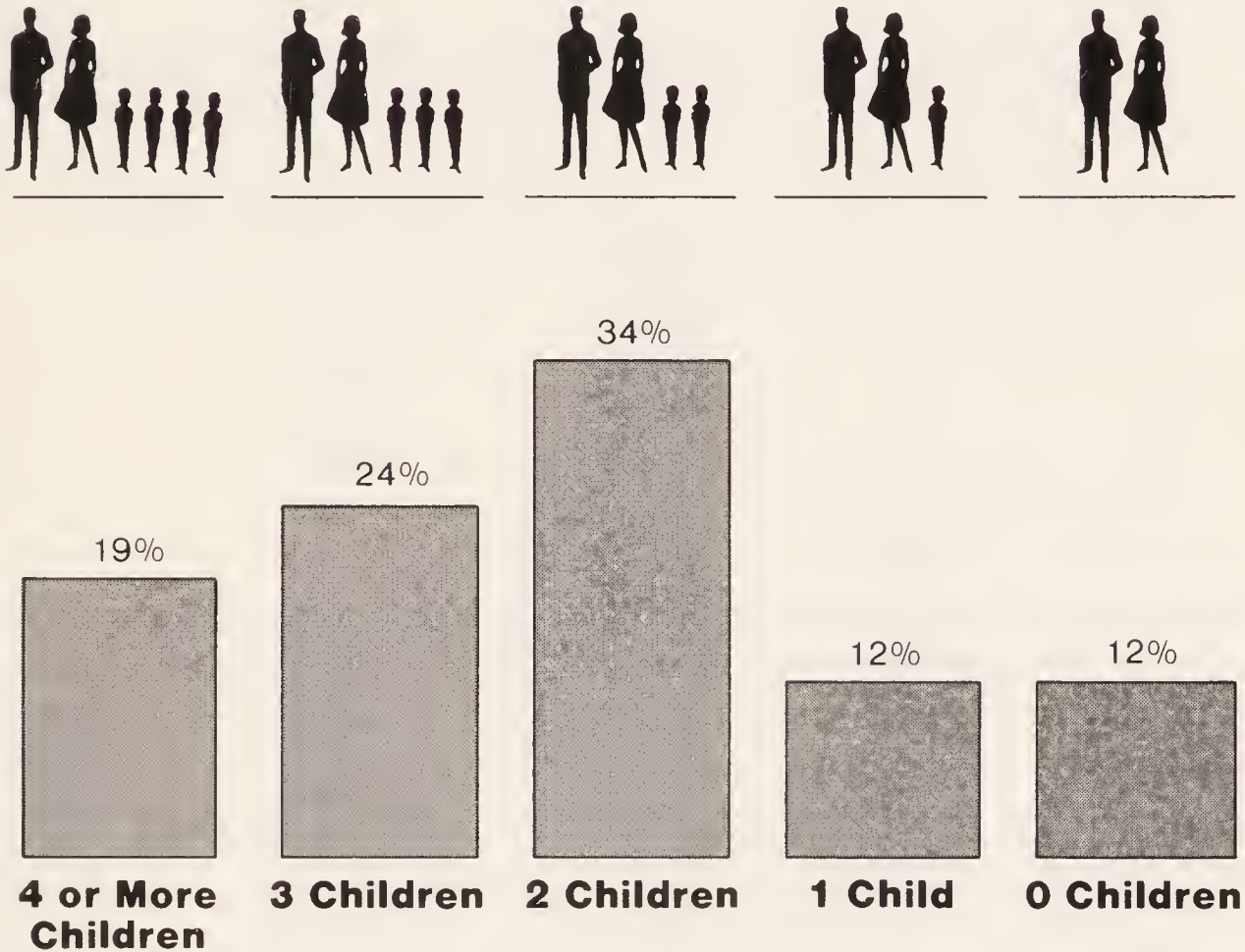
Number of Children Born	Percent of Women Bearing Stated Number of Children
0	12%
1	12%
2	34%
3	24%
4 or more	19%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. (Numbers do not add to 100% due to rounding.)

These numbers, when graphed, are represented by the chart on page 3.

Having set the historical demographic background, I decided to conduct some on the spot survey research. I began by asking the stu-

Chart 1A
NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN FOR WHITE
WOMEN AGE 40-44 IN 1985



Completed Fertility Rate: average of 2.4 Children per Woman

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

dents some questions about their family demographic history, how many siblings they had, and so on, and then told them that I was not interested primarily in the past, and not interested primarily in their mother's fertility patterns. I really wanted to know about their own future fertility. I told them to get ready for a show of hands regarding how many children they wanted to have. As might be imagined, the boys and girls began giggling and chattering, joking and poking.

I asked: How many want to have *four or more children*? Not one hand went up.

I then asked: How many wanted to have *three children*? A smattering of hands—call it about a *tenth* of the students. Groans came from the seated neighbors of the hand-raisers.

“Sally, you’re going to have three children? Gross!”

I asked: *two children*? Suddenly, a sea of hands in the auditorium; about *half* the group.

One child? Almost a third of the hands went up—approximately 30 percent.

And *no children* at all? A smattering again—perhaps *a tenth*. These rough numbers look like this:

**VERY INFORMAL POLL: NUMBER OF CHILDREN
WANTED BY LINDEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, 1985**

# OF CHILDREN WANTED	% WANTING STATED AMOUNT
0 Children	10%
1 "	30%
2 "	50%
3 "	10%
4 or more children	0%

The fertility projected from that data would be very different from the 2.4 children completed fertility rate born to their mothers' generation: The arithmetic for the young students works out to 1.6 children per woman.

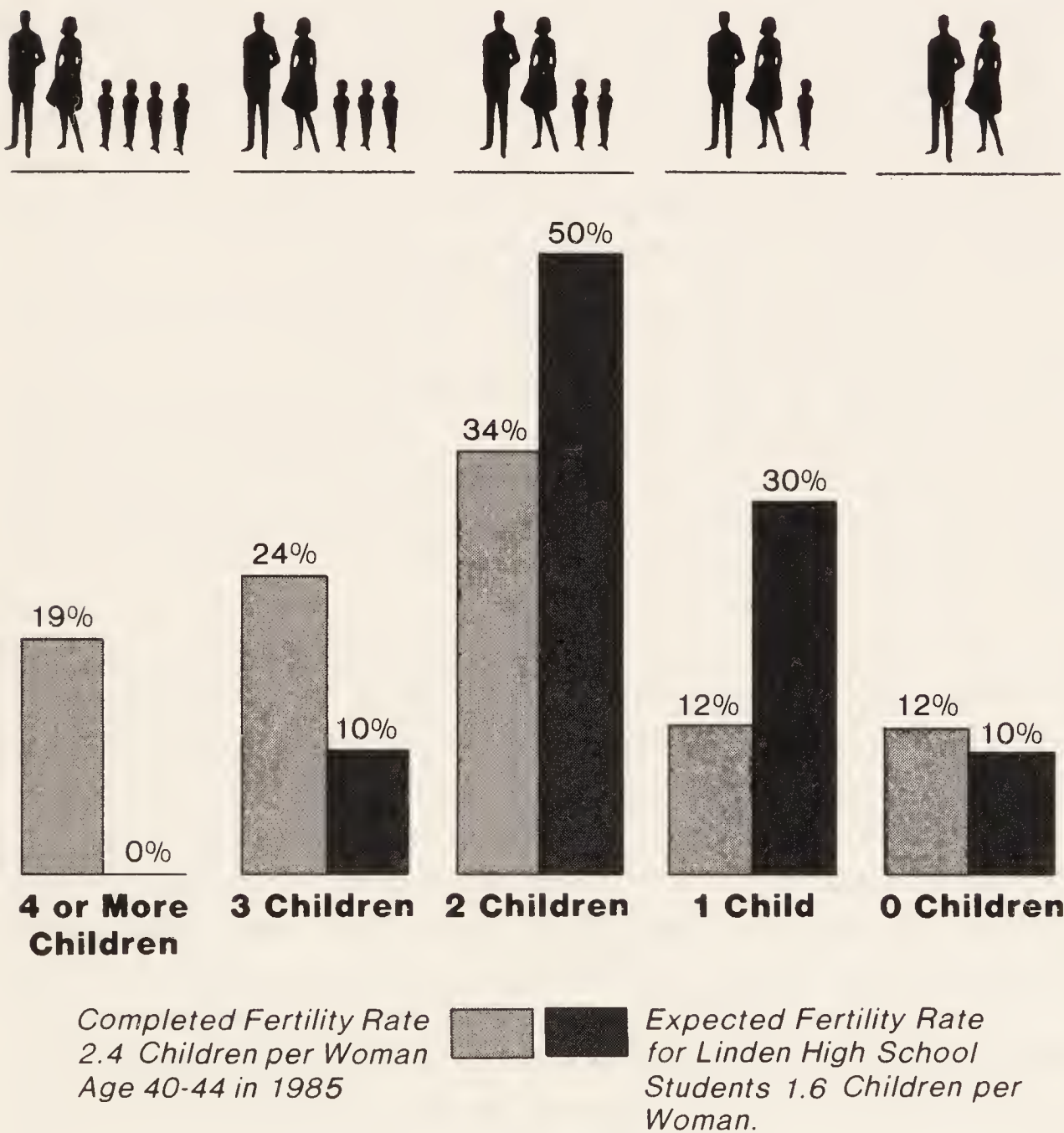
A second row of bars (on page 5) added to the earlier chart depicts the *future* desires of Linden teenagers, compared to what had *already* happened in America at large in an earlier generation.

Let us think for a moment about these data, one set precise, one set admittedly very rough. In order merely to keep a population stable over an extended period of time, it takes 2.1 children per woman (excluding immigration.) The generation of the *mothers* of Linden high school students, typically bearing most of their children *after the Baby Boom* was over, averaged about 2.4 children per woman. That 2.4 figure continuing over time would yield a vigorously growing United States.

But these youngsters in the informal poll were saying they intended to bear only about 1.6 children per family. The mothers had 50 percent more children than the teenagers expected to have. If continued over a period of time, that 1.6 rate yields first a low population growth rate for America. Then it yields a no-growth rate. Ultimately, it yields a United States of America that is shrinking.

These numbers, as mentioned, are not scientific. One normally doesn't do good polling in groups, lest peer pressure influence the results. I polled males and females, but, for good technical reasons,

Chart 1B
INFORMAL POLL: NUMBER OF CHILDREN
EXPECTED BY LINDEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, 1985



most birth “intentions” data are derived from a female-only sample. Both the informal sample and the Census data concerned whites only, not all Americans. Beyond that, recent studies of “intentions,” or “children wanted,” or “children expected,” or “ideal size of family” data, even when executed scientifically, are almost invariably flawed. The number of children *actually born* usually turns out to be *less* than the number *intended or wanted*. After all, some women who want children never marry. Some can’t conceive. Some get involved in careers and decide to have either no children or fewer children than they originally expected.

Still, while my very rough results from Linden do not match with precision birth intentions data in the U.S. today, they do offer a clear flavor of the *direction* of what's happening in America, and in the other modern, industrial nations of the world. For example, consider Gallup Poll data regarding the "ideal size of family." In 1945—as World War II ended—the percent of Americans saying they believed that having four or more children was the "ideal" family size was 47 percent. Turning the clock ahead to 1959, it was about the same: 45 percent.

And then, suddenly, change. By 1985, only 11 percent told Gallup pollsters that four or more children were ideal!

At the same time, those saying that "two" children were ideal went from 16 percent in 1959 to 56 percent in 1985!

The thumbnail Linden survey also conforms with the general direction of recent Census data showing "lifetime births expected," which are now at about the lowest level we've ever seen, and have been at such low levels for about a decade. These data will be discussed later in this volume.

But it's not just intentions data or ideal family size data. It's not just Linden, Gallup, and the Census Bureau. All these are only reflections of something that is happening in the modern industrial world *that has never happened before*.

Authors love to be able to say "such and such has never happened before in all history" But friends, beware, it usually isn't true. This time it is. What's happening today has never happened before. It will dramatically change the U.S. and the world in which we live. No one knows with certainty what the full nature, extent, or impact of these changes will be, but there is more than enough data—far more precise than the show of hands in Linden, the Gallup data, or the Census intentions data—for highly informed speculation.

Of only one thing is there certainty: stark change is ahead. And of change itself we know one thing: The earlier we know of its projected arrival, the better can we try to ameliorate it, shape it, adjust to it, or even try to reverse it. Over the years, in a variety of circumstances, I have heard businessmen, diplomats, government planners, and parents, all begging (wisely) for the same thing: "No surprises, please." In one sense, this speculative book is an attempt to deal with that plaint. Forewarned is forearmed.

What is happening is this: For about a decade and a half now the peoples in the nations of the free, modern, industrial world—that in-

cludes us in the U.S.—*have not borne enough children to reproduce themselves over an extended period of time.*

We had a Baby Boom.

Now there is a Birth Dearth.

And hardly anyone is paying much attention, certainly not in the U.S. After all, in the first generation of such a “baby bust,” there is only a shortfall of babies, not of adults. And even some of that is smoothed out if the baby bust happens to follow a baby boom, as has happened here. This is so because there are so many potential parents around from the previous boom that even if they each have very small families, it can still add up to quite a few children (although a smaller number than in the boom years).

But as we enter the *second* generation of the Birth Dearth, which is just about upon us, the shortfall is not just in babies, but in young adults as well. The earlier “missing” babies become “missing” producers and consumers, soldiers and sailors, mothers and fathers. And then, assuming only that fertility rates remain at their current level, the *next* generation of babies—the small families of these smaller number of maturing Birth Dearth babies—starts shrinking. That, too, will likely be with us within a few years. And all this family size change, of course, reflects itself sooner or later in actual population numbers. The nations affected by the Birth Dearth move inexorably from high growth rates, to low growth rates, to no-growth rates, to negative growth rates that are already apparent in some of the West European nations.

My own view is that this remarkable development, this Birth Dearth, will hurt us in the United States, and it will hurt people and nations around the Western, modern world. This may prove to be so in a dramatic and absolute sense where we experience noticeable harm, in either a personal, economic, geopolitical or social sense. But I believe it will almost surely be so in the sense that even if things seem all right, we would have been much better off if the Birth Dearth were not proceeding in this way at this time.

I believe the Birth Dearth will, in the near future, begin to cause turbulence at every level of our economy, from the counters of fast-food restaurants to major corporate board rooms. Modern capitalism has always been rooted in the economic fact of vigorously expanding domestic markets. That phase is ending. The ensuing turbulence will be difficult—though not impossible—to deal with. Ours, after all, is a responsive and flexible economy.

Indeed, the coming effect of the Birth Dearth may well provide great economic opportunity for some. (Invest in mortuaries, nursing

homes, geriatric hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies, not in companies that manufacture baby food, tricycles, or little league uniforms—and not in suburban four-bedroom housing developments.) Still, on balance, the Birth Dearth will prove hard to deal with. This is true in the United States, but doubly true in the nations of Western Europe and in Japan, our major trading partners. Birth rates there have generally fallen to lower rates than in the U.S., in some cases starkly lower—and immigration is not regarded as even a semi-serious solution. The Western Europeans have particularly enormous problems coming at them. And if they do, then we do. After all, as we hear every day, this is an interdependent world.

I believe, too, the Birth Dearth will leave in its wake tens of millions of unhappy adults who, through no real choice of their own, will end up with no children at all, or fewer children than they really wanted—or many fewer grandchildren than they had hoped for.

Much as I abhor the thought, I believe it is possible that, because of the changing ethnic and racial balances that come along with the Birth Dearth, we may face some increased divisiveness and turmoil in America, which could have been avoided had the Birth Dearth not visited us now.

I believe further—perhaps most importantly—that the Birth Dearth may well turn out to be of great harm to the broadest value we treasure; it will make it difficult to promote and defend liberty in the Western nations and in the rest of a modernizing world.

I do not mean to sound apocalyptic, but the demographic forces now in motion may just yield a world—one in which we or our children will live—where the U.S. will no longer be “the most important country in the world.” It could be a world where the alliance of Western nations will no longer shape either the political agenda, the culture, or the direction of the global community. This, I believe, could not only harm Americans and our Western allies. It would also harm all the other nations and peoples of the world, certainly in the poor areas of the globe, and quite possibly even among the Soviets and the Soviet bloc.

We have lived through an era of free-falling fertility in the modern democratic world. The key question it yields may well be this: *Over time, will Western values prevail?*

It is true that almost since the advent of the free, Western, “modern” world—and that dates back several centuries—its future has been questioned. It has been asked: Could the free, and capitalist, countries continue to prosper in the face of internal economic contradictions? Were these free nations with democratic politics made of stern enough stuff to stand up to external threats from totalitarian

states? Would they doom themselves to death by pollution or death by environmental degradation?

We've managed. Those who have predicted Western demise have been wrong so far.

So far. We do not know the future. But if the dim outlines of the world we see through the lens of demography are any measure of what's to come, it may well be a world we don't like. We may face a situation where our birthright, our legacy, and our prosperity are diluted, and diluted, and diluted, perhaps even to a point where they gradually cease to be very relevant.

Curiously, while it's happening, we may not even be aware of it. That is perhaps the most pernicious and baffling part of our situation: The nature of the harmful aspects of the changes headed our way may hardly be noticeable as they occur. They will progress slowly at first, then gain speed—but at any given moment things will probably seem to be just the way things are, or ought to be.

For history is a one-way street. We usually don't understand in the present what might have been if we had acted differently in the past.

Suppose, for one example, that the U.S. had legislated a restrictive immigration bill in 1824 instead of 1924. Under such a circumstance, today we well might be a nation with a population somewhat less than half our current population, almost as populous as Japan. Would the world be different? I surely believe so. Would we be a super-power? Perhaps, but I'm dubious. Would the U.S. have had the capacity to embark on a space program and fly to the moon? Could we support the armed forces necessary to deter potential Soviet expansionism? At best, all this would be much more difficult. In any event, would we know what might have been? Surely not.

Or suppose in the 1930s that we, England, and France had made a decision to stop Hitler before he got started, avoiding World War II. Could anyone today know or understand the magnitude of something that never happened, of 60 million people who were not killed? Of course not. After the fact we don't know what would have been, or could have been.

I confess I offer this slender volume with trepidation. In many ways it goes against my grain. Through my writings and television work, I have become known as an optimist. I would maintain, of course, that I am only a realist, but the words follow me: "optimist," "Panglossian," "roseate," "Dr. Feelgood." But whatever the description, the truth is that I do indeed believe that in my adult lifetime our modern democratic society has worked out remarkably well. (I was

born in 1933; I was twelve when World War II ended.)

I believe we live in the most free, most prosperous circumstance the world has ever seen. And, for now, it's still getting better. I think this progress almost surely will go on for at least a short while. Until fairly recently, I could divine no particular likely reason why our world would not continue to flourish well into the foreseeable future. At root, it is clear that the marriage of liberty and technology is powerful medicine for what ails people.

So why am I—of all people—writing this alarmist tract?

I only have one sad answer: I am alarmed. The situation I describe here scares the hell out of me. And I am convinced it is real. I do not believe I have fallen victim to “projectionitis,” that disease of straight-lining trends into the future until they become absurd. I know full well that a projection isn't a prediction.

But recall this: Although there have been some notable blips in the line, fertility has been falling in most of the Western world for more than a century. That is not exactly a short-term trend. It was tacitly presumed by many demographers that the fertility drop would stop when it reached replacement level of about 2.1 births per woman, because if it didn't the species wouldn't survive.

But that's not what happened. The rate went lower. Most of what follows in this book is speculation about what happens if the rates in the democratic industrial countries stay just about where they are now for another generation, or two, or three. It is not about what happens if the fertility downtrend continues and the rates go even lower (even though the latest rates for the modern world as a whole do show the decline continuing). The difference between projecting a leveling-off of low rates that already exist and have existed for quite a while (which is essentially what I do here) and projecting a continuing downward slope, is a difference with a great distinction.

Now, that still doesn't mean things can't change. They may indeed change—up or down. If fertility rates go lower than they are now, the consequences will be more dire than described here. If, by chance, the rates should turn solidly up in the years to come, the reader is invited to throw away this book. Much of it will be irrelevant. The speculation here is usually about what happens if birth rates stay roughly where they are in the modern parts of the world. It can be noted, then, that in two out of these three possible scenarios—the two most plausible to most experts—the speculations offered here are based on projections that would at least support the numerical basis for such pessimism as is found here.

Why were the demographers wrong about the depth of the fertility fall? Because hundreds of millions of people were acting in the priva-

cy of their bedrooms for their own private reasons, probably oblivious of the demographers' predictions, of explanations of replacement rates, of survival of the species, or of anything else relating to cosmic demography.

The West Germans today are on a course that yields fewer than 1.3 children per woman over the course of her lifetime. Recent demographic projections show that if that rate continues, it would reduce the West German population from 60 million today to 50 million by the year 2000, and down to 16 million by the end of the next century! A German demographer visiting Washington likes to talk about the pandas in the National Zoo. They have great difficulty reproducing and, as a species, may be on the road to extinction. He says it makes him think about what the German situation will be like in the centuries to come. French Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac, says "Europe is vanishing" and "Our countries will be empty." To be sure, the German demographer and M. Chirac exaggerate, but that's the image the trends yield.

The prognosis, as we shall see, is better for the U.S. But the direction of the trend line is the same. Back in 1972, the distinguished American demographer Charles Westoff was staff director for the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, chaired by John D. Rockefeller III. The spirit of that report, says Westoff, was one of relief that fertility rates had come down from the highs of the Baby Boom years. It extolled the idea of a further decline toward a two-child average.

Today, reviewing a variety of trends in motion in the U.S., some of which he says have not yet run their course, Westoff writes this:

When we consider these trends, and observe that fertility in the United States has been declining for two centuries . . . and when we see similar and even more extreme declines in other Western countries in recent decades, the conclusion that fertility appears destined to remain low seems inescapable. The greater uncertainty appears to be how low it will fall. The large problems on the demographic horizon in Western countries will be those of aging, with population decline, and with questions of immigration.¹

As I sense it, the way the numbers work out, we in the West have about one generation to first, understand, and then, reverse, this fertility free-fall we have experienced. Otherwise we will pay for it.

¹ Charles Westoff, "Fertility in the United States," *Science Magazine*, Oct. 1986. Westoff is Director of Population Research and Professor of Demographic Studies and Sociology, Princeton University.

In 1968, Paul Ehrlich, a biologist from Stanford University turned his attention from fruit flies to human beings and wrote a small book called *The Population Bomb*. It sold millions of copies and seemed to crystallize the thinking of an entire generation of young people who came to believe that we were crowding ourselves off the planet. It obviously can't be verified quantitatively, but it is likely that as this view became more and more widely held, it played at least some role in the subsequent sharp fall in fertility. Women said they felt "guilty" in bringing yet another hungry mouth into such a crowded, polluted world, which was running out of resources. Women who thought about having a third child have told me that their peers let them know that it was somehow unfair to have a large family.

In my judgment at that time, Ehrlich's idea was wrong-headed, surely so for the peoples of the free industrial nations. I believed then that it was based on both faulty examination of the data and faulty logic; I believe now that subsequent developments have justified my earlier view.

The Population Bomb did demonstrate one truth, however: that a little book in this arcane field of demography can have a mighty impact on the nature of the world.

It is my hope that *The Birth Dearth* will have a similar fate, as it makes an opposite case.

Chapter 2

Free Fall

The principal actors (and perhaps victims) in this volume are the people who live in that community of nations that are best described by these words: *modern, industrial, free*.

Although the most attention here is paid to the United States, such a grouping of countries would also include Canada. It would include all the states of Western Europe. It would include Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as Israel and Iceland (twenty-two nations in all).

I refer to them here variously as “the Community,” “the Alliance,” or “the Western nations.” The Pacific members of this group of nations are obviously not “western” in a geographic sense, but they tend to qualify on the grounds of modernity, economic status, and culture.

There is a paradox at work in the central idea of this book.

I am saying to these modern nations: Watch out! I am saying that in the modern world the falling birth rates we are facing are new and potentially hazardous. Yet, in another sense, it is by no means a new sto-

ry that fertility rates have fallen in these nations. Indeed, family size has been going down in a bumpy fashion in the industrial nations almost since the very beginnings of the Industrial Revolution.

Consider the United States. We have good documentation dating back almost 200 years; the very founding of the nation involved the constitutional call for a census in 1790. Data from that count, as well as from other early sources, reveal that American females of that time typically bore about seven children over the course of their fertile years. (This figure represents the “completed fertility” of a cohort of women and it relates to what we now call the Total Fertility Rate—TFR. For many purposes, surely for the longer-range trends often stressed in this book, the TFR probably is the single most meaningful birth indicator in the demographic trade. Accordingly, much will be heard of it in this volume, as is explained in some technical detail on pages 26 and 27.

In 1890, one hundred years after that first Census, the completed fertility rate was not *seven* children—but down to *about four children*. And today, almost another century later, the U.S. is down to a TFR of 1.8, below the replacement rate—a Birth Dearth level.¹ Even sharper fertility decreases and levels are observable in the other modern Western nations.

The paradox here is this: It is precisely because in the industrial world the trend of downward fertility is so old and so universal that, at its current levels, it is both “new” and potentially threatening.

It is not that demographers haven’t understood for a long time the relationship between a modern society and lower birth rates. As people move from rural to urban settings, from farms to factories, from country homesteads to city row houses—all facets of modernism—then fertility falls. As incomes go up, as women move into the work force, as education increases—all facets of modernism—then fertility falls. As technology yields better contraceptive techniques, as standards change to permit legal abortion—once again facets of modernism—then fertility falls. All those relationships still seem to be at work today, and (as we shall see) show little sign of imminent reversal. Indeed, the likelihood is that the trend to even lower fertility may not yet have run its course.

So what is new and scary about this old trend? It is that in the last two decades it has reached, and then breached, the magic demo-

¹ In this book, the term “Birth Dearth” deals with a TFR below the “replacement rate” of 2.1 children per woman. I modestly mention that the term “Birth Dearth” was, I believe, first used by this author in 1971, in a short study for the National Association of Food Chains entitled “The Demography of the 1970s: The Birth Dearth and What It Means”.

graphic number of 2.1 children per woman referred to earlier. As noted, that is the rate required over time (and absent immigration) merely to keep a population at a *stable* level. Again, as noted, many demographers assumed there was something in the nature of the human species that would stop the decline of fertility when it more or less reached this 2.1 level—the “replacement rate.” As that happened, it was assumed that in a demographic sense everyone would live happily ever after, with a population that would neither grow much, nor shrink much.

But a funny thing happened on the way to a steady-state population. It turned out that demography is not really about the human species. It’s about individual people, and it is individual people (called parents) who have babies and set the long-range fertility patterns. Individuals, making intimate decisions that involve the bedroom and the checkbook, usually don’t care much about whether the Total Fertility Rate of the nation is 2.4 children per woman (as in the Soviet Union), 2.1 (as in Czechoslovakia), 1.8 (as in the U.S.), or the near-suicidal 1.27 that now prevails in West Germany. (Denmark and Italy are a little higher with 1.4, with Switzerland just a bit above that at 1.5.)

The couples involved often care about whether the wife needs to work or wants to work, whether their dwelling is large enough for a child or more children, whether they will have the money available to send their child or children to good schools, and whether they will be able to afford a nice vacation; in short, whether—in a hundred ways—they will be able to keep up their standard of living. In the end, much depends on whether the urge to parenthood—principally involving the love of offspring, and a yearning for a posterity—is strong enough to offset the problems it may yield.

So: The *direction* of the trend is long-established. It is the *low level* and the recent *speed of descent* that is so startling. How low? Very Low. How fast? Very fast.

Almost every aspect of modern life seems to be blamed upon—or praised because of—its derivation from the turbulent time called “The Sixties.” So too with “The Birth Dearth.” Varying somewhat from year to year and from nation to nation, the demographic trend we deal with here began in most industrial nations sometime around the 1960s. Expressed as simply as possible, what happened was this: *For a while, the bottom fell out.*

I do not exaggerate. Some examples: In just twenty years—one generation—the TFR in The Netherlands dropped from 3.2 children per women to 1.4. That is a decrease of 53 percent!

Or consider a bigger country. Over a brief eleven-year span, the French rate dropped 32 percent!

Only among whites? No. Japanese birth rates began falling somewhat earlier—in the mid-fifties—and dropped by 27 percent in one decade.

What about the United States? From a higher base, the U.S. experienced one of the steepest declines in the world. Our TFR plunged by 54 percent in just nineteen years—from 3.77 to 1.74, starting in 1957 and going to 1976. (It's been at about 1.8 since then.)

In short: Among the nations we are talking about—the modern, industrial, free nations—the bottom fell out almost everywhere, and quickly. There will be an attempt here not to stuff too many graphs into this volume, but the one on the opposite page is critical and deserves some scrutiny.

The actual numbers that form this graph are offered in tabular form in the Appendix.

Several things should be noted about the numbers.

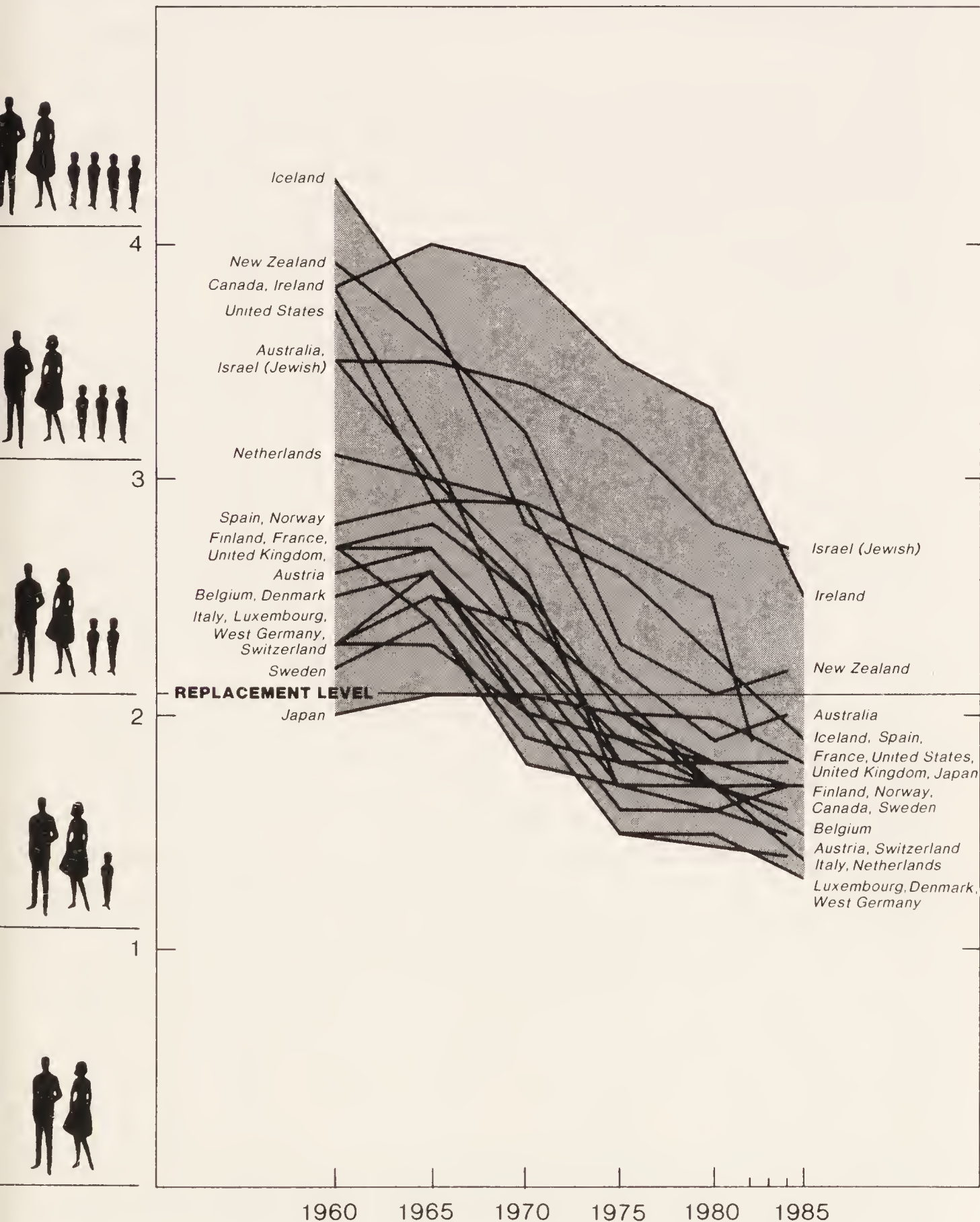
One can sense from the graph, and it is confirmed by the data in the Appendix, that the most recent data for the modern nations generally show a continuing decline. Of the 22 nations included, 14 *dropped* from 1980 to the most recent year available, usually 1985. Five nations stayed at the *same level* during that time. Just three went *up*, each by a minuscule .1, and two of those were tiny countries, Finland and New Zealand, along with the middle-size Australia. Of the six most populous Western nations, three have TFRs that dropped in that time frame—West Germany, France, and Italy, each down by .2.

Demographer Carl Haub of the Population Reference Bureau keeps a close eye on the year-to-year fertility rates. In early 1987, referring to the Western industrial nations, Haub said this: “The general country-by-country evidence shows TFRs either remaining stable or in continuing decline. There is no evidence of an upward trend.” In other words, not only is there no apparent upturn occurring, not only is there no firm plateau discernable, but it is entirely plausible that the decline has not yet reached bottom. The broad run of the data has obviously been following this downward path to below-replacement levels for a long time now—at least a full generation. It is quite likely that the next available set of annual data will show many nations moving to still lower all-time lows, just as this chart shows. That, at least, seems to be the consensus of most demographers who have studied the situation.

In the post-World War II circumstance, it was Japan that first breached the 2.1 replacement barrier for an extended period of time. That began back in 1957. It was not until 13 years later that the first

Chart 2A FERTILITY DECLINE IN THE INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES 1960-1985

Total Fertility Rate (Expressed as Children Per Woman)



Sources: *World Tables*, Third Edition, Vol II, World Bank. *Recent Demographic Developments in the Member States of the Council of Europe*, Council of Europe, 1986. *World Development Report*, World Bank, various years. *Statistical Abstract of Israel*.

West European nation went below replacement to stay. That was West Germany in 1970. But within five years after that, fifteen other nations were below the mark! And by 1980 *all the major, free, modern nations were under replacement*. Today, only Ireland, Israel and New Zealand—none of them great demographic powers—are above replacement rates.

Moreover, this fertility fall has been the steepest in all demographic history.

Now, there is at least one easy and statistical reason that can explain some of the steepness of the decline. Consider what happened in the United States when World War II ended in 1945. G.I. Joe and Rosie the Riveter finally got together again, and it was as if the country went into heat. Babies, babies everywhere. That American TFR of 3.8 in the peak year of 1957 would today be described as a “Third World rate.”

Indeed, in most places in the industrial world, during the postwar 1940s and throughout much of the 1950s, there was a “Baby Boom” of some sort, although not up to the magnitude and duration seen in the U.S. To some extent, this near-universal Western “bump” was to be expected. Birth rates do tend to rise after a war, and almost all of the Western nations were in the war. But unexpectedly, the boom lasted longer, and at higher levels, than most demographers had expected. This was especially so in the United States. It was, you might say, a seminal event. In any event, fertility rates were at unusually high relative levels and a drop was to be expected.

But notwithstanding the postwar Baby Boom phenomenon, almost no one expected what happened next—a demographic track that was not only very low, and stayed low, but one that, unless big changes occur, clearly leads to sharp population declines.

Consider some of the history of population and fertility loss. There have been, to be sure, temporary declines in population before. War has been one cause: Sixty million people died in World War II. Another cause of demographic decline has been famine: Six million people died in one incident in India some years ago and, more recently, about 25 million died in China during the Cultural Revolution. Disease can decimate a population: Bubonic plague killed off about a third of the European population in the Middle Ages. Repression, too, can contribute to eroding a population base: One estimate is that Soviet policies since Lenin have directly or indirectly destroyed more than 60 million people in the Soviet Union. Something similar (proportionately) happened in Cambodia in the 1970s.

Economic depression has pushed down fertility rates. During the

Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, many European nations dipped below the 2.1 TFR mark for a few years, although in most cases nowhere near as low as their current rates.

War, famine, disease, repression, depression. These are *external* events or conditions—*inflicted* upon either nations or peoples. But the nations and peoples in question today—our nations and peoples of the Western community—are at peace, well-fed, free, healthy, and prospering.²

The cause of our Birth Dearth is not external in the conventional sense—it is *self-induced*, or if you prefer, *self-inflicted*. (Thus: the use of contraception, women moving into the labor force, urbanization, all involve some large measure of personal choice.)

As I have traveled to many nations in pursuit of this story in recent years, I have been struck by the fact that in so many places, so many people offer very particular reasons regarding the cause of the Birth Dearth in their particular country.

A woman in Texas told me it was because of Vietnam. She had been married to two 'Nam vets she said, and they weren't ready to make commitments due to their trauma from the war.

In Germany, I was told that one reason the birth rate was down was in reaction to Hitler, who had tried to increase birth rates.

I will give further examples later. I find these particularistic stories all very interesting, but, alas, when all is said and done one must ignore most of them.

Why? Because, birth rates have plummeted everywhere throughout the modern industrial world. They are at a record low for a record duration. They are, most likely, still falling. They have fallen in a nation which was involved in the Vietnam War, and in nations which weren't. They are falling in nations where there was a big population explosion and in nations where there wasn't. They are falling where there was a fascist history and where there wasn't. The fact is, the Birth Dearth is a phenomenon that is going on all across in the modern world. And it has never happened before.

What does it yield?

² Despite all the talk of a decade of “stagflation” (the Seventies), real per capita income continued to rise among the Western nations in the Seventies, as it did in the Sixties, as it does now in the Eighties. Moreover, the sharp fertility declines began before the “stagflationary” Seventies, and continues at low levels after the departure of “stagflation.” In any event, the stagflationary experience was a far cry from the Thirties Depression situation.

Chapter 3

A Little About Demographics

What of the future? What do these remarkably low rates portend?

Before we begin to answer these questions directly, a word should be said here about the social science of demography and the ability of demographers to speculate accurately about the future. I offer two thoughts. First: Although they have made some big mistakes about certain sorts of things, demographers know more about the future than other social scientists. Second: they know a great deal.

Economists—who usually cannot agree on an interpretation of the past, nor on the meaning of what is happening now—are often happy to tell you what will happen in the future. Such predictions are frequently wildly out of date before the ink spray on the computer print-out has dried. They fall prey to the first unexpected economic event, of which there are many: booms, recessions, depressions, inflations, deflations, stagflations, etc. You may bet on it: Economists don't know what will happen next.

Political scientists, too, make predictions. They will tell you the country is moving to the right, or to the center, or even to the left.

They will tell you that candidate Jones is a shoo-in to be president in 1988. Then a recession, a war, a major gaffe, or a national scandal pops up, and the same or other political scientists will tell you perhaps the country isn't moving to the right, and anyway, good old Jones has been touched by scandal, is gaffe-prone, and turned out to be a turkey on the campaign trail. It's Smith who's a shoo-in, except, of course, if the economic forecasts by economists about inflation don't hold up, or if Smith proves to be a gaffer too. Believe me: People in politics—political scientists, pundits, practitioners—know even less about the future than economists. You can depend on it.

In this social-science land of the blind, the one-eyed demographer is king. For demographers know some things, with some certainty, about the future. The root of their special knowledge is not hard to divine. Think: They are usually dealing with numbers of people, and those people are *already alive*.

Thus, if a thousand babies are born in the U.S. in 1987, we pretty well know how many native-born ten year old children there will be in the country ten years later, in 1997. (The answer is about 984, after accounting for infant and child mortality.) Knowing these sorts of rates, we can do some fairly precise national planning about the number of schools, classrooms, and teachers that will be required in 1997. (Try asking an economist about the inflation rate in 1997. Ask a political scientist what percentage of the electorate will self-identify as Democrats in 1997.)

Similarly, once we know American birth rates in 1987, we also know pretty well how many native-born young adults age 20 there will be in the U.S. in 2007. If we make some plausible adjustments for potential emigration and immigration, and add in the prior two decades' worth of births, we know roughly what the total number of young adults age 20 to 40 there will be in the U.S. in 2007. We then know in rough measure another critical fact: *how many potential mothers there will be in our country at that time*.

Demographers know some other things about the future and about how the world works. They know, as has been mentioned, that if two parents (on average) don't bear and raise two children to reproductive age, then—over a period of time and with all other things being equal—a population will decline. *Two parents must be replaced by two children*. That is not my law. It is (depending on your preference) God's law, a law of nature, or a law of arithmetic. Two must yield two, whether you are a believer or an atheist.

Alas, the wonder and simplicity of demographic futurology begins to end at about this point. Demographers surely don't know every-

thing about the future, and the rest of what they do know can get complex.

First: The rate needed to keep a population in balance over an extended period of time is not simply two children flat. In most modern nations it is approximately 2.1. Why the .1? Two reasons. Because some children don't survive to adulthood when, in theory at least, they too could become parents and help continue the perpetual motion of the human species. And because there are somewhat more boy babies than girl babies born—and fertility measurements almost always concern females, not males. There are about 105 males born per 100 females. To achieve an exact replacement rate of females at that ratio would require a 2.05 TFR. The other .05, making up the 2.1, comes from the infant and child mortality rates mentioned above.

Interesting fact: One key reason demographers measure fertility in women and not in men is that maternity is a known fact easily ascribable to a specific woman. Establishing paternity, on the other hand, may be questionable. (Accordingly, the reader will mostly find rates for women in this book.)

The second complicating factor concerns the matter of immigration. We don't know how many immigrants the U.S. will acquire in the future, and with the past record of illegal immigration, we don't even know exactly how many are here now. In theory, a below-replacement fertility rate can be made up by a high immigration rate. In practice, the numbers don't really work out that way these days.

Thus, in the more-or-less ethnically homogenous nations of Western Europe or Japan any extensive immigration is seriously frowned upon. France now accepts only about 30-35,000 immigrants per year and, even at that low level, it has become a major and festering political issue. The political bonuses are going to those pols who not only want to cut immigration, but actually propose to send home many North African emigres who arrived in France in earlier years. Italy takes in only about 4,000 immigrants a year. England in the last decade has had a net loss, although in the last few years the numbers have turned positive. West Germany and some other Western European nations pay immigrants to leave and go back where they came from, which is usually Turkey. Japan has about zero net immigration.

The U.S. is not ethnically homogeneous. In theory, it would be easier for us than for the Europeans to take in enough immigrants to wipe out our Birth Dearth rates. In fact, we take in more legal immigrants than all the other nations combined. But Statue of Liberty rhetoric notwithstanding, there has always been substantial public resistance to high immigration rates in the U.S. These days, too, there

is plenty of resistance, and we do not take in nearly enough immigrants, legal or illegal, to yield the functional equivalent of the 2.1 replacement TFR over the long term. Nor are we likely to in the future. (This will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.)

If there was doubt that immigration could not put us on a positive demographic track—and there shouldn't have been for reasons to be explained in a moment—there should be little doubt about it now. The Immigration and Reform Control Act of 1986 was passed by the Congress and signed by the President in late 1986.

The bill imposes stiff punitive “employer sanctions” on those who hire illegal immigrants. Previously, only the illegal immigrant, not the employer, was punished. Now, after warnings and previous fines and violations, an employer ultimately can be fined up to \$10,000 for each illegal immigrant hired, and face a prison term as well. The bill also has an illegal immigrant amnesty provision, but only for those illegals who arrived prior to 1982.

The new law means that it most likely will become much more difficult for illegals to get jobs in the U.S.—and jobs have been the basic magnet that drew most illegals here. Although there remains an argument about just how effective the law will be, most experts believe it surely will curtail some amount of illegal immigration, likely a great deal of it over time, as kinks and loopholes are worked out and fraudulent practices of avoidance are dealt with. Perhaps more important for our purposes here is to note that in recent years, the extent of illegal immigration has been grossly over-stated in the popular press.

How so? To begin, there is an inherent statistical morass involved in the data, even on the legal side, involving: refugees, asylees, marriages to American citizens, country quotas, the future impact of the “daisy-chain” effect which can increase immigration via the re-unification of families of legal immigrants who will become citizens, and—what is rarely thought about—emigration *from* the U.S., which the Census Bureau estimates at 160,000 per year. Moreover, the statistical methodology and practice of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has come under sharp criticism. For good reason, a National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences (NRC/NAS) panel entitled their 1985 study “Immigration Statistics—A Story of Neglect.” In the last few years, to be fair, INS has shown important improvements in their statistical procedures.

The NRC/NAS panel attempted to make some unbiased estimates of an immigration situation that has been barraged and obfuscated by bizarre guess-work statistics (invariably high) generated by self-interested sources, especially regarding the number of illegal immi-

grants.¹ Their conclusion: “. . . a population of 1.5 to 3.5 million illegal aliens in 1980 appears reasonably consistent with most of the studies . . . there is no empirical basis at present for the widespread belief that the illegal alien population has increased sharply in the late 1970s and early 1980s; the only data available on recent trends . . . in fact suggest that the illegal population has increased little if at all since 1977, although entry attempts may have increased. . . .”

The Census Bureau, the other disinterested agency that has tried to make solid estimates in this field, has a somewhat higher estimate than the NRC/NAS. Census says the total number of illegals at the end of 1986 was in the 3-5 million range, with approximately 100-300,000 illegals coming in each year. Until the new law was passed, the Census Bureau used 200,000 as their official projection number for illegals. In congressional testimony, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the hands-on agency in the field, endorsed the Census estimates. As this is written, Census experts are recalculating their projections, in order to lower it progressively over the years as the expected impact of the new law is felt. INS officials agree that the law will have a major effect on reducing the flow of illegals. (Indeed, in the early part of 1987, *The New York Times* reported that thousands of illegal American immigrants were already moving into Canada to avoid being subject to deportation under the new immigration law. At the same time, a *Washington Post* story, datelined Mexico, reported that substantial numbers of Mexican and Central American illegals were returning home for the same reason: new fears of deportation. Such deportations could be triggered if an illegal who arrived in America after the amnesty cut-off date sought to get a new job and couldn't provide appropriate timely residence documentation.)

What all this means is that there are fewer illegals in this country than most of us thought, fewer who will be applying for amnesty under the new law, and a lower flow of illegal immigrants than has been popularly perceived. (An illegal must have been in the U.S. prior to 1982 in order to qualify for amnesty.) The World Bank and the United Nations uses the figure 435,000 immigrants per year when projecting U.S. data. Because the basic model of world population used in this book is from the World Bank/UN, source, that is the basis of all the data and all projections for all countries used here (including the U.S.) unless otherwise noted. Given the passage of the immigration bill, the World Bank/UN estimates seem to be a good rough figure to work with as a *total* for immigration to the U.S. The reasons

¹ One former Census demographer dealt with one of the far-out estimates by noting that if it were true, it would totally de-populate Mexico within a decade.

behind this judgment are explained in the technical footnote below.²

Even before the new immigration law, demographers had estimated that all our immigration would have to soar from best-estimate current levels to yield a population that would not decline in the next century. Demographer Roger Avery of Brown University estimated that immigration would have to be about a million per year, net, to yield a no-loss U.S. population in years to come. That is more than *twice* the current best-estimate figure, and for that to happen would work against every political and attitudinal sentiment in America today. Avery also makes an estimate that puts much of the immigration picture in proper focus for the purposes of this book, which concentrates on Total Fertility Rates. He says the net effect of all immigra-

² The 435,000 World Bank/U N estimate makes sense on these grounds: In the last seven years, the U.S. admitted an average of 551,000 legal immigrants per year. Subtract the U.S. Census-estimated 160,000 emigrants per year, and the net is 391,000. If you posit that the new law over a period of years will cut 75 percent of the 200,000 illegals, *add* 50,000 illegals for a total of 441,000, which roughly coincides with the World Bank/U N 435,000 estimate used here. The 75 percent figure is speculative of course; lower it and the disparity grows, raise it and it ends up that the World Bank number is too high. Forthcoming Census projections will probably cut the illegal rate down to zero over time, on the government theory that sooner or later new laws will work as written. They don't.

The Census Bureau middle-series net immigration projection number is 450,000, and was calculated in a way to include most (about 77 percent) of the estimated illegal immigrants. If you follow the formula above, reducing the remaining illegals by about 75 percent over time, the net U.S. immigration is about 462,000 per year—again, not far from the World Bank/U N estimate. To make things even more complicated one could add in a “daisy chain” factor whereby newly legalized immigrants (via amnesty) will become citizens and then bring in relatives (legally) in the future. (In the past, however, only about 10 percent of legal Mexican immigrants opted for U.S. citizenship.) As balance to all that, however, it should also be noted that the amnesty provision will also have the effect of greater deportations of, or out-migration by, recent illegal immigrants, as mentioned in the Canadian and Mexican instances cited on page 24.

Everyone connected with the field admits that any and all projections are rough at best. The new law could work at greater or lesser efficiency. However, if it doesn't work out well, it will quite likely be fixed. Upon passage of the bill, one of its architects, Rep. Charles Schumer (D.NY), noting that the new law is complex said, “Everyone was certain the present situation was terrible. So if it doesn't work, we'll have to go back to the drawing board.” Legal quotas may be raised in the future, but more likely lowered, given anti-immigration sentiment in the U.S., always present historically, but intensified now that about 80 percent of current immigrants are Hispanic, Asian, and black. (See Chap. 10) In any event, even another 100,000 immigrants per year would compound over a period of half a century to fewer than 8 million additional Americans. What is important to note is that even if one uses a somewhat higher, but not unreasonable, illegal immigration rate and accepts the somewhat higher-side projections based on Total Fertility Rates (to be discussed in a moment and which are arguable)—*the current U.S. fertility, plus all immigration, is still short of the rate required for replacement over time.*

tion to the U.S., legal and illegal, would only yield the functional equivalent of raising our 1.8 TFR to a 1.9 TFR.

The third complicating factor is the rates themselves. It was mentioned that the “Total Fertility Rate” is usually considered the best of the fertility rates for many purposes. Surely it is so for our purpose here. Plain old “birth rates” (or more precisely “crude birth rates”) are simply the rates of births per thousand people in the adult population. But, as mentioned in Chapter One, this rate makes no correction for the number of those women who actually happen to be in the child-bearing ages at a given moment. And so, a generation after a “Baby Boom”—that’s now—the number of births (as expressed by the crude birth rate) can be at a normal sort of level just because there happen to be so many women of child-bearing age around, even if those mothers are having *very few babies per mother*.

(This is a distinction with a difference. Example: think of *one* couple bearing *three* children. Now think of *three* couples each bearing *one* child. The number of children involved is the same [three], but they do not yield the same long-range demographic result. In the first case, population growth *increases by 50 percent* in the first generation [two parents producing three children]. In the second case, the rate of population growth *is decreasing by 50 percent* [six parents producing three children.] If you further stipulate that the *offspring* will behave in ways similar to their parents, then the powerful implications of continuing Birth Dearth below-replacement numbers becomes apparent. In one case you get 4.5 children in the next generation [1.5 females with a 3.0 TFR] while in the other, you get only 1.5 children [1.5 females with a 1.0 TFR]. That is a 200 percent differential.)

Now, the “birth rate” can be very useful for certain sorts of measurements. So can “the number of births” or the “growth rate.” These rates will be mentioned here as the occasion warrants, but all suffer from the fact that they are heavily weighted to what happened *earlier* rather than offering a true fix on what is happening *right now* in terms of real per-woman fertility behavior. And it is what is happening *right now* that will play a crucial role regarding what will happen *in the future*.

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) tries to correct for this. It measures birth rates for women of every age, and attempts to correct for the age “bumps” stemming from prior rates.³

³ Even the TFR has its problems. The “cohort” TFR is the most accurate. It is, in fact, precise. It tells you exactly how many babies per age cohort were born—but, unfortunately, it tells you this *after* it has all happened. Thus we can have a precise “cohort” or “completed” total fertility rate for all American women who have already passed the age of child-bear-

Now we come to the fourth factor: *Momentum and Masking*. Women can be having children at a rate substantially *less* than the 2.1 replacement rate, and yet *for a while* still produce a growing, not a shrinking, population as a result of prior fertility patterns. This complicating effect is usually called “demographic momentum” or the “echo effect.” It tends to mask present fertility activity, but only temporarily. Sooner or later the piper gets paid.

What we are talking about here can be viewed as a three wave process. In the United States there was a *first wave*, the Baby Boom,

ing. But it is the “period” TFR which we use mostly here because it can tell us something about the present and the future rather than just about the past. It measures how many babies 1000 women would have by the end of child-bearing age if they bore children at the current prevailing fertility rates for women at each individual year of age today. That is, the period TFR stipulates that women age 30 today will, when age 40, have children at the same rate that women age 40 today are having babies. Of course, we don’t know that for sure, which is one reason demographers argue about the future. A case has been made (by demographer Norman Ryder of Princeton, for one) that the period TFRs may be misleading us slightly because younger women not having babies today will have them later and at somewhat higher rates than is now the case among women in their thirties or early forties. Even if so, Ryder says it only tends to move the TFR from 1.8 to 1.9. This is by no means impossible, although I would argue with it on several grounds. The case against: remember the period TFR is already keyed to women up to age 44—women who were already in their twenties in the turbulent, value-changing Sixties, who were in their thirties in the Seventies and in their early forties in the early Eighties. These are women who lived through our cultural revolutionary tumult, and still had time to try to have children later in life if they felt that they had missed out on a good thing. Insofar as they did, it is already reflected in the period TFR used here. What reason is there to expect a truly meaningful bump of births to older women? What will 40-year old women in 1990 know or feel that 40-year old women didn’t know in 1986? Moreover, there are indications now that fertility in the teenage brackets and in the 20-30 age bracket in the U.S. is beginning to *fall* further and that could push down the period fertility rate. Some demographers (Avery for one) believe these trends will likely yield greater rates of women who will end up bearing one or zero children, thereby pushing *down* fertility following the European model, where TFRs are lower than in the U.S.

The Census Bureau “middle-level” fertility series of projections was 2.1 until 1984, ten years after the TFR had fallen to 1.8. The most recent Census middle-level projections, published in 1984, used a 1.9 TFR, the first time a Census middle-level projection went below replacement value. Even that was a “close call” say Census officials. It could have been 1.8. (The average TFR of the 10 latest years for which “official” data have been published is 1.796.) In fact, the next set of Census projection, currently in preparation, will almost surely have a middle-level TFR of 1.8. Provisional monthly birth data from the National Center for Health Statistics through September of 1986 are already 1-2 percent lower than Census projections. The 1986 TFR should, in fact, be slightly under the 1.815 World Bank/ U N number used in this book for constant fertility projections over time. The latest (provisional) rate for 1986 was 1.80.

In any event, as mentioned in the prior footnote, no reasonable combination of higher-side immigration estimates, or higher-side TFR re-calculations, brings us up to the functional equivalent of 2.1 children per women necessary for replacement over the long term.

when a somewhat sparse number of mothers (born in the 1920s and Depression 30s) bore a *huge* number of babies per woman.

The second wave is the “echo effect” of the Baby Boom, when the *many* young Boomer women are having *fewer* children per mother (the Birth Dearth) but a *medium total number* of children because of the large number of Boomer mothers. That’s now, roughly speaking.

Wave three and beyond is the fascinating—and troubling—part of the puzzle. That’s when the Birth Dearth babies, soon to become adults, will have their babies. If they have them at current TFRs, the number of babies in the future will drop either moderately or sharply depending on whether one projects the Census middle series of 1.9 TFR or the World Bank/UN figure of 1.815 (the 1986 provisional U.S. TFR was 1.80. The next set of Census projections, will most likely use a middle series number of 1.8, as will be discussed in a moment.)

Note the rise and fall of the number of births in America in the recent past, with projections out to the intermediate term future:

ANNUAL U.S. BIRTHS

Actual, and projected numbers, if current total fertility rates continue at World Bank/UN 1.815 projection

1960	4.3 million births
1970	3.7 million births
1980	3.6 million births
1990	3.6 million births
2000	3.2 million births

To sense the true steepness of this drop, recall that in 1960 America had 179 million people, while in 2000 we will have about 268 million. The actual number of births will be *down* by 26 percent while the population *grew* by 50 percent.

A final complication concerns longevity. People are living longer these days. That is a blessing. (In 1985, there were 2.7 million people in America over the age of 85—compared to only 1.1 million back in 1965, only twenty years earlier.) The onset of greater longevity obviously increases the number of elderly. That obviously tends to increase the total population at a given moment, like right now. But in terms of long-term trends, while such longevity complicates the picture, it is of much less than cosmic importance. An elderly boom invariably precedes a death boom. All of us die.

So: the key rate—for our long-term cosmic purpose—is still how many children are born per woman.

Chapter 4

The Fruit of the Birth Dearth

Having seen what is happening today (Chapter 2), having noted here some of the technical aspects and caveats of the demographic trade (Chapter 3), it is now time to look ahead.

Let us take advantage of the fact that demographers do know something about the future. Let us build our model of the future on the following simple assumptions:

1. That the current fertility rates in each of the Western nations will remain at the latest levels available in 1985 (despite the fact that some nations' rates have fallen even further since these projections were run, and despite the fact that, upon examination of the data, many distinguished demographers believe the TFRs will fall somewhat lower in the course of the next few years—and very few demographers believe rates will climb). For the United States our World Bank/UN model uses a TFR of 1.815, which is actually a trifle higher than the latest 1986 provisional U.S. rates.

2. That the admixture of legal and illegal immigration rates in the U.S. remain at levels described in the previous chapter. (Only the

U.S., among the big Western nations, takes in sufficient numbers of immigrants to make a serious demographic dent.)

3. That fertility rates in the Third World nations, now very high but declining, will continue to decline over the years, as projected by the UN.

4. That longevity rates will continue to rise as projected by the United Nations.

Under such circumstances, what does the future look like if we divide the world into three parts: the Western nations, the Communist bloc and the less-developed nations?

Observe first the *rate* of population *growth* in the whole Western community—looking 30 years back—and then looking 100 years into the future. The data is plotted in five-year chunks. The “future” data here and in the pages that follow are based on special projections prepared by Ms. My T. Vu, a demographer for the Department of Population, Health and Nutrition of the World Bank, using the assumptions just mentioned.

The graph on the opposite page reveals a clear story. There was rapid growth in the Western world (due to the Baby Boom.) There is now slower growth—but still growth—(due to the echo-effect of the Baby Boom and increased longevity). There will be no growth by the early years of the next century (due to the Birth Dearth). Then there will be shrinkage (also due to the Birth Dearth).

If the projections hold, that will be the story of the future in the Western world: Slow growth, no growth, shrinkage.

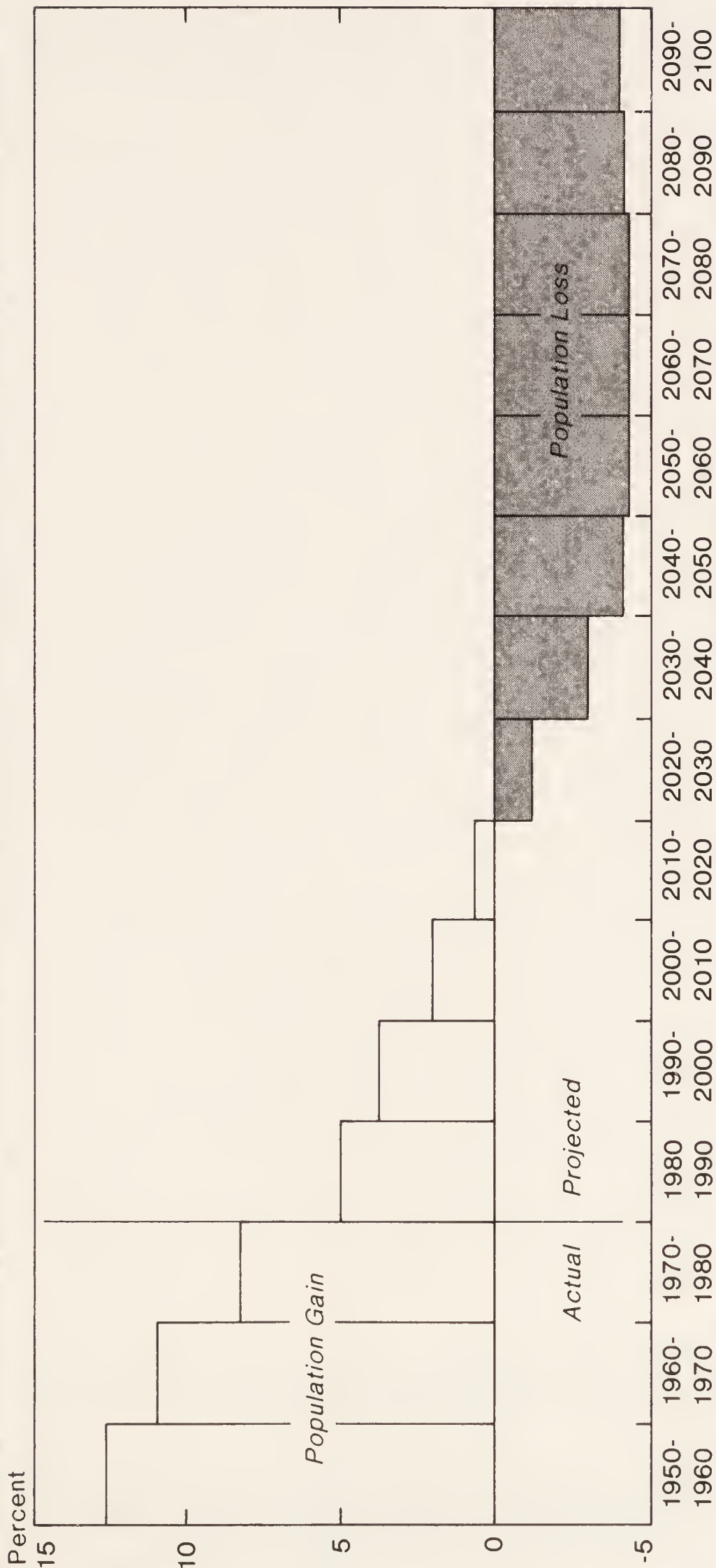
Just as the TFRs ultimately show up as growth rates, so growth rates ultimately translate into actual population levels. The chart on page 32 shows projected total population for the Western nations.

Again, a similar tale: rapid earlier growth, slow growth now, no growth coming soon, decline shortly thereafter. (These data are for *all* Western nations; similar numbers and graphs are shown for the U.S. on pages 53 and 55. Data for Western Europe alone are to be found on page 94.)

These scenarios yield several powerful ideas, some obvious, some not so obvious.

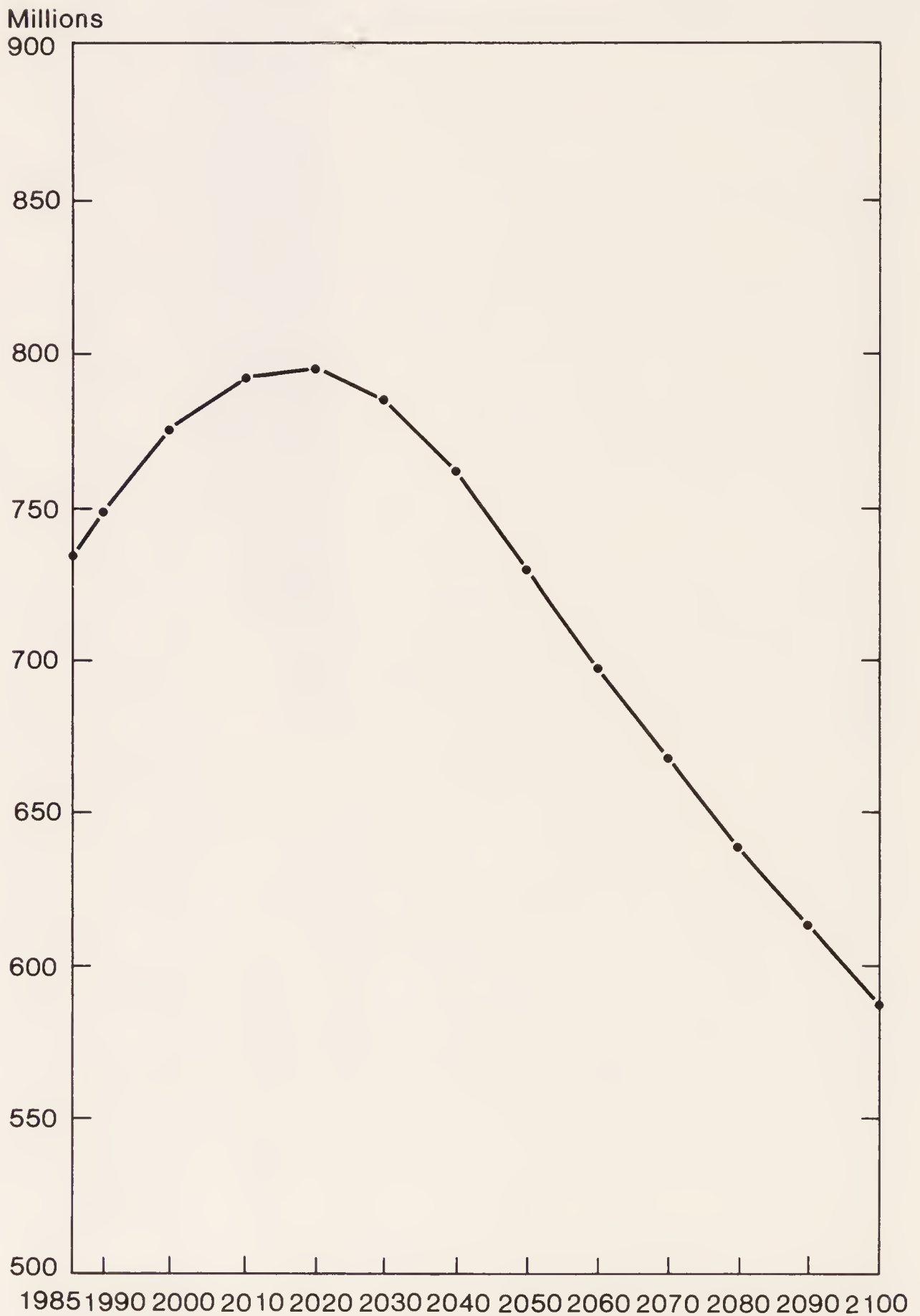
Clearly, as can be seen graphically, both population growth rates and levels in the Western World are, either immediately or shortly, headed downward. Still, because of the echo-effect of the Baby Boom and increasing longevity, the time of population plateau is delayed until a decade or two into the next century. Only then does an actual population decline begin. After all, in a nation of a quarter of a billion people like the U.S., a decline of a few hundred thousand births per

Chart 4A
PERCENT CHANGE OVER DECADES IN TOTAL POPULATION OF INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES 1950-2100*



*Note: Industrial democracies include Canada, U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.
 Source: United Nations 1985; and Special World Bank Projection (see Appendix "Notes," page 170).

Chart 4B
PROJECTED POPULATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL
DEMOCRACIES 1985-2100*



*Note: Industrial democracies include Canada, U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Source: Special World Bank projections (see Appendix "Notes," page 170).

year takes a very long time to yield a positive-to-negative impact. That was so even for a country like West Germany, with much lower birth rates. But sooner or later decline sets in, as is actually happening now in West Germany and a few other Western European nations. As will be seen later in some detail, the process may take a heavy economic, geopolitical, personal and social toll.

In any event, this is how the demographic scenario generally plays out: As the Birth Dearth trend begins, it means relatively fewer babies. That means, a few years later, fewer students in elementary school and high school. (That is about where we are now in the U.S.) That situation—for certain people—has already changed the economic landscape. If you were a school teacher in Europe, it may have meant a layoff. If you worked in a plant in the U.S. producing toys for children, or worked selling imported toys for children, you may have lost your overtime pay or some extra commission pay. If you currently run a McDonald's franchise in America, or Italy, it may mean that it is beginning to get difficult to find teenage help. If you were a teenager working in a McDonald's, you might now earn a higher hourly rate, because the Burger King in the same neighborhood was also running out of teenagers and hence bidding up the wage scale.

But the major effect of the Birth Dearth has not quite appeared in most places—although it will be coming over the horizon at us tomorrow. In the U.S., for example, the Birth Dearth began in earnest in 1972, about when it began in most of the rest of the Western World. So by 1987 the oldest American BD babies were already 15 years old. At the end of the Eighties and the beginning of the Nineties—and that is just a micro-second as demographers reckon—the first thin and shallow wave of BD babies will be graduating from secondary schools across most of the Western world. Many of this sparse generation will be moving directly into labor markets of one sort or another, including the military. In the mid-1990s, these BD babies will be college graduates, moving into higher-level occupational slots and—significantly—beginning to marry and form families of their own. In the latter part of the Nineties, the first of the Birth Dearth babies will be the thin crop from which young executives and managers will be chosen.

All the while—unless there is a radical change in fertility patterns—there will be fewer and fewer babies born in the Western world and thus fewer and fewer infants, children, and teenagers as the years roll on. It will be an undulating, fluctuating number in some countries due to earlier fertility patterns, which cause temporary “bumps” in the number of births, but the number will be undulating

and fluctuating in a downward direction. These young people will be the echo-effect of the Birth Dearth as it continues, a slender crop of the sons and daughters of the slender crop of BD babies. Then *they* will mature, ready for adulthood a decade or two after the turn of the century. In most Western nations, they will be living in countries that have already been depopulating in an absolute sense. In some others, the actual decline will be imminent, or close to imminent.

So: the first shriveled fruit of the Birth Dearth is already upon us. They are already teenagers; they will soon be young adults. The impact of the diminishing numbers of young people will be mostly harmful I believe—and, moreover, will likely intensify with each passing year.

The demographics can get complicated. Let us see if all this can be made graphic, and put into an American context.

One image has dominated recent American demographics: “the pig in the python.” It is a convenient metaphor to explain the progress of the post-World War II Baby Boom.

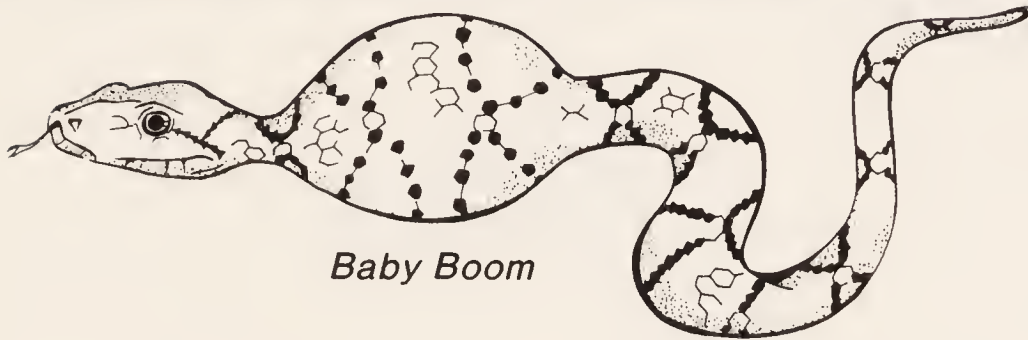
Picture a python; a big, long snake—hungry. He catches a fair-sized pig and swallows it. Gobble, gobble, suck, suck. As the doomed pig moves through the snake’s digestive tract—and as I understand reptilian physiology, a snake is not much more than a head and a very active digestive tract—we see the outline of the pig over a period of time. The moving “bump” in the python—the poor pig—represents the massive cohort of Baby Boom babies as they get older. Thus:

Chart 4C
THE PIG IN THE PYTHON

PYTHON



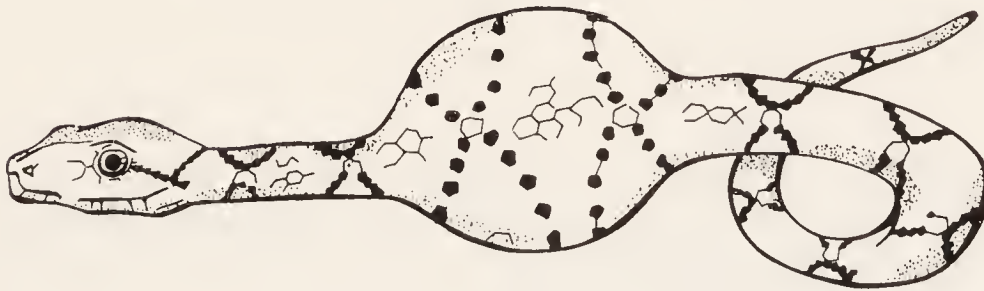
PYTHON, HAVING SWALLOWED PIG



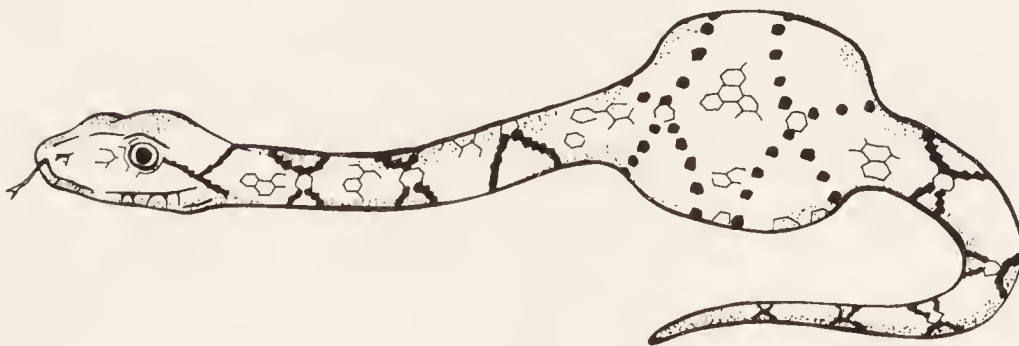
Baby Boom

PYTHON, IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS

Baby Boomers Getting Older



Baby Boomers Getting Still Older

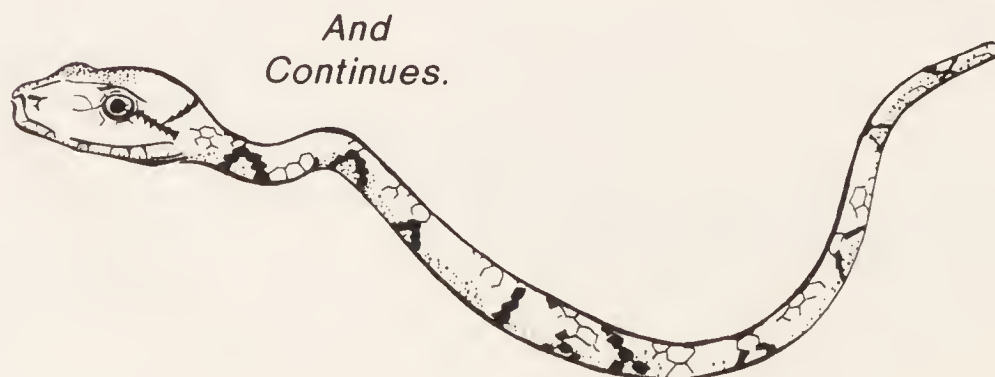
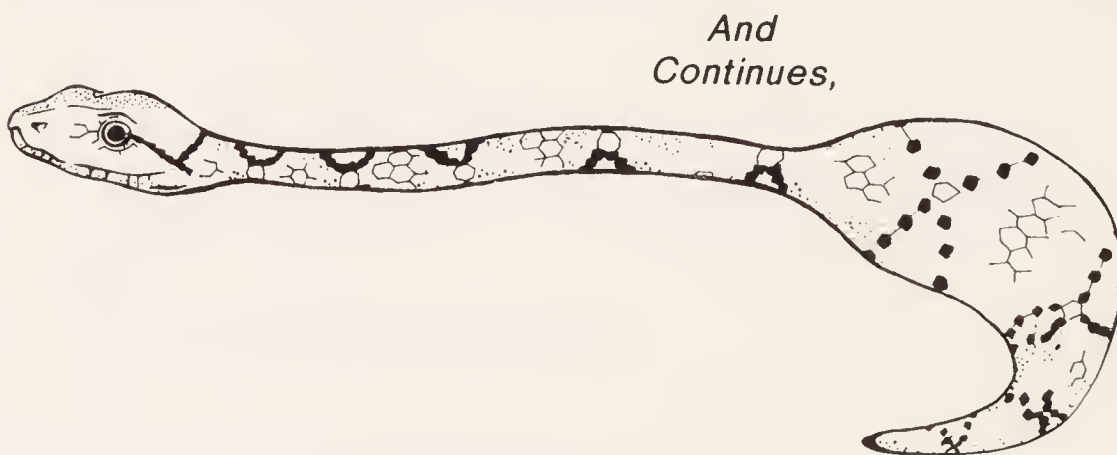
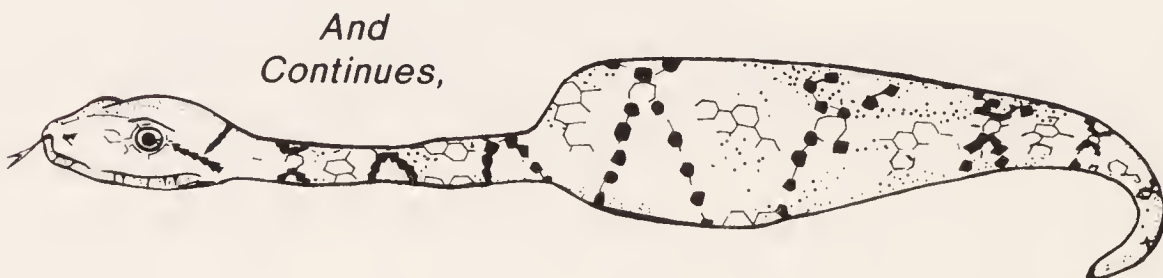
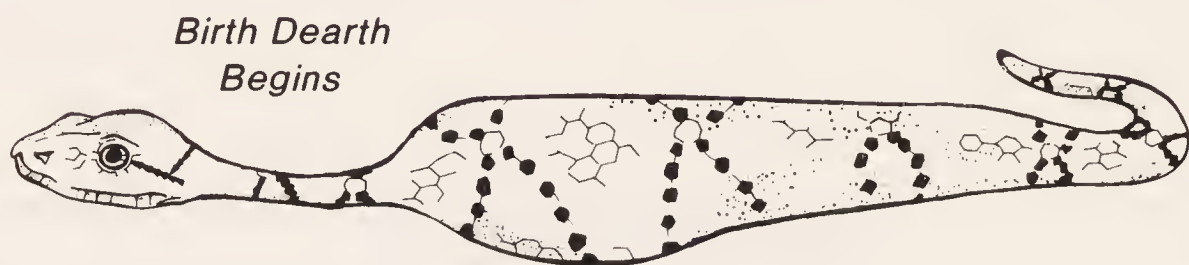


Baby Boomers Getting Much Older



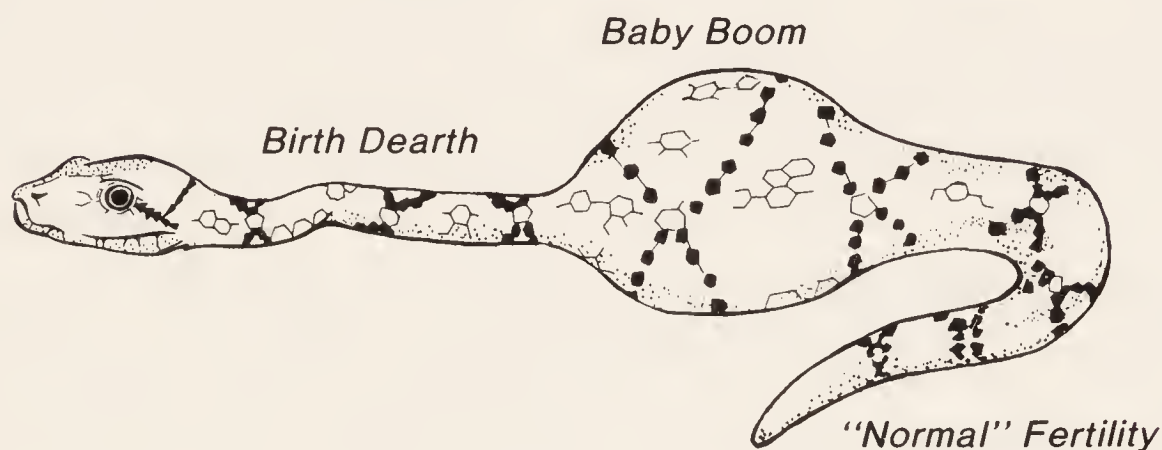
But in the era of the Birth Dearth, we clearly need a new image. I offer this: the case of the Starving Snake. In the abstract (excluding for a moment the earlier Baby Boom bump for simplicity's sake), the hungry reptile, afflicted with Birth Dearthitis, would look this way over a period of years:

Chart 4D
THE STARVING SNAKE



After a while—in this stylized model—you clearly end up with an ever-skinnier and skinnier snake. In the real world, of course, there is still that earlier bump of the Baby Boom. So, the progress of the real snake, stylized again, would look something like this:

Chart 4E
CONFUSED PYTHON



That is a confused snake, to be sure. But its prognosis is clear: It will keep getting skinnier, unless something changes.

That's not all. After a while—just to finish up with snakes—it not only gets skinnier, it gets skinnier faster and faster. Demography, at its mathematical root, is a science that deals with multiplying and dividing more than with adding and subtracting. It deals with geometric progressions rather than arithmetic progressions. That point was made early on by the patron saint of doomsayers, Thomas Malthus.

The idea is obvious on a small scale. Consider: If *two* parents have *four* children, they have *doubled* their number in a single generation. Then suppose each of the children, in turn, takes a spouse and each new couple continues to beget *four* children. At that rate, after only nine generations, there will be *1,024* offspring!

That is geometric growth; we don't add, we multiply. And so, demographers, thinking geometrically, often talk of the "doubling" time of a population. Such calculations can yield big numbers quickly and the big numbers lend themselves easily to horrific metaphors like "population explosion" or "population bomb."

Now, however, there is talk in the demographic community of "halving" times. A population trend that is losing numbers because of below-replacement fertility *also* proceeds geometrically, not arithmetically. Suppose we choose a model that (for simplicity's sake) deals with *two* parents who produce only *one* child. That population

has been halved in a single generation. Work that backward. Start with 1024 adults, divided into 512 couples. After nine generations, with the TFR at 1.0 (not that far away from the present West German rate), the population of 1024 people is reduced to two people! On the Malthusian downside, we don't subtract, we divide.

The moral of this particular demographic tale is clear: Once they get started, *things can move very quickly*. In our current Birth Dearth situation, the "momentum" effect discussed earlier will begin to change direction, yielding, at least in theory, not a geometric population *explosion* in the West, but a geometric population *implosion*.

Reviewing the chart on page 32, it is apparent that Western population will drop, with growing speed, by about 200 million souls if present fertility continues through the next century. In abstract theory if one turns the crank for another few centuries, you could end up with hardly any people at all—yielding not ZPG (Zero Population Growth), but ZP (Zero Population): nations of empty camper-trailers and condominium ghost towns, a world almost absent of Frenchmen, Germans, Japanese, Dutch, and even Americans, except for a few new immigrants, of course.

Now, all this geometric stuff can certainly be overdone. It was overdone by some Explosionists who, when fertility rates were high everywhere, predicted a world of near wall-to-wall people. I do not intend to fall into the same trap. It is surely not likely that these Birth Dearth rates will continue indefinitely. Geometric trends—up or down—usually don't.

A more serious question to consider is not *whether* this trend will stop, but *when*.

To understand the impact of that question one must note that even the beginnings of such a downward spiral—which has already happened—will change our world. For example, because of B.D. level birth rates in the early 1970s many Western European nations will have to extend the terms of service for their military draftees. Germany already has. If the Birth Dearth continues for another generation or two, or three, the changes it will wreak on our world will not be as simple as changing draft laws. It will change the world in a major way, perhaps beyond current recognition. Why so?

First, because the longer it lasts, the harder it becomes for nations to go back to where they were, or even to stabilize at where they are. Demographic momentum works negatively once a tipping point has been reached. After an actual population decline has proceeded for a while, a shift to a 2.1 TFR not only *doesn't* take a nation back immediately to where the nation was, but the decline may continue for de-

acades, as deaths from fatter, pre-BD cohorts out-number births from skinny BD cohorts. Of course, if women in the next century decide to have four or five children each, things could change quickly. Does anyone believe that will happen?

And, secondly, in thinking about change in the West, we must remember that the free modern nations do not exist in a vacuum on this planet. In a world of linked economies and geopolitical alliances that girdle the globe, the destinies of the Western nations are inextricably tied to developments elsewhere.

So: To see what happens, let us continue our model-making. Let us follow through by looking at the rest of the world through the lens of a simplified three-part division of the peoples inhabiting this globe of ours.

- There are the democratic modern, prosperous industrial nations—that's us. We've just seen what can happen, indeed is *likely* to happen to us for at least a while longer.
- Then there is the contiguous Soviet bloc, that is, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. These nations are non-democratic, but they are mostly industrial and mostly modern, albeit at standards of living much lower than are common in the West.
- And then there are the "other" countries, mostly the less-developed countries (LDCs), also called the "Third World" nations. These nations exhibit a wide variety of political, economic, and demographic patterns. For our purposes here, however, we categorize this bloc by "what they are not." The Third Worlders are not *both* industrial *and* democratic. In the rare cases where one might stretch a point, they have not been either democratic or industrial over an extended continuous period of time (Argentina, S. Korea.)

This Third World category would include democratic India, which is not industrial. It would include Communist China, which is neither democratic nor industrial. It would include noncommunist, nonindustrial, nondemocratic Indonesia. It would include all of Africa—almost entirely nonfree and poor. It would include all of Latin America: less-developed democracies like Colombia and Brazil and more-developed nondemocracies like Chile (possible exception: Venezuela). It would include the Arab oil states, some of which are wealthy, but none of which are democratic.

Despite the exceptions, it will be useful to remember that for weighting purposes this Third World category of nations is predominantly *poor and mostly nondemocratic*.

Recalling again that demographers do know something about the

future (most particularly how many potential mothers will be present 20 or so years from now because so many have already been born), we can look briefly at trends in the rest of the world. Again, we will be using World Bank/UN projections, and it should be noted that these projections incorporate a continuing decline in the TFRs of Third World areas, down to a 2.3 rate in 2025.

What of the Soviet bloc? In contrast to the projected *shrinkage* in the modern democracies, *the Communist-bloc nations will be growing*. Today, the Warsaw Pact nations (Soviet Union plus Eastern Europe) have, as a whole, a total fertility rate of 2.3 births per woman. That is well above the replacement rate of 2.1. It is 28 percent higher than the 1.8 rate for the industrial democracies, taken as a whole.

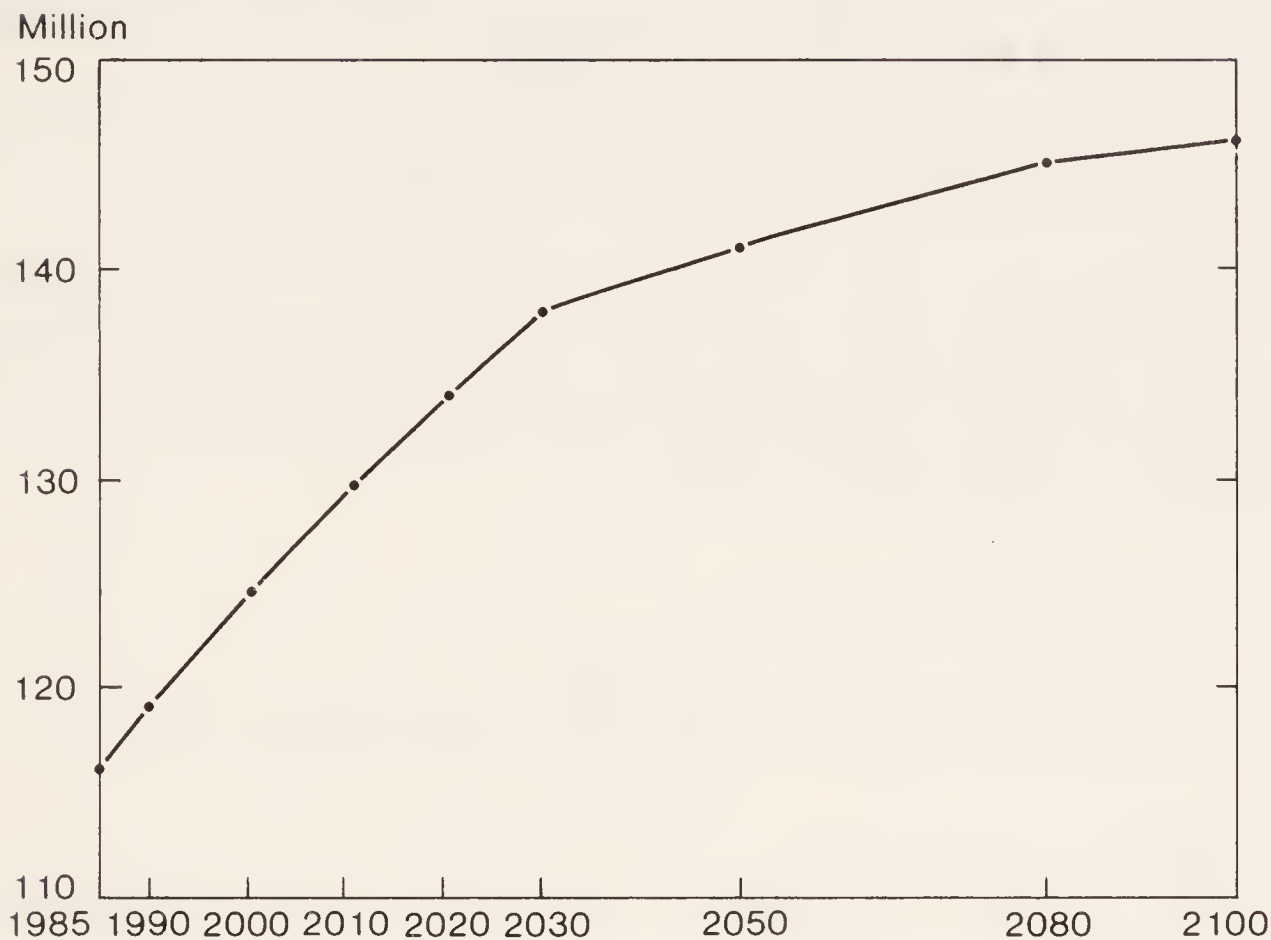
This comes about due to some mixed demographic circumstances in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.

Consider first Eastern Europe: As industrial countries, the Eastern European nations tend toward low fertility. As a group, however, their TFR stands now at 2.1 children per woman—just about replacement level, but still 31 percent higher than the devastatingly low rate of 1.6 now prevalent in their counterpart nations of Western Europe (whose low rates are incorporated in the graphs of all the Western nations on pages 31 and 32, and presented separately on page 94).

In some few cases, this higher East European fertility has come about partly because the East European Communist governments have not hesitated to use their considerable police and government powers to try to *force* fertility rates up. Romania is the prime culprit; it has not only banned abortion, but set up a birth-monitoring apparatus to help prevent illegal abortion. (More about this later.) On the other hand, the East Germans generally have not been coercive. But they are currently spending an inordinately large part of their Gross National Product on birth bounties and child incentives, particularly for third children in a family. Other East European governments are also spending a great deal to offer baby bonuses as well as to manipulate their housing and employment systems in order to encourage child-bearing. What the long-term results of these pro-natalist schemes will be remains to be seen, as will be discussed at some length in Chapter 10. For now, they have been quite successful, as the chart on the next page shows.

But the most important aspect of higher Communist-bloc fertility lies outside Eastern Europe, specifically in the Soviet Union, and within the Soviet Union, in the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union.

CHART 4F
PROJECTED POPULATION OF COMMUNIST EASTERN
EUROPE 1985-2100*



*Note: Includes the following countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania.

Source: *World Population Projections 1984*, World Bank.

The Soviet Union is the world's last remaining far-flung empire. It also serves as a single-nation microcosm of the strange birth patterns currently transforming our world. In the European areas of the Soviet Union, fertility levels are about at the level of their Eastern European neighbors. The Soviets began a significant pro-natalist policy in 1981 which included offering women one year of partially paid maternal leave. The Communist Party Congress in 1986 increased the time to one and one-half years. Apparently it has worked; U.S. Census demographer Ward Kingkade estimates that the TFR in the European parts of the Soviet Union has risen from *below-replacement* levels to *about-replacement* levels from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. Thus, the large Russian Republic within the Soviet Union (R.S.F.S.R.) is currently producing about 2.1 children per woman, according to the Census Bureau. (Our Census scholars, through assiduous study of Russian data, may know more about Soviet demographics than the Soviets themselves know.)

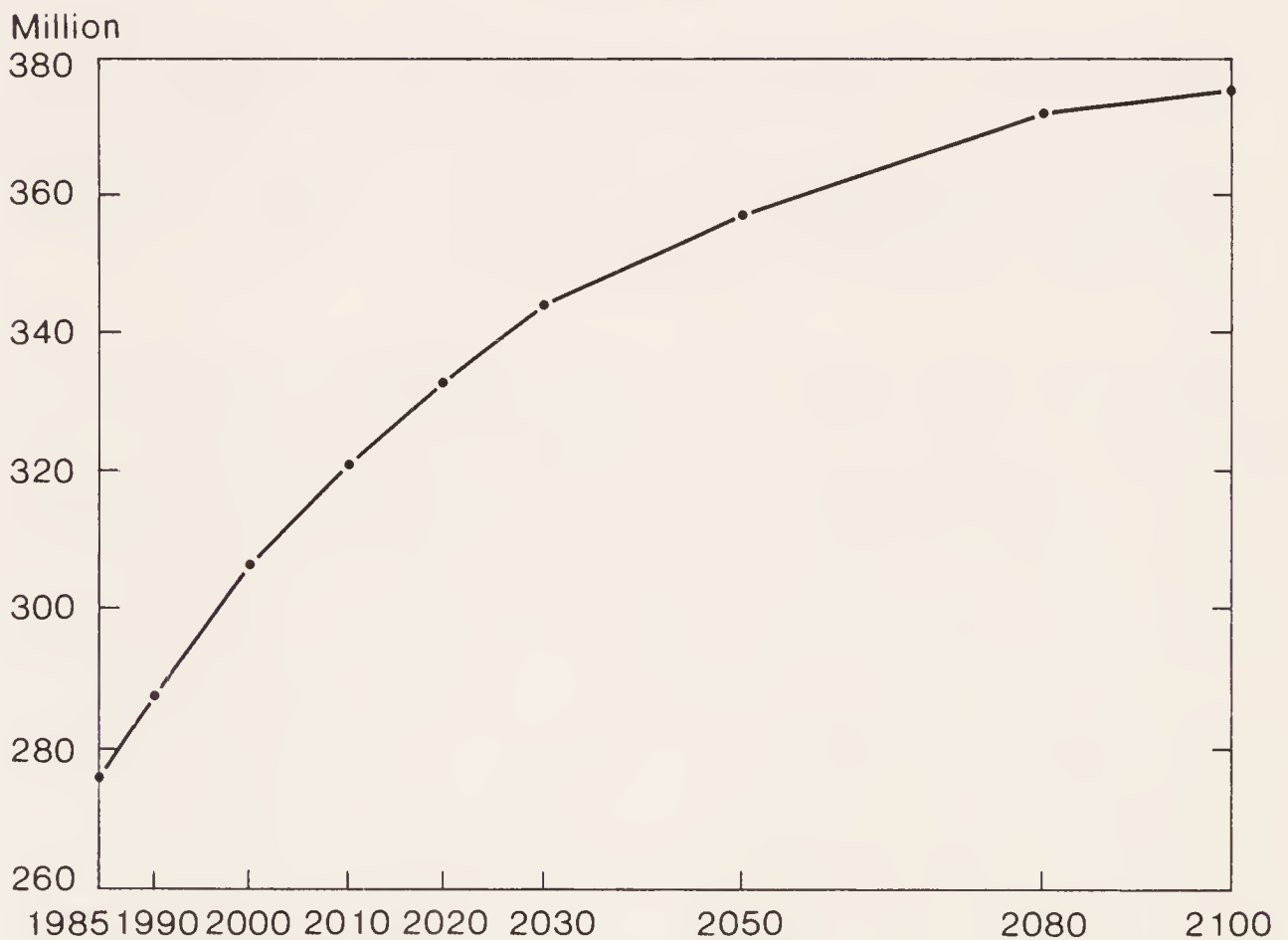
But the south central republics of the U.S.S.R. resemble very high

Third World nations in fertility (as well as other ways). At last measurement, Tajikistan registered a TFR of 5.5 births per woman; the rate in Uzbekistan is 4.7. The rates in the Azerbaijan Republic, Kazakhstan, and other Central Asian areas are also high. These regions are populated predominantly by Moslems.

Thanks in large measure to the prolific reproduction of its Central Asian minorities, the Soviet Union as a whole has a TFR of 2.4. That is about a third higher than the U.S. It is half again higher than Western Europe.

According to the UN/World Bank data, the Soviet Union is slated to grow by about 100 million people in the next hundred years. The growth line for the Soviet Union looks like this, including a gradual decline in Central Asian fertility:¹

Chart 4G
PROJECTED POPULATION OF THE SOVIET UNION
1985-2100

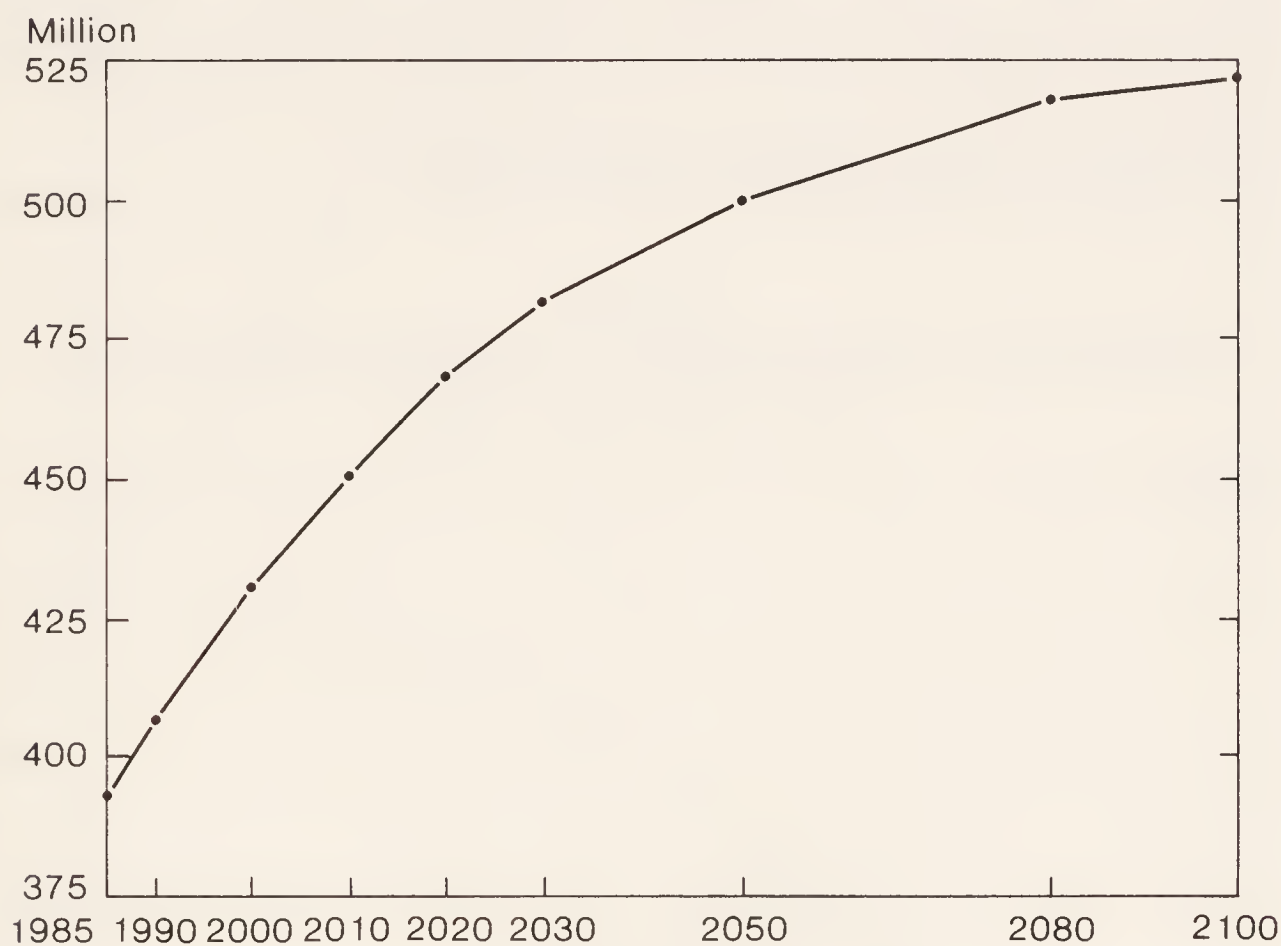


Source: *World Population Projections 1984*, World Bank.

¹ The U.S. Census projections of Soviet fertility are higher than the UN/World Bank set, showing a Soviet population ranging from 370-386 million by the year 2050, about 30 years before the UN/World Bank data approach those numbers.

And so: while our population in the West will be flattening out and going down (see page 32), the population of the Communist bloc will be going up, as can be seen from the chart below which combines the populations of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Chart 4H
PROJECTED POPULATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL
COMMUNIST WORLD, 1985-2100*



***Note: Includes the following countries: USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania.**

Source: *World Population Projections 1984*, World Bank.

The Communist block grows from 390 million people today, to about 515 million by 2065. Some potent implications of the East-West fertility differentials will be explored later.

What about the less-developed world? Without much popular notice, the last 15 years have seen a tremendous and heartening decline in Third World fertility, from a UN measured TFR level of 6.1 in 1970 to 4.1 in 1985.

That represents a fall *halfway* toward the goal of long term population stability, a TFR of 2.1 children. As mentioned earlier, the UN

projections are based on a continuing fertility decline in the developing world—all the way to an average of 2.3 children by 2025.

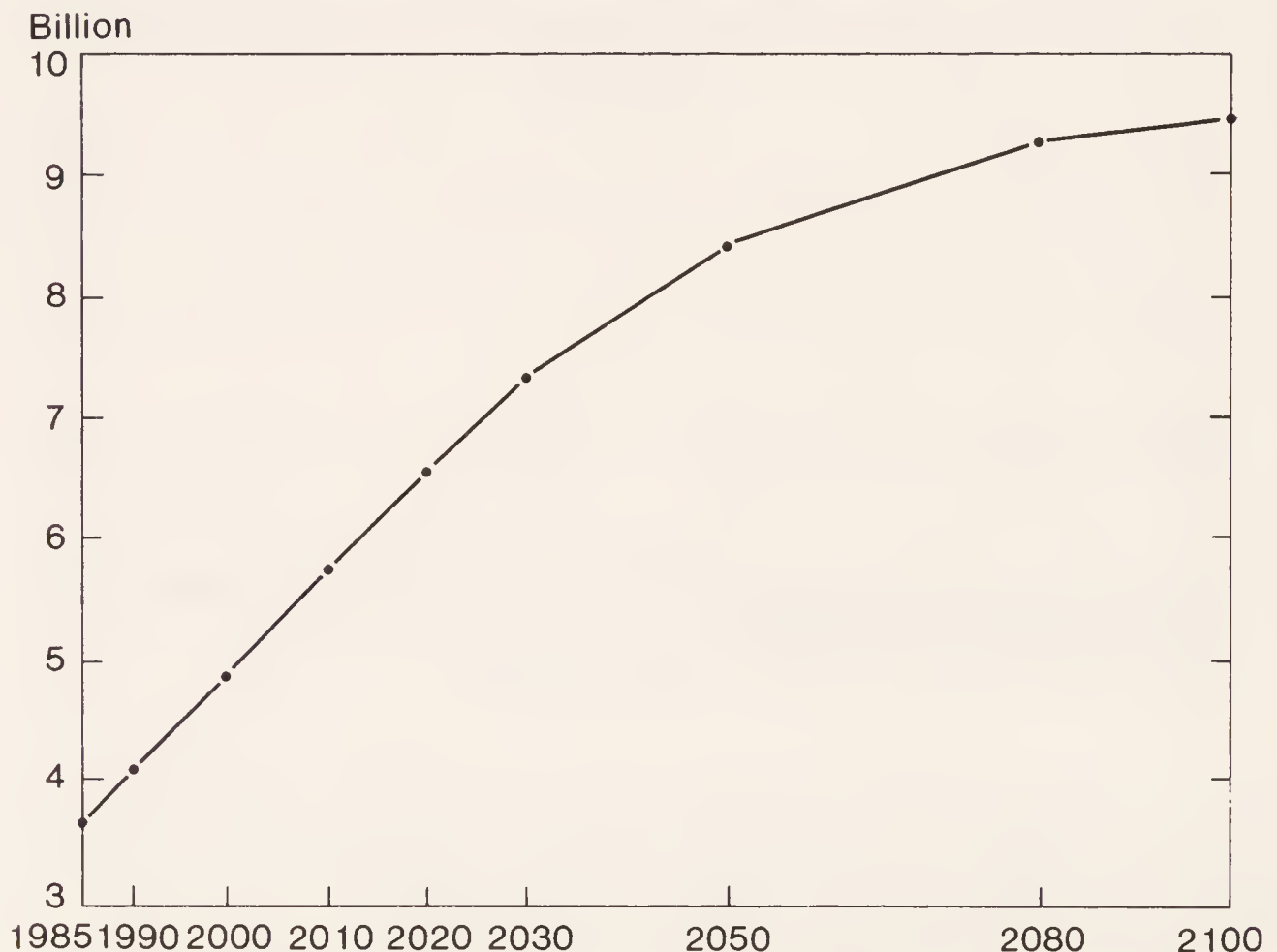
This sounds good. All things considered, it is good. But remember momentum. The Third World is now awash in the fruit of those TFRs in the six-plus range from a generation ago. Today there are 1.1 billion women of child-bearing age in the less-developed world!

Even if these women reduce their fertility as the United Nations projects, there will be a flood of Third World babies, a real flood: Third World population, which is now 3.7 *billion* persons, is slated to rise, to over 8 *billion people* by the middle of the next century!

At the same time, the West will be going down.

The Third World projections look like this:

Chart 4I
PROJECTED POPULATION OF THE LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES 1985-2100*



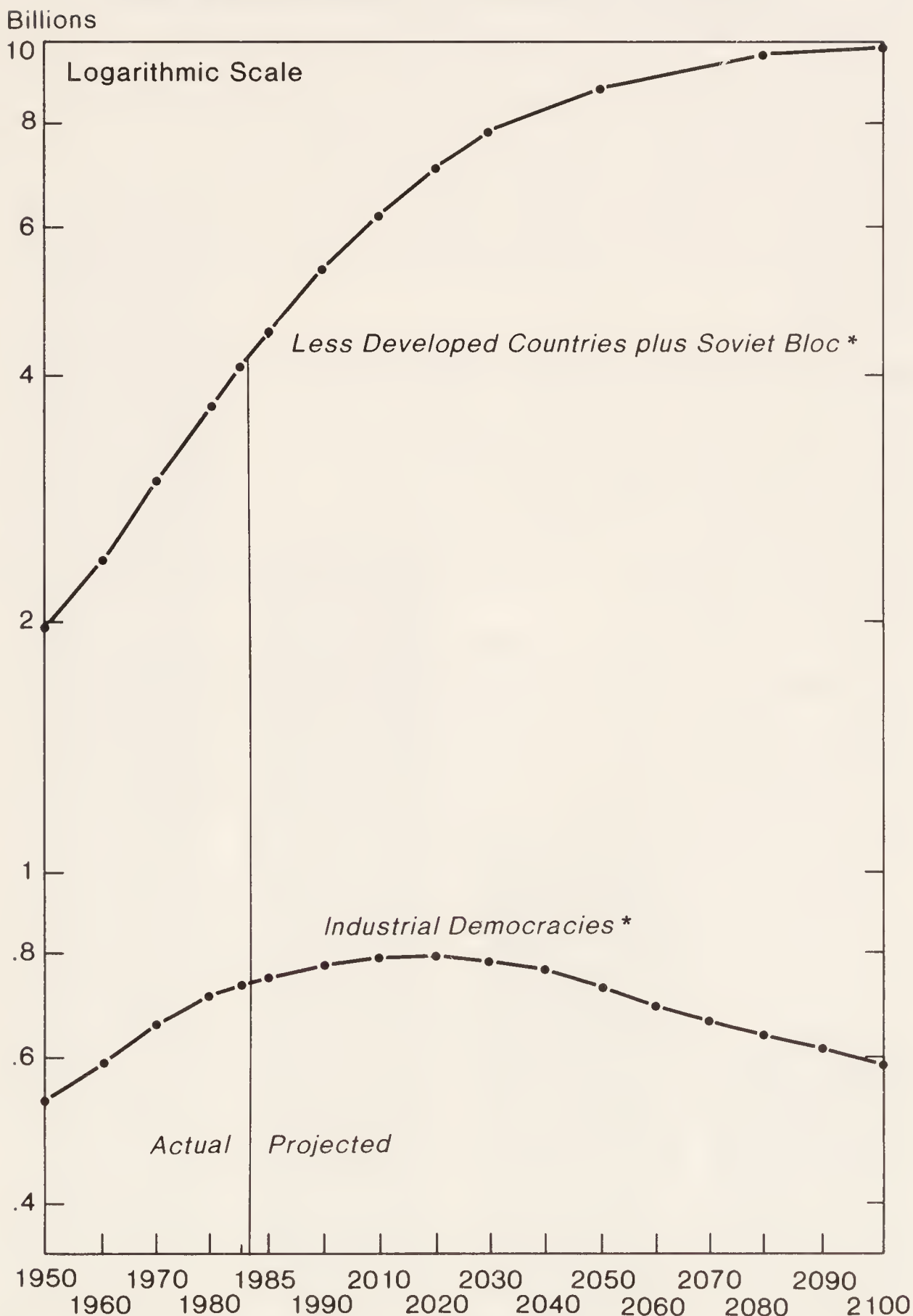
*Note: Less developed countries include all nations of Africa, Asia, Central and South America, except Japan.

Source: *World Population Projections 1984*, World Bank.

In short, the free West goes way down, the nonfree Soviet bloc goes up moderately, and the poor nations go way up.

From a Western perspective, if you were to put them all together, the sad picture looks like this:

Chart 4J
WORLD POPULATION BY GROUP 1950-2100



*Note: Industrial democracies include the following countries: Canada, U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Iceland, United Kingdom, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The Soviet Bloc refers to the USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. Less Developed Countries as according to standard U.N. definition.

Source: Actual population levels *World Population Prospects*, United Nations, 1985. Projections for industrial democracies, *Special World Bank projection* (see Appendix "Notes," page 170). For rest of world, *World Population Projections 1984*, World Bank.

Is this three-way split harmful? Step back for a moment and consider the nature of the modern world, particularly since the end of World War II in 1945.

We live in a community of free and modern nations, banded together in a loose but real alliance, stretching around the world from the U.S. and Canada, to western and southern Europe, to Japan and Australia. As befits sovereign states, these nations like to argue. They argue about strategic defense, about who will buy cars from whom, about the question of whose wine shall be subject to what countervailing duties.

But beneath the bickering, something remarkable has happened during the last four decades. This community of free modern nations—led by the U. S. in more ways than one—has shaped and molded the nature of the entire world to an extent that has probably never happened before. This is true economically, technologically, culturally, geopolitically, and in many ways militarily as well. In the course of this Western dominance, at least two important global developments should be noted here.

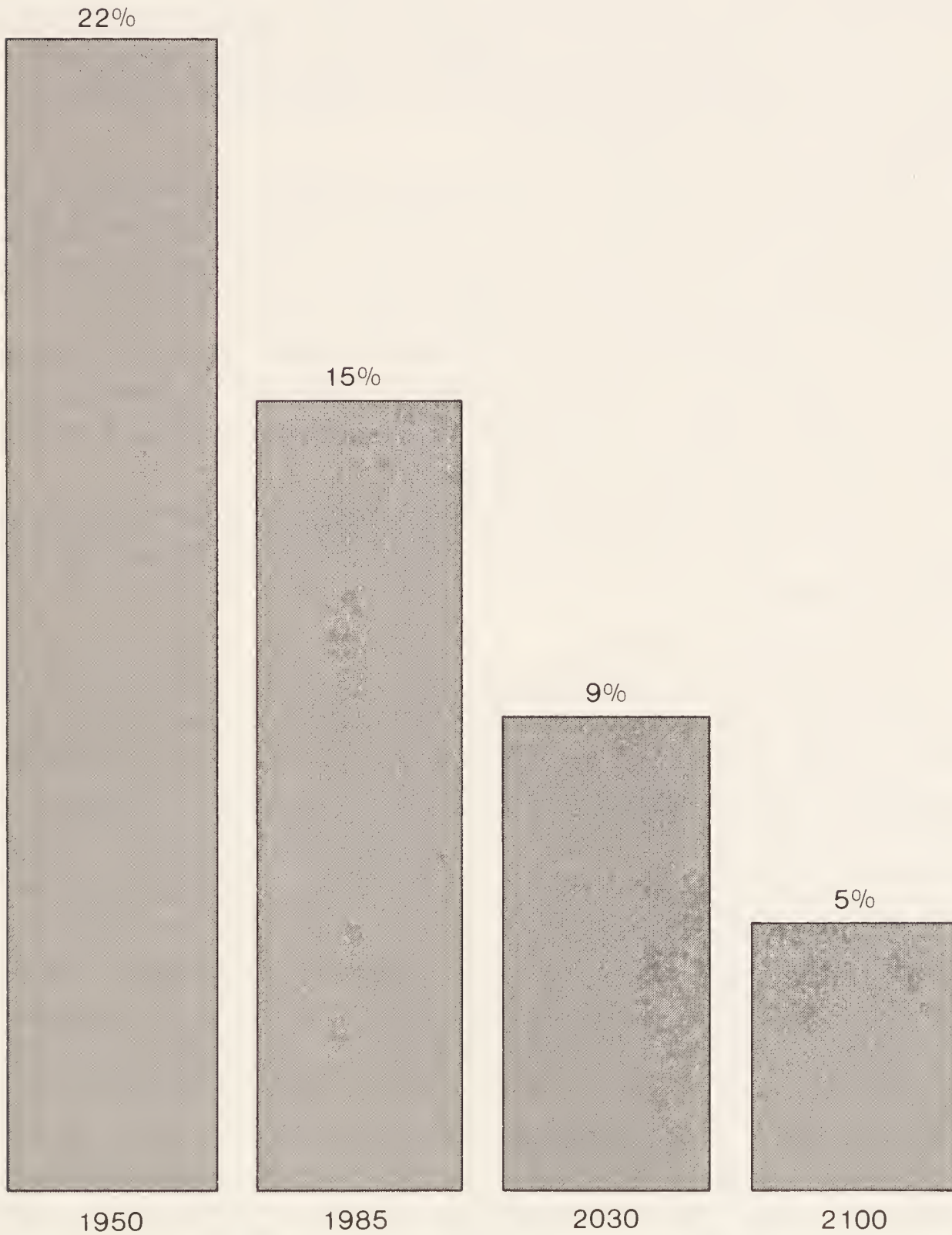
First, we—the moderns—have vastly improved our condition. Despite periodic recessions, stagflations, isolated occasional small wars in faraway places, oil shocks, and terrorism, we are more prosperous, healthier, more at peace, and more free than ever before. Surely we have advanced during this time when the benign aspects of Western culture have been in the ascendancy.

Second, they—the aspiring nations—have also gained during this rare moment of big-power peace and Western prosperity, freedom, and technological advancement. Progress in the Less Developed Countries has spread rapidly, despite well-publicized daily tragedies and setbacks, despite debt, oil shocks and oil gluts, wars, and genocide. Viewed broadly over the course of recent decades, life expectancy has soared, commerce has expanded, food per capita has increased, literacy and communication have exploded.

Some nations—Taiwan, South Korea, Venezuela come quickly to mind—have moved rapidly to near-modern status. Others have massive problems, but progress has been clear: Brazil, for example. Some of the Arab oil countries have made large economic strides forward. Interestingly, many of the nations once regarded as “the basket cases”—like India—have made great headway, albeit from a very low base.

Indeed, because they start from a much lower base, the case can easily be made that there has been more real and relative progress in the advancement of the human condition among the poor nations

Chart 4K
FRACTION OF TOTAL WORLD POPULATION IN THE
INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES 1950-2100*



***Note: Industrial democracies include Canada, U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.**

Source: *World Population Prospects*, United Nations, 1985. *World Population Projections 1984*, World Bank. Special Projections by World Bank (see Appendix "Notes," page 170).

than among the rich. (One example: an increase of 16 years in life expectancy at birth in the Third World over the last 30 years, compared to an increase of six years in the rich world.)

What caused the advance of the poor nations? Modernism, Westernism, call it what you will. There was medical technology that improved sanitation. There were new seeds that improved agricultural yield. There were multinational corporations that brought jobs and access to markets. There were transistor radios, new roads, airplanes, and—in more places than you might think—at least the beginnings of a democratic process.

Interestingly, even the “population explosion” in the LDCs is the direct result of modernism: Fewer babies in the Third World are dying in infancy due to the advent of modern Western sanitation and medicine, albeit sometime in rudimentary form.

Even the Communist world has improved and, in some large measure, benefited from Western primacy. They have shared or stolen our technology; they have benefited from the geopolitical and military stability among the big powers.

In 1950, when this Western moment began in earnest, the population of the “free, modern world” comprised about 22 percent of the global population.

Today we are 15 percent.

Projecting current fertility rates just out to the year 2025 the proportion will be about 9 percent (and that incorporates the United Nations’ projected drop in Third World fertility rates). A reasonable extrapolation to the end of the next century, using “medium” UN projections, brings the Western proportion down to about 5 percent. According to UN projections, our share of the world’s population will look like the chart on page 47.

Well. Western modernism came to dominate the world—and improved it—while we comprised somewhere between 22 percent and 15 percent of the world. A question arises: Will our values continue to dominate in a world where our population shrinks? Shrinks to 9 percent? Shrinks to 5 percent? Shrinks even lower?

Is this harmful? Economically? Personally? Geopolitically? Will it yield internal social turmoil? What kind of world will today’s children of the West live in tomorrow? We now look at these questions.

Chapter 5

What Happens

We continue our speculation. I present here a very short—and very selective—history of capitalism.

Since its inception (about 300 years ago), the capitalist countries have been associated almost invariably with rapidly growing numbers of people in their home markets. By any standard, these capitalist countries have shown enormous economic success over the years. Thus, three factors: the advent of capitalism; growth of population at home; economic success.

End of short, selective history of capitalism.

Now, there may *not* be a cause and effect relationship between capitalism, rapid domestic population growth, and economic success. But *if there is some relationship*, that aspect of capitalism will *surely change*. As this change occurs—it has already begun—it will likely change the very nature of the capitalist economy.

Will such a change harm us? No one knows for sure. We are moving into uncharted waters. There has not been a Birth Dearth before.

How will our economies be different? At the least, there will surely

be economic turbulence. There will be dislocations. But will the overall effects of the Birth Dearth harm us economically? Although there is an argument about it within the economic community, my own sense is that, on balance, the Birth Dearth will indeed harm us economically. In particular danger, I believe, are those in the business community who don't plan ahead, who don't try to look around the next curve.

To sense what may happen to capitalism and capitalist countries, we should start by looking backward. Everyone knows about the demographic poetry that has shaped American history. It is rooted in a tale of a near-virgin continent with a population of less than a million people (Indians) in the early 1600s. By the time of our first census in 1790, there were about *four million* ex-Europeans and ex-Africans, living mostly on a sliver of land on the East Coast.

A century later, in 1890, the U.S. population was almost *65 million*. The 1990 Census is expected to record about a *quarter of a billion Americans*. By almost any reckoning, American demographic history must be counted as one of the great population explosions.

What is not realized generally is that the amount of population growth in the rest of the now-capitalist world has also been dramatic, even if not up to the American scale. Here is a simple time line of West European population over the last three hundred years:

ESTIMATED POPULATION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS *

1680	71 million
1780	100 "
1880	187 "
1980	322 "

Source: Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones, *Atlas of World Population—1680-1880*. 1980: World Bank

*Includes only the current West European democratic and industrial market nations as defined by World Bank. (Excludes Yugoslavia, Albania, Portugal and Greece.)

During this same period, the population of Japan also grew very rapidly—from 27 million to 114 million. And, of course, the rate of growth in numbers in the previously “uninhabited” nations of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand was extremely sharp.

So, during the last 300 years, when economic progress in the world was most explosive, there was enormous population growth in those

nations where the most vigorous economic system (capitalism) was most potent and prevalent.

Let us put a little recent American flesh on these numbers.

What did it mean in practice in America? Well, for one, there was always plenty of fresh demand for more housing. Accordingly, if an individual or a company was in the business of building or selling residences—from slums to penthouses—in Connecticut or California—there was almost always a demand for more residences.

If a person grew or sold or processed food or fiber—grain or granola, cotton or silk—there was almost always a demand for more food or fiber. If a company built or sold cars—Model Ts or El Dorados—there was almost always a demand for more cars. If a company designed, manufactured, distributed, or sold word processors or personal computers—IBMs or Apples—there was almost always a demand for more of them. If a company sold fast food—Wendy's or Taco Bell—there were almost always more people to buy the burgers or the burritos. More. Always more.

This high-growth situation yielded many consequences. It didn't mean that every American business venture was a success. There were Edsels. There were Florida land busts. There was an over-production of computers leading to some big corporate losses. There were, as well, a number of good old-fashioned business-busting recessions and depressions. But all that notwithstanding, for the most part, there was on-going decade-after-decade population growth, and a decade-after-decade increase of demand for almost everything.

This made a lot of people in the business world look like geniuses. Suppose you were the sales manager for a national widget company. Suppose further that, because of population growth, the number of people needing widgets kept going up by, say, 15 percent every decade (which has been about the average rate of decennial population growth in the U.S. since 1910). Suppose further that your boss, and the corporate shareholders, wanted you to increase sales.

The chances were very good that you would be able to do so. After all, the market right here at home kept growing. If people were leaving the Dakotas, or Pennsylvania, or if growth was very slow in those places, all you had to do was make sure that you sold more widgets in California and Texas to make up the difference. If you merely kept your share of the widget market, your sales would increase by 15 percent per decade. You were a hero! Sales went up. Total profits went up. Even if by some chance your crafty competitors in the widget industry increased sales more rapidly than you did, you could still look pretty good. Suppose your *share* of the total widget market went down a bit. Your gross sales would still be likely to go up: perhaps not

by the 15 percent that the population had grown—but maybe by 10 percent or 12 percent. Still not bad: Sales go up, profits go up, dividends go up. Good old Joe, he brings home the bacon!

That scenario is ending. The Western World—our world—is already moving from a situation of fast growth to slow growth. A no-growth circumstance is already in the deck. There will be actual declines in most Western nations unless there are important changes in fertility levels fairly soon. This scenario is quite apparent for Europe. It is also apparent for the U.S. although the timing is somewhat slower due to our large postwar Baby Boom and continuing immigration. Heroes in the business community will surely be harder to find. In America, a given city or state or region may continue to grow robustly, but as a nation growth is ending.

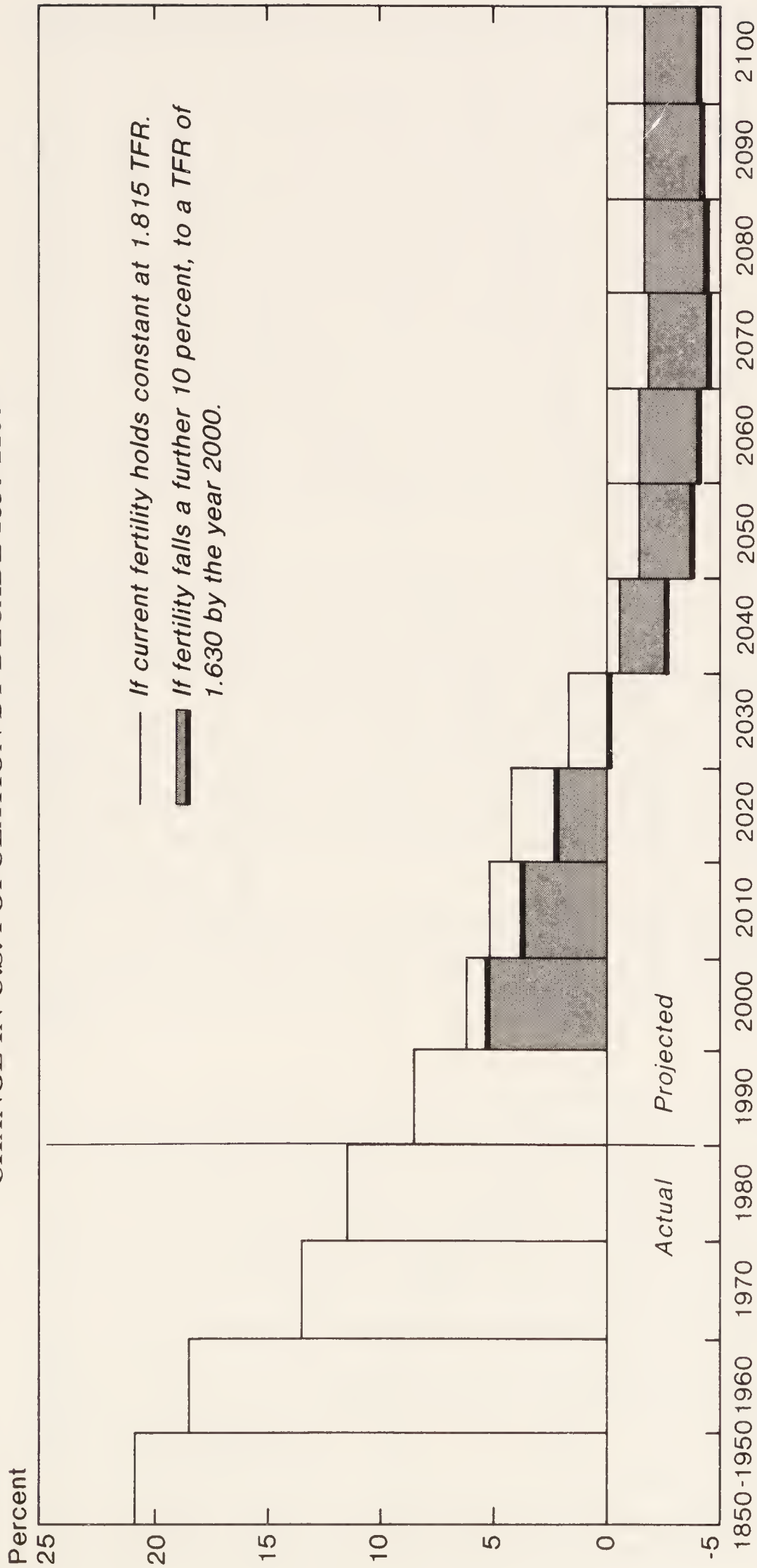
We saw in an earlier chart (page 31) the decline in the rate of growth for the Western nations. Look now at growth rates for the U.S. (including estimates for new immigrants as described in Chapter 3). Because many demographers think the U.S. fertility drop may not yet have run its course, an alternative projection is offered on the facing page to sketch out what happens if we drift down toward West European levels.

Growth rates, of course, translate into actual population levels. Chart 5-B (Page 54) shows what it looks like for the U. S. at the UN/World Bank projection of 1.815 and at a lower, 1.63, level that the World Bank has also turned out.

If, by chance, you think that the U.S. is due for a fertility turnaround, you had better look closely at these official and provisional numbers provided in early 1987 by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and covering the last dozen years:

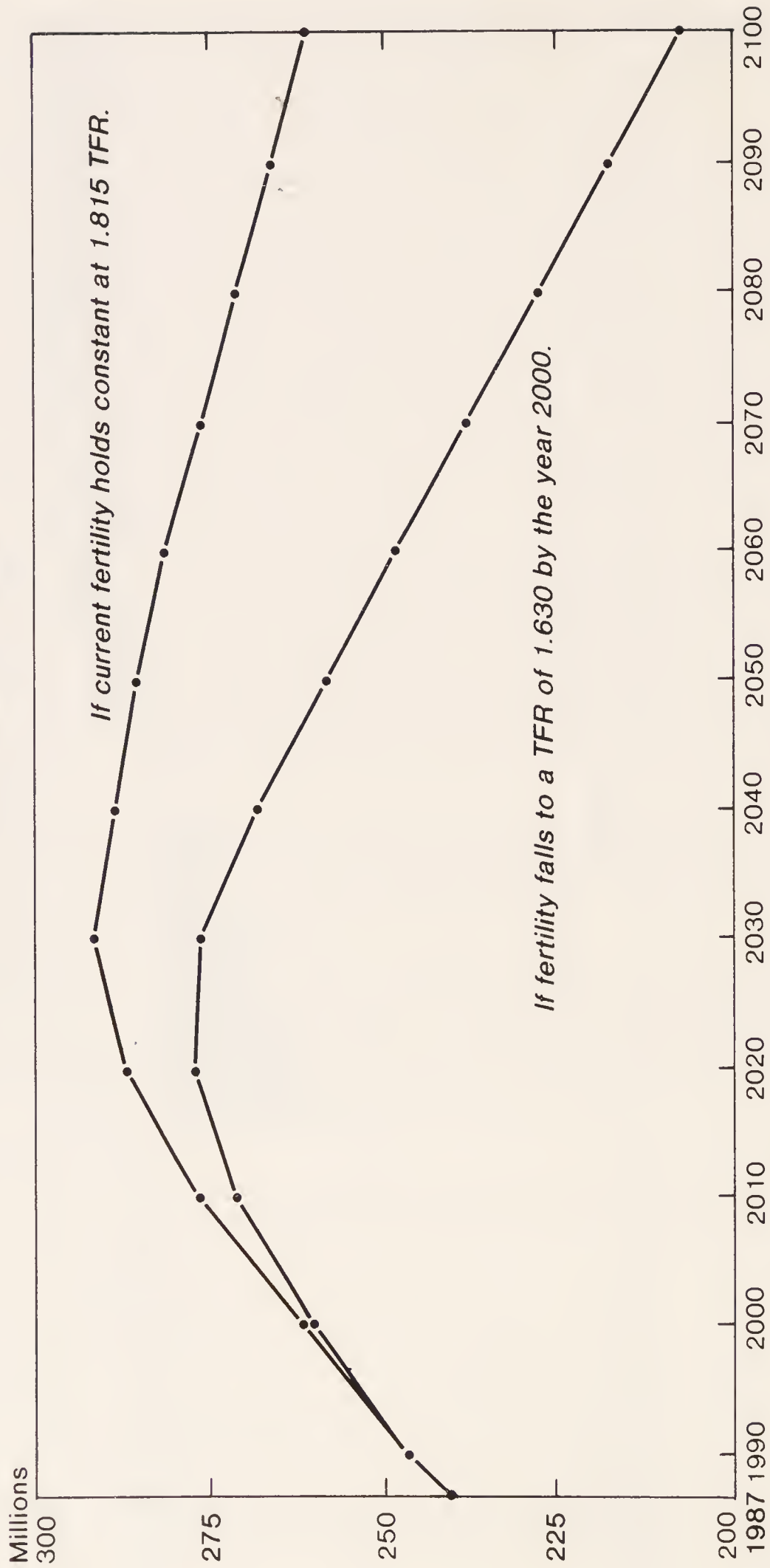
<i>YEAR</i>	<i>TFR</i>
1975	1.774
1976	1.738
1977	1.790
1978	1.760
1979	1.808
1980	1.840
1981	1.815
1982	1.829
1983	1.803
1984	1.806
1985 (provisional)	1.840
1986 (est. & provisional)	1.795

Chart 5A
CHANGE IN U.S. POPULATION BY DECADE 1850-2100



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. Special World Bank projection (see Appendix "Notes," page 170).

Chart 5B
U.S. POPULATION 1987 TO 2100



Source: Special World Bank Projection (see Appendix "Notes," page 170).

- The rates have barely moved since 1975; the total swing from highest to lowest is very small, only about 5 percent, and the most recent number is near the mid-point of the small swing.
- The 1981 rate of 1.815 is the U.S. rate used by the UN/World Bank projections and used in this volume. This rate is higher than the 1986 estimated provisional rate of 1.795.
- The last dozen years in America have yielded up a TFR averaging 1.801, counting provisional totals for 1985 and 1986.
- Excluding provisionals, the latest official figures for a ten year time frame (1975-1984) average out at 1.796. Excluding provisionals, the TFR is 1.818 for a five-year time frame. For a four-year time frame, excluding provisionals, the TFR is 1.813.
- The 1986 birth rates are running about 3 percent lower than 1985 rates and 1-2 percent lower than Census projections published in 1984.
- From everything known as the galley proofs of this volume go to the printer in early March 1987, the U.S. projections of 1.815 provided by the UN/World Bank are either just about right on the money or slightly high, depending on how many years one chooses to average. When the U.S. Census Bureau drops its middle series TFR projections to a flat 1.8, which they will almost surely do the next time projections are published, probably in 1988, all the 1.815 projections in this book will be somewhat higher than the official Census projection.
- Caution: “Provisionals” and “estimates” are just that; they can change slightly up or down when made “official,” but the range is fairly tight. The key point is this: U.S. fertility is low and, for now, staying low.

So: a new modern Western world with less growth, a U.S. with less growth, and—in the not too distant future—the likelihood of fewer people, first in the West generally, and then probably the U.S. too. This should provide plenty of food for thought for businessmen looking ahead; for young people who one day will be not-so-young, in businesses that face shrinking markets; for middle-aged people who will soon be older and wondering where their federal Social Security pension money will come from; for people who may one day sell a house and not find a buyer at a reasonable price. In short, it is food for thought for almost everyone.

What does the Birth Dearth yield from an economic perspective? Essentially, two intertwined problems: shrinking domestic markets and an older population. These, in turn, yield still other problems. Put together, all these problems don't typically occur at a precise mo-

ment, that is, at the instant population growth ceases, or at the instant population starts shrinking. The harmful economic effects of the Birth Dearth do not constitute an *event*. Rather they make up a process, almost ready to begin: low growth, no growth, shrinkage.

First on the agenda is: What if domestic markets shrink? Is it really so terrible? Some economists say probably not. It's true, you produce fewer widgets because there are fewer people to buy them. However, the optimistic economists say, there are also eventually fewer people needed to produce them. So, while total sales or total profits may decline, sales and profits *per worker* may not decline at all, and that's what counts—productivity. In fact, these economists say productivity may even go up. The optimists continue: A Birth Dearth yields fewer young workers. There is then more bidding for their services. Youth unemployment goes down. Wages go up. More capital is invested to buy equipment to replace the higher cost of labor. The newer equipment yields higher productivity per worker. We all get wealthier and everyone lives happily ever after.¹

That is a nice scenario; there is likely some truth to it. There are also gaping holes in the argument.

Who will buy those goods so efficiently produced?

As mentioned, a Birth Dearth not only provides fewer workers, it provides fewer buyers. And a Birth Dearth also sets up a sharply changing age distribution of the population, and sets that changed distribution in oddly staggered patterns. Some of these age patterns, along with some of the stark and discombobulating effects they provide, will be coming at us in the very near future.

Housing is a classic case in point. The housing industry—new housing, that is—by itself, provides about three percent of the jobs in America.

But what about the jobs for people who make the original equipment that goes into new houses? What sorts of things? Start with furnaces, air conditioning, stoves, refrigerators, electronic garage doors, intercom systems, and carpets.

And what about the stimulus that new housing provides for the home furnishings industry? What sorts of things? The extra lamps, sofas, beds, desks, television sets, VCRs, video rooms, bedspreads, clocks, new phones with automated dialing features, and so on and so forth.

And what about the real estate brokers, the mortgage bankers, and

¹ There are also arguments that less growth and fewer people yield a less polluted physical environment. I am dubious, for reasons explained in Chapter 11.

the termite inspectors? Put it all together and it involves about 11 million jobs—or about 10 percent of the American work force!

Now consider this: People typically buy their first house when they are young. That makes sense; that's when they (typically) marry and (typically) have children, even if only one. In 1990, according to Census data, the number of young Americans aged 25 to 34 will be *44 million*. But by the year 2000, because of the onset of the Birth Dearth in the early 1970s the number of young people aged 25 to 34 will be only *36 million*. That is a one-decade *decline* of young adults of 18 percent—while the United States is still *growing*.

Should one assume that new housing in the next decade will decline by about that much? In theory, roughly so. That's bad for the housing industry and people who work in the housing industry. But it can affect other people as well: today's Yuppies, for example. In the 1990s they likely will be well-to-do middle-aged people. As such, they will likely want to buy bigger, better, upscale houses. (They could buy an existing house, or quite possibly a new house). In theory, that should help the housing industry.

Fine. But who will buy their old houses? Eighteen percent fewer people than in the prior decade, that's who. Will that upscale middle-aged Yuppie couple really be able to buy that expensive house if they don't get a decent price for their old one? Will they get a good price? Somewhere in the housing process roughly 18 percent fewer houses will be sold due to fewer buyers from the Birth Dearth cohorts. That makes it a buyer's market. The Yuppie generation gets hurt. The Birth Dearth generation is helped. But the housing industry (seen nationally, not by specific location), will be hurt, possibly severely, in the decade to come even though it is doing well right now. Most people will find it difficult to buy a more expensive new house if they don't get a decent price for their existing dwelling.

And there is something else at work. Remember, in a Birth Dearth society, the population eventually gets not only smaller in number, but older. And as a society gets older, sooner or later lots of people die (even with increased life expectancy). Many of those dead people leave empty houses. As the number of people dying grows and grows, the number of people dying and leaving empty houses soon starts closing in on, and then ultimately exceeds, the number of people coming into the housing market. That process leaves even more empty houses on the market than in normal times. It may mean that, in some given decade of the future, the theoretical new housing market declines not by 18 percent but by 40 or 60 percent—or more, in theory a 100 percent decline. There will, theoretically, be enough empty

old houses to take care of all the demand for new housing.

In fact, at about the year 2000, the number of deaths will exceed the number of new entrants into the housing market in Western Europe. In America that cross-over point isn't approached until a couple or three decades later (depending on whether one uses Census or UN middle series projections), and quicker yet if fertility should fall somewhat further. But, in any event, the spread between housing entrants and deaths diminishes steadily as the years go on, lowering new housing demand even below the 18 percent figure cited for the 1990s. The number of deaths projected for the single year 2000 is about 300,000 more than for 1985. If it takes two elderly dead people to free up one house, that raises the year 2000 existing housing supply by about 150,000—per year—compared to the 1985 market, further depressing demand for new housing.

All this is theory. Economist (and housing expert) John Weicher, of the American Enterprise Institute, puts some caveats to the theory. If housing prices fall due to less demand, he says, there will be more abandonment and razing of low-income dwellings, not the straight one-for-one trade-off described above where 18 percent fewer housing entrants yields 18 percent less housing. On the other hand, says Weicher, this razing/abandonment process can lead to “deserted, donut-like central cities.” The process of demographic diminishment, says Weicher, does not fall evenly on all concerned. People working in construction and in those fields that provide raw materials needed for housing get hurt the most: masons, lumberjacks, brick makers, and so on. People working in the furniture and appliance fields are harmed less; those items tend to wear out over time and need replacement over time even if new housing construction is low. In the “trading-up” scenario outlined earlier, builders and slum landlords get hurt more severely than middle-income homeowners, says Weicher. Moreover, Weicher notes, as the demographics go down, smart builders will concentrate on building dwellings other than suburban homes—vacation houses, for example. Still, Weicher says, after all the caveats are applied, the housing industry—and the people who work in it—is going to get hurt, at least moderately.

Housing expert George Sternlieb, director of the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University, puts it starkly: “You simply are not going to have that demand for starter houses that dominated our housing thinking for the past 40 years.”

Let us leave Weicher and Sternlieb now and return to that lucky new entrant to the labor force in the 1990s. Is he really so lucky? He is, it's true, in a tight labor market. But will his services be bid for in a

housing industry when demand for dwellings fall? Why? Has anyone ever heard of a tight labor market with a dearth of jobs?

I confess I have not figured all this out industry by industry. There have been some labor force and consumption models produced on the basis of low fertility in the future, but apparently nothing from the point of view of industries and businesses themselves. The commercial demographic business is growing rapidly these days—billing an estimated \$40 million per year. Unfortunately, they concentrate mostly on micro-mini projects, like how to perfect a direct mail list by using census tract and ZIP code data. I suspect they could render a greater service for their clients if they looked out to the intermediate term and speculated on the sweeping change in demographic composition that is coming our way².

² Thus, why doesn't some enterprising commercial demographics firm, or an academic economist, try to take the U.S. Census Industrial Classification System and examine it industry-by-industry and sub-group-by-sub-group, in an attempt to see how each field relates to the advent of the Birth Dearth.

For example, there is the category of "Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries." How does it fare in the 1990s, as the Birth Dearth babies become young adults? Differentially, I would guess. Forestry will be in trouble, because lumber will be in trouble, because housing will be in trouble, as described in the text here. Agriculture and Fisheries, on the other hand, would seem likely to grow along with the total population, that is, more slowly than in the 1980s, but still with some growth, due to the demographic momentum from earlier times.

But some of the business-by-business analysis can get very complex as tides wash over cross-tides. I gave a talk to a firm that provides services for airlines—everything from refueling to ticketing. Their question was: Demographically speaking, how will airlines do in the Nineties? We tried to figure it out. On the one hand, as the Baby Boomers mature, there will be more people in their peak earning years, that is, in their forties and fifties. That's a lot of well-to-do people who will want to travel. That's good for airlines and good for airline service companies. On the other hand there will be a decrease in young adults aged 25-34, the cutting edge of the Birth Dearth adults. Had the Birth Dearth not occurred there should have been a lot of young salesmen traveling on airlines among that group. Alas, they were never born, so they're not salesmen counting up their Frequent Flyer miles. How does it all wash out? How do the airlines make out? Probably all right. There will also be lots more old people, and they fly—often to see their grandchildren. On the other hand, there will be fewer grandchildren to see. We decided it can get very complicated.

What about the Census "industry" of Public Administration," sub-category "justice, public order and safety." That includes most policemen. On the basis of demographics alone, the Nineties would not seem to be the time to go into business providing billy-clubs for policemen. There will be fewer young males; it is young males who commit most crimes. Crime, therefore, should go down. A billy-club is essentially a durable and/or capital good, in that it doesn't wear out, at least not quickly. Therefore there will likely be little demand for billy-clubs. Don't invest in United Consolidated Billy-Club, Inc.

How about "Entertainment and Recreational Services?" The market will still be there, but to maximize the target, the product should be aimed at middle-aged folks, not rock-'n'-rolling teenagers.

What about manufacturing? It's divided into durable and non-durable goods. The non-

In the absence of such detailed projections, I can however, offer an anecdote or two that takes my point beyond the housing industry.

I gave a speech to a meeting of top executives of a small conglomerate a couple of years ago (\$2 billion in sales). I explained my view of the Birth Dearth. A young executive got up and said he ran a baseball glove company. "Am I in trouble?" he asked. I asked him at what age a boy typically first bought a baseball mitt. "About age eleven," he said. We discussed briefly the demographic trends for 11-year-olds, which are not favorable.

Looking at the actual projections, a full answer would go something like this: "You are all right now, things may get a little better through the mid-Nineties because of the Baby Boom echo effect, but beyond that, you are, indeed, in some trouble. You will have fewer customers. Many of the customers you may have been hoping to have in the future will never be born unless fertility goes up substantially, and it probably won't. You will be in a stagnant industry, at best, more likely a declining one. You are surely not in a growth industry."

Coming back to our original problem regarding the economic effects of the Birth Dearth. Where will all those young, in-demand new workers of the future get jobs? Not likely in the one baseball glove factory still producing in the U.S. It is unlikely they will expand. Not in the sales force of the baseball glove importer. Demand will be stagnant. Not in the ranks of people who work in sporting good stores where the gloves are sold. The number of total baseball glove-related jobs could remain about the same or more likely drop, as the number of customers decline in the out-years. If Social Security pay-outs will have to start at ever-older ages of recipients (which, as we shall see, is quite likely due to the Birth Dearth) then older workers will have to keep jobs longer, keeping younger workers in even less of an in-demand situation than one might expect.

A final story. I spoke not long ago to a group of executives from a large corporation. I reveal no names, but the corporate initials were

durable markets, like paper, rubber, and beverages, should grow slowly along with the slow-growing economy. Certain durables, however, may be in worse shape, as described in the next chapter.

What about the category "Professional and Related Services?" Again, some of the components must be looked at separately. The components dealing with health should do well—the society will be getting older, needing medical attention. On the other hand, within the health field, pediatrics will likely be a problem—fewer children. The parts of "Professional and Related Services" dealing with education should be troubling—due to fewer children and young people. On the other hand, education or re-education programs designed for the middle aged or elderly should be able to manage.

It gets complicated. Play the game yourself. Urge your friendly employer to do the same. Advance planning could save your job.

IBM. I told my Birth Dearth story. I explained that my research represented only “a work in progress”—standard author poor boy talk. I asked the assembled executives if they could tell me what it meant for their business, which can be an arcane one for a fellow like myself who still writes in longhand.

“Well,” said one sales executive, “you know, all we really make are black boxes. They go by a lot of names—typewriters, word processors, personal computers—but they’re all black boxes to us. When a new worker arrives at a new desk, that’s good news for us. Then the company who owns that desk usually has to buy that worker a new black box. That new worker is typically a young worker. We try to sell that company our black boxes. Now you’re telling us that the demand for original-equipment black boxes will go down by almost twenty percent in the next decade. Thanks a whole lot for the good news.”

You’re welcome. Better that you know now than discover it later. The good news is that the rate of decline slows down after 2000, although, long-term, the decline continues.

These few examples reveal something important about the economic nature of the Birth Dearth. It typically takes a while for it to be felt. Baby food manufacturers can feel it early, housing and computer industries can feel it twenty-five years later. But eventually we all feel it as the demographic waves ebb and flow, sometimes up a little in a given age cohort due to earlier demographic bumps, but generally staying low, and lower, as fertility stays at below-replacement levels. It’s a process, not an event, eroding and/or changing the economic situation year after year. Its harmful effects are often felt gradually as growth rates go lower, even before a no-growth level or a shrinking level is reached.

Now, of course, it’s not all that simple. There are yet more caveats.

Just as the housing industry will develop some survival tricks, so, too, will IBM be on an easier playing field than the straight black-box example suggests.

IBM doesn’t only make black boxes for *new* entrants to the labor force. By making better black boxes, they can get customers to replace old black boxes with more efficient, new black boxes. Moreover, for most businesses—a bakery, a shoe manufacturer, a car manufacturer, or a highway builder—there is always this fact: Things are consumed and/or wear out. There is always a replacement market for things that are consumed or wear out. Our Western industrial world will by no means come to a screeching halt because we are going from high population growth to low population growth to no population growth and then likely to negative population growth in our various domestic markets.

There are not only new and better models of existing products to stimulate demand, there is not only the need for replacement goods, but there is the truly ingenious capacity for a responsive society to adapt to new economic circumstances. As noted, the builders say they will promote the idea of vacation homes. What about the slowing down of customer growth in a fast-food chain due to falling demographics? What to do? Start serving breakfasts. Or put the fast food restaurant on wheels and take it to a construction site to serve such workers as are still working in that field. Or get a franchise working in a college student-union building.

Wondrous are the ways of the free marketeers as they seek new markets. Do not underestimate them. On the other hand, remember that some demand is finite. Very finite. Thus, people typically eat only one breakfast per day. If they eat an Egg McMuffin at a McDonalds, that is an egg that was an egg not eaten at home. From the chicken farmer's point of view, and the chicken feed producer, and the producer of egg boxes, it makes little difference whether the egg was sold to McDonalds, or whether it was sold directly to the consumer, or to a supermarket chain which then sells it to the consumer. It's still one egg.

In short: A responsive business community can surely help in dealing with the economic effects of the Birth Dearth. But responsivity is not a panacea.

And here is something else that is not a panacea: exports.

When one travels around Western Europe these days and discusses the economic dilemma of their Birth Dearth, one hears a strange solution advanced: "It doesn't matter that our domestic market will shrink. We'll solve that with extra exports to the still-fast-growing Third World." Such a notion is as foolhardy in Europe as it would be in the U.S.. In fact, it is doubly so, because European fertility rates have fallen lower than ours, and it has little immigration to help out.

That proposed solution is no solution. Who in the Third World will buy European (or American) exports if there is not much of a market in Europe (or America) to sell to? Where will the dollars, francs, guilders, lire, deutschemarks, and pounds come from to buy European goods if Europeans, due to low population, can't buy very much, thereby sending those hard currencies overseas?

Indeed, as we shall see later, one of the great losers from the Birth Dearth will be the less-developed countries. For, as the late Herman Kahn pointed out, (I paraphrase) the best thing going for poor people is rich people! It is, after all, rich people who can buy the products and services of poor people, making them progressively less poor.

When the United States buys Sri Lankan textiles, the Sri Lankan workers involved earn less than a U.S. worker would earn, but are better off than those Sri Lankans would be otherwise. How so? Because they get jobs, usually well-paying ones by local standards, and not only that, soon the demand for their services may be bid up, creating a cycle of somewhat higher wages. In addition to benefiting the American consumer by lowering prices, it helps bring about progress for Sri Lanka. But if the First World market diminishes while the Third World labor force grows, the Third World will not do nearly as well. Who will buy their goods?

On a global scale, fewer rich people makes it more difficult for poor people to become richer people.

Here is another European panacea one hears. “We have lots of unemployment now. We don’t have enough jobs for the workers we have. If we have fewer workers in the years to come, we will have less unemployment.”

Harumph. As my colleague at the American Enterprise Institute, Herbert Stein, points out: “That is an interesting theory. If one has no population at all, that would eliminate all unemployment. And all employment, too.”

Truth be told, the unemployment rate within a given nation is relative and proportional, not absolute. The point is elemental; a nation with 10 percent unemployment would likely have about 10 percent unemployment regardless of fewer numbers of people. After all, fewer people, from sparse Birth Dearth cohorts, would consume less than fat cohorts would. That would lower demand, lowering the number of jobs. Thus, when the German population falls, the amount of wurst consumed will fall. That leads to fewer jobs for wurstmakers. And the unemployment rate would remain about the same. And that is not a wurst case scenario.

The only jobs that might be considered “locked-in” under such conditions of population decline would theoretically be from export-related sources. But that, as we have seen, also doesn’t work. Remember, when imports drop due to a Birth Dearth shortage of consumers, then exports will fall due to the shortage of hard currency to pay for the exports.

Finally, in yet another sense, there are no finite numbers of jobs in a given nation, created by a mystical job-making machine, usually called a “government.” There are only societies that are organized in ways that increase or decrease the amount of unemployment. For example, one reason rich countries have unemployment is, in part, because (often humanely, sometimes wisely) they subsidize it with pro-

grams like unemployment insurance, welfare, minimum wage, and medical care. If such programs were eliminated unemployment might well plummet as desperately poor people, previously protected by the social safety net, sought and found very low wage jobs, or sold apples on street corners or begged for a living in order not to starve. It would not be a country I would choose to live in, but it might have a lower unemployment rate.

In any event, employment does not rise and fall on the basis of the Neanderthal notion that there are only a finite number of jobs to be filled by a finite number of people. People not only consume and create goods and services, they correspondingly also create and consume jobs. That is the essence of “supply-side demography” and that part of the theory is surely correct.

And finally, there is another argument that is a nonstarter. I talk in this chapter primarily about the economic effect of “turbulence” and “dislocations” caused by shrinking demand and an ever-older population. This harms an economy while it shifts gears to accommodate to new reality. Well, I am told, “a free economy always has dislocations and turbulence—don’t worry. The buggy-whip makers were dislocated out of business by the automobile manufacturers; the people who worked for the typewriter manufacturers were dislocated by the people who made word processors; the textile workers in America were dislocated by textile workers in Taiwan—but we all ended up all right didn’t we? Stop worrying.”

No. There is a crucial difference between a worker being temporarily put out of work because the product he or she makes is superseded by a better product, or because people in another country can make certain goods either cheaper or better. In those instances, even if an individual losing a job may suffer, the public as a whole gains—from better or less expensive products. With automobiles, we can move ourselves more efficiently; with personal computers we can make a spreadsheet more quickly; with lower-cost imports we can buy a dress at a cheaper price.

But what are the economic benefits from a worker dislocated out of a job because there are not enough people to buy the houses he used to build? There are none. That worker may indeed find another job as the economy grinds and shifts, but his dislocation has caused no economic betterment and, hopefully, only temporary suffering.

Chapter 6

A Graying Economy

So much for shrinking markets and the turmoil they can cause. We come now directly to a second and related facet of the economic implications of the Birth Dearth: the graying of a population. It has been mentioned here earlier in a noneconomic sense and in relation to shrinking markets. But it creates problems in other ways. The process can be seen most graphically by looking at “age pyramids.” The pyramids below show the changing American situation—from the early 1980s to 2030. The wider the base, the younger the population.

The pyramid diagrams clearly show an elemental phenomenon: *a below-replacement society keeps getting older*. As this happens, the pyramids begin looking like rectangles. The eminent French demographer Alfred Sauvy described the Birth Dearth circumstance some years ago most pungently: “A society of old people, living in old houses, ruminating about old ideas.”

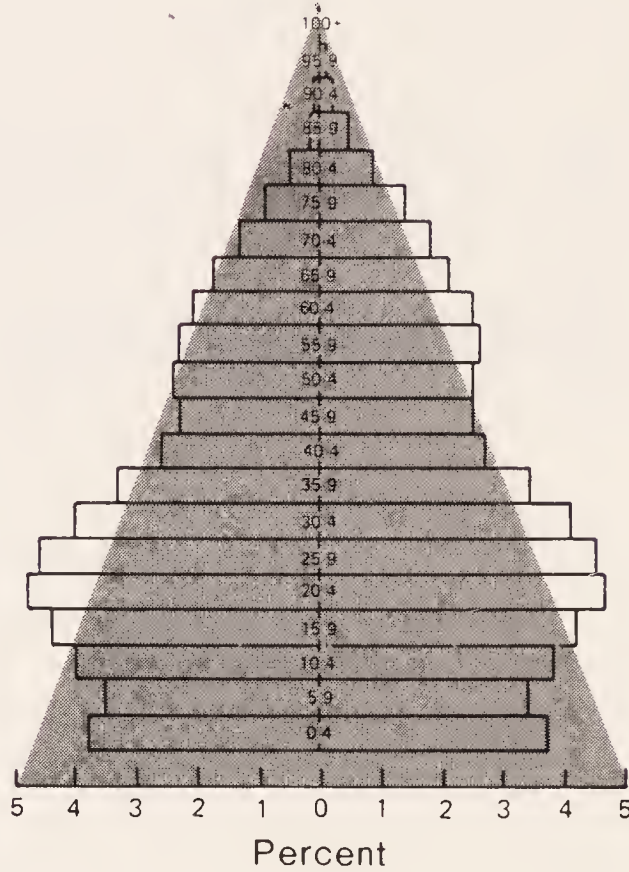
The logic of the situation is simple. A society where each succeeding generation of babies is smaller in number than the preceding generation—which is what happens sooner or later in a below-replacement fertility situation—is an aging society.

Chart 6A
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE U.S. POPULATION,
BY AGE AND SEX, 1982 AND 2030

1982

MALE

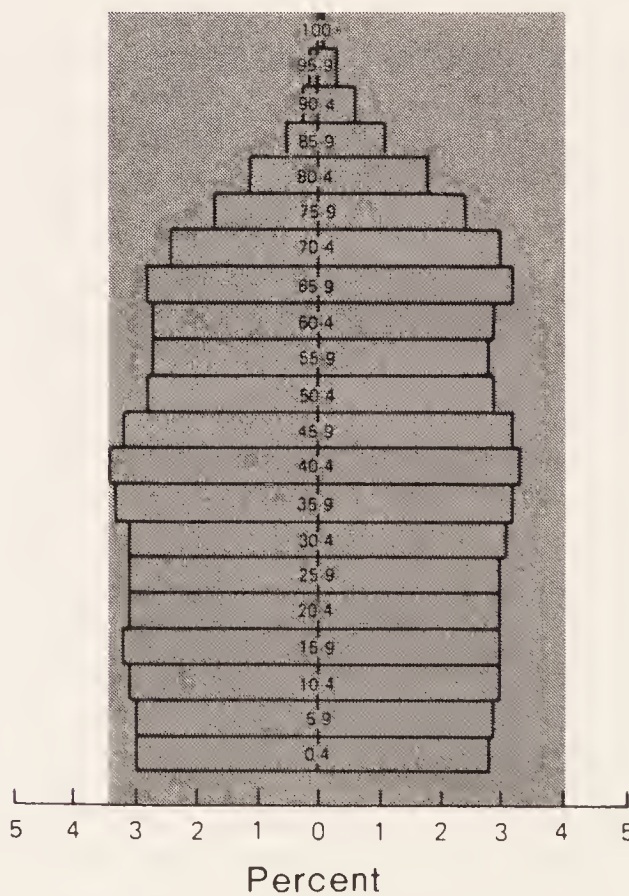
FEMALE



2030

MALE

FEMALE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Projections, "middle" series.

Some simple columns of numbers sketch the portrait of an aging America, Germany, Japan, and for the France that Sauvy feared:

**ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS OF MEDIAN AGE
BASED ON ASSUMPTION OF CONTINUED LOW
FERTILITY FOR THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE,
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, AND JAPAN,
1970 TO 2025***

	Estimates			Projections			
	1970	1980	1985	1990	2000	2010	2025
	<i>Median years of age</i>						
United States	28	30	32	33	37	38	42
France	32	33	34	35	37	40	42
Germany	34	37	38	39	42	46	50
Japan	29	33	35	37	40	41	44

Source: United Nations, 1986, *World Population Prospects, Estimates and Projections As Assessed in 1984*.

*Note: Even these continued low fertility projections assume some small increases in the total fertility rates of France, Germany and Japan.

What are the economic consequences of an aging population? Sauvy might have expanded his remark about a society growing ever more elderly: “Old people, living in old houses, ruminating about old ideas”—to which he could have added “*and waging political warfare with younger people about who pay the bills for old people’s pensions.*”

There is a popular conception among Americans that our federal Social Security pensions are paid for by our very own contributions that have been put into an earmarked fund that is just waiting for us when we reach retirement age. Wrong. That is not how government pay-as-you-go social security programs typically work.

Let this be understood clearly: *Typically, we don’t put money into the Social Security program for our own pensions. We put in babies.*

Thus, as a rule, most of *our* money doesn’t pay for *our* own pension with *our* dollars. It pays for our *parents’* pensions and our *grandparents’* pensions. But who will pay for our pensions if we don’t have children, or more precisely if we as a population have ever-fewer children?

That is the right question to ask, particularly if you are a Baby Boomer adult, age 22-42 in 1987, looking at small Birth Dearth-size cohorts coming up behind you.

Unfortunately, nice answers are in short supply in the modern world of the Birth Dearth. The changing age pyramids of the coming years mean this: In 1985, there were 145 million people of working age in the United States to pay Social Security taxes for 29 million elderly. That's a ratio of *five* producers for *one* retiree. But in 2035, as the Baby Boomers retire and the Baby Busters fill the labor force, the ratio will be only *two-and-a-half* producers to *one* retiree.

Those data are from the Social Security Administration (SSA) "middle assumptions." Now, this author has been a life-long admirer and booster of Social Security. I remain that. But it must be said that these "middle assumptions" by SSA are deeply flawed from a demographic standpoint. The TFR projection of the SSA rises magically to 2.0 within a couple of decades, despite the fact that we have been steady at 1.8 for almost fifteen years and despite the fact that most demographers feel that if the TFR is going to move, it will move down, not up. Moreover, the life expectancy rates in the SSA middle projections move up much less rapidly than most demographers assume (and everytime you read a newspaper story about new drugs to block cholesterol buildup, SSA life expectancy projections look even worse).

Accordingly, one would be advised to also look at the SSA "low" series (with a 1.6 TFR by the year 2010) for a perhaps more likely projection of dependency ratios, or at least as a projection to pull down the inflated middle series one somewhat. In such a case, that assumption of the ratio of working age population to elderly goes from 5 to 1 today, to 4 to 1 in 2010, to 3 to 1 in 2020, and to 2 to 1 in 2035, rather than the 2-1/2 to 1 cited from the earlier SSA projection. (In 1945 the ratio was about 7-1/2 to 1.)

What to do? Sooner or later, under a 1.8 TFR or a 1.6 TFR, Social Security "goes broke" unless something changes. The obvious answers are all unpleasant. Benefits can be cut for the elderly. (That's not very popular among the elderly.) Or taxes can be raised for workers. (That's not very popular among workers.)¹ How would you like to run for office on a raise-taxes, cut-benefits platform?

Puffed-up projection assumptions are not new at SSA. Thus, the "middle" series of Social Security projections were kept at the 2.1 children-per-woman rate for many years after the rate had actually fallen to the 1.8 level.

¹ There are a variety of ways to do this, but they all still have the effect of cutting benefits or raising taxes. Examples: delay retirement age, tax Social Security income, increase the levels but not the rates at which taxes are due on Social Security.

In part, this gave the House-Senate Save-Social-Security panel of 1982 much easier numbers to work with in order to “solve” the Social Security problem. If the current 1.8 rate should hold, it raises the Social Security pay-out-over-receipts by about \$80 *billion* per year in the next century, when compared to a 2.1 rate. It doesn’t take long to extrapolate various fertility differentials into shortfalls amounting to many, many *trillions* of dollars. Some numbers will be offered in a moment. In short, because of the Birth Dearth, Social Security will be a big problem in the years to come.

There are big arguments about Social Security projections and they yield positions ranging from sanguine to desperate, with remedies—if and as needed—either draconian/immediately or moderate/later.

But if one ratchets Sauvy’s statement just one more legitimate turn, the future comes out this way: “old people, living in old houses, ruminating about old ideas—and waging political warfare about who pays the bills for old people’s pensions, *and medical care.*”

Today, the Medicare trust fund is kept separate from the Social Security trust fund. It currently provides hospital care for about 30 million Americans. That fund will clearly be thoroughly depleted by the late 1990s. That is tomorrow.

Where will the money come from? The talk in Washington is that the Social Security trust fund will be combined with the Medicare trust fund. On the surface, it figures. The Social Security fund will get “fat” in the 1990s while the Boomers are still working. But if that combining is done, the Social Security fund is drawn down earlier and advances the day of reckoning when it “goes broke.” At a 1.8 TFR the Social Security middle forecast would put the go-broke date in the late 2030s. Adding in the Medicare shortfalls puts the go-broke date down to about 2015 under an intermediate forecast, and as early as the year 2000 if the economy should turn in a somewhat sour record, activating a worst-case projection.

Of course, these funds won’t really “go broke.” As mentioned, either benefits will be cut, or taxes will be raised. But the changing dependency ratio (remember we now have five workers supporting one elderly person, but that will probably go down to a ratio of close to 2 to 1!) puts enormous extra leverage on the tax-benefit equation. To keep benefits up, the tax increases will have to be proportionately huge because there will be so few payers around. More likely, benefits will have to be reduced in one way or another: less money, or later retirement, or less medical care. Using SSA intermediate projections, including the combining of medical and pension funds, by 2035 So-

cial Security taxes will have to be raised over time by 50 percent above planned increases to meet current commitments, or benefits reduced by about a third. If nothing is done, the Social Security fund will be \$2.3 trillion (!) in debt, in constant 1986 dollars. Under worst case scenarios, Social Security taxes must rise from the current 14 percent of payroll to 37 percent by 2035 just to meet current commitments. The medium scenario would call for a rise to 23 percent of payroll by 2035. Income tax, state tax, sales tax comes on the top of that, not leaving much for incidentals like food, clothing and shelter.

Well, one may say, people are living longer, so they can retire later. Or, one may say, the society will be able to support the elderly because there will be relatively fewer children to support. Or, one may say, fertility will go up. Or, one may say, productivity increases will go up giving later generations more real income even if they have to pay more taxes.

Yes, but it doesn't cost the public treasury nearly as much to support a child as it does to support an elderly person. Yes, but when fertility ultimately increases, as it must lest the Western world just fade away, the dependency ratio will be getting lower on both sides: more elderly and more children—all paid for by pathetically few workers.

Yes, people are living longer. Yes, people can retire later (the Social Security Amendments of 1983 increased retirement age to 67 starting in the year 2022.) Yes, life expectancy is going up, and will likely continue to go up. But an older force of retired people will require more medical care, and more *expensive* medical care, for more years. Where will the extra money come from? Not from new, bigger taxes on the slender legions of the Birth Dearth cohorts. There won't be enough of them to pay what is needed for the elderly to take advantage of the new life-extending, health-extending, medical technology.

Well, it is said by more conservative/libertarian types, that's why Social Security should be reconstructed as a fully-funded *private* system. Then the elderly won't be dependent on vanishing government trust funds—such as from Medicare—for their health needs. Every elderly person would have his or her own Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or Individual Medical Account (IMA) fully funded and invested in securities. Then it won't matter if there are skinnier generations behind them.

True? Partly, although the plan has the effect of increasing general revenue taxes for many decades. But switching to a “fully-funded” system rather than a “pay-as-you-go system” may be of less help than is thought. For the Birth Dearth has potent economic effects because

it changes the essence of a population. Consider: Suppose there were 10 old people, 10 children, and 80 workers in a population. Then the old people with medical IRAs (or plain old rainy-day personal savings for that matter) would indeed be able to buy the best of medical care: doctors, hospitals, exotic machinery. There would be plenty of doctors, nurses, and medical technicians around to buy such services from.

But, to make the case simple, suppose the population had 80 old people, 10 children, and 10 workers. The 80 old people, even if all were wealthy, would soon find their wealth diluted by great medical demand chasing limited medical supply. Among those 10 workers would be only a few doctors, nurses, and medical technicians who knew how to use the new miracle medical technologies of the twenty-first century. And so, the 80 rich old people would bid for their services. And prices for medical services would skyrocket. And rich old people wouldn't be rich anymore. Or, they would be sick, rich old people who couldn't afford medical care.

I exaggerate the numbers. But that is the effect of drastic swings in dependency ratios. A human society functions smoothly as a pyramid, where many workers support few elderly. Square that pyramid—and the sound of the crunch reverberates everywhere, mostly negatively.

Finally, it's said, don't worry about Social Security and Medicare shortfalls caused by a Birth Dearth. The rising tide of technology, yielding per capita productivity increases, will bail us out. We'll all be richer.

Will we?

There is yet more to the economic problem. It's not just about age distribution, lack of markets, and dependency ratios. Another factor is tightly intertwined: spirit.

Unprovable as it may be, I believe we must face the idea that societies that keep getting older and smaller, older and smaller, older and smaller—will become dispirited. It was not an ever-older and ever-smaller population that yielded the dynamism that has become associated with American life. "Manifest destiny" was not the cry of a no-growth continent of old people. Our most recent spasm of dynamism is surely associated in part with the maturing of the 80 million Baby Boom babies—young, energetic, creative, and on the make. We have never been a society of old people in old houses fondling old ideas.

Consider the ramifications of some aspects of the Birth Dearth

that are in the intangible realm of the spirit, but are not unimportant to an economy.

I was sitting with economist Julian Simon in a cafeteria in San Francisco, where we were both attending a 1986 meeting of the Population Association of America. We were discussing the Birth Dearth situation. We talked for a while, and soon our conversation seemed to draw the strands of the economic argument together: smaller populations, older populations, and less spirit.

Simon looked over to the serving counter and pointed to the large coffee-making machine. "Use San Francisco as a micro-model," he said. "And suppose there are one-hundred coffee-making machines in San Francisco. And suppose about five wear out and need replacement each year. And suppose you were a coffee-making machine manufacturer."

I so supposed.

"Would you work very hard at designing a brand new, super-duper coffee-making machine?"

I might, I said, if I had an idea so exceptional that I could replace many existing coffee-making machines, but, in general, it didn't seem like a good idea to spend the time, effort and money if all I could do was sell five new machines. I'd just sit by and do things the old way.

But suppose, Simon continued, "you knew that many new people were coming into the neighborhood and fifteen *new* restaurants would open up this year in San Francisco and they would all need coffee machines."

That, I agreed, might begin to titillate my commercial senses. Twenty machines is an extra 300 percent bigger potential market than five machines. I might set my engineers to work on designing a brilliant new coffee-making system.

Now, although Julian Simon is a provocative and original thinker, this is not an original thought of his. He is talking about a combination of what are often called "economies of scale" and "accelerator" effects. These ideas are as applicable to "innovation" as they are to "goods." We all know, for example, that it is difficult, impractical, and expensive to produce only a very small number of automobiles. It only becomes practical when the numbers are large enough to take advantage of mass production—an economy of scale. And such is often the case with new ideas. It is less likely that the costs of innovation will be worthwhile to the innovator if there is less of a market for his innovation. Twenty innovative coffee-making machines—maybe yes. Five innovative coffee-making machines—probably no. As mentioned, the difference in production is 300 percent even though the

fifteen new machines represent only a 15 percent increase in total stock of existing coffee-making machines.

This is an accelerator effect that population growth adds to the production of capital goods. Or consider an even starker example: Imagine a country with one thousand schoolhouses. If the population of children remains constant, or falls, there is *no need for any new schoolhouses*. But if the population of children goes up, even minimally—say 2 percent—there will be a need for twenty new schoolhouses. That is an infinite increase in demand for new schoolhouses (from zero to twenty). To say the least, that is of more than passing importance if you are in the schoolhouse-building business.

So it goes with capital goods of all kinds. A 2 percent increase in demand for a disposable, disappearing consumer goods product like bread—equals 2 percent. But a 2 percent increase in demand for non-wearing-out capital goods, like schoolhouses, or just plain houses, can require an infinite, or massive, increase in demand. In this sense, much of the needed “innovation” we hear so much about these days responds to demand like a capital good, not a consumer good. If you don’t grow, there is less demand for innovation in all those fields where things don’t wear out quickly.

Economist Allen Kelley of Duke University puts some of this in a contemporary American setting. Kelley notes that even with an economically slow-growing or no-growing West, there can still be inventions and innovations. They can come from a university research lab not dependent on new demand, they could be invented elsewhere in the world. But, Kelley points out, in a slow-growing market, or a non-growing market, such inventions would be absorbed slowly. After all, if you are a manufacturer, there is less reward to be gained by turning over your stock of machinery if there is little additional demand for what the machinery produces. So your machinery gets older. At the same time, manufacturers in nations with growing populations and growing markets will bring new machinery on line more rapidly. Consequently, *their* manufacturing techniques will be more modern and efficient than *ours*. These efficiently produced goods will out-compete our less-efficiently more-expensively produced goods.

Kelley believes that this, along with many other factors has contributed to the decline in our “smokestack” industry in America’s “rust belt,” and that it will continue to have a negative effect.

Less innovation ultimately means lower productivity and a lower standard of living than would otherwise be possible. Kelley says this about the harmful economic effects of the Birth Dearth: “Jobs could well be there, but prosperity may not.” He believes that we may go

toward policies of trade protectionism to make up for our inefficiencies from less efficient industries. This, he says, will yield higher priced goods for Americans, lowering our standard of living.

The slow-growing markets talked about here will come about due to diminished population growth, and then get worse due to no population growth, and get even worse when and if there is actual population decline. The smaller the potential market likely to use the innovation—the less innovation there will be. Of course, the replacement market is still around, and that in itself can be potent for certain sorts of products. But it will never be as good as if there is a replacement market plus a growing new market.

Economics, it is said, is about life at the margin: a little more efficiency, or a little less efficiency. So too with innovation. The spirit of innovation, the likelihood of innovation, would almost surely suffer at least somewhat as population stops growing.

And, of course, and most importantly, it goes beyond coffee-making machines. We can live well even without new coffee-making machines. But what happens is also applicable, for example, to new medicines to save lives. How much money will a drug company invest in research to produce a new drug for, say, cancer or heart disease if the potential number of customers in countries with populations that can pay for such drugs shrinks with each passing year?

How much? Somewhat less than if population was growing rather than shrinking.

And the problem goes somewhat deeper still. Recall our potential innovator of the coffee-making machine. Suppose the innovator had a relatively larger market for his potential innovation. (Not just for five as in our San Francisco micro-model, but many more throughout the U.S., although still with fewer potential customers than in a condition of vigorous growth.)

In such a case, the innovator might still take a gamble on a new coffee-maker—or new valve or new printing press or new computer or new medical device—if *he or she were a young person*. A young man or woman with a new idea at age 30 might take the risk. After all, if it works out, he or she would have many years to profit from it. At age 40 the payoff is a little slimmer, at age 50 slimmer still. You will not find many risk-taking entrepreneurs starting out afresh at age 60. For quite realistic reasons, the energizing spirit of daring diminishes as a society ages.

In considering economics, then, we must consider spirit and cul-

ture as well. This relationship can be seen by looking around the world; one culture produces wealth, another poverty. Spirit and culture drive economics. Even some economists understand this. An innovative, optimistic, forward-looking society will likely be a prosperous one. Those are typically the features of youth.

The Birth Dearth circumstance, by definition, yields us an ever-aging society. What kind of spirit is there in a society that doesn't even have the gumption or interest to reproduce itself?

And finally, the Birth Dearth and its associated factors produce something else that may produce serious economic harm—in a most personal way.

Who are the babies and children of today who will be the labor force of tomorrow? What are they like? How economically valuable will they be when they mature?

Rather surprisingly, in a society (ours) that's been getting richer and richer, more children are likely to be exposed to poverty than in earlier times. Why? Mostly because of the increase in family dissolution. In Chapter 10 we will quantify the divorce statistics, and show how an increase in divorce tends to take women out of the potential-mother pool, thus lowering fertility. Here let it be noted that a broken family is likely to be a female-headed family and a female-headed family is likely to be a poor family with poor children, even if its origins are middle-class.

Thus, at least 40 percent of today's children will endure a marital breakup, 20 percent of children will live through two divorces by the time they are 18. Female-headed families account for 56 percent of the total poverty population. In all, *about one-third of our children will spend some time below the poverty line.*

And consider the rising tide of out-of-wedlock births. As recently as 1960, only 5 percent of all births were out-of-wedlock. Today the rate is 21 percent. The rate for blacks is very high, but, from a lower base, the white rate is expanding proportionately faster. At least part of this increase can also be seen as related to a Birth Dearth ethos: later marriage, less marriage—and finally a woman says to hell with it, I'll do it myself (almost). Those out-of-wedlock children, too, are likely to live in a deprived environment for at least part of their lives.

Add to that the way education and income correlate with our fertility rate. Census data from the June 1985 Current Population Survey (CPS) show that among women who had never completed high school,

the TFR was 2.5. Among women who were college graduates the rate was only 1.4.²

A similar pattern is observable in the income data. Women in families earning less than \$10,000 a year had a TFR of 2.1. Those women in families earning over \$35,000 had a 1.4 TFR.

So: a disproportionate number of our children are from ill-educated, poor households. That is an important but not a new pattern; birth rates are usually higher among the lower socio-economic classes. What is relatively new is the fact that so many children from an otherwise middle-class ambiance are growing up poor, at least for a while.

Is this harmful? A study conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan showed that children who have been through a divorce were five times more likely to be either expelled or suspended from school than were children who had not been exposed to divorce. Children from divorced backgrounds were twice as likely to repeat a grade.

This year's political buzzword is "competitiveness." We are told that America is losing ground in the international trade race.

Professor Frank Levy, an economist at the University of Maryland, looks at current trends, and notes that our labor force of the future, the fruit of Birth Dearth fertility patterns, will be disproportionately poor, ill-educated, and likely scarred by family breakup. He says such a labor force can harm us in the future contests for international economic competitiveness. Although I don't believe America will be the loser in the competitiveness race, Levy's general point does make sense. Once again, we would be better off if the Birth Dearth had not visited us.

Talking about "trends" makes the whole situation rather impersonal. But these trends, of course, are attached to real people and real groups of peoples. And they are not attached to real people in a uniform way. There are differentials involved.

In the course of writing a book like this, and talking about it publicly and privately almost incessantly, one ends up with an ear for nuance. To put it politely, many Americans are concerned that our current fertility and immigration patterns will yield "harmful" racial and ethnic results (see Chapter Nine). One hears that "the problem" concerns blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Arabs, immigrants generally—you name it—everyone, it seems, except the people doing the complaining. Well, in my judgement, they are dead wrong, as will be dis-

² The CPS estimates used here were calculated by Census demographer Martin O'Connell, using unpublished computer runs.

cussed later on. For now, note this about the causes of the Birth Dearth:

- It is *not* due to fertility rates of the totality of *blacks* in America. The black TFR has fallen, and in 1984, the TFR for black women was 2.2 children, just a trifle above replacement levels. I think that is about where the national rate ought to be. But the TFR for blacks who have reached middle-class status is somewhat *lower* than for comparable whites!
- It is *not* due to fertility rates of the totality of *Hispanics* in America. The Hispanic rate has fallen, and the most recent CPS estimates from 1985 show an Hispanic TFR of 2.4 children per woman. That's mildly above replacement levels—surely the Hispanics are not the unindicted co-conspirators behind the Birth Dearth. Moreover, the TFR for Hispanics in the middle class, while higher than for middle-class whites and blacks, is still below the replacement level.
- It is *not* (hardly) the fault of Americans of *Asian descent*; their TFR is estimated at 2.0.
- It is *not* due to fertility of *immigrants*; their TFR estimated from the June 1985 CPS is 2.1.
- It is *not* due to fertility among Americans with *low incomes*, or with *little education*. As noted on the previous page, their fertility is already relatively high.

So, whose fault is it? What accounts for the Birth Dearth?

The age-adjusted estimated CPS data show Americans with less than \$10,000 family income had a 2.2 TFR. Americans earning between \$20-25,000 had a TFR of 1.7. And Americans with incomes over \$35,000 have a TFR of 1.3. That's the West German rate, too—the lowest in the world. Accordingly, let it be noted, *the Birth Dearth is due to low fertility among the middle and upper middle class!*

In America, blacks and Hispanics are much more likely to be poor than the population as a whole, while Asians and non-Hispanic whites are less likely to be poor than the population as a whole. But when the data are adjusted for income it is clear that the problem cannot be laid at the door of race or ethnicity. It is a straight class issue. It is an issue of the nonpoor and the well-educated. It is, in short, a middle-class problem. If we are seeking change, we should know who the prime target audience is: the culprit is the middle class—white, black, Asian and Hispanic.

Although there are economists who believe otherwise, it seems

clear to me, for the reasons laid out here, that the Birth Dearth is likely to hurt the economy. This will happen either because of smaller markets, or because of skewed age distribution, or from an undistinguished work force, or less spirit, or from an aging society, or from a combination of all the above. The extent of the economic harm is hard to gauge. For example, you can play out the coffee-maker game at the German TFR of 1.27 and get one set of answers; play it out at the U.S. 1.8 TFR and get another; try shrinking that to 1.6; or go on up over time to a 2.1 replacement rate, and get still other sets of assumptions.

What will the effect be? Perhaps simply lower economic growth say, from 3 percent per year to 2 percent or from 2 percent to 1 percent or to zero percent—manageable, but less than we deserve. Or perhaps an ongoing Birth Dearth may cause a much greater turbulence that may not even be measurable in standard economic numbers, as will be explored in the next chapter. All that we really know is that we will be living in a very different economic circumstance.

Chapter 7

The Demography Of Geopolitics And Geoculture

So then, this much we know:

- There is a Birth Dearth in our Western world. Birth rates have been well below replacement, for almost a generation in some places; there is no sign yet of reversal; many demographers believe rates are still headed down.
- There is moderate growth in the nations of the Soviet bloc.
- There is and will be rapid population growth in the Third World.
- We know with some certainty that the Birth Dearth will create economic change and turbulence in the Western world. With less surety, it is posited here that such economic change will harm us.

Question: Would the United States be a world power, the “leader of the free world,” if our current population were still 4 million people, as it was in 1790? Or 62 million as it was in 1890? We shall come to an answer: No.

Let us continue our speculation. Consider a new strand in the argument about the Birth Dearth: geopolitics and geoculture. I confess

that, to me, it may well be the most important aspect of the Birth Dearth situation. Much of what follows stems from an essay on this topic¹ I wrote in collaboration with Karl Zinsmeister, my former colleague at the American Enterprise Institute. He should, however, not be held responsible for every word here; moreover, the emphases are my own.

I believe the geopolitical and geocultural situation will cause more long-range harm than the economic situation. I also believe it with more surety because both the data and the logic of the geopolitical case seem to me more powerful than the economic case.

It is serious.

Consider again the situation originally laid out in Chapter Four. Let us say that the modern era began with the end of World War II in 1945. The 42 years since have been a period of Western dominance. I would argue that it has been the most progressive epoch in human history. The Western nations themselves are the most prosperous, most technologically advanced, most productive, and most free collection of peoples ever assembled. For more than four decades in alliance—despite perpetual bickering—they have guaranteed a big-power peace.

The less-developed world has also prospered. Often under Western sponsorship there has been an explosion of independent nation-states, often modeled, at least in principle, on Western concepts. Although tragic poverty still exists, the Third World has benefited from Western medicine, science, and trade.

Even the Communist world has prospered from our advance. They have shared our life-enhancing technology. They have joined in the benefits of reduced big-power violence.

What has caused this remarkable moment?

I believe the fruits of Western culture and ideals, emanating from modern Western nations, have shaped the progressive nature of the world at this time. The specific content of that culture, the precise nature of those ideals, are hard to define. But they clearly involve political freedom. They involve intellectual freedom. They just as surely involve technological innovation. They involve commercial interchange.

The leader in this cause has been the U.S. It is no wonder that during this time American (or English, if you insist) has become the world's dominant language.

¹ *A Speculation on the Geopolitical Implications of Below-Replacement Fertility in the Western Democracies* by Ben Wattenberg, Senior Fellow, and Karl Zinsmeister, Research Associate, American Enterprise Institute, delivered at the American Enterprise Institute Public Policy Seminar, Dec. 1985.

Is all this threatened? I fear so.

Recall from an earlier chart (see page 47) that this international flowering began at a time when the West constituted almost *one-quarter* of the world's people. Today, about *one-seventh* of the world is Western. That may not be a critical difference.

But look at the trend, in twenty-five year bites, and remember that much of it is already pretty well locked into concrete by prior fertility patterns:

**FRACTION OF TOTAL WORLD POPULATION IN
WESTERN COMMUNITY**

1950	22 %
1985	15 %
2010	13 %
2035	8 %
2060	7 %
2085	5 %

What happens when the West is less than 10 percent of the world? Less than 5 percent?

It seems to me unreal to say that nothing happens. Demography is the marathon social science. The rise and fall of nations, and civilizations, is the tale of long-distance runners. Relative positions are perceived to change slowly, but they do change inexorably. Recall that it was less than fifty years ago that the world's leading geopolitical power was little England!

What happens if Western economic markets become less relevant? What happens if Western nations get to the point where it is much more difficult, or even impossible, to project military power if and when necessary?

Under such circumstances, will Western values remain strong and influential around the globe? Or will they wilt, barely noticeably from year to year, victim of an erosion in a political and cultural economy of scale? Will it turn out that, after several centuries of turbulent regnancy, topped by a half-or-so-century of making it work peacefully and progressively, we Westerners and we Americans will slowly begin to fall behind, or drop out, of the long-distance race?

To answer we must first ask an elementary question: Do mere numbers of people equate with power and influence—be it military, cultural, or economic?

Consider first the military situation: Of course it is quite possible that the modern nations and cultures can remain strong for a very

long while, even in the face of the changing demographic balance that is in store for us.

There are some examples in history of small populations that seem to have preserved their military, and cultural, influence among larger neighbors for quite a while. This could have come about through superior organization, technology, or just plain spirit. But it usually also involved some accretion of demographic power, usually by conquest, with ensuing loyalty by the conquered to the conquerors.

Thus, historians tell us that as early as 500 B.C. little Athens and other Greek city states were able to dominate societies much more populous than their own for centuries, in large measure because of their innovative military techniques—the “smart” weapons of their time. But the ancient Greeks also made allies, at least temporarily, of the lands they conquered: Macedon, the Ionian states, Sicily.

Similarly, for centuries it was Rome’s superb roads that played a major role in allowing her to project power all along a 7,000-mile frontier in Europe and North Africa while her army was never any larger than 500,000 and usually closer to a third of that. But, again, the Romans accreted demographic power by conquest of a variety of European peoples who remained loyal for centuries. When the loyalty collapsed, so did the Roman Empire. (Important nations today, like Romans of yore, are still interested in projecting power. One of the important tools for power projection these days is called “aircraft carrier,” as Libya’s Colonel Muammar Gaddafi learned in 1986.)

But to note that there can be some compensations for population inferiority does not mean that population does not matter. For, while it is not at all clear where the tipping point lies today, it usually has been true that no amount of technical superiority could balance a gross lack of population over a long period of time. This appears to be equally true today for nations, for alliances of nations, and for the super-power leaders of alliances of nations.

For example, the super-power situation seems to go this way:

- While a large population does not guarantee great power status . . .
- A nation cannot be a great power unless it has a large population. (The U.S. and the Soviet Union are large population super-powers; China and India have large populations, but are not super-powers.)

Thus: even in an age of missiles and submarines, no nation or group of nations without a substantial population can hope for lasting global influence. Perhaps it should be said “especially” in an age of missiles and submarines. For the advantages of a large labor force, the economies of scale and production, and big military establishments are of vast importance in the military high-tech world.

Larger populations produce a larger gross national product. And brute economic production is one critical aspect of national strength and security. Larger populations can build more easily the infrastructure of industry, transport, communications—all of which support national defense. National power, after all, is in some way related to the number of railroad cars, cyclotrons, roads, hospitals, electric plants, and universities a nation possesses. And then there are scientists. Attaining technological leadership requires collecting a large critical mass of scientists. Only a large consumer market can support much industrial scientific innovation, which often spins off into the military field. Only a large society can tax its people enough to finance major research and development directly for the military. And, of course, a large society makes it easier to provide the manpower for the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force.

Now let it be noted: In none of these areas is a large population *itself* enough to produce success. But in each instance a big nation is likely to have a strategic advantage.

Thus, one of the conventional lessons of the U.S. Civil War was that a larger population with a larger industrial economic base (the Northern states) can contribute a great deal toward overpowering a less-populated area (the largely rural South). This was so even when, as is generally accepted, the South had more highly motivated soldiers and better generals.

Likewise, remember World War II: The U.S. had, at that time, a population about twice as large as the Japanese. Although a surprise attack and advance military preparation gave the Japanese early victories, our logistical advantage ultimately crushed the Japanese, even though we were simultaneously fighting in Europe.

The basic equation holds true even in an atomic age. Only large populations have tax bases broad enough to support the defense systems which are the basis of national power and security. This includes not just research and development as mentioned above, but weapons themselves. A single new heavy aircraft carrier costs \$3 billion to build. It costs many billions more to operate over its lifetime. The costs are so prohibitive that only two nations—the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.—have launched new heavy carriers in the last ten years. These are two of the four most populous nations in the world, each with populations near the quarter of a *billion* mark.

Now consider Britain, a modern nation with a population of 56 million. A few years ago, it did not feel it could afford even to operate the light carriers it already possessed and was poised to retire all but one for economy's sake. Then came the Falkland Islands War, and the British government temporarily changed its mind. Currently, Britain

is straining its defense budget just to build four new ballistic-missile-carrying submarines to replace the four now in service. The new subs will cost a total of over \$12 billion, an average of about \$550 per British taxpayer. (On a per capita basis, the subs would cost the U. S. about a quarter of that amount.)

Perhaps the clearest example of a national security system that could not possibly be built by other than large nations is the Strategic Defense Initiative, a.k.a., “Star Wars,” “Peace Shield,” etc. The total costs may range in the *trillion* dollar area! It could be put together only—if indeed it is feasible and worthwhile—by amortizing it out among a large population.

The national security benefits of a large population accrue most clearly to nations that are already modernized. But even when very poor or disorganized, large nations must be taken seriously in global calculations of power. Consider China and India. Both have per capita incomes of under \$300. But because of the aggregated weight of their economic production, their masses of soldiers, and the near-impossibility of an aggressor ever subduing such large populations, they are accorded national power all out of proportion to their low economic condition.

One of the clearest indications of this is the Soviets’ positioning of so many troops—over 50 Soviet-style divisions—on or near the border of poor, underdeveloped China. Nor is it coincidental that both China and India are also nuclear powers. With all their poverty, they can be nuclear powers only because they are demographic powers.

Of course, this is not to say that modern military technology can’t go a long way toward compensating for an inferior population level. The Israelis—a nation of 4 million surrounded by more than 100 million hostile or potentially hostile neighbors—have amply demonstrated this over recent decades. But several things must be remembered. First, Israel had its own population explosion. It came about in large part because of substantial immigration. The other factor was a high Jewish birth rate in Israel. For Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews alike, that rate today is just about the highest of the modern nations (a TFR of 2.7 in 1984). If Israel’s Jewish population had remained at the 600,000 figure it was at when the state was founded in 1948, instead of the 4 million it is today, it is hard to imagine that Israel could have survived.

And further, if not for the special nature of its relationship with the United States, a nation as small and beleaguered as Israel would find it

difficult and perhaps impossible to afford the sophisticated weapons which are necessary for its continued existence. The United States provides Israel with credits and subsidies of several billion dollars per year—nearly \$1,000 per Israeli citizen—and even so the Israelis must devote 30 percent of their GNP to defense, require military service up to age 49, and operate on a permanently militarized footing with a spirited and well-educated military. The Israeli example, therefore, can hardly be taken as a general model for overcoming the national security disadvantages of a low population base.

Besides, unlike the Israelis versus the Arabs, most nations, in most circumstances, cannot assume they will have a continuing technological and educational advantage over their rivals. And if opposing nations maintain an approximately equal level of scientific, educational, material, and industrial advancement, it is the population level that can make a major difference.

That is why it can be dangerous when traditional competitors suddenly move along different demographic paths. Certainly the French felt that the balance of power was shifted fatally against them when, in the late nineteenth century, their growth of population dramatically slowed, while that of their European competitors continued upwards. France had known a position of considerable population advantage over the British, Germans, and Austro-Hungarians. But by the early 1890s, it was inferior in size to all three. This period of population decline corresponded closely with the fall of French national power and influence. Similarly, the Germans felt themselves considerably weakened by their failure to keep pace with the growth of the Russian population.

If population plays a heavy role in both the military and military-related economic spheres, it should be clear that it is also potent in the international *political realm*, where not only military power but wealth, are the chips in the games that nations play. In a world increasingly interdependent in economic matters, the sheer sizes of domestic markets and labor forces are among the critical variables in international competitiveness. America's wealthy continental market of 240 million people gives it geopolitical influence and leverage that smaller populations do not have. How many Hondas can you sell to Holland? (Conversely, it is not an accident that Holland is not able to produce jumbo aircraft like the Boeing 747.) As in life, so in politics: other governments and/or foreign corporations have to try to be nice to the big fellows on the block.

And there are dimensions of power and influence beyond the standard military, economic, and political ones. Culture counts. Values

count. It is the primary goal of American and Western policies to see to it that our values can survive and, one hopes, spread. If the peoples of the world admire Western values and seek to adopt Western values in their own ways for their own uses—we are stronger and safer. We then have a better chance that our children will live in a user-friendly world that honors the values we honor.

In large measure that is why our government funds the United States Information Agency, Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, the National Endowment for Democracy, student and cultural exchange programs, as well as certain aspects of the C.I.A., the Peace Corps, and the Agency for International Development, just to begin a long list.

They are all parts of “the contest of ideas.” Our allies are involved in many similar ventures, for similar reasons. *And so are our adversaries.* As never before, we *all* know that ideas move people. If Western culture flourishes, we flourish. If it falters, we falter.

Does population—its levels, its direction—influence cultural potency? Of course it does. Population (as we have noted) influences power, economics, and politics, and these factors clearly interlink with culture and values. How? Weak nations tend to emulate strong ones in many ways. Big and wealthy nations produce and export goods and services that directly or indirectly transmit values and culture. Consider only one example for the moment: *Why do American movies and television programs dominate the global market?*

Start an answer by asking a different question: Why don't Dutch movies and television programs dominate the global market? Because there is an economy of scale in some aspects of culture just as there is in military weaponry or in the automobile industry. Nations that are populous and wealthy enough to build aircraft carriers can also amortize the cost of a multitude of high-budget television dramas, sitcoms, and movies. Such products, already profitable or near break-even in a large domestic market, can be sold overseas at relatively low additional cost. And when “Dallas” is on the air every week in Algeria, and then denounced (scene-by-scene) in mosques by fundamentalist mullahs, on balance the West (believe it or not) benefits. Modernism is what the mullahs fear, and it's what we believe in, even if “Dallas” shows a sordid side of it.

When cassettes of American movies circulate in the Soviet Union, the viewers are astonished not so much by the violence or the sex, but by the backgrounds and street scenes showing a level of living unimaginable in Russia.

It is interesting: For years now Americans have been bemoaning

the fact that the Japanese manufactured most of the world's estimated 150 million VCRs, even though the original technology was American. What we forget is that while the Japanese sell the hardware, America sells the lion's share of the software in the world: movies, rock music, television programs. Indeed, these days one can make the case the world is flooded with the manifestations of a full range of American culture, good and bad, ranging from political campaign techniques, to clothes, to fast food, music, movies, television serials. Henry Luce may have been right when he said this would be "The American Century." That doesn't happen to all big, populous, strong countries. But it is hard to imagine that in this day and age it can happen to little, weak countries.

We come to a final thought: Democratic values are contagious. They have spread remarkably in the last two centuries. The democratic ideal needs carriers. Who are the carriers? Powerful nations, in recent times primarily in the U.S., France, England, and a few others. If these national carriers are weakened in the relative scheme of things—by diminished population strength and its outward ripples—is it possible that the spread of democratic values may be slowed? Or stopped? Or reversed?

Chapter 8

What Will Happen Geopolitically, Geoculturally

It should not be necessary to dwell upon the fact that one cannot predict the future. We do not know if there will be a war or wars, booms or busts. We do not know if Eastern European nations will, somehow, break away from the Soviet Union. We do not know if the Third World will suddenly bloom. We do not know if the world will be hit with new plagues, or drastic climatological changes.

All that is clear to me, for the purposes of this book, is that some major demographic change is on its way. So I ask you here to speculate with me about that on the basis of All Other Things Being Equal.

For the sake of argument, then, let us accept the predicates laid out here: that we do indeed face important demographic change, with the West on the short end, with the Soviet bloc gaining population moderately, and with Third World population numbers going up very rapidly. We posit further, as explained in the previous chapter, that in any calculus of power, population matters. And now let us ask: *what might the geopolitical world of the future look like?*

As we look ahead, then, we should consider, or reconsider, three ideas. The first idea is this: *Power is relative*. Consider an example

from the world of sports: Boxer A may be in perfect shape, with a lightning jab and dazzling footwork. But if Boxer B is bigger, better, and tougher, Boxer A is a loser. Power is relative.

The second idea is this: As described earlier, the mechanics of low fertility are such that the West may be headed for a difficult time in terms of domestic economic well-being. Or to understate it, Western economic vigor, may not be as vigorous as it has been or might have been absent the Birth Dearth. After all, the U.S., Europe, and Japan will be aging, with fewer and fewer young, energetic workers and possibly fewer fresh ideas fueling the lower rungs of the social demographic pyramid. Many important economic markets may be disrupted at least temporarily. (What happens to the housing industry of the Western world when the number of housing vacancies due to death approaches the number of new entrants into the housing market?) There will likely be massive problems in the social welfare fields, particularly in regard to pensions and elderly health. There will be a dislocating shift from growth-oriented societies to no-growth societies and then likely in most nations on to a condition of absolute population decline—a sequence which has never been experienced since the advent of the Industrial Revolution.

In short, then, the Western community *may* be facing a situation in which, at the very time its population is declining in relation to its actual and potential competitors, it is also losing some of the economic magic touch at home. At the least, it will likely be enduring a bumpy transition period.

Third: If the West were even standing pat demographically while the rest of the world kept expanding, the case could be advanced that, relying on their technological and organizational superiority, the industrial democracies could protect their position and perhaps even enhance the growth of democratic values elsewhere. They would be seen as mature, stable societies. But a continuing Birth Dearth at home would seem to reduce that possibility. After all, the projections show the totality of the Western community on a path that actually *shrinks*, and at an ever-accelerating pace.

This combination of ideas—that power is relative, that we may face economic turbulence, that we will be shrinking in number—could present the West with a very stiff challenge.

How will it all play out? We continue our speculation.

Consider first the Soviets. Today, the U.S. and the Soviet Union are roughly equal in population. (The Soviets are 15 percent larger.) When one projects the current fertility and immigration rates of the

super-powers into the future, one comes up with this rough and simple result: *The Soviet Union gains in demographic power relative to the U.S.* (See charts, pages 42 and 55.)

The wild card, of course, is what will happen within the Soviet Union as its ethnic composition changes.

The Soviet demographic situation has already been sketched out. They have moderate fertility rates in the European parts of the Soviet Union— at about the replacement level—and, in addition very high fertility rates in Central Asian parts, which are mostly Moslem. The net Soviet result is a TFR of 2.4 and thus, substantial population growth ahead. Even if one assumes a reasonable decline in Soviet Central Asian fertility, the Soviet Union will still go from 275 million people today to a population of around 365 million by the end of today's baby's lifetime at about 2065.

At the same time, the U.S. population—projecting current rates—will crest and then likely decline: U.S. population in 2065 would be about 278 million, *and shrinking*. So, unless something changes, the two superpowers will go from a position of near-parity in population (a 15 percent margin for the Soviets) to one approaching a 30 percent Soviet advantage, *and growing in the Soviets' favor*. But it is worse than that: because of the aging effect of the Birth Dearth, the Soviet working age population will then be close to *50 percent larger* than that of its counterpart in the U.S.! (According to UN projections. The demographic tilt toward the Soviets is even sharper according to U.S. Census Bureau calculations. See page 42.)

However, beneath this growth of demographic power, the Soviets may have some serious problems that might stem from the different fertility rates among the various Soviet nationalities. Just after the Bolshevik Revolution, the large majority of the Soviet population was Russian. Today it is only about 50 percent Russian. By 2065, that fraction will have shrunk further, perhaps down to 40 percent or even somewhat lower.

There are scholarly arguments about how much anti-Russian activity exists in Soviet Asia, but it is a region which harbored, within living memory, anti-Bolshevik *bazmachi* guerrillas. In late 1986, there were major anti-Russian demonstrations in the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan. Many Soviet central Asians share ethnic and religious ties with their neighbors in China, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Iran—not exactly areas known for peaceful and harmonious relations these days. There have been journalistic reports regarding incidents of violent unrest between Soviet Russian and Soviet Tajik troops stationed in Afghanistan. Certainly, some Soviet Asians are quite conscious of

the internal political implications of their higher birth rates. Indeed, some look to the future and privately refer to the phenomenon as “victory in the bedroom.”

In addition, there are other important non-Asian minorities in the Soviet Union that are at least somewhat restive. (The Ukrainians—more than 40 million strong—come most immediately to mind.)

As it plays out, it is likely that even if the Central Asian republics remain docile under Soviet rule, there will be some demographic problems for the Kremlin. For instance, language barriers obviously loosen national cohesion, and today at least two-thirds of the non-Russian population in the U.S.S.R. is not fully fluent in Russian. About 90 percent of the Soviet officer corps is Russian, but the rank-and-file soldiers necessarily reflect the ethnic composition of the population at large, soon to be less than 50 percent Russian. It is likely, then, that an ever-larger fraction of Soviet fighting men will find it difficult to fully understand their officers, many of whom they hate in any event.

Demographer Murray Feshbach makes a rough estimate that by 2020, because of differential birth rates and changing age distribution, only about 35 percent of draft-age youths in the Soviet Union will be Russians! Already, the ethnic-composition factor has forced Soviet military planners to try some important military changes. Nervous about Soviet Moslem troops fighting Moslem Afghans, Soviet generals tried to send only Soviet European troops into the battle zone. That didn't work out and, as this is written, Soviet Moslem troops are now fighting Moslem guerillas in Afghanistan in a potentially explosive Moslem vs. Moslem situation.¹

All this leaves us with a variety of demographically based scenarios regarding the balance of power between the Soviet Union and the U.S. We consider three here:

Scenario One: The Russians, even as they go from majority to only plurality status in the Soviet Union, will continue to rule an uneasy, but relatively more powerful nation—of about 365 million people by the year 2065.

Under this scenario, the Soviets gain more power because of a larger labor force, better economies of scale, larger markets, larger

¹ Another demographic factor worth considering: National life expectancy in the European parts of the U.S.S.R. has actually dropped in recent years! That is an unprecedented occurrence for a modern, developed country. It appears to be a product largely of a plague of alcoholism, aggravated by a deteriorating national health system. The decline of life expectancy has not occurred in similar measure in Moslem areas, further accentuating the split demographics discussed here.

GNP—all the reasons sketched out earlier in the previous chapter. Accordingly, it becomes relatively easier for the Soviets to finance their military power (over a broader demographic base) and more difficult for us to keep up, despite our higher standard of living. Just to stay even with each other, all other things being equal, our per capita defense spending will be going up year by year, while theirs could be going down. Consider this topsy-turvy scenario: A few decades into the next century, it may be Soviet military planners, looking at a U.S. struggling with a massive Social Security shortfall, and saying, “Let’s spend them into the ground.”

Scenario Two: With Russians no longer a majority, Russian interests no longer rule essentially alone in the Soviet Union. Some ethnic power-sharing arrangement comes about. It would continue to be a Soviet Union, as above, that is more demographically powerful relative to the U.S. than it is today. This may not be a happy development for ethnic Russians, but that does not mean it would necessarily be a happy situation for the U.S. There would still be another nuclear superpower around. Would it still be hostile? Would it still be Communist? Probably. Probably. Could it eventually be dominated or influenced by a fundamentalist Ayatollah-like Moslem? Doubtful, but, then again, that’s what the Shah thought.

Scenario Three: A final possibility is the fragmentation of the Soviet Union. Under such a scenario, the Soviet empire splits apart under centrifugal demographic pressures, as internal anti-Russian hostility proliferates. Perhaps Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, and the Ukraine among many others become separate nations. The Eastern European nations then go their own way. This is not a likely outcome, but not impossible as non-Russians become more and more powerful inside the Soviet Union. It is an end result that might well benefit the U.S. Unfortunately, getting from here to there might prove to be extremely dangerous. There has never been extended civil strife in a nation with a large arsenal of nuclear weapons.

The most likely scenarios—numbers 1 and 2 above in that order—clearly work to the disadvantage of the U.S., although probably not irreparably. The Soviets would have a labor force 50 percent larger than the U.S., but we might just roll up our sleeves and say “thou shalt not be the most powerful nation in the world.” And, with our technological advantages, we could probably make that stick, if that’s all there were to it.

However, even such American resolve may not count for much when one considers the striking decreases in population that are likely to come in Western Europe. After all, how valuable is a West German military ally—the lynchpin of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance—if its population drops *by almost half* by the middle of the next century and then by 70-80 percent at the end of that century? Who will be there to defend the flat Germanic plain—the classic conventional invasion route—from the possibility of rumbling Soviet tanks? Moving beyond West Germany: How valuable is the whole of NATO if its population is growing smaller and smaller each year, with ever-diminishing power, a NATO that knows its power is ever-diminishing, and whose adversaries know its power is ever-diminishing?

Consider what the population projections for Western Europe look like from a military point of view:

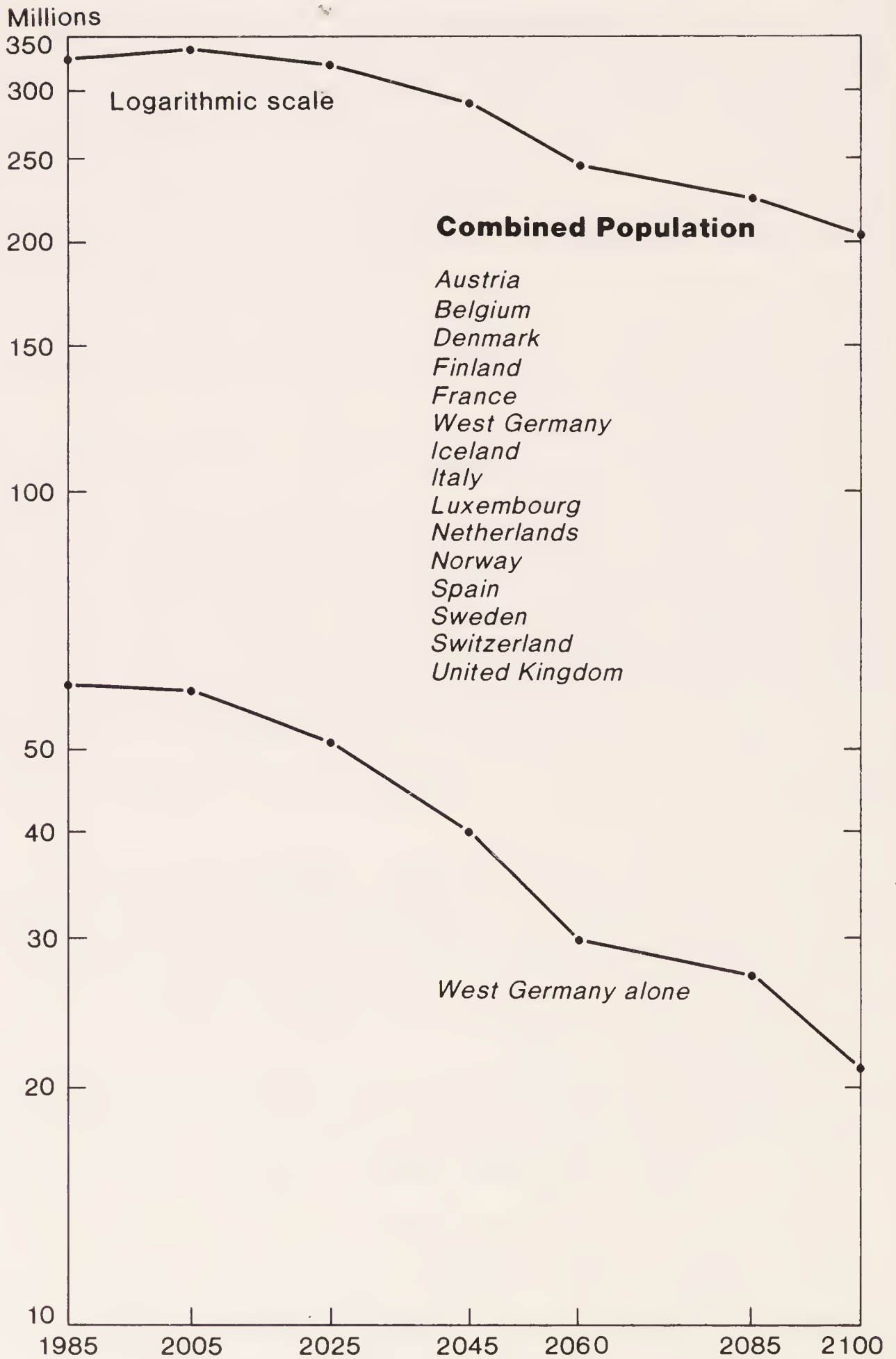
In December of 1985, the American Enterprise Institute held a conference on “Consequences of Population Decline in the West.” Among the commentators in attendance were two leading American defense analysts, Edward Luttwak, Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and author of *On the Meaning of Victory*, and Richard Perle, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy. They each addressed the future of NATO and West Germany. The following are edited excerpts of their comments.

Edward Luttwak: . . . West Germany contributes twelve out of twenty of NATO divisions—the largest bloc—and they are more significant because they are cohesive. And of course they are Germans, so they really can’t help being good soldiers. They are a big chunk of NATO’s ranks.

Given the demographic trends, the German *Bundeswehr* will not be able to maintain twelve divisions in the years ahead. That will have a very specific and immediate impact on the military balance. It will be significant each day it obtains—both in terms of a possible war and in terms of perceived balances. There are no ‘stocks’ when it comes to military power. In the contentions of nations, prestige is a stock. Britain is still living off prestige from the past. Wealth, of course, is a stock. Ammunition is a stock. But in terms of deployed, fielded military power, there are no stocks.

If there are population ups and downs, economic and social problems may eventually work themselves out. But in military terms, troops you once had, or troops you will have, have abso-

Chart 8A
POPULATION OF WESTERN EUROPE 1985-2100



Source: Special World Bank Projection (see Appendix "Notes," page 170).

lutely no meaning on today's battlefield. You can be destroyed as a result. Because there are no population stocks, demographic fluctuations have a significance in the military realm that they do not have elsewhere.

Richard Perle: No matter how effective we are technological-ly, we are going to require a minimum size standing army made up by the United States and its allies. In countries like the Federal Republic of Germany, it is already becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the minimum size military force necessary to provide a reasonable prospect of conventional defense of German and allied territory.

The Germans are searching for solutions. They will extend their conscription period by three months, but that is a short-time palliative. Moreover, further extending that effort over time will, I think, almost certainly produce social strains similar to some of those experienced in this country during the Vietnam period.

So I am pessimistic about the capacity of at least our northern European allies to continue to make the minimum necessary contributions to the standing armies of the West.

In the absence of a sense of danger in the West, it is going to be difficult to maintain a sufficient peacetime military force. One of the consequences of this, ironically, might be a return to the emphasis of the 1950s on nuclear weapons as opposed to conventional defenses.

We have made a great effort in recent years to emphasize conventional defenses. The stockpile of American nuclear weapons has actually declined since 1967. We have roughly a third fewer nuclear weapons today than we had then, and the destructive power or megatonnage of those weapons is barely a quarter of what it was in the 1960s. This has been the result of a deliberate effort to minimize reliance on nuclear weapons. One consequence of current demographic trends may well be a regrettable reversal of this positive effort to deemphasize nuclear weapons.

Fewer troops. Less defense. More reliance on nuclear weapons. Under likely future circumstances, are nuclear weapons credible? Who would believe that Americans would possibly risk using nuclear weapons to defend a Europe already committing slow-motion demographic suicide?

Such a vision does not even need raw conquest to draw a scenario for disaster. A simple series of political caving-in by the weak to the strong would be a more likely occurrence, perhaps finally vindicating

the theory of the Finlandization of Western Europe.

But the Soviet bloc is only the West's most obvious rival, and military force is only one aspect of global power and influence. Perhaps as important as whether the West's military defense will remain adequate is whether—in the broadest sense—the world will remain a place in which our values are respected, and our culture welcomed.

That challenge could eventually come mostly from the Third World, perhaps in an uneasy collaboration with the Communist World.

We continue our speculation. What do we know about the Less Developed Countries (LDCs)? Foremost is that in terms of population, the Third World is already first in the world. The Third World today constitutes about three-quarters of the global population. By the end of the next century, if current trends do not change, the ratio will be about 90 percent. That is, the democratic industrial nations will be about 5 percent of the total population, the Soviet bloc nations will be about 5 percent, and the LDCs about 90 percent.

That 90 percent share made up by the LDCs will amount to about nine billion people! That alone is twice the current population of the world. And these numbers take into account the fact that fertility has already fallen in the Third World and will surely continue to fall!

If one were to take only numbers into account, it is clear that the Third World will inherit the earth. But, as has been discussed here, although numbers count, they are not everything. Technology counts. Wealth counts. And culture counts.

It is in the realm of culture that the Third World, paradoxically, could both weaken itself and harm us if the Birth Dearth situation obtains.

We speak here, of course, of generalities. As indicated earlier, the idea of a "Third World" encompasses a broad range of nations, peoples, beliefs, and levels of development. Still, the United Nations calls the group the "Less Developed Countries"—with their acquiescence and support.

Despite a substantial amount of progress in recent decades, most of the LDCs are often desperately poor by any Western standard. Beyond that, the great majority of the peoples of the Third World are, in fact, living in premodern circumstances. Rural China, where most of that nation's people live, is still a peasant, quasi-totalitarian, water-buffalo economy despite the recent important and heartening reforms. India has made real progress in recent years, but three-quarters of the country is made up of very poor peasants, some of whom still live within a cruel caste system.

At least China and India have moved ahead from a very low base in recent years. But many of the nations of sub-Saharan Africa have stagnated or even retrogressed. Our television sets have shown us the ugly sights of famine. Disease and war stalk the lands.

Now, to be sure, there are aspects of beauty, profundity and deep substance in many of these cultures. Yet, it is also true that much of the Third World is living in a time other than ours. For the most part, it is a world where people do not vote in any serious democratic way (with India and most of the Latin American countries the most notable exceptions). It may be a world of serfdom or animal worship. It may be a world where the full notion of contract has not yet penetrated, making modern business difficult. It is still a world where, in vast realms, most people do not read or write. It can be a world where women are regarded as inferior beings, treated like chattel.

In short, it is a set of cultures alien to ours. It is a set of cultures that does not—or at least has not yet—come close to providing the level of living, or the freedoms, of the Western World.

Now: As demonstrated, the Third World will be growing larger, both absolutely and relatively, in the decades to come. Could the Third World culture become dominant? Could it erode our culture?

We do not know. Many LDCs are advancing, and doing it by adopting Western culture. That is surely a plus for us. But many other nations cling to old ways. That is all right for them if they want it, but not necessarily in our best interests. Other nations seek to synthesize modernism with old cultures. Some important nations have retrogressed. Iran comes most quickly to mind.

In any event, how can one measure such an amorphous, ineffable item as “culture”? How could we ever determine whether “their” culture has penetrated or diluted “our” culture? For that matter, might it not be good for us to get further exposed to some of the salutary values of traditional cultures? In any event, there can be no precise measurement. But one can, by logic, begin to try to sense the nature of the situation.

Thus: We have said that Western culture was dominant forty-odd years ago after the end of World War II, when the West made up about 22 percent of the earth’s population. Today, the West comprises 15 percent—and we are still dominant. Because of demographic echo-effects dealing mostly with people already born, it is just about a sure thing that it will decline to under 9 percent by 2025 and probably down to about 5 percent by 2100 if present trends continue.

When does our ineffable but very real culture begin to dilute or erode in a harmful way? At 10 percent? At 5 percent? At 1 percent?

As it happens, if it happens, what will it mean? It is unlikely that the U.S. will be farmed by the power of water-buffalo. Will we worship cows? We will not. Will we willingly abandon democracy? We will not.

All that seems unreal. But it is equally unreal to suggest that our values will remain untouched as our numbers go down, and down, and down, if our economic and military power go down, and down, and down. It will be difficult for tiny minorities, growing weaker (we Westerners) to set the tone or values of the world. And values, as noted earlier can be contagious, one way or the other.

This view should not be seen as simply Western chauvinism. If Western values do not flourish and prevail, it may well harm the interests of the Less Developed Countries as well as our own, indeed harm them perhaps more than it harms us.

For, first of all, the West offers the LDCs their most important model. The industrial democracies are preeminent at producing what most Third World peoples desire—wealth and freedom. Developing nations, like individuals, need exemplars. Many of them, as noted, seem to be well on the road toward Western-style success themselves, or are trying to meld modernism with traditionalism.

But, recalling the idea that this volume is speculative, we should ask whether a triumphing Western culture will continue at the same pace in non-Western nations, or continue at all, if the vigor of the original and powerful sources of Western modernity begin to fade slowly from the scene? How solid and secure are democratic modernist values if it should come to pass that an ever-increasing proportion of those who espouse those values are recent converts? If they are nations with only short and tenuous histories of popular governance and industrial development, nations that may be only a step away from a coup, perhaps aided by Soviet interests? Will the Western nations develop a siege mentality, a bunker mentality that could lead to God only knows what? Will the world back-slide? Isn't all that more likely to happen than if the Birth Dearth had not come along, and the older and more stable democracies had retained more of their youth and vigor, even though Third World nations will be growing faster under any plausible scenario?

Then there are straight economic reasons why continued Western potency is of value to the LDCs. The West offers the less-developed world at least two great things that should be mentioned here. One is the opportunity to share our technology—our new developments in sanitation, agriculture, communications, transportation, and medicine. When you see a peasant in a poor country walking along a paved

road, listening to a transistor radio, carrying a sack of rice produced by the seeds of the Green Revolution, his children inoculated with life-saving vaccines, drinking relatively pure water—you know that it is the West that has struck that spot.

The other matter is access to our markets, as described earlier. Recall again the late Herman Kahn's stunning paradox: the greatest agent for progress in the poor countries is the wealth of the rich countries. This wealth differential puts great value on the single most important commodity the poor nations have—*low-cost labor*. There is an important market for the products that low-cost labor can produce or assemble—textiles, cars, electronics—only when there are lots of rich people to buy those products.

That wealth differential serves as a re-distributionist tool. When American firms buy Mexican-made computer components, the Mexican worker, perhaps a *campesino* a few years ago, gets *less* of a wage than a U.S. worker would get, but *more* than the Mexican would otherwise get. Accordingly, it helps bring about progress south of our border. But if the First World market shrinks while the Third World labor force explodes, the Third World will not do nearly as well as it would have had the First World market stayed larger.

Only the Second—communist—World might conceivably stand to gain from the erosion of Western values, and even there it is only the *governments*, not the people, that might applaud. The existence of strong political democracies serves as a source of hope for repressed individual Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Ukrainians, and Balts, to only begin a long list. It can be assumed that in a world with diminished Western power and values, the likelihood of freedom for them, or even the hope of freedom, may well diminish.

In short, the Birth Dearth hurts us in every conceivable geopolitical way: militarily, economically, politically, and culturally.

There is yet one other way it can hurt: personally.

Chapter 9

What It Means Personally

In the summer of 1986 ABC-TV presented a three-hour network special entitled “After The Sexual Revolution.” It dealt with women in the job market, child care, marriage, divorce, and fewer children. It had at least a mild feminist bias. It seemed to have been filmed almost entirely in that typical American metropolis, Greater New York City. It mis-used or mis-cited some statistics.

But its redeeming feature—worth the three-hour wait—were some personal and candid interviews. Two were particularly poignant.

The first was with an attractive 37-year-old woman. She is the head of her own business—ironically, a dating service. She talks about her business career; she talks about her earlier romances and relationships. Then she talks about wanting to get married.

Here is what she said—and did:

Ms. Laura Slutsky (President, People Finders): It’s the loneliness and the fear that it won’t happen, and I have to live alone and make my life work. Another difficult challenge. But I’ll do it. I’ll be classy about it, at times.

Reporter: Face that fear a minute for me, though.

Ms. Slutsky: Wait a second, this is stuff. The fear of being alone is not—I don't like it. I'll do it, though. Why am I crying? I don't want to cry. These are hard questions. The fear of being alone is hard for me. All my eye makeup that I put on is going to come off. But I'll do it, I'll do it. I don't want to do it. I don't want to do it.

The second interviewee was, again, an attractive woman, a psychologist named Judy Kramer. Here is what she said:

Judy Kramer: It took me a very long time to make this decision, but I always knew I wanted to have a child somehow, sometime. The way I want this baby is every blade of grass in every place that there's grass in every field and in every backyard and in every meadow across America. Just about how much I want this baby. Pretty much.

Richard Threlkeld (ABC News) [voice-over]: Judy Kramer is thirty-six. She is unmarried. She is five months pregnant by artificial insemination.

Ms. Kramer: In my whole life there have been about 20 minutes when I thought I didn't want to have a baby, and all the rest of the time I knew that I wanted to have a child.

Threlkeld: [voice-over]. After age forty, having a child becomes biologically impossible for about 63 percent of American women. (*Author's note: there is an argument about such numbers. The figure used by Threlkeld is probably much inflated. This is explored briefly on Page 106.*)

Ms. Kramer: And if I waited until I was forty and still didn't have a husband and father and then tried to get pregnant and couldn't get pregnant, I can't even imagine, words could not describe how I would have felt then. I would have been unutterably sad, and then I would have had this longing for a baby that I couldn't have biologically.

Threlkeld: [voice-over]. To beat the biological clock, more women are considering a whole set of difficult and unorthodox decisions, like Judy Kramer's choice to become artificially inseminated and raise a child on her own.

Ms. Kramer: I know this idea is outrageous to a fair number of people, because in many ways I'm very traditional, and this isn't really the kind of thing I would think I would do. It's hard and it's different and it's unusual, and I thought and agonized and ob-

sessed and mulled over all of that. I occasionally worry that this child will get to a certain age, ten, twelve, fourteen and will turn to me and say, “I can’t believe you did this horrible thing. I hate you for doing it. You’ve made this decision. I don’t have a father. You don’t even know who my father is. You know, what were you thinking of when you did this?”

Earlier efforts in this book tended to relate to cosmic issues. In the previous two chapters, we talked of nations, alliances, and the geoculture—and what may happen in those realms. Some of the most grievous consequences of those situations may be a long time coming. In the geopolitical case, we are talking about the possibility of a fairly long, gradual, although potent, situation (the decline of the West). Plain, ordinary people, alive today, may be affected harmfully, but (as mentioned) they may be affected in ways they will never even sense.

The economic effects of the Birth Dearth, as laid out earlier, have a shorter time fuse. As mentioned in Chapter 5, free economies can adjust to disruption. There will likely be economic turbulence and dislocation. There will be losers and gainers. But, on balance, people in the Western world may well be able to make out alright economically over the long run, although probably less well than they might have, because the bumps in the road may be much sharper than they would have been otherwise. Those bumps may cause some personal economic tragedy, but most of them would seem to be headed our way in the early 1990s, at the soonest. Intuitively, my sense is that it will be those businesses that do not look ahead that will probably take the heaviest beating.

We turn now to a very different aspect of the Birth Dearth. It concerns a mentality right now affecting tens of millions of people. They are young, old, and middle-aged—and babies, too. As indicated in the excerpts from the ABC program at the head of this chapter, people are already being affected in a most personal way by the causes and effects of the Birth Dearth. There is little doubt that this will continue and intensify as the years roll on. For many, as they themselves testify, it will mean personal tragedy.

What happens in a Birth Dearth? People have fewer children. One of the reasons for this is that fewer people get married.

Let us examine each of these ideas in turn—less marriage, fewer children.

There is less marriage today than in earlier years. As we shall see, in some part this may be the result of *delayed* marriage (still to come) rather than wholly due to a decline in rates of people who will actually marry.

For certain subgroups in the population—college-educated white women to be specific—a case has been made that there will be sharply lower rates of marriage in the years to come. In 1986, an obscure, unpublished, academic study by Harvard and Yale researchers Neil Bennett, Patricia Craig, and David Bloom struck a massive public chord of panic.¹ That great sociological journal, *People* magazine, featured it on its cover. So did *Newsweek*. Phil Donahue did a program about it.

The study dealt with women born during the Baby Boom years, the oldest of whom are now about 40. It maintained that college-educated white women born during those years and who had not married by age thirty, had only a *one in five chance of ever* marrying. (That is, 80 percent of those unmarried would *not* marry!)

For such women unmarried by age thirty-five, the odds went to *one in twenty* (95 percent would *not* marry)!

And as for unmarried forty-year-olds? A by-now famous sentence from the *Newsweek* (June 2, 1986) cover story reported that their chances of marriage “were about that of being killed by a terrorist.” (A measly 1 percent chance of marrying!)

Now, as it turns out, the reaction to this arcane (and probably flawed) study was more interesting than the study itself. Fright, alarm and fear of disaster among young women! And their parents! Condemnation of the women’s movement for leading women into this trap! Soon the study became known among many women simply as “*that study*.” The gist of the story can be gleaned from these quotes from the *Newsweek* story:

Pediatrician Catherine Casey of Arlington, Virginia, age 38, said: “I never doubted that I would marry, but I wasn’t ready at twenty-two. I was more interested in going to school. . . . Now my time clock is striking midnight. That’s a tough realization—that you may have waited too long.”

And fashion consultant Susan Cohen of New York said: “I had a long run of being twenty-two—I think I was twenty-two until I was thirty-eight. . . . It does get lonely after a while. Now I would like to meet somebody.”

The single status of these women seemed dictated not primarily by choice—they wanted to marry—but more by our current circumstance. They became involved in interesting careers and were—according to the Bennett-Craig-Bloom study—unlikely ever to marry.

Will all this prove to be correct? Will such a high rate of college-educated women end up as spinsters in an era devoid of spinning

¹ “Black and White Marriage Patterns: Why so Different?” By Neil G. Bennett, David E. Bloom and Patricia H. Craig. Yale University, March 1986

wheels? Obviously, it would clearly serve my interests in making the Birth Dearth case to endorse the B-C-B study. Less marriage equals less likelihood of children, tending to verify my cause for alarm. But, while there is a root of truth in the study's findings, I believe that those findings are much overstated. Still, as shall be seen, their work is by no means irrelevant to the Birth Dearth case.

The problem with the Bennett-Craig-Bloom projections is that they are modeled on the idea that future rates will resemble a variety of past rates. But our present is different from our past. We have gone through a major social discombobulation. Women are going to college and are going to work at rates never seen before. Some (not many) feel they don't want to marry. Men are facing women with different attitudes and different status. It is said that men are intimidated by marrying such educated and upwardly mobile career women. It is said that more permissive sexual attitudes have made it easier for men not to marry, or to marry much later in life.

So, why should we think future marriage patterns will resemble past ones? In the old days, it's true that a large proportion of women were married by age thirty or thirty-five. Under the social standards of the time, those few who weren't married weren't ever likely to. But to compare the data of those few unmarried women of yesterday with today's many unmarried women in a new social circumstance is probably invalid.

Marriage delayed will not necessarily prove to be marriage denied. All we know so far is that many women of the Baby Boom cohort have not married—yet. We don't know the future—yet.

My skepticism of the B-C-B projections is based more on humanity than on statistics. At a certain point in time, the Baby Boom now-young-adult generation will have to make a choice. At that time, for both women and men, it will *not* be a choice about getting-married-and-having-a-family *now or later*. It will become a choice that will more properly be phrased as getting-married-and-having-a-family *now—or never*.

Saying “never” means, for most intents and purposes, that a young person must say, “I have decided never to have a husband (or wife), a child, a family, grandchildren, or a posterity.”

That is a cosmic choice. There are many millions of years of genetics working against it, there are bedrock human emotions working against it, factors even more potent than the current lure of a fast-track career. There are many studies showing that people who marry are generally happier and healthier than those who don't.

So I say that while marriage rates will decline, the decline won't be

nearly as dramatic as the impression left by the Bennett-Craig-Bloom study. Most of the young women and men in question will decide to marry, although at later ages than we've normally seen. Eligible mates, now sensed to be in short supply, will materialize. Just as most women don't want to be spinsters, most men don't want to remain bachelors, forever playing the field. (If, indeed, men are now intimidated by "up-scale" women, maybe they will soon realize that in a two-earner world, a high-earner woman can be quite a catch.)

A few months after the unpublished B-C-B study appeared, another unpublished study surfaced. This one was by Jeanne Moorman, a U.S. Census Bureau demographer. Ms. Moorman's report used a statistical model based on a different set of prior rates to project future marriage rates for white college-educated women. The Moorman study had the effect of factoring in the idea that marriage was only being *delayed*, not abandoned. And her projections were, accordingly, sharply different. For example, where B-C-B said only 5 percent of never-married women aged 35 would ever marry; Moorman said 40 percent would marry.

My own surmise is that the truth will turn out to be somewhere between the two studies, but much closer to Moorman. There will be somewhat less marriage for all women (not just college-educated whites), but probably not as dramatically low as the B-C-B data suggested. (Some rates are discussed in Chapter 11.) As the news of Moorman's findings spread, there was a collective sigh of relief among unmarried women, although this report never did receive the attention accorded the B-C-B study.²

The Battle of the Studies, it seems to me, was highly instructive on at least two counts. First, the initial public panic. It revealed, more clearly than any set of data could, that most women, even college-educated career women, want very much to get married, often desperately so. When they are not married, and believe they won't ever be, they are often miserable.

² Unfortunately, sociological research can take on a life of its own, often in harmful ways. A December 29, 1986 article in the *New York Times* entitled "When Studies Mislead" by Andre Brooks began this way:

A thirty-six year-old patient recently told Dr. JoAnn Magdoff, a Manhattan psychotherapist, that she had decided to marry a man she did not love after reading a study that suggested a college-educated woman who was single at age thirty had only a 20 percent chance of marrying.

Another patient, a forty-five year old man, admitted bullying his wife into doing his bidding, using the same study to convince the wife that she would have no chance of finding anyone else if he became dissatisfied and left.

Second was this: Although the two studies differed in results, they had a powerful lowest common denominator. B-C-B says a lot of women will not get married. Moorman says that more women than B-C-B indicates will get married, only much later in life. Their projections, then, agree at least on this: Marriage is being, and will be, delayed. (If you buy the B-C-B idea of less marriage, it obviously subsumes the idea of later marriage.)

Agreed: later marriage. With that, we apparently get much personal tension, if not unhappiness. But what else does later marriage mean? Something quite relevant to the thesis of this book.

A woman marrying after thirty, certainly after thirty-five, is less likely to have a large family and more likely to have either one child or, perhaps, none. (Princeton demographer Charles Westhoff estimates that *about half* [!] of young American women today will end their fertile years with either no children or only one child. If that indeed proves to be the case in the future, such a combined rate of “ones” and “nones” would be the lowest in American history.) This situation of later marriage, of course, exacerbates the Birth Dearth. In my judgement it can also hurt individuals enormously.

There is an old demographic maxim: “fertility delayed is fertility denied.” And later marriage delays fertility. Why? For several reasons, some of which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 10.

The obvious one is that most women (Judy Kramer notwithstanding) don’t have babies until and unless they have husbands. Moreover, it is more difficult for older women to conceive. One study, of French origin, indicates that 28 percent of women are infertile after age thirty-five, and after age forty, fully 63 percent cannot conceive. These data have been sharply challenged as the French study was based on women who had been involved in attempts at artificial insemination. Other studies, probably more accurate, show much lower rates of infertility as a woman ages. Data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) show that the over-forty infertility rate is 27 percent based on recent NCHS studies, quite a difference from the French study’s reported rate of 63 percent. But all studies agree that fertility *does* decline as age rises.

The NCHS data shows 2 percent of married couples wanting children, first or more, were infertile in their teens, about 10 percent infertile in their twenties, and 14 percent at ages 30-34. The big jump in the demographic distribution of infertility in women occurs among couples at ages 35-39 when the rate rises to 25 percent. At ages 40-44 it is 27 percent. (Another view of these sorts of rates is to be found on page 125. The moral of the story is this: if you want to have a child,

your chances of success are much greater if you try before age 35.)

And, of course, there is “the biological clock” itself. The median age of menopause is in the late forties. The later a woman marries, the narrower is her window of fertility. The likelihood of a woman marrying in her late thirties or early forties and having two children is not large; of having three children, very rare. Other factors narrowing the likelihood of a two-or-more child family for women who marry late include the higher probability of their being deeply involved in a career. Further, there seems to be a somewhat greater possibility of having contracted a fertility-impairing disease, although the large majority of women who have contracted such diseases remain fertile, and much remarkable medical progress has been achieved in fertility enhancement for those who have fertility problems, as will be discussed later.

In recent years the fertility rates of American women who had just completed their fertile years showed that only 9.5 percent never bore children.

Today, experts are trying to gauge what will happen when the current cohort of young women complete their fertile years. The very lowest estimates are that about 15 percent of American women will bear no children, the highest estimates are about 25 percent. Consensus among demographers seems to be about 22 percent.

Now, it is not my intention of here to tell people how to live their lives or how to arrange their reproductive activities. My views are conventional/libertarian on this issue. I believe that on most personal issues, people should be able to do what they want to do, provided they do not harm others (even if I don't like their choices).

That view extends to fertility, even if (as I have maintained here) the larger, impersonal consequences may be harmful in the economic and geopolitical realm. I am against the Chinese forcing people to have *fewer* children. I am equally against the U.S., or any nation, forcing young people, or even leaning hard on young people, to have a child, or to have *more* children. (Incentives are another matter, discussed in Chapter 11.)

That does not mean that I do not have an opinion. I do. I believe that most people—men and women—who freely decide not to have children will probably live to regret it. But that, at least, is their choice. (Remember, current best-guess estimates indicate that we are talking about somewhere between one-fifth and one-quarter of young American women.)

More importantly, I believe that those who *unwittingly* arrange their personal lives in ways that often reduce their chances to have a child, or children, will live to be very sorry if it turns out that they indeed do not have children. In such cases, it wasn't a matter of choice, it just happened that way.

Until very recently the demographic term for a childless woman was "barren." I would maintain that for most people—men as well as women—a life without offspring is likely to be, at least, less happy and fulfilling than a life with children. At worst, such lives can be barren indeed.

There is a body of data that shows that the great majority of women believe this. One example: a 1985 Virginia Slims/Harris survey shows that 90 percent of American women want to get married and have offspring. Other survey research clearly shows that people with children are happier than those without children.

Erica Jong, quite a feminist, wrote this in the April 1986 issue of *Vanity Fair*:

. . . Having stumped across this country on book tours for the past decade or so, I can bear witness to the fact that the women of America are ready for liberation, ready for sexual freedom, ready to embrace their own strengths and believe in their own powers—but they are most emphatically not ready for a movement which puts down the most meaningful relations in their lives: their relationship with their children.

This is not a book about philosophy or the meaning of existence. But there are ancient verities that ring true, at least to me. When you are old, the people who will care about you most dearly, and the people whom you will care about most dearly—by far—will be your children, your grandchildren, and in these days of increased life expectancy, sometimes your great-grandchildren, if you are lucky. This is generally true, even if within a family there is tension, alienation, long-standing grudges, and so on.

Growing old without offspring is, quite simply, quite sad for most people. If the inherent loneliness of such a situation is not apparent to the reader, there are plenty of sociological studies about the elderly to prove it.

And there is more to it than just that. I go to the obvious again. Our children are the only speck of immortality we have. A person may be justly proud of his or her work—what has been built, written, sold, composed, accumulated, or legislated. But with the shifting sands of time, these achievements inevitably wither. Read "Ozymandias"

again. All that is really left of us is our progeny. That is the way the world works.

That is my view. To those who think about it, and consciously reject it, I have no rebuttal. Their case may well be a case that can be justified. If a woman says, “I’m on the career speedway and don’t want children,” so be it. If a couple says, “It costs too much to have a child; we want to take vacations now instead,” so be it. If a man or a woman says, “My life is meaningful because the work I do helps others,” so be it.

But increasingly the evidence is coming in that many of the choices of childlessness are, for many, not really a matter of choice, but of circumstance that has run out of control. Recall the quotations at the beginning of this chapter. That crying woman didn’t *intend* to be childless. It just the way things work out so often these days.

The second and third generation of feminist literature makes the case regularly: “That’s not what we meant when we said we wanted freedom, equality, and independence—maybe our mothers were really smarter than we were.”

Perhaps they were. Cheryl Russell, editor of *American Demographics*, makes a statistical case:

If you are looking for a good, long-term investment, then have one child, or even two. You might have heard that this investment is highly speculative. You probably believe that the returns are poor. You figure that in a modern society like ours, children are a luxury. You and millions of other Americans have been misled. You’ve been told that you can’t count on your children to help you out in old age. But you can. Ninety-four percent of the children of elderly parents say they would be willing to help their parents financially if they needed it, according to a 1981 study. Children still provide most of the social services for the nation’s frail elderly. Forty percent of people aged 85 and older need help doing their daily activities—such as shopping, household chores, handling money, and cooking. Families provide 80 to 90 percent of these services, according to the Population Reference Bureau. Your children won’t put you into a nursing home—they will keep you out of one. Nearly half of the institutionalized elderly are childless, compared to only one-fifth of all elderly. The childless are likely to be in institutions because they have no one to help them out. Sixty-four percent of elderly parents who live alone see their children at least once a week, reports the National Center for Health Statistics. Seventy-seven percent talk with a child on

the telephone at least weekly. Seventy-two percent live within minutes of at least one child. This family contact keeps the elderly healthy and happy. Millions of young people today are toying with the idea of remaining childless. It costs \$100,000 to raise a child, they reason. Why not spend the money on stereos, vacations, new cars, and exotic foods. The childless are accused of being selfish, but it's those who opt for parenthood who are selfishly—and wisely—guarding their old age.

—American Demographics (Nov. 1986)

The one-child family is, of course, very different. Yet, it is the “ones,” together with the “nones,” that yield the Birth Dearth with all its attendant problems.

Is there something wrong with the one-child family? Surely not, when that is the choice of consenting adults.

There does not seem to be any good case that “only” children are “spoiled” children. There are “only” children who have grown up to be wise, famous, creative, and prosperous: Leonardo Da Vinci, Hans Christian Anderson, Alexander Pope, Eleanor *and* Franklin Roosevelt, Willie Brandt and Lauren Bacall.

Still, there are some things to consider: Obviously, an only child has no brothers or sisters (unless there are step- or half-brothers or sisters). Later on in life, an only child will not have nieces or nephews. No disaster, perhaps.

But more broadly, consider a society where the one-child family is the norm over a period of time. The only child in an ongoing only-child society will not have cousins. Or consider this: In a one-child society, it works out that four grandparents will share one grandchild. (Interestingly, in a two-child family model, four grandparents share four grandchildren, not one.)

On the subject of grandparents, we ought to consider their situation in a Birth Dearth era. A new drama is being played out all over the Western World. Its generic title is “The Case of the Sorrowful, Waiting, Grandfathers and Grandmothers.”

After all, what happens when young Ms. A. and young Mr. B. decide to get married later in life, or decide to delay childbearing, or, in many instances, decide not to have children? If they don't have children, and if the potential grandparents then don't have grandchildren, the potential grandparents end up deprived of one of life's great joys for people of middle age and above. Indeed, many would maintain that if a couple leaves no grandchildren, ever, much of the meaning of their life has been stolen from them.

Of course, the potential grandparents may have had children other

than young Ms. A. and young Mr. B., and may have grandchildren from their other children. But even in such cases, for many the situation is getting sticky these days. If the potential grandparents' fruitful child is a parent who becomes a parent late in life, the grandparents may not be grandparents until they are well into their sixties. That delays the joy and meaningfulness of grandchildren, typically leaving the grandparents only relatively few years of knowing their grandchild. Similarly, the grandchildren may well have only a few years from which they can remember their grandparents and gain a sense of inter-generational solidarity and perpetuity.

This situation is already with us more frequently than in earlier times, but it will likely grow much more severe in years to come. Thus, consider a couple today bearing only one child, at, say, age 37. Some decades later that child marries and bears only one child—also at age 37. The grandparents are 74; they will (if they are lucky) see their only grandchild enter elementary school *when they're eighty*. They probably should not count on witnessing a confirmation, or bar mitzvah, or even seeing the child graduate from elementary school.

Or suppose a young couple today has just one child. And that child turns out to be one of the growing number of people who will have no children (believed to be about one-fifth to one-quarter of young women today). Then the original couple has no grandchildren and no biological posterity.

Or, consider this facet in the life of an only child: when the child is an adult he or she will have the total responsibility of caring for his or her elderly parents.

A few years ago I had a chat with Simone Veil, the former French Minister of Health and Family Affairs and President of the European Parliament. She now champions pronatalist policies in France. She is the mother of three grown children. At the time of our conversation none of her children had borne more than one child.

Madame Veil was exasperated. "They tell me they won't have any more children for the good of the one child they have! Everything is so expensive, they tell me—private school, dancing school, summer camp . . . I tell them if you really want to be good to your children, get him, or get her, the best gift in the world, the most expensive, the most time-consuming, the most long-lasting—get them a brother or a sister! But they do not listen . . ."

I make no case against the one-child family. I ask only this: If that's what young people want, then make it a conscious choice. Too often, however, the one-child family is almost cavalierly imposed by situations that might have been changed by conscious action. Suppose that crying thirty-seven-year old woman on the ABC-TV program

does get married. It will be difficult for her to have the time to have two children—even if in her dreams that’s what she, and her husband, wanted all along. Delayed marriage, as we have seen, is quite likely to yield one-child or zero-child families.

I am not here to preach. Decisions regarding family size are perhaps the most intensely personal and most important ones we humans face. The considerations involved concern love, marriage, economics, values, timing, and career, to only begin a long list. Not everyone—by far not everyone—has all the options, or most of the options, or sometimes any of the options, regarding childbearing.

But let me address here only one issue that comes up again and again as one talks to young people these days, in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world : “It costs so much to have children,” they say.

It does. Career time for women is interrupted. Raising a baby is hard work; some parents don’t like being parents, some are ambivalent about it. Larger housing quarters cost a great deal. College costs are high even in public colleges, and astronomical in private colleges. For urban elites, the costs of private schools at precollege levels can be almost as high. An Urban Institute estimate reveals that it will cost about \$135,000 to raise a child from crib through college.

There is only one solid rebuttal to that view. It is this: There are costs, even higher for most people, in not having children.

I hesitate to bring it up. It is an extremely sensitive topic. It is an issue about which I believe I am on the side of the angels. Yet, if you are trying to deal with the problems associated with the Birth Dearth, the problem of race and ethnicity ought to be raised, no matter how sensitive the topic is.

As noted on page 77, because they are more likely to be poor, blacks and Hispanics have substantially higher fertility rates than whites. Further, recent immigrants have higher fertility rates than other Americans, at least for their first generation in residence.

Moreover, the great majority of immigrants these days come from Hispanic nations, Asian nations, Moslem nations, and black African nations. Less than 20 percent of legal immigrants to America today are of white European “stock,” to use Census parlance. The rate is even less than that if illegal immigrants are counted in. There is little reason to think this will change: West European birth rates are so low these days, there’s hardly anyone left to leave.

Today, 80 percent of the current total U.S. population is of white European stock. At roughly current rates of fertility and immigration

(similar to those used in this volume), demographers Leon Bouvier and Robert Gardiner³ have projected that by the year 2080—one century from now—the white European share of the U.S. population will be down from 80 percent to 60 percent, and still shrinking. (And, say Bouvier and Gardner, if immigration rates should rise to one million per year—doubtful in my judgment—that share of white European stock would be *under* 50 percent.)⁴

³ *Immigration to the U.S.: The Unfinished Story*, by Leon Bouvier and Robert Gardiner. (Population Reference Bureau, 1986.) Bouvier is the former Vice President of the Population Reference Bureau in Washington. Gardiner is Research Associate at the East-West Population Institute in Honolulu.

⁴ I do not consider the religious mix here for several reasons. First is that reliable data is not available; the Census Bureau does not ask for a respondent's religious preference when the base-line decennial census is taken. Second, it's difficult to figure out the break-points of religious discrimination. Much early American nativism involved Protestant distaste for Catholics—that is, that the idea that “papists” would take over the country. More recently, we have heard talk about “a Christian nation,” which is regarded by some as an issue of Christians versus Jews. Today, we hear that America is a nation in the “Judeo-Christian tradition.” One could assume that the phrase implies that American citizens who are Moslems, Buddhists, or Shintoists might not be in the American tradition—thus a split of Christians and Jews versus all others (although that is not my sense of the meaning of the phrase or the reality of it). Even that is muddled: Moslems worship the same God as Judeo-Christians. So: there will be no general quantifying-by-religion here.

Deserving of mention, however, is a somewhat separate and controversial point that is bubbling around these days and relates to the Birth Dearth argument: the issue of Jewish demographics.

For the last century or so, demographers believe that Jewish fertility rates have been lower than that of the U.S. population as a whole, while at the same time moving up and down in concert with the nation's Total Fertility Rates. Thus, when the 1930s Depression pushed U.S. rates down, it is estimated that Jewish fertility went down, too, staying below total U.S. rates. When the Baby Boom was upon us, Jewish fertility rates went up, but not up as high as was the case for the rest of the country. All this makes sense: Jews in America are disproportionately likely to be college-educated, well-to-do, living in urban areas. These factors generally correlate with lower fertility.

Comes now the Birth Dearth. If the U.S. Total Fertility Rate has fallen to 1.8, where then is the Jewish TFR now? No one knows for sure, but history, logic, and some estimates would put it down in the 1.4 to 1.6 range. If such low rates stayed that low, Jewish population would shrink sharply over an extended period of time. A reasonable estimate would take the total American Jewish population from around 6 million today to about 3 to 4 million—by the end of the next century. That's a drop of somewhere between a third to a half! Admittedly, the numbers, calculations, and estimates are very complex; they involve not only fertility rates, but adjustments for inter-marriage, immigration, and religious conversion to and/or from Judaism. Still anything close to a 33-50 percent drop is enormous. That idea has concerned many leaders of the American Jewish community who look to the future and see Jews making up an ever-smaller, less influential, slice of the totality of American life.

A recent book about Jews in America, “A Certain People,” by Charles Silberman (Summit, 1985) attempts to dismiss the idea that the number of Jews will dwindle and constitute a substantially smaller share of the American mix. Drawing to some large degree on the

What happens in an America, with Birth Dearth conditions, under either scenario—current immigration rates, or higher ones? Unpleasant as the thought may be, I think it will yield some unnecessary social turbulence. And it won't be the fault of the immigrants, Hispanics, blacks, or Asian or Moslem Americans.

I do not believe that America is essentially a racist or bigoted country, anti-black, anti-Asian, anti-Hispanic or anti-Islamic. Indeed, enormous strides toward amity among the races, religions, and ethnic groups have been achieved in recent decades. But what's coming down the road at us demographically is asking for some extra trouble, and it is self-inflicted.

The influx of Cuban immigrants to the Miami area has caused ill will between Hispanics and blacks and between non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics. Vietnamese commercial fishermen have clashed with commercial fishermen from Texas. There is anti-Arab sentiment in Detroit. Los Angeles and New York are routinely described as "Third World" cities. It is not a phrase used in a complimentary sense.

It is true that America has absorbed tens of millions of immigrants before. There was turmoil then, even though the existing population and the new immigrants could each be described as "white European," despite sometimes major cultural and religious differences. This time the cultural linguistic and racial differences seem even greater to many Americans. To that must be added the long range question, troubling to many, of whether America will remain a nation that can continue to be characterized as one that is predominately of white

work of demographers Steven Cohen and Calvin Goldscheider, author Silberman maintains that Jewish rates are low now only due to the timing of fertility—that is, that Jewish women are marrying later and will have children later. Accordingly, Silberman says, the number of Jews in America, is not likely to diminish much, if at all.

Demographer Sidney Goldstein of Brown University, an expert on Jewish fertility patterns, has deep doubts about this scenario. He writes: "All agree that in the United States, Jews have averaged lower fertility than non-Jews for a century or more. . . in the absence of a sharp reversal in trends, some decline still seems likely to me. . ." Goldstein points out that the Cohen-Goldschneider projections fly in the face of Census projections for the population as a whole, and he sees no particular reason why Jewish rates should part company from their historic relationship to total U.S. rates at this time.

I agree with Goldstein. The argument that lower American total fertility rates are merely illusory or transitory, or an artifact of a statistical quirk of timing, has been dealt with in this volume. The Birth Dearth is real. It's going on all over the world. America has had below-replacement fertility rates since 1972. There is no reason to believe that Jews are exempt from these low fertility patterns. The alleged "timing" delay, as described earlier in this book, is less than cataclysmic even if it should turn out to be true. It would likely only change the TFR minimally. (See page 27.)

European extraction. That question, that doubt, yields resentment among some Americans. Some are nativists, racists or jingoists. But others are not, only wondering whither we are headed and fearing that where we are going is not where we want to go. Gov. Richard Lamm of Colorado and Gary Imhoff have written a book whose title and sub-title express their fears. It is called “The Immigration Time Bomb” and subtitled “The Fragmenting of America.”

The potential resentment yielded by such changes in the demographic mix can yield ugly turbulence. To those who feel that America must absolutely remain a nation with a clear majority of citizens with a white European heritage (I don't), it should be pointed out to them that the problem they see is essentially one brought upon by their own actions. The root cause of the changing demographic balance in America will not be caused by too many immigrants. Our current legal immigration rate is not high by historical standards. We've seen earlier that illegal immigration has been much lower than advertised. What's new in the equation is the very low fertility of the middle class Americans who are already here.

My sense of the matter is that the new immigrants—like the old—can be folded into the American mix in a way that will be beneficial in the long run. (In fact, I think we ought to raise legal immigration rates, as will be seen on pages 164-5.) In the short term, however, the new immigration may well cause extra turbulence because the immigrants are coming to a country with very low Birth Dearth fertility rates among a large segment of the native population. That's what's causing the changed demographic mix in America, and the turbulence that may well come with it. That turbulence would be much less likely to show up if the real culprits, the non-reproducing middle class, started reproducing themselves.

So: We will likely have economic problems, geopolitical problems, personal problems *and* racial and ethnic turbulence. Wonderful.

Chapter 10

Causes

Unavoidably, I have alluded many times in this book to a variety of causes that have led to the Birth Dearth.

It is now appropriate to look frontally at those universal factors that, over the long and short term, and around the Western world, seem to have played a role in the drop in fertility. This may be of help in determining whether the decline will continue. More important, it may be easier (in the next chapters) to prescribe possible treatments for a condition whose causes are known, or partly known. The orthopedic surgeon can work much more effectively when he has an X-ray picture of the broken bone in front of him.

As mentioned briefly in an earlier chapter, I found it quite interesting traveling to foreign lands to do research for this book. In each country afflicted with the Birth Dearth, someone—usually quite bright and educated—will inform you of one or two specific and unique reasons why the fertility rate has fallen so far, so fast *in that particular country*.

In Germany, you will be told that Germans don't really like children—there is even a word for it (*kinderfeindlichkeit*).

In the Netherlands, people will tell you that there was a particularly big population explosion after World War II, that the country is geographically small, and so, very low fertility rates were bound to come.

In Italy, one is told that while Italians love children, in the old days Italian women had so many children that their daughters saw how difficult it was, so they are having very few of their own.

In the U.S., too, we hear some very specific tales of causation. It's said by some economists, for example, that real income didn't go up, or actually went down, starting in 1973, and the now-maturing Baby Boom generation really can't afford babies, and so aren't having babies. The trouble with that thesis is that the birth rate started falling sixteen years prior to 1973, and by 1973 the TFR was down to 1.8, about where it is now. The fall in births came *before* the alleged fall in incomes (of which more later).

More generally in the U.S., it is said that the Yuppies, American style, are selfish materialists, interested only in themselves, their cars, their wines, their clothes, their jobs—but they don't have the social responsibility that yields either a caring society, or babies. It's said, of course, that it's all due to the Women's Liberation movement, inspiring women to go to work rather than have babies. A Reagan administration document on the parlous state of American families blames most of it on liberalism. Yet, six years into the most conservative administration in recent memory, an administration that has pointed with particular pride to its appeal to the young people, the TFR is a shade lower than it was at the start of that administration.

All these rather specific stories about specific countries make the question of causation an interesting one for a writer delving into the matter. There's always a new idea to fondle.

But, of course, there is a problem: These ideas don't usually explain enough. For the Birth Dearth is not unique to Americans, Germans, Italians, and Dutch.

It is going on everywhere in the developed world. It's happened on the small crowded island nation of Japan and on the big sparse island nation of Australia. It's happened during times of boom or recession. It's happened under liberal or conservative governments, in nations with allegedly permissive standards (Scandinavia) and nations that are allegedly somewhat more traditional (Japan). It's happened in countries with big prior population explosions (like the Netherlands) and in countries with small population explosions (like England).

Not only is it happening everywhere in the developed world, but it's been happening for a long time. Theodore Roosevelt complained about America's falling birth rate during the 1890s, when lifetime births averaged over 4 children per woman. Mussolini complained about Italy's low birth rate. In the 1930s, sociologist Gunnar Myrdal viewed falling Swedish birth rates with alarm, in part to convince Swedish right wing politicians to endorse welfare state proposals, which he said would raise fertility.

In fact, as noted, birth rates in the developed world have been declining almost since the developed world began. The Industrial Revolution apparently contained a fertility depressant. Demographers call it "the demographic transition"—the shift from high to low fertility.

To review again: What is new about the Birth Dearth is not its direction, which is down. What's new is its level—to a rate well below what is required to keep a population stable, and the fact that population decline is occurring when the nations involved are at peace and generally prosperous. Also again: Over the years, most demographers assumed that the decline would stop at a TFR of about 2.1 because the species would (in theory) eventually disappear if a 2.1 rate was not maintained. But just who is "the species"? They are just plain individuals, people who are in the bedroom making very personal, very individualistic decisions. The people in the bedroom are Tom and Sally, or Hans und Hildegarde. They are not thinking about "the species" at all. They are thinking about their own lives and beliefs, and how their lives and beliefs interact with the conditions they face.

Is their residence large enough for a baby? Is a bigger one available? Will Tom's salary be enough to support them if Sally stops working to have a baby? Does Sally want to stop working? Will they have enough money for college costs when the baby is no longer a baby? Won't their standard of living fall? Will Sally get maternity leave and get her job back? If she stays home for a few years, will she fall off the career track? Will Tom really share 50-50 in taking care of the baby? But doesn't he have to travel in his work? Can Sally cope with both a job and a child? Two children? Three?

So the history of fertility, and of fertility decline, is a history of very personal decisions that are often played out upon a backdrop of some conditions that are common to all the modern nations, many of which can be quite impersonal. Urbanization, job availabilities, contraception and abortion come most immediately to mind.

Most of the universal factors are interrelated, but for convenience sake the factors can be divided into four parts: A) socioeconomic, B) legal/technological/medical, C) lifestyle, and D) values.

Because almost all the factors tend to have pushed, and are pushing, fertility rates down, let us now look at the depressant causes first. (Later we will look at the few trends and changes that point in the other direction.)

Socioeconomic Factors

Urbanization. At the time of the first U.S. Census (in 1790), about 90 percent of all Americans lived on farms. But the farm population today is only about 2.4 percent, and poignant stories on television tell us every day of still more farmers leaving the land.

As people leave farming as a way of life, fertility almost invariably declines. There is a powerful logic to this pattern. Children are often an economic asset on a farm: They can work the fields, do the chores. But in an urban apartment, or a suburban home, children are an economic drag: They go to school during most of the year, and often to camp in the summer. If an urban couple decides to have a child, or an additional child, they may well need to move to a larger—more expensive—residence. With more children, it becomes more difficult for the woman of the house to take an outside job. The farm wife doesn't typically have an outside job although, of course, she typically works from dawn till dusk.

Despite government efforts to subsidize crops and “preserve the family farm,” the move from the farm has been inexorable. The recent farm shakeout, due mostly to bad loan decisions and low prices, has only accelerated a trend that has been in motion for centuries and will continue, not only in the U.S., but elsewhere in the Western world where the rate of people engaged in farming is higher than in the U.S. (Italy 12 percent, France 8 percent).

In Europe today, as in America, there are gigantic warehouses storing unneeded agricultural products: cheese, wine, meat, grain, to begin a long list. Sooner or later the subsidies that put the cheese, wine, meat, and grain in those warehouses will be phased down, more farmers will leave the land, and fertility may well fall further.

Education. As education goes up for women, fertility goes down. The rates of education for women are at an all-time high in the nations of the Western community, particularly at the college level. In the United States something quite remarkable has happened. Back in 1960, only about *one third* of U.S. college students were female. Today it is *half!* Parity has been achieved. Many of these college educat-

ed females want to use their education to get a job in the money economy. A woman at school and then at work is more likely to delay pregnancy. The demographic evidence says that pregnancies delayed—to some extent—are pregnancies denied.

Wealth. Although logic might dictate otherwise, the correlations are generally clear: As income goes up, fertility tends to decline. Per capita income in the Western community has gone up by 56 percent since 1965 (after discounting for inflation). It continues to increase. It is going up in the U. S. as well.

One reason often mentioned for the linkage of high income and low fertility is that well-to-do people get hooked on goods and services available to well-to-do people, like nice vacations and nice homes.

In the mid-1960s, doing research on another demographic book, I visited Hungary, which at that time had the world's lowest fertility rate. Not only that, but it was doing fairly well economically for a Communist state. In a night club in downtown Budapest the satirists sang a song entitled "Kicsi vagy Kocsi," phonetically, "kitchi vod kochi." In Hungarian that is a play on words that says it all: "a kid or a car."

In addition: wealthy societies typically provide pension benefits. With a pension, parents don't need to have children for their own social security.

Working women. This is probably the single most important factor. Demographers have established that when women of child-bearing age enter the labor force, fertility goes way down. The rates of young women at work are at an all-time high in the Western world. In the U.S. in 1940, only 17 percent of married women were in the labor force full or part-time; today the figure is 53 percent. Labor economists believe rates of working women will continue to rise.

There are at least two fairly obvious reasons why working women have lower fertility. First, taking time off from work to have a child, particularly several children, can bump a female career worker off the path to quick occupational success. So, in many instances, she doesn't leave her job, or delays leaving it and doesn't have a baby, or has one later. And equally obvious, many couples feel that the money provided by a second earner is necessary to maintain a standard of living they have come to enjoy. Again, the woman finds it hard to leave and either doesn't leave the work force, or delays leaving; in each case lowering fertility, at least statistically.

In late 1986 *Newsweek* ran a cover story entitled "Three's a

Crowd,” dealing with the rising rate of childlessness among married couples where both parties worked. The piece gives a flavor of some of the attitudes and circumstances that yield low fertility these days. Some excerpts from the interviews in the *Newsweek* article:

“There’s a real economic burden to raising children,” says Nancy Baron, a thirty-year old writer and stage designer in Boston. Baron and her husband, Neil Osterweil, also a writer, decided against children before they were married last year. “Sometimes,” she says, “Neil and I joke that we’d like to adopt an eighteen-year old, complete with college tuition.”

Ruth Corson Maynard, forty years old, director of municipal research for a Wall Street firm, had already decided she didn’t want children when she married her husband, David, nine years ago. He had two and didn’t want more. Now they live in two cities—he works in Boston—and spend weekends together; children would never fit in. “Maybe we’ve both just plighted our troths to the responsibility of what came first, and that was our jobs,” Ruth Maynard says.

“This world is a crazy place to try and raise a kid,” says Dan Petry, twenty-eight, business manager for a medical center in Chicago. “We could well blow ourselves up before the child has a chance to mature.” Petry and his wife, Marjorie, twenty-nine, are active in their church. “If we wanted to take off to help world causes in Central America or South America, how could we do that with a child?” she says. “This way nothing holds us back.”

When Bobbi and Lynn Bender were married 20 years ago, they decided to postpone parenthood until they had established careers. They began trying to have kids when Bobbi was in her early thirties. Nothing happened. “For years I stayed on the pill out of fear of getting pregnant,” says Bobbi, now forty and the associate director of finance at the University of Chicago Medical Center. “Then I find out I can’t have children.” She doesn’t know if she would have been able to get pregnant earlier, but because she started so late, even adoption—the only alternative—is unlikely. Most agencies prefer to find homes for their infant charges with younger couples. In any case, Bender and her husband, Lynn, forty-three, the director of physical planning and construction at the university, feel they are too set in their ways to

become new parents. Nonetheless, says Bobbi, “there are times when I wake up on Mother’s Day and burst into tears.” When she meets couples who are able to have children but don’t, she is shocked. “I think they are going to regret that decision once they find that not being able to have a child has become a fact rather than a choice,” she says. “You have this hollow core inside of you that will never be fulfilled.”

Los Angeles writer Milo Frank and his wife, Sally Forrest, an actress, are both in their fifties and have been married more than 20 years. “We didn’t set out not to have kids,” says Forrest. But during the years that I would have had them, I was always working or traveling. We didn’t think too much about it because we rarely discussed it. When we did, we’d say, “Maybe next year.” Next year never came. Frank says he and his wife now have second thoughts, but “all I have to do is read the papers or talk to friends who have children and the regrets stop.” Adds Forrest: “We’re very happy. And we’re still married.” Their friends who were married at the same time are all divorced, she says.

Noah Appleton, a forty-three-year old car dealer in Houston swirls the ice cubes in his crystal tumbler and glances down at the traffic on Houston’s West Loop, seventeen floors below. His high-rise condo is one of the city’s most prestigious addresses. He explains: “This is one of the biggest reasons why we don’t have children. If we had them, we certainly couldn’t live here.” Appleton and his wife, Janet, the thirty-three-year old manager of a nurses’ temporary agency, say most of her friends are childless, too; they found that parents can’t take off on unplanned adventures. “We’ve made our choice for freedom and spontaneity,” she says. Even their Abyssinian cats, Condo and Mini, are neutered and declawed—what the Appletons call “condo converted.” Says Janet: “They can take care of themselves, and we’re free.”

Free at last, free at last. Great God almighty, they’re free at last.

Legal/Technological/Medical Factors

Abortion. In most Western countries, abortion was illegal until about the mid-1970s. Today, abortion is legal in 19 out of 21 community nations, representing 94 percent of the community population. The number of abortions performed *each year* in the Western nations

is estimated at six million! In America alone, there are about 1.5 million legal abortions performed each year. Obviously, this lowers fertility rates to some extent, even though many abortions were performed illegally prior to legalization.

The possibility of additional Supreme Court appointments by President Reagan has led to speculation that *Roe v. Wade*, the decision that legalized abortion in 1973, could be overturned outright, by a new, more conservative court. That is dubious. There are some sitting justices who favor outright repeal of *Roe v. Wade*. But others who are opposed to *Roe v. Wade* are believed to favor only modifications of the decision, which would still allow legal abortion.

More important, even if *Roe v. Wade* were wholly repealed by the Supreme Court it would not likely mean the end of legal abortion in America. Prior to 1973, many states had legalized abortion to one degree or another. Those state laws would likely remain in effect, and, accordingly, abortion would still be legal under some circumstances in states with 42 percent of the U.S. population. That, in effect, would also make it legal and accessible for the vast majority of the population living within a short ride or plane trip to a state with legal abortion. Of course, the states could then illegalize abortion over time—or others could legalize it. In any event, abortion will likely remain a legal option for most Americans for decades to come.

Contraception. Over the years there has been a biotechnological revolution in the means of avoiding pregnancy: Pills, diaphragms, condoms, intrauterine devices (IUDs), and a huge increase in sterilization, which is now the most popular method of birth control among married couples. Among currently married couples in the U.S. today, 39 percent have at least one surgically sterile partner. This includes 28 percent of all couples who have had only one child or zero children. It is important to understand this 28 percent rate. It means these couples will have fertility rates that are below replacement, unless an unsterile partner remarries or a sterile partner has a surgical reversal, which can be very difficult.

Researchers in the field believe there will be further improvements in contraceptive techniques in the near future, including the long-awaited “morning after” pill. Such a pharmaceutical, already on the market in France, is now under review by the Food and Drug Administration. It can plausibly, de facto, end most of the abortion argument. A woman with access to the new pill—over the counter or under it—can terminate a pregnancy almost immediately, without even knowing if there was a pregnancy.

One goal of better and more prevalent contraception has been to al-

low couples to control their fertility. For users, that has usually worked.

Lifestyle Factors

All of the above socioeconomic, legal, medical, and technological changes—all favorable to low, and lower, fertility—have influenced, and been influenced by, changes in *lifestyles*—which, in return, have also encouraged low fertility:

Delayed Marriage. Age of marriage was first measured in the United States in 1890, almost one hundred years ago. Today (1986 data) it is at the highest level ever—23.1 years for women and 25.7 for men. Just since 1970 the age of marriage has gone up by 2.3 years for women and 2.5 years for men.

This rise in age of marriage may not seem like much, but, in reality, it is enormous. If you say that in a modern society like ours age 18 is about the youngest that young women will marry, then the recent increase for females from 20.8 (in 1970) to 23.1 years now has increased the years of being single by 82 percent over the course of just a relatively few years. Every year a woman is unmarried tends to lower the fertility rate because it further reduces the number of years that a woman is likely to bear a child (unless she wishes to bear an out-of-wedlock child).

Delay of Birth of First Child. Census numbers show that these days only 48 percent of couples married 5-10 years earlier have had one child (1980 data). The corresponding rate fifteen years earlier was 64 percent.

This delay of childbearing is almost surely related to the rise in the rate of working women (“Let’s both work and save up for a house”). In any event, as in the case of later first marriages, it likely depresses ultimate fertility on the grounds of “fertility delayed is fertility denied.”

Divorce. Divorce is substantially more prevalent than in earlier days. Back in 1960, there were only 9.2 divorces per thousand married women per year. By 1985, that rate had more than doubled to 21.5. That yearly rate accumulates. In 1960, there were 35 divorced persons per thousand total population. By 1984, there were 121. In absolute numbers, there were 393,000 divorces granted in 1960—

and 1,155,000 divorces granted in 1984. On average it takes 3.5 years for a woman to remarry, and that rate is increasing. Women who are divorced are typically removed, at least for a while, sometimes forever, from the pool of likely mothers. Naturally, this too tends to lower fertility.

Decreased Fecundity. As mentioned in the previous chapter, as women age, it becomes more difficult for them to conceive. Although the sum is not believed to be overly large, the incidence of medical factors that can make a woman infertile has increased. This is to be expected in a society where marriage and pregnancy are delayed. Women have more time at medical risk in a general, nonsexual sense, and are more likely to have more premarital sexual partners which can yield an increase in potentially fertility-impairing venereal diseases. (Although a large majority of women [78 percent] who have contracted such diseases remain fertile.)

There is much whispered talk these days about very high infertility rates. One keeps hearing stories of desperate couples, unable to produce a first pregnancy. Accordingly, it might be useful to try to put some dimensions on the problem, although the data is complex and far from perfect, to say the least. National surveys conducted by government agencies in 1965 and 1982 revealed that the rate of childless infertile couples had more than doubled over that time frame, with most of the increase occurring by 1976. But—and this is an important but—the rates are still regarded as low when viewed as a totality. In 1965, about 2.3 percent of all married couples were deemed childless and infertile (that is, actively trying to get pregnant and failing for one year). In 1982, the rate was 5.8 percent.

Fortunately, there is countervailing activity. Dr. William Andrews of Norfolk, a past president of the American Fertility Society, makes this estimate: “Of 100 couples seeking to get pregnant, 80 percent conceive in the first year. An additional 10 percent can conceive by trying for another year. The remaining 10 percent have a fertility problem. Of these, half can be treated successfully in an uncomplicated way. The remaining half need more sophisticated treatment, and of these, half will be able to conceive and half won’t.”

In short, 97.5 percent of all couples willing to go the last mile to conceive—can conceive.

Andrews estimates that twenty years ago only about 50 percent of the problem cases could be helped. Now it is 75 percent. Ten years from now it will be 85 percent. Andrews believes that advances in fertility enhancement more than make up for any increase in infertility.

Put another way, Andrews believes that a woman today, if she tries, has a better chance of becoming pregnant than a woman in her mother's generation.

Never Married. In recent years, the rate of never-married women has been relatively low. In 1984, of woman age 40-44, only 5.4 percent had never married. But that reflects matrimony during the Baby Boom years. What percentage of the current cohort of young women who will never marry is, of course, unknown, but an examination of recent data has led most scholars in the field to assume that it will be much higher than it used to be. Census demographer Arthur Norton estimates that the never-married rate of current young women will be about *double* that 5.4 percent. The effect of a sharp increase in never-married women has the effect of reducing the likely universe of potential mothers.

Male Homosexuality. There is an argument about whether there is more of it, or whether it is only more open. But, in an earlier time, many "closet homosexuals" got married and had children. This probably happens less frequently these days. In any event, the result is the same: the likelihood of lower fertility rates (due to a shortage of fathers).

Lesbianism. Same as above with mothers, although probably not as prevalent.

Unmarried Couples. Think about how language reflects changing attitudes and changing reality. Once upon a time when a man and a woman lived together without benefit of matrimony, it was called "living in sin" or, in the colloquial, "shacking up." As the practice became more common the phrase became neutral and value-free: "living together" is the term of art today. A linguistic search is on to come up with a better phrase than "Significant Other," or "possel-que" (acronym for census language: "Persons of Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters") to describe the person one is living with. Census data shows the proliferation in America: from 522,000 in 1970 to 2,220,000 in 1986—about a four-fold increase in less than a generation. It is one more reason for lowered fertility: people living together without benefit of matrimony are much less likely to bear children than are married couples.

So, consider. A young woman goes to college, goes to work, lives with her boyfriend for a while, delays marriage, delays birth of first

child, all the while somewhat diminishing, by some measure, the chances of bearing one or many children.

Is it any wonder the total fertility rates are down so low?

Wild Card. First there was the publicity about herpes and other sexually transmitted diseases. Then there was the ongoing tragedy of the AIDS epidemic. All this has surely changed sexual habits among young people. But what will it mean in the long run? Earlier marriage? Later marriage? Fewer children? Less sex, yielding fewer out-of-wedlock babies? More fidelity? Less likelihood of divorce? Fewer potential parents because of epidemic-level deaths among young adults? Merely more caution? Will a cure or vaccine be discovered in the near future? Will death rates be higher in the U.S. than elsewhere? Will Africa be particularly hard hit? Will there be macro-demographic consequences?

To all of these questions there are no firm answers. So far, there has been no noticeable change in the key trends discussed in this book. One estimate that has been tossed around is that AIDS could kill 100 million people around the world. Still, that is only about 2 percent of the total global population.

Values

Finally, all of the above factors influence, and are influenced by, a change in *values and attitudes*.

“Women’s Liberation.” It is a shorthand phrase for a complex phenomenon. Although there is now a change in the air, one clear root thought of the original movement was this: Marriage, raising a family, or a large family, was no longer necessarily considered to be the single most important thing in a woman’s life. Clearly, that is a view that would have the effect of lowering fertility.

A second and third generation of feminists have challenged this view, or parts of it. Question: Will public attitudes change soon, thereby changing fertility behavior?

I hope so. It is the root reason for writing this book. But I would guess that it will take more than a little while to first, change attitudes about fertility, and second, to see such attitudinal change translate into behavioral change.

How so? First, the argument among feminists (and others) has been raging for at least a decade. Public opinion polls show there is in-

deed disenchantment with some of the original tenets of “feminism” or “the women’s movement.” But there is little evidence that women’s behavior has changed. Thus, for a dozen years from 1973 to 1985 the TFR has stayed frozen almost solid, undulating only in a tight band from 1.840 to 1.738. It is the first time in our history that there has been so little movement in the TFR over such a long period of time. In other words, so far, there has been talk about working women losing out on their chances for motherhood, but little change in the rates of women actually bearing children, at least as seen through the lens of the TFR.

Similarly, after all the discussion about a new, more traditional home-oriented generation of young women coming on strong, the rate of married women in the labor force has gone up to record highs. There has been much talk about husbands doing more housework and nurturing; progress has been made, but the burden of family and home still usually remains with women.

I would be the last to argue against the proposition that “ideas have consequences.” In fact, in the next chapter I will try my hand at a few that might. For the moment, however, not much has changed.

“It costs so much to raise a child these days.” In fact, individuals earn more money by far than they used to. Accordingly, there is more money available to raise a child than in earlier times in America, certainly more than in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

There is a complex argument about the 1970s. Per capita income went up substantially. Family income stayed about flat. For a variety of reasons, this author believes that the per capita income figure comes closer to reflecting the reality of that inflation-wracked decade, and that, in fact, real income for real people increased. At worst, however, real income did not go *down*. More important there is no serious statistical case to be made that fertility went down because income went down. As mentioned earlier, the drop in American fertility was pretty much over by 1973. The huge drop came during the late Fifties and early Sixties when real income, measured either by per capita or family income went way up. Moreover, as the final draft of this book is being written, America has been in an economic recovery for more than four years, one of the longest recoveries in recent times. If the economic determinists in the fertility argument are correct, fertility should have gone up. Yet, it’s stayed flat and low.

So the Birth Dearth has not been caused by people having less real income to raise children. Something else was going on.

In the old days, a new infant did not typically pull a mother out of the work force (the mother wasn’t typically in the work force). Ac-

cordingly, income was not sacrificed. Most mothers and fathers did not sacrifice either a vacation, or a new word processor, in order to support a child or an additional child. But these days, due to second earners, those luxuries are available and it is said that the sense of economic loss brought about by a child, or an additional child, may *seem* more acute. Result, if so: lower fertility.

Environmentalism. A belief has grown up that we have too many people, that too many people cause pollution, drain our resources, cause poverty, set our nerves on edge, and can heighten international pressures. Besides, it is said by some of the people who believe the above, “why bring a baby into a world that will be blown up by nuclear weapons?” In my judgement, there is very little evidence or logic to any of this. Thus, for one example: Some of the most densely populated countries are the most environmentally advanced—like Switzerland. More people can cause pollution. More people can also reduce pollution. It’s what people do, not how many there are, that counts. All that notwithstanding, there is a powerful belief system that maintains that more people are a problem, and insofar as people believe it (and many do) it can surely create attitudes that would tend to lower fertility rates.

Here is a list of factors discussed that tend to depress fertility:

- urbanization
- more education
- more income
- more working women
- more abortion due to legalization
- better contraceptive techniques
- delayed marriage
- delay of birth of first child
- more divorce
- increased infertility
- increased spinsterhood
- more open homosexuality
- more open lesbianism
- more “living together”
- “women’s liberation”
- the perceived high costs of children
- “environmentalism”

These trends are apparent in the Western world and in the U.S. The net result is clear: There are plenty of reasons for young women these days not to have many children. And some of these trends prob-

ably have not yet run their course. Most critically, it is likely that the rate of working women will continue to go up in the years to come.

What is the list of profertility factors in the modern world? I can think of only two:

- The infant mortality rate has dropped. In the U.S. it has dropped by about half just since 1970, from about 20 per thousand to about ten per thousand. But because the rate was so low to begin with, and because it can't go down much more, this can have only a very slight statistical effect on increasing the numbers of persons who will survive to reach the age of reproduction.
- There have been some stunning and heartening developments in medical techniques to help infertile couples become fertile. So far, in the U.S. this has involved relatively few people (about a million persons are now under treatment), but it could grow. The real cause of the Birth Dearth, however, is not that couples are *unable* to have one or more children, but that they *choose not to*. Because the vast majority of men and women *are* capable of reproduction, the statistical significance of these developments is likely to be quite small. (See pages 125 and 160.)

That's a long list pushing fertility down and a very short one working in the other direction.

Perhaps the best measure of future fertility is the "Lifetime Births Expected" series kept by the Census Bureau. This is the serious version of the author's thumbnail poll taken in Linden, Michigan, described at the very beginning of this book.

Back in 1967, among all currently married American women aged 18-34, the lifetime birth expectations rate was 3.052 children. By 1985 the birth expectations rate had fallen to 2.196 children. But consider first that the intentions rate will surely be reduced at least somewhat when extrapolated to the entire female population, because it does not include unmarried women. Consider further that the intentions data have generally proved to be somewhat higher than the ultimate reality of completed fertility—some women don't find mates and some who do find that they or their mates are infertile. The intentions rate today is near its all-time low. That yields a future TFR still under replacement.

So, unless something changes, our Western population numbers will sink to lower growth, then to no growth—unobtrusively for a while, but then geometrically, with a momentum very difficult to halt—and then we will start losing population.

Is there anything we can do about it?

Chapter 11

Remedies

Monotonously, I say it again: this book is only a speculation—based on facts and data and trends as we now know them.

Now, finally, all other things being equal, where does our speculation lead us in the 1990s and then on into the early and middle decades of the next century? What does the world look like?

First, we can observe a picture postcard *Western Europe*. It is a cutesy place, still lots of fun for tourists, full of old churches, old history and old people—a Disneyland display of the roots of Western culture. It's shrinking in population, and power, and economic muscle. It is becoming, in short, less and less relevant.

We move next to an aging *Japan*, likely watching its economic miracle stultify, bending under the strain of too many old people and not enough worker bees to support them. What happens in Japan will likely be roughly what happens to the rest of the Western world in one degree or another, only it may happen in Japan a little earlier, because Japan's Birth Dearth began earlier.

Finally, we see the *U.S.*, in somewhat better shape than the rest of

our friends, perhaps putting off the day of actual population loss, but still moving into an aging no-growth mode, facing the same trends so apparent in the rest of the West, likely to be at least under some economic strain, likely to continue as leader of the free world, but less and less able to influence global events because the free world is becoming less and less important.

Moreover, there will be some additional personal unhappiness due to less marriage and low fertility. Retrospectively, we will see that this did not occur solely as a matter of pure personal choice among young people. Much of it came about through impersonal conditions that were built into our system—and almost mindlessly yielded personal decisions that brought about lots of adults with few or no children.

The cartoon below tells a lot about our current situation.



Flying Fish. L.A. 1986

It's too bad she forgot. Unless she, or her counterparts in the decades to come—men and women—start remembering, all the nations

now afflicted by the Birth Dearth will become grayer and grayer, smaller and smaller, and probably weaker and weaker.

There are two things to be said about this vision of the future: it is speculative, and it is troubling.

Suppose this speculation, based on trends in motion, based on rates that may well deteriorate still further, is at least partially correct. Is there something that can be done about it?

To begin, I think we must think seriously about it. Of course, one might say, don't worry, sooner or later it will change. It has to. Straight-line geometric projections usually turn around. Otherwise the nations of the West will simply disappear, and that just won't happen.

Well, probably not. Almost certainly not, although I should report I've heard eminent demographers already talk about certain nations or peoples "going out of business." I've heard it said of Austria. I've heard it said of Latvia. We've mentioned the West German demographer who likes to visit the pandas in the zoo to see what a species going extinct looks like.

But, even if we dismiss any going-out-of-business sale for the West, the situation is serious. The argument is heard: "Don't worry, we're still growing some (due to the echo-effect of the Baby Boom); if we start going down, if it causes a problem, then we can change. No loss."

Not likely. Demographics don't turn on a dime. Just as there is an echo-effect of the Baby Boom, so will there be an echo-effect of the Birth Dearth. As it arrives, it will be very difficult to issue a national command "Attention, all couples. Have more babies immediately or else!"

Why difficult? First, because democracies can't, and shouldn't, be in the coercion business. And second, because there won't be very many mothers around to effectuate the change even if they wanted to. Don't plan on a quick demographic turnaround, unless you can visualize millions of nice, well-educated working women turning in their attache cases and running shoes in order to stay home to bear three or four or five children. Depending on the country involved, that's roughly what it will take to prevent a Western population from declining once the decline begins.

And don't count on a simplistic solution via immigration, certainly not in Western Europe or Japan, and not very likely in the U.S. Americans don't *want* to take in *more* immigrants. Generally, they

want *fewer* immigrants. This shows up clearly in public opinion polls taken over the last half century. Here are fairly typical recent survey results:

Question: At the present time our law allows about a half million immigrants a year into the United States. Would you like to see the number of immigrants *legally allowed* to enter our country increased, or would you like to see the number decreased, or do you think we're letting in about the right number now?

Increased	8%
Decreased	54
About right now.....	37

Source: Roper Organization for U.S. News/CNN, June 1986.

Such negative views on immigration are not new; they are documented in Rita J. Simon's book, *Public Opinion and the Immigrant: Print Media Coverage, 1880-1979*, a content analysis of how American publications dealt with the immigration situation going back more than a century, back when the country was still "empty." To think that American legislators some decades from now—with a quarter-billion Americans in place, with America possibly under economic strain for reasons described here—will opt to open our doors to tens of millions of Asians, Latins, Moslems, or Africans, boggles the political imagination. (Remember: there won't be a pool of white Europeans around to draw upon. It is now an issue of race, religion, and region as well as immigration, as discussed earlier.) As will be indicated later, I favor higher legal immigration in the U.S., but I am skeptical that it can come about.

It is also important to note that America will have plenty of demographically-induced problems even if, by dint of a mildly higher fertility rate and a higher immigration rate, all we do is go to a no-growth population, and manage to avoid actual shrinkage. The piper for the prior Birth Dearth must be paid for a while. There will still be declining markets in some key age cohorts (young adults), there will still be a lack of growth and a rising dependency ratio making it difficult to fund pension obligations, there will still be a changing geopolitical balance, there will still be the personal problems described, although all would be somewhat diminished.

If all this is important, we should act now.

What should we do?

At the outset, let us acknowledge that, given the constraints we live under, *it won't be easy*. So what should we do?

Let us begin by establishing some general principles:

First. To remember how difficult the chore is, we ought to acknowledge that it may well be that the current fertility rates are not an “aberration,” but “normal.” Demographers have been talking for centuries about “the demographic transition,” that is, more modernization yields fewer children. Often implicit in that notion was the idea that the transition would level off at about the replacement rate of 2.1.

But the community-wide TFR is not 2.1. It is 1.6 in Western Europe. It is 1.8 in the U.S. and Japan, and 1.7 in Canada. Perhaps it is in the nature of things in modern, free societies that this is the logical range of rates, even though they ultimately yield an ever-diminishing population. If that is so, it means that we have to *DO* something to change the Birth Dearth, because it won't likely go away by itself.

Second principle. No coercion. In recent years a few nations have resorted to coercive policies to change fertility rates. The Chinese, in an attempt to bring down population, have tried to outlaw a couple from bearing more than one child. Typically, offending parents may be subject to fines, punishment at the workplace, or difficulties with housing authorities. Women at the workplace have been subjected to regular gynecological exams to see that the one-child edict was not being violated. If there are unauthorized pregnancies, abortions are “recommended” by government officials. There have been some documented cases of forced abortion as late as the ninth month! Not surprisingly, birth rates in China fell. And human rights—the right to bear children—were dealt a grievous blow.

In Romania, coercion has been used for an opposite reason: to raise birth rates. In 1966 the government made abortion illegal. Imports of contraceptives were halted. Tough restrictions were placed on divorce. It got worse. In 1985 mandatory monthly gynecological exams were established, typically at the place of work. Failure to conceive, or carry a pregnancy to term, was grounds for official trouble. In addition, Romania set into motion a number of the more or less standard voluntary, noncoercive policies designed to boost fertility: maternity leaves, tax benefits, birth premiums, etc. Not surprisingly, with the advent of pro-natal policies, plus coercion, birth rates went up.

To this author, it seems as if coercive government fertility policies are either immoral or wrong-headed. A couple has the human right to

have children. Denying such a right, as in China, is one of the most outrageous abuses in the world today. And forcing a woman to bear an unwanted baby, as in Romania, is coercive. There are profound moral issues involved in abortion and they will quite properly continue to be publicly aired in the years to come. But in the judgement of this author, at its root the call for moral behavior of this sort must be faced by the parent or parents, not the state. Accordingly, the illegalization of abortion should be ruled out as a means to try to raise fertility.

Third principle. The goal is to provide young people, particularly women, with *more options, not fewer*. The purpose of the exercise is not to return to a prefeminist era in which, feminists allege, women went barefoot and pregnant, had so many children they didn't know what to do, and didn't have any other choices. In keeping with those criteria, this author rules out the idea of illegalization of contraception, or of making contraception more difficult to obtain. People have a right to shape their reproductive planning as they see fit. Diminishing that right is not the right way to increase fertility.

Fourth principle. One of the options that should be made more attractive is for some women to bear three or four children. This is not an arcane theory in the realm of social or moral policy. It is the way the arithmetic works out.

Figure it out for yourself. The goal is 2.1 children per woman, perhaps a little higher for a while. So women who bear two children are essentially neutral in this equation. To this, add the fact that there will always be some women who have only one child or none, by design, or because of infertility, or because they lack a mate. (These days, as we have seen, the "ones" and "nones" are much more common than in earlier times.) So, if a replacement TFR of about 2.1 is to be achieved, the likely fact of the matter is that some greater number of women need to have three, four, or more children.

So: Below-replacement rates in the 1.5-1.9 range may be "normal." We accept no coercion. We want more options. We want more 3-4 children families, and/or we want fewer zero and one-child families. Within these demographic and ethical constraints, what can we do?

First on the agenda, it seems to me, is *public education*. After all, we can't know with any kind of surety the true "natural" level of the demographic transition unless the young people involved understand the consequences of their actions.

Thus, it is said by some that the basic cause of the steep decline in fertility is due to greed and selfishness among young people, to Yuppies run amok, more interested in second cars than second children, more materialistic than maternalistic.

Perhaps. But that indictment, it would seem, is at least premature. Forgive them, for they know not what they do. Yet. After all, “selfishness” implies knowledge of a choice. The truly selfish person must have three known options: I can act one way to help others, or another way to help only myself, or perhaps a third way to split the difference. Only with such knowledge, does the truly selfish person then act to help only himself or herself.

But there is another possibility concerning low fertility that has nothing to do with selfishness: plain raw ignorance. A young person may not sense that his or her actions may be harmful to himself or herself in a personal way—a self-inflicted social wound. And young people may not know of the broader economic, social or geopolitical distress their actions may yield in the future.

So far, it seems to me, those sets of choices have not been properly posed. In America the case for the harmful effects of very low, below-replacement fertility has barely surfaced. People should not be called selfish if they don’t know they’re causing problems for others or for themselves.

Consider one example. We live at a time when the popular rhetoric has highlighted “the population explosion” rather than the remarkable drop in fertility rates. Thus, we are still told that a “population bomb” threatens the Third World, although fertility—while still quite high—has been falling there for fifteen years. (Third World fertility today is not much higher than U.S. fertility in the peak Baby Boom years.) We have been told implicitly and explicitly that “too many people” is a major cause of the Third World poverty and illness, although many economists, demographers, sociologists, and family planners believe no such thing. Indeed, a 1986 National Academy of Sciences study makes clear that high population growth is, at most, a minor cause of the afflictions of the poor nations. Remember: additional people produce as well as consume; rapidly growing countries can be on an ascendant economic track—it happened in the U.S., Europe, and Japan in earlier times.

In any event, the idea of demographic crisis in the Third World has slopped over to our part of the planet, too. The Western world, indeed, went through a “Baby Boom.” That, we were told, would leave us overcrowded, polluted, and underresourced. But the Baby Boom ended more than two decades ago. We proceeded to go into a popula-

tion free-fall, and ended up at Birth Dearth levels. Yet, every time a new McDonald's opens up, or we're caught in a traffic jam, or Yellowstone is filled up with tourists, we are told that the U.S. is "too crowded" (thus confusing additional discretionary wealth, which provides people with cars, or vacation time to visit Yellowstone, with added population density, which has little to do with these problems). Resource prices have tumbled, indicating abundance, not scarcity. Pollution levels are down. Still, we hear it: "The U.S. is too crowded."

Is it any wonder that such mal-educated young environmentalists worry about whether to bring one more mouth into this crowded, hungry, smoggy land? If you think I'm kidding, recall what actress Joanne Woodward recently said on the subject: "Unless there's some reason to believe things will change, why provide more fodder?"

That is one small example of distorted education. But it brings to mind an analog for our current situation. It is the old "Theory of the Commons," recently repopularized by none other than the environmental movement itself.

Recall it: English sheep raisers look at a large and luscious green-sward (the commons) in the middle of a small village. It is public property open for use to all. Each sheep raiser muses to himself: "If I graze my sheep there, that will give me free fodder, and it won't hurt the commons. Why, it will even keep the grass trimmed."

True enough. And so the first farmer acts that way (in his self-interest), then a second (in his self-interest), then five, fifty, a hundred (all acting in their own perceived self-interest). But soon the commons has been ravaged; it becomes a rutted slum in the middle of a once-fair village. And so we see how individual acts of apparent harmless self-interest can inflict great harm upon the collective interest.

The intellectual basis for environmentalism has been to educate the public that individual (or corporate) acts of self-interest—be they littering or air pollution or water pollution—may harm the common good. For example, one factory putting industrial waste water in a river may be harmless enough and even enable a manufacturer to produce goods inexpensively, make a good profit, and keep jobs in the U.S. But a thousand factories polluting a river may prove to be both unhealthy and unaesthetic. Once the public understands that, the environmentalists have demonstrated that voters are often prepared to act in ways they perceive to be in the general *public* interest rather than in their own *private* interest. That's so even if they live up-stream from the polluters. Public opinion polls show that voters are even willing to pay higher taxes and higher prices to "clean up" the environment.

So, here is our analog: most young adults these days have decided that having few children (or none) is in their immediate present private best interest. (Go get that green grass on the commons!)

But they have not yet been educated that such private decisions may have a harmful public effect or a harmful personal effect. They do not know that the Birth Dearth may ultimately hurt them due to busted pension plans or economic dislocations or domestic turmoil. They do not know the ramifications of the Birth Dearth that can yield a world inhospitable to values they cherish. They do not know that in some nations (not the U.S.) the Birth Dearth could yield—let us say it—a withering-away. And my sense is that many are not fully aware of the potential personal sorrow that may befall them. (The commons may be in the process of being ravaged.) So, the first course of action is education. We will never know how low is low until the participants in the game know what's happening on the commons. Accordingly, let us call a moratorium on calling Yuppies and other young people "selfish" until they understand that their private choices will have public and private effects that they may not like. Once educated, they may act differently. Indeed, the root purpose of this book is to begin to popularize the problem and the need for the necessary education.

If we can educate our young people that the Birth Dearth is important, then what? All the analogies of sheep and sheep raisers may still not comprise anywhere near a full answer to this question. After all, we are not really talking about sheep on the commons; we are still talking about individual young men and women in the bedroom, concerned about personal problems. Under present conditions, all the education in the world may not change enough minds regarding how many children to bear.

But there is a critical reason that education is so important: politics. If the present conditions do not encourage fertility, perhaps politics can change those present conditions. And in the world of politics, education has an Archimedian aspect. Give me education and I have the lever that may move the political world—and consequently have a chance to change the conditions that produce the Birth Dearth.

Let us now consider politics and the Birth Dearth.

Until recently, it was almost axiomatic in the demographic trade that "pro-natalism doesn't work." There have been government schemes and programs tried throughout much of the developed world designed to increase fertility. These programs included: child allowances, tax breaks, maternity leaves, housing allowances, day

care, etc. But despite all the schemes, most nations saw fertility plunge and stay low.

There seems to me to be several plausible reasons for perceived prior failure. The first and most obvious possibility is that, indeed, pro-natalist policies just don't work. Many demographers maintain that birth rates may go up for a year or two after a pro-natal policy is instituted, but that then the rates are likely to fall back. Perhaps social engineering is just not powerful enough to change people's minds about such personal and intimate decisions. That indeed is possible, indeed there is at least some general truth to it.

A second thought is that fertility rates would be even lower were it not for pro-natalist policies.

But there is a third possibility. Some very interesting evidence has come up in recent years that may reveal that pro-natalist policies can work. If so, it may change the way we think about these matters.

Ironically, the evidence comes from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Perhaps, even more ironically, it involves something in short supply behind the Iron Curtain: large amounts of cash.

Now, to understate a point, I am not in the habit of praising the policies of totalitarian countries. I have devoted a portion of my personal and professional life to publicizing the sins of the evil empire. On this issue, too, I am very wary of totalitarian behavior: the ugly coercion of fertility in Rumania has already been mentioned.

But, truth be told, most (not all) of the pro-natalist schemes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in recent years have not been very different in kind from those that have been established in Western Europe. Both generally involve a variety of children's allowances, day care, maternity leaves, tax breaks, subsidies, and so on, although some of the East Europeans are making abortion more difficult, while West European countries are not.

There are two big differences. The Eastern Europeans *spend much more money* relative to their economies than do the West Europeans. And their programs seem to be working.

To put it as crassly as possible, it may well be that a serious case can be made, from a policy point of view, that some additional *babies can be bought*.

One simple way to see the difference between Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe and free Western Europe is to look at the latest TFRs as compiled by the Population Reference Bureau:

Eastern Europe	2.1
Western Europe	1.6

Beneath these broad aggregates (involving a total of twenty-seven countries) are some fascinating stories of specific nations.

Consider the two Germanies. Same language, same historical and cultural antecedents—but with different forms of government. West Germany is democratic and pluralist. East Germany centralized, non-democratic, communist. And the two Germanies have very different financial levels of pro-natalist policies.

As of 1972 both Germanies had almost identical TFRs:

TOTAL FERTILITY RATE

	<i>WEST GERMANY</i>	<i>EAST GERMANY</i>
1972	1.72	1.78

As the Birth Dearth hit in earnest, fertility fell in both Germanies.

1973	1.54	1.58
1974	1.51	1.54

At about that time, East Germany began implementing a variety of very expensive pronatalist measures. West Germany did not. And this is what happened:

1975	1.45	1.54
1976	1.46	1.64
1977	1.41	1.85
1978	1.38	1.90
1979	1.38	1.90
1980	1.45	1.94
1981	1.44	1.85
1982	1.41	1.85
1983	1.32	1.79
1984	1.27	1.80

West Germany, spending relatively little of a rich economy on pronatalist measures, sunk to the pits of Birth Dearth, a TFR that would (if continued at their latest available rate, 1.29 for 1984) take their 61 million population down to 16 million by the end of the next century! East Germany is at a much higher fertility rate, but still negative. Their total population would go from 17 million today to 13-14 million at the end of the next century. In theory, at that time East Germany would be about as populous as West Germany, although today the West is almost four times as large as the East.

The evidence to date is fairly clear. The Eastern European nations,

although much poorer, spent much greater fractions of their incomes for family policies. One principal goal of these family policies is the increase of fertility. One estimate¹ shows that if specific Western countries were to match the comparative level of family allowances provided for three-child families in Hungary and Bulgaria, that would involve a 120 percent increase in Sweden, a 100 percent increase in West Germany and a 70 percent increase in Britain!

A big difference. A lot of money. If Czechoslovakia, which spends even more than Hungary and Bulgaria on child allowances, were used as a model instead, the Western countries would have to pony up yet an *additional* 60 percent to reach parity with the Czechs. And all this includes only the *direct cash* for child allowances, not for the array of services such as day care, scholarships, maternal leave, or housing allowances, where (again) the Eastern European nations far outspend the West European ones in terms relative to their own poor economies. A lot of money. But, as the numbers show, it seems to help. (A recently instituted pro-natalist policy of partially paid maternal leave seems to have raised fertility rates in the European parts of the Soviet Union.) That is, pro-natalism with extra-high expenditures has worked, up until now. Some demographers feel that Eastern European rates may fall back after a while, at least partially.

Perhaps. But let us remember this: Although within Eastern Europe there are country by country differences, Eastern Europe taken as a whole started out some twenty years ago as the part of Europe with the lowest fertility rates. Its fertility rate now is the highest rate on the continent, and is higher even than the United States. For the Western democracies, nothing seems to have worked. What the East is doing looks like the only game in town.

Here are the comparative numbers:

TOTAL FERTILITY RATES

	<i>EASTERN EUROPE</i>	<i>WESTERN EUROPE</i>
1960	2.47	2.62
1965	2.32	2.72
1970	2.27	2.38
1975	2.21	1.96
1980	2.20	1.80
1985	2.16	1.62

Source: U.N./Population Reference Bureau

¹*The Fear of Population Decline* by Michael Teitelbaum and Jay M. Winter, citing T. Frejka, "Family Assistance in Europe: Social Welfare or Pronatalist Policies?"

In our search for solutions, this brings us back to politics. For governments—driven by politics—must be one part of the remedy, although by no means the only part.

It is, of course, easier to spend big pro-natalist government money in a nonfree country than in a free country. In a nonfree country, the ruler, or rulers, can sit down around a big table and make policy. They can look at a staff study that concludes that the nation will be in trouble unless the state provides much bigger child allowances, much more day care, more pension benefits, bigger education stipends, and better tax incentives for those people with children. If the rulers agree, they can, in effect, say, so be it, we'll take from one sector of the economy and give to another sector; specifically to parents who bear children. And that's then the law.

That is not exactly how the system works in the U.S., or the other Western democracies.

In America, someone or some group might come to the conclusion that the country needs a “family policy” designed to reverse the Birth Dearth, as well as doing other good things. A Congressman would be convinced. A pro-natalist package of cash and service benefits might be proposed.

What would happen next?

A Congressional committee staff might well examine it. So would the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), allegedly working on behalf of the White House. The Congress might then hold hearings. White House aides would give conflicting advice to the President. Lobbyists for the elderly might denounce the bill for offering new benefits for young people but not the elderly. Critically, feminist groups might divide over the issue. The more radical groups might well condemn the proposal on the grounds that it was nothing but a smoke-screen designed to put women back in in the kitchen. Conservative groups might denounce the plan as a post-Reagan reversion to big government. Right-to-life groups would insist that the best way to increase the birth rate would be to make abortion illegal. The OMB would appear and make the case that the proposal was a budget-buster, violating the guidelines of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings.

Nothing much would happen for quite a while, if ever.

It is for that reason, it seems to me, that education of the broadest sort is the key to success, and will likely precede any major legislation. It was not until the American public was convinced about environmental and ecological degradation, not until little children yelled “pollution!” when they saw a factory smokestack—that legislation flowed from Congress like a mighty stream.

Remember, if we were to follow the workable and decent parts of

the Eastern European model, and adapt them to free circumstances, we are talking about using enormous resources. Streams, freshets, rivers, veritable Niagaras of dollars! The nations of Western Europe have already shown us that relatively minor expenditures haven't done much good at stimulating additional fertility. And they've done much more than we have.

Education and public concern can yield public pressure of every sort imaginable: television news and specials, newsmagazine covers, editorials, media events, political coalitions, and ultimately electoral leverage in the voting booth. Only that pushes politicians to act on difficult issues. Only politics can unlock the nation's treasury. And government dollars will form one big part of a larger plan necessary to erode the Birth Dearth before it erodes us.

So: education first. Let the word go forth that a no-growth or shrinking Western population will harm the West and harm the U.S. That it will probably cause economic turbulence, probably starting with the housing industry in the 1990s. That it may cause domestic tension. That over a longer stretch of time it can erode American power and American influence; that the forces of freedom may move toward a relative disadvantage to the forces of totalitarians or to the forces of the Third World. That there will be much personal misery if a quarter to a fifth of women have no children, if fertility is so low that four grandparents must share one grandchild, and if lots of grandparents don't have any grandchildren. Let all the manifestations be understood: that immigrants don't steal jobs from natives, that we are not running out of resources, and that national poverty is not caused by national population growth.

Then we can begin.

Chapter 12

Practical Plans

Let us now assume that America has indeed been educated to the perils of the Birth Dearth, as explained here. Let us assume, further, that we have begun to engender a spirit of activism that can help our cause.

What next? How do we move the cause further forward? And what specifically are we for? In the public realm? In the private realm? Domestically? Internationally?

There are two natural allies for a big domestic pro-natal activist movement—and, strangely enough, on many issues these potential allies are often bitter adversaries. No matter to us. We pro-natalists have big things to do, and miles to go. We will take our friends where we find them.

Think first of American feminism, a well-organized, politically powerful, and savvy movement. It is unlikely that a serious pronatal movement could make it without feminist support.

I simplify: The first feminist wave said women should have the right to work at good jobs in the money economy, and indeed that if they didn't, they weren't fulfilling themselves. A second wave—of working, and allegedly fulfilled women—said something else: we want to work, but we're missing something if we don't get to raise a family. We're supposed to have a serious career *and* keep house and have children. Under current conditions trying to be Supermom may be too tough!

These women are not against having children. Quite the opposite; they are looking for help to allow them to pursue careers *and* have children. The feminists of this stripe are concentrating on boosting a “services” strategy, typically pushing items such as federal support for day care and paid maternal leave. *They want to make it easier for a committed working woman to have kids.* Intuition tells us that it is these working women—who are more than likely to be on the job on a fulltime basis—who are the women who are more likely to have only one child, or none. The data back it up. Such new services might turn the “nones” and “ones” into “ones” and “twos.” That's fine. One step.

Think now not of feminism, but of the “Pro-family” movement springing from the conservative side of American life. They, too, have developed massive political clout. They demand “traditional values.” They typically oppose abortion. They often oppose sex education, including the teaching of contraceptive use, in public schools. They believe more in private sector activity than in public sector activity. They believe mothers should spend time at home with their children, certainly when the children are very young.

There are obvious differences between the means and the goals of the traditionalists and the feminists.

But is there some common ground that pro-natalists can develop that might find support from both traditionalists and feminists?

I think perhaps so. After all, the pro-family activists are, almost by definition, in favor of at least somewhat higher fertility. It is hard to have families without babies.

And, these days, many neo-feminists are also complaining about the conditions that lower fertility: the lack of paid maternal leave from a job, the high cost of day care, the difficulty of finding a mate, of beating the biological clock.

So: the activists—both latter-day feminists and the traditionalists—have some similar goals. The feminists want to make it easier for women who work *to have children*. The traditionalists want to make it easier for women to be able to stay at home, not to make outside work the center of their lives, and *to have children*.

Politics aside, both sets of views are pro-natalist, but with one crucial difference. Feminist plans, if they were tried and if they worked, could probably yield some additional families of *one or two children* among families that otherwise would have had fewer offspring. Traditionalist plans, if they were tried and if they worked, could yield additional families of *three and four children* among families that otherwise might have had fewer offspring. Programs for both agendas are valid, and might indeed have a good chance to raise the TFR, provided—as we have learned in our Eastern European vs. Western Europe model—that in their totality *such plans are big, comprehensive, bold and expensive*.

Now, “family policy” is already shaping up to be one of the great issues of our time. It would be a shame to let the players at the table be confined to feminists and traditionalists. We pro-natalists ought to get in the game, too.

Let us now take a cursory look at some of the small ideas than can add up, and some big ones that can knock your socks off.

Consider first the neo-feminist agenda. Perhaps at the top of every list of feminist reform is day care. It can be a crucial, usually expensive, service—for working women. (Women at home with their children don’t typically *need* day care, although even mildly well-to-do women usually take advantage of it in one way or another.)

The varieties of day care plans, solutions, and semisolutions are almost infinite: federal funding for, better regulation and licensing of, state funding for, better training for providers of, encouragement of help from the business sector—and so on.

My own favorite semisolution to the day care issue concerns the American corporation. Many of them behave these days as if they had no idea of what is approaching in the 1990s. To all with eyes to see, it is clear that there will be labor shortages for some businesses because the Birth Dearth babies who will soon be reaching the age of work will be few in number. At the same time, for some industries, for the same reason (fewer Birth Dearth adults), there will be less demand for their goods or services, causing both dislocation and unemployment.

Both these factors, it would seem, would put a premium on corporations seeking out the very best employees.

In industries that will be doing well in the Nineties, there will be sharp competition among companies for good employees from a smaller pool. For companies that will be hit by turbulence due to changing markets, the need for good employees may be even more

critical: it may be hard to stay in business with a mediocre work force.

Add one more fact. The rate of women in the labor force is expected to continue to increase.

Mr. Businessman: Under such conditions, how will you entice and keep a stable and energetic labor force? Of course, good salaries help. Benefits help. Good working conditions help.

And pro-natalist policies in the private sector would help. Making it a little easier for a young couple to have a child, or a second child, will make it a little harder for a competitor to steal your employee.

Many corporations these days offer employees a “cafeteria plan” for benefits. An employee can choose a number of benefits adding up to no more than a stipulated cost. Typically, the items offered may include: health care, dental care, optometry, legal services, investment services, and prescription drug benefits. But very few companies offer day care for toddlers as a benefit.

Mr. Businessman: I think you are making a mistake. Not only should the costs of day care be offered as a choice in your cafeteria package of benefits, but I think if you really wanted to attract the best young workers, you would go one step further and wherever possible set up a *day care center at the site of the jobs*. Such a facility, if well run by qualified professionals, could prove to be a great attraction to potential employees. Mothers (or fathers) could bring their young children to work with them, and drop them off at the on-site nursery school.

If most places of work had such arrangements it would surely make parenting for working mothers easier, more fulfilling, and less traumatic—for both mother and child. It would offer mother and young children the potential of more time together. When? Traveling to and from the job. During lunches. During coffee breaks. During any emergency or even a mini-crisis. Perhaps during a special break during the day. All this could dilute much of the guilt of working mothers, who often feel they are not close enough, for long enough, to their offspring. It would diminish that looming fear of working mothers—of one day hearing her child calling the baby-sitter, “Mommy.”

Making motherhood and a career easier to manage simultaneously could increase fertility, at least somewhat. It could provide a great lure to help a corporation recruit the best young workers at a time when labor markets are tight. It’s a good, if limited, idea.

Mr. Businessman: You say your firm is too small to handle it? How about pooling with some other firms in the same office building or the same industrial park?

But suppose the parents—for whatever reason—don’t want to, or

can't, send their toddlers to an on-site day care center. Perhaps the child stays with Grandma while Mom works. Perhaps the parents want the toddler to go to a private day care center, perhaps a religious one. Ideally, the corporate benefit plan would subsidize to some degree the cost of the off-site day care service involved, just as some businesses now subsidize some of the costs of dental care as an offset to the amount of available "cafeteria" services.

That's one small piece of the puzzle. It's nongovernmental, it's pro-family, and profeminist. Unfortunately, fewer than two thousand firms in America (out of an estimated 3 million) currently run on-site day care centers. How could we increase the number?

One of the hitches in the system apparently is liability insurance. Given the current state of the law, and the practice of juries, insurance companies are often chary of issuing coverage for anything involving children. Perhaps the federal government could set damage limits and then serve as insurer of last resort. That would make it easier for corporations to participate in on-site day care.

What else is on the feminist table these days? One recently proposed bill dealing with day care ("The Child Care Opportunities for Families Act of 1985") handles matters as diverse as licensing, training and retraining of providers, scholarships for providers, child care for handicapped and chronically ill and poor children, pilot programs, crisis nurseries, just to begin a list.

Add to that an array of other service programs that have been advocated to help working mothers. These include: unpaid maternal leave, paid maternal leave, flex-time, job-sharing, the reestablishment of the day care tax credit, new day care arrangements utilizing the skills of the elderly—again, just to begin a list.

All these programs have one thing in common: They make it easier for a woman to work and have children. There is some merit to each of the mentioned items. They ought to be judged on their merits and put into practice by the appropriate agencies: governments at various levels, businesses or other "mediating structures" such as churches, synagogues, fraternal groups at other levels.

If it's judged a good plan, let's do it. Money should be no object. Remember, we're saving Western civilization. And besides, as you will see in a while, I may have come up with a plan to create some extra money.

One thing, however, must be recalled about all those essentially feminist plans designed to help working women. They tend to meet only three of our four operating principles. They are indeed noncoercive. They do expand, rather than reduce, options. They do tend to

deal in part with the idea that it may well be that 1.8 or 1.6 is the “natural” TFR in a developed nation, and consequently some external aid is required to boost the fertility rate.

But, what is missing from those plans is our fourth criterion: to help some women (those who want to) to have 3-4 children. While day care, maternal leave, flex-time, etc., can probably help push up fertility at the margin, such programs will typically only make it easier for most of the involved women to bear only *one* or *two* children. But the fact is, it is very, very difficult for a woman to continue working in an economically serious way while she is raising *three* or *four* children.

To bear and raise three or four children a woman typically must be able to stay home, at least when the children are very young. Given the normal spacing of pregnancies, that typically involves a ten-year hiatus from the labor force, if not more.

And, recall that some additional “threes” and “fours” are needed to raise the TFR. Without more 3-4 children families, the chances of going up to a 2.1 TFR, or more, are slim. Remember the “twos” are right on target, but no matter what we do, there will always be “ones” and “nones,” which must be balanced out.

How to get those bigger necessary families? How to make it easier for women who *want* to stay at home, to stay at home? How?

Give them money. Lots of it, in order to at least partly compensate for lost earnings. Remember, that is an important part of the solution that has worked at least for a decade or so with those dear Communist governments in Eastern Europe.

How to get money to people?

The fastest traditional way to deliver targeted funds to people is through the tax code. If you want to get money to the parents of children, that can be done simply by raising the personal exemption that is automatically computed into every taxpayer’s annual bill. In point of fact, in the big new tax bill of 1986, the exemptions for all Americans were substantially raised—from \$1,080 per person to \$2,000 per person: that is, an additional exemption of \$920 per person in America.

The Reagan folks crowed mightily that this was a profamily tax bill because it delivered more money to parents of children. (More children, more exemptions.) However, the big bonanza was a tax deduction, not a tax credit. And so, because the bill also provided lower tax rates, ultimately down to only two levels, 15 percent and 28 percent, the actual cash value of the additional personal \$920 exemption ranged from \$138 to \$257 per person per year. Not exactly enough to

raise a child on, or even make much of a dent.

A more serious, more profamily, more prochild tax plan could have been designed without putting any greater drain on the Treasury. One way to do it would have been to *keep* the old personal exemption of \$1,080 (adjusted for inflation) for everyone *except children under age, say, 16*. With no additional expenditure, that would have provided a *new* personal exemption for children under 16 of about \$3,900 for each child. If converted into a tax credit—which would equalize the monies received for rich and middle-class alike—the real cash value would be about \$700 per child, almost enough to tip the balance for some people who are weighing the pros and cons of having an additional child. (Under such a plan, poor people, who no longer pay federal income taxes under the new tax code, could get a similar amount through a direct payment, using the equivalent of an “earned income tax credit.”)

In this way extra cash bonuses would be awarded only to children and their parents, but not, as in the new tax law, to everyone. It is straight “redistributionist” policy, but not in the classic rich to poor manner. It would be redistributionist in the sense that it *takes* tax dollars from those *without* young children and *gives* tax dollars to those with young children. Accordingly, it could help raise fertility among women who don’t work and want large families: the more children, the more dollars, but still nowhere near the *total* costs needed to *raise* the children (diminishing any fear that it would encourage illegitimate births among poor women just to get money). While the plan is designed to help mothers of larger families, it would also help working mothers with smaller families. The extra money, for example, could be used for day care.

This is no radical scheme. It would do nothing more than go *part way* toward adjusting the original 1948 exemption figure to compensate for subsequent inflation.

An alternative scheme, much more controversial, could direct the extra monies more sharply to encourage only larger families. Under such a plan, the extra payments would go only to the third and fourth children in a family—but not to children number one and two. Indeed, in just such an attempt to boost large-family fertility, there are a number of countries that do offer extra rewards to the parents for each child more than two. (Such a plan could be justified on the grounds that working women with smaller families get their bonuses in the form of some service programs, like paid maternal leave, mentioned earlier.)

It was said at the outset, and repeated too many times, that this

book is partly a speculation. So be it. Speculate along with me about whether there may be an even more dramatic way to target the Birth Dearth problem.

Forget using the income tax code with deductions, exemptions, and credits. Even \$700 per child may not do much good. But suppose a substantial U.S. Government check were simply given each year, for sixteen years, to the parents of each new baby born after a certain date, say, January 1, 1989.

To be of some real help the money involved would probably have to be about \$2,000 per year per baby. That still wouldn't be enough to "bribe" couples to bear children, quite possibly out of wedlock, which would only exacerbate an existing severe problem. But it would help alleviate the costs of parenting, and, at the margin, perhaps encourage *some* potential parents to have an additional child or two.

Now, no matter how you cut it, this is a very expensive program, adding up to annual expenditures of hundreds of billions of dollars over time. But remember, we have already decided that nickel-and-dime programs usually don't work. In an era of budget austerity, hundreds of billions is big money, to say the least. In fact, it's not small potatoes even when times are flush.

Where can such large amounts come from? Where should it come from? Let us continue to speculate, and perhaps daydream a bit.

Such big money can and should come from only one source: the Social Security Trust Fund. The amount flowing through that fund in 1985 amounted to \$190 *billion* dollars—monies coming in from workers and going out to pensioners. But by the year 2015, as the 80 million Baby Boom babies are producing at full steam, and producing Social Security payments at full steam, and most of them not yet retired, a *surplus* of about *a trillion dollars* will be in that fund. Now, that accumulation of a trillion or so dollars can pay for a lot of baby bonuses from now to 2015.

However, at about that year of 2015, as the Baby Boom babies begin reaching retirement age, something quite dramatic begins to happen. The value of the Social Security fund starts slipping down, way down, as the now-retired Boomers start drawing monthly checks.

Now, let it be noted here that Social Security projections are a morass. They involve future unemployment rates, growth of the economy, longevity, and—crucially—fertility rates. Interested political activists can produce almost any scenario for the future, ranging from "everything is OK" to "disaster beckons."

But most analysts agree that there are difficult times ahead for the

trust fund in the long term. Unless major changes are made, or trends change, it will likely “go broke”—sometime after the Boomers begin retiring in the next century. It will happen sooner, perhaps much sooner, if one stipulates that the Medicare Trust Fund, soon to go into debt, is absorbed by the larger Social Security fund.

Why will the trust fund likely tap out? Recall the reason: because people don't really put money into *their own* Social Security pensions. Their personal contributions essentially go for people in their parents' or grandparents' generation. *Adults really put babies into the system.* The main reason there will be relatively few dollars in the trust fund in the next century is because so few babies (relatively) will have been born during the years of the Birth Dearth. Not enough Birth Dearth babies to support the aged babies of the Baby Boom. Not enough babies, not enough money.

Now, suppose that bonus of \$2,000 per year for each new baby will encourage some couples to have an extra baby. For 16 years that new baby will be pulling cash out of the Trust Fund—\$32,000 in all. That's a debit against the Trust Fund, and to it must be added the interest that the Fund could draw from government bonds with those spent dollars if the fund had held on to them.

But at about age twenty or so, that extra “bought” baby will typically go to work—and work for about 45 or 50 years. The average amount of Social Security funds those babies-now-adults would then put into the system would probably run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars, dependent on future pay scales, inflation rates, and unemployment rates. In short, although such a plan will draw down the fund in the early years, it could replenish, more than replenish, or partly replenish, the fund by yielding up new producers at just about the time they are needed—that is, when the trust fund is running dry and the Baby Boomers start needing retirement funds.

Some of the key questions are these: How many extra babies will how many bonus dollars per year actually yield? Could the plan pay for itself? How much is an extra baby worth to the U.S.? And the straight answers to all these questions is this: No one knows. The economic and fertility variables are too many, and the potential number and level of schemes infinite.

My sense of the matter is that some sort of plan using trust-fund dollars could be worked out that could approach economic break-even. Perhaps the bonus would have to be less than \$2000. Perhaps it would be paid out only for ten years, or five, rather than sixteen. Perhaps it would not be offered to the offspring of nonmarried mothers, another very controversial thought that I'm not at all sure I favor.

And if it still doesn't add up, then what? We ought to think hard about taxing ourselves extra to make it work. Remember what we're trying to do: Prop up the West, keep the American economy vigorous, and diminish human unhappiness. Let's pay for it if we have to.

Suppose such a plan only increased births by about 5 percent, let's say one out of twenty women would decide to have an extra child because of our new child allowance system. If that's what happens, it would add about 175,000 births per year. That would raise American fertility from about 1.8 to 1.9 percent. It would add about eleven million Americans to the population by the middle of the next century, and go a long way toward preventing an eventual decline.

Admittedly, this is a gargantuan plan. Perhaps we'll have to think smaller. And while on the subject of Social Security, something smaller comes to mind. Remember our earlier dictum: We don't put dollars into "our" Social Security accounts; we put in babies.

The dollars young and middle-aged workers put in to Social Security go to their parents and grandparents or people in those generations. The money *we* receive when *we* are at retirement age comes from our children and our grandchildren—or from someone else's. Such is the nature of "pay as you go" social security plans.

Consequently, people who have no children, or perhaps only one child, are in a sense, cheating the system. They are "free riders." They end up drawing full pensions paid for by children who were raised and reared—at a large expense—by children of other people.

That's not fair. Couples without children have extra discretionary income while they are young, which they can invest for their retirement. That is not the case for many couples rearing young children at a time when schooling and housing are felt to be particularly costly. Yet childless people get full Social Security retirement benefits when they are older, paid for by other people's children, raised by parents who were almost always short of money.

Can this fact be used in trying to design a small piece of a plausible pro-natalist policy? Perhaps it can. Remember, one of the oldest explanations for falling fertility is that, as a society modernizes, urbanizes, and creates pension schemes, children become of less economic value to parents. They are not needed to do chores on the family farm. Later on, they are not needed to support their parents in their sunset years. A nice green check from Uncle Sam, often augmented by private plans and private savings, takes care of the elderly.

But, as we have seen, when fertility goes too low the human chain letter game called Social Security doesn't work well.

Suppose, in order to boost fertility, we considered—humanely and anonymously—relinking the ancient bond between having children

and having security in our old age.

One obvious way to do that in a way that would encourage fertility would be to legislate a change in the Social Security tax. It would involve a simple change in the FICA box on the W-4 payroll form. Persons who have no children would have more money deducted from their check, people with one child would have less deducted, those with two children, still less, and so on. If the rates were wisely scaled, such a program would be quite fair, as well as pro-natalist. It would be one more economic incentive to boost fertility: If you have more children, there will be more left in your paycheck.

It would also probably be a political disaster. People whose rates would be raised would scream bloody murder. Congress would quickly collapse under pressure. But perhaps the deed could be done somewhat painlessly. For Social Security taxes are slated to rise in steps in the years to come, from a maximum of \$4,788 in 1986 to \$5,208 in 2000, indexed for inflation.

Suppose you kept that already legislated raise in effect—but exempted from the raise any person with two or more children, or even cut their rate. That would leave the no-child and one-child payers paying substantially more of a Social Security tax than those payers with two or more children. The result is somewhat the same as the earlier model: The no-child and one-child payers would pay more than the bigger family units but, because the taxes are already legislated, it would be done in a way that might avoid a political blood bath.

Of course, under such a plan the Social Security Trust Fund could once again be temporarily short-changed. But, as has been explored here many times: pro-natalism involving money can only work if the money is big money. The useful myth we call the Social Security Trust Fund (which is really not a separate fund, nor is it in trust) is the easiest source of big money around; and if more babies are the result, the fund may well be partially or totally repaid just when it needs it. If not, we'll just have to pay taxes in the future for our pro-natalism now. We need the babies more than the money.

It should be added here that such pro-natalist ideas also make a great deal of sense in their own right, not as pro-natalism, but as sound social policy. In recent years, it has become clear that our major social problems revolve around our “child problem.” My colleague, Karl Zinsmeister, has made the point that in recent years children have lost out in the race for federal help. In the Seventies, the elderly got disproportionate shares of government monies. In the Eighties middle-aged people of the upper middle and upper classes did well with tax cuts. Children have been short-changed, and the poverty data show clearly that they are in poverty far disproportion-

ate to their numbers. They are, today, the most in need of help.

The preceding speculations—and that's all they are—are keyed to the American situation.

But most Western nations are in a similar situation. The pension funds are fat now, slated to get fatter as their Baby Boomers mature, and destined for deep trouble as the Baby Boomers reach retirement age. At that time, low Birth Dearth cohorts will be footing the bill at enormous cost to themselves, or refusing to pay the costs at enormous costs to the elderly.

The European nations devote more monies to pro-natalist policies than Americans do, but still a relatively small percentage of their gross national product compared to Eastern Europe. The West Europeans, like us, should think about tapping their pension trust funds now, in order to boost the levels of pronatalist policies, in order to raise fertility, and in order to provide more pension payers later.

That may turn out to be the best way to save their pension systems—and *their countries*. Remember, the Western European average TFR is 1.6 children per woman, well lower than the 1.8 in the U.S. Moreover, those rates apply to essentially nonpluralist countries that do not accept immigrants easily.

In short: Social Security is a Ponzi game, a pyramid scheme, a chain letter—the most elemental one in life. Grown children help support their aged parents. It works fine, wonderfully, as long as it is stoked by new players (children). When fertility falls drastically, the society has broken the ancient rules of the Ponzi pyramid. But it possibly can be restored by using present resources for future benefits. In the financial community there is a word for that process. It is called “investment.”

A business analogy is appropriate. When inflation rates were very high a few years ago, interest rates soared. Some businessmen were advised, “Don't invest in new capital equipment; you can get a better return by putting accrued earnings in a money market fund.” That strategy may have had a short term appeal, but most businessmen understood, sooner or later, that they were not in the money market business. Suppose you were a lumber company executive. You could take your available investment and get a 14 percent return from short-term financial investments; or you could invest the money in pine seedlings which would take, say, twenty years to mature into saleable lumber, with an annualized twenty year return of, say, 10 percent as opposed to the short-term securities yield of 14 percent.

What would you do? If you want to stay in the lumber business, about which you allegedly know something, you'd better plant the seedlings.

So, too, with the Social Security system, and with the nation as a whole. The surplus in the Social Security trust fund can be directed by Congress to be invested in government bonds, drawing interest (in a government-to-government bookkeeping transaction), hoarding its nest egg in order to be able to pay out pensions and probably medical insurance, but ultimately depleting itself anyway. Or it can be directed to use that money to try to help ensure that Social Security does not run out of seed-corn—that is, by helping to provide the next generations of payers and players for the system.

And it goes further than that. In the U.S. and in Western Europe, a large investment in baby bonuses can pay off not only by saving pension plans (important), but by helping to save what has come to be known as Western civilization (very important).

There are lots of other little ways to skin this cat. It may be that the most anti-natalist federal activity is in the realm of aid to college education. These days, most student financing comes from guaranteed loans, not grants—and about a third to a half of undergraduates leave school in debt. The average amount owed is almost \$9,000 for private school college graduates and \$7,000 for public school college graduates. The sums are rising.

This means that even if a young couple wanted to have children early in life, they might well delay until they could repay their loans, which could take many years.

Recommendation: Devise a schedule whereby a graduate who has a baby can have some of the loan forgiven and all of it postponed, interest-free.

Another idea: Establish “Day Care IRAs.” Let young couples put nontaxable money into an investment account to be drawn upon when a child is born, thereby diminishing the economic loss that occurs when a new mother loses her job.

As I have discussed these various money transfer programs with Washington policy makers, I have sometimes received a sharp reaction from some puristic conservatives. Translated, it goes something like this: “Ugh! More big government. Me no like.” or “That’s what McGovern wanted—\$1000 demogrant; no good.”

Well yes, sort of. A child allowance would end up sending a green federal check to the parents of every child in America, much as almost every elderly person gets a green Social Security check. Indeed, that can be said to be bigger government.

On the other hand, if the payments are fairly large (which they must be for it to work), these payments could be used to phase out scores of targeted social welfare programs, each with large bureaucracies. If you give parents of poor children enough real green cash

money, you may lessen or eliminate scores of programs, including: food stamps, welfare, rent supplements, and so on. Money, in the hands of individuals, is a commodity so ubiquitous that it can buy almost anything a federal program can provide, and can do it without big bureaucracies and without stigmatizing the recipient. Conservatives: reconsider.

The ideas here obviously interrelate. In the Congress, such thoughts would have to be dealt with by a morass of committees, making big-dollar legislation very difficult. Why not a Select Committee on the Family to sketch out a grand scheme?

Beyond all the government and private industry schemes, are there other ideas than can be encouraged? I think so.

Consider first the amorphous realm of *values*.

Divorce lawyers decrease fertility by helping people get out of the pool of potential mothers and fathers. Statistically speaking, it might figure to eliminate divorce. But, in practice, using muscle to try to reduce divorce makes little or no sense, and is coercive. Divorce is a private matter, usually mutually agreed upon, often beneficial to all concerned in the long run, even when there is much short term pain.

But how about encouraging remarriage? That is very different. It is noncoercive and typically healthy for all concerned. It sharply reduces the poverty rate in female-headed families, which is America's pre-eminent domestic problem. It often helps the children of prior marriages. And it tends to raise fertility.

Private institutions—churches and synagogues, fraternal groups, women's clubs, as well as neofeminist groups—should be encouraged to do more to establish the social conditions where young divorced men and women can meet potential new mates. This is happening already, but let's give it a shove if we can.

Another idea would be to thoroughly destigmatize the "personal" ads. They can be a good way for men and women to meet, divorced or single, young or not so young. If the *New York Times* began to take such ads, the stigma would disappear quickly.

Role models. Washington attorney Edith Fierst makes this point: Almost all the glamorous television programs and movies seem to show young, successful career women, with no apparent concern for their children, whose arrival was likely delayed by the demands of their career. How about some stories modeled on real-life, successful women who had children early, like Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick or Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (who each had three)? In our era people live longer and work longer—close to a fifty-year work span.

Time for childbearing can be taken early, still leaving forty or so years for a career.

An area where there could be more agreement between liberals and conservatives concerns the encouragement of adoption. In some cases, the right-to-life activists have encouraged adoption over abortion in a harsh way: by trying to legislate mandatory programs forcing pregnant women to get scary lectures and slide shows about the evils of abortion, replete with mangled fetuses.

Needless to say, the prochoice groups have fought such laws and in 1986 the Supreme Court overturned such a statute in Pennsylvania. I would agree with the Court's decision.

But there are good reasons to look for other alternatives. In the U.S. today there are an estimated two million couples, often desperate, seeking to adopt children—and there are few children to adopt, especially white children. An underground market has formed where costs run up to \$15-20,000 to “buy” a baby through private channels.

At the same time, there are 1.6 million abortions in the U.S. each year (versus 3.6 million live births). If only about 5 percent of the women changed their mind, did not abort the fetus, and gave the babies up for adoption, that would yield eighty thousand additional babies per year. That's a lot of babies, and twice that many sad potential adoptive parents who would be made much happier.

It would seem that a formula could be devised that would be thoroughly noncoercive, thoroughly nonthreatening, thoroughly non-scary, and yet encourage women to constructively consider the adoption alternative, possibly including generous financial support from prospective adoptive parents. Of course, most pregnant women seeking an abortion would still not choose the adoption route. But remember, if only one out of twenty would opt to do so, that would yield 80,000 babies.

Remarkable medical progress has already been made in the field of fertility enhancement. Says fertility specialist Dr. Howard Jones, of a renowned and pioneering Norfolk, Virginia fertility clinic: “We started with the notion that we were by-passing tubal disease. . . we have now come to the point where one or another of the (conception) alternatives can be offered patients almost regardless of what their sterility problem is, and that total concept of being able to go one more mile is, I think, the most rewarding aspect of the last five years.”

Dr. Jones is a distinguished physician—and an idealist. He is right;

there is already a great deal that is known about how to help infertile couples, as noted on page 125. Much money has been spent on research. But much more can be done; fertility enhancement should claim a high priority in medical research. Excuse the word, but it is inconceivable, and foolhardy, that the National Institutes of Health refuses to fund research about *in vitro* fertilization.

Beyond all that, there is need for a program to publicize the existing technology and knowledge. Many infertile couples still believe “there’s nothing to be done; it’s God’s will.” And beyond that, there is cost. Some of the available procedures can be expensive. Yet most standard medical group insurance plans do not cover fertility enhancement. They should.

The mega-story of “Baby M” raises other possibilities. Can surrogate parenting play a part in raising fertility? It would seem so, if a proper legal code can be established. A couple is deemed “infertile” if one partner can’t conceive. Surrogating allows the fertile partner to participate biologically and both partners to be hands-on parents. Surrogating provides offspring for people who seek to adopt but can’t find babies.

All truly pro-natal activity can be a great blessing, allowing people who desperately want children, to have them.

But fertility enhancement alone will by no means solve the problem of below-replacement fertility. For the Birth Dearth is caused in very large measure by people who *can* bear children not having them, and not caused by people who *can’t* bear children. One expert at the National Center for Health Statistics estimates that even if, with the wave of a magic wand, *every* infertile couple in America were made fertile—it would only raise the TFR from 1.8 to somewhere in the 1.9 to 2.0 range. (And *everyone* is not going to be made fertile no matter how far we extend our medical and financial resources.)

We should explore some new housing arrangements. Suburban home builders, probably the people most economically threatened by a continuing Birth Dearth, should be in the lead.

Among the highest birth rates in the Western world are on Israeli kibbutzim, where there are no private costs to raising children. A member’s earnings are given to the kibbutz. Housing, education, and food are provided for all members *and all children of all members*.

Obviously, such a relatively pure socialist system is neither applicable nor desirable here. But could a suburban homebuilder figure

out a way to provide some of the best fertility-enhancing features of the kibbutz—in a suburban, nonsocialist, modern Western setting? Could there be a community where husband and wife each work privately at whatever jobs they can get, where they will live in their own houses—but where the community provides every service that makes the combination of work-and-parenting easier? Such services could include on-site communal day care facilities for toddlers, “children’s houses” with eating privileges for whatever meals were necessary, and overnight dormitory facilities if Mother and Dad wanted to be away for a weekend or were away on business. The only real difference from a regular suburb would be extra high property taxes which would pay for most of the costs of rearing children but do it somewhat less expensively as an economy of scale comes into play.

Consider now some ideas in the international arena:

There is a little secret about international family-planning programs. They almost always are promoted solely on the basis of what’s-good-for-the-beneficiaries. Lower Third World birth rates, it’s said, will make economic progress come more quickly in less-developed countries. It’s good for maternal health. It will lessen food demand and hunger. It helps preserve the natural environment.

Some of these reasons are wholly valid, but some of these reasons are debatable. But what is rarely mentioned is that the promotion of lower fertility in the Third World is not only good for the recipients, but for the donor-nations as well. That’s us. That point is not made, however, because it is thought that it might sound colonial or racist: Here are white Western people lecturing the mostly nonwhite rest of the world to have fewer babies. Foundation executives and government officials are petrified of being put in that position.

But it is in our best long-term interest that fertility rates in the Less Developed Countries come down even more rapidly than they are now falling. That could help redress the coming demographic imbalances discussed in many places in this book.

We ought to have the courage to say publicly what is true about demographics, and not be afraid of being called “racist” or “colonial,” particularly because all the parties gain.

Family planning, on a personal level, is sound on its own merits in the Third World, although attacked by some on the conservative side of the spectrum. But if we publicly acknowledged that by promoting it in the Third World, we also gain from it geopolitically, we could help build a broader consensus for more family planning aid. Such an argument could help bring in more conservative political support.

Is this just a new Western imperialist dodge to put down the Third World? I don't think so. Milton Himmelfarb has come up with an appropriate analogy. He notes that when an emaciated person goes to a doctor, the patient is advised to gain weight. But when an obese person shows up, that doctor advises the patient to reduce. In my view, it would not be a bad policy for *all* nations to aim toward a TFR that is stable or slightly positive: in the range of 2.1 to 2.3. That means that we should go up, and the Third World nations go down. (The Third Worlders are at least on the right track. We are not.)

Accordingly, the U.S. and the Western nations ought to continue, and intensify, voluntary family-planning assistance to the poor countries of the world. If truly noncoercive, such programs only provide options for poor families that rich families in the West already have. And they can help us geopolitically.

One very good way to help assure that our values survive is to see to it that they who will inherit the earth share these values. Remember, a hundred years from now probably only about 5-7 percent of the world's population will be from the nations of the Western community. Accordingly, our foreign policy, and that of our allies, ought to become even more proselytizing than it is now. It ought to be aimed toward the development of what might be called a friendly "geoculture."

We should help cement Western values among the people of nations now on the brink of both democracy and modernism. If we do that, the world of the future will be a more secure and friendlier place for us. This is a policy the U.S. has pursued for many years. It is inherent in the goals of agencies like the United States Information Agency, Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, Radio Marti, the Agency for International Development, and parts of many other larger government agencies, including the Departments of State and Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a program specifically targeted for that purpose. It involves the participation of the AFL-CIO, the Chamber of Commerce and both major political parties. NED has sponsored programs all over the developing world to help establish free trade unions, to encourage free enterprise, to help free political processes flower, to encourage a free press and free religious institutions. Unfortunately, since its inception, it has been legislatively bashed and almost beheaded several times by coalitions of leftist liberals who think it is conservatively biased, and by conservatives who think its tilt is liberal. It has been put on short rations by the Congress: Funding now runs at a measly total of \$15 million a year. That amount should be dramatically increased.

There is another sort of public diplomacy we might try. Our government might take the lead in convening an international conference of all the free Western states that are facing the Birth Dearth situation. After all, the United Nations has a population meeting every ten years—but so far it has concentrated entirely on the population problems of the Third World. I was a member of the U.S. delegation to the UN Population Conference in 1984 in Mexico City and hardly a public word was written or uttered about the low fertility difficulties of the free modern world.

A Free World population conference could work toward several objectives. It would draw media attention from all over the world—particularly the Birth Dearth nations. Remember: Education and awareness come first.

A suitable budget could be raised to commission definitive papers on what works and what doesn't in the realm of pro-natalism.

Perhaps the best thing that could come from such a conference would be the understanding that this problem does not just concern individual countries but involves the entire modern world, and its future. When people are aware that their problems are not unique, they are in a stronger position to act.

Cultural diplomacy is not only a government affair. For example, American and Western-style businesses often spread our culture in a healthy way. Multinational corporations have carried the seeds of a market system to the corners of the world. Of particular importance is our movie and television industry. There are currently almost 150 million VCRs in the world. Almost all are manufactured in Japan. But most of the viewers are watching American cassettes. Moreover, most imported movies and television programs are American. Foreign governments have tried every dodge to limit their import, to maintain local cultural purity. New trade legislation before the Congress in 1987 provides that the President be allowed to retaliate commercially against nations who limit market access to our movies, television programs or cassettes. Such legislation should be enacted into law, and the President should act when appropriate.

There is reason to believe that Western political principles may be spreading. Example: Since 1980 there have been almost forty relatively free elections in two dozen Latin American nations. That represents a high-water mark for free elections in the history of the region.

In the last six years civilian presidents have replaced military rulers in Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, Honduras, Panama, Peru, Guatemala, El Salvador, Uruguay, and Brazil. Add those nations to the long-standing democracies in Colombia, Venezuela, and Costa Rica

and a remarkable fact emerges. Back in 1979 fully two thirds of the nations in Latin America were under military or military-directed governments. Today, 90 percent of Latin Americans live in countries that are democratic, or well on the road to democracy! And American election consultants, armed with 30-second television commercials, are going multinational, with a Latin beat. That's good, not bad.

Will these democracies take root and flourish? We do not know. There was some geopolitical euphoria in the 1960s when many Latin American nations moved in democratic directions—only to fall back.

Still the recent record is heartening, and we ought to act as if the Western-thinking bloc can be expanded, not only in Latin America, but elsewhere. Accordingly, we ought to devote increased effort toward that end. More economic aid, astutely targeted to those countries interested in developing free-market economies, free political processes, free labor unions, and a free press, would surely be of value.

Military aid to Nicaraguans and other peoples seeking free governments ought to be supported.

A strong Western military establishment must be maintained to prevent Communist expansion and adventurism, which, when successful, lead to a crushing of democratic values.

Even if Western fertility should climb back to the replacement level in the decades to come, the population of the Third World will be a much greater proportion of the world's population than it is now. Those Third World nations will also likely be richer and more powerful than they are now. That is why, as mentioned, it is so important to try to help them move toward a modernist and democratic future. But it is also why we had better pay more attention to their concerns now. In the future, these nations will be our customers, our suppliers, and—hopefully—our allies. If they are not, we will likely be in trouble.

Do we know enough about the Chinese, the Indians, the Indonesians, the Nigerians, the Brazilians? Do we know enough even of our next-door neighbors in Mexico? Do we know their languages? Do we know their cultures? We ought to. These are the demographic superpowers of the next century.

Surely, we want them to look toward Western values as they grow. Just as surely, that is more likely to happen if we are regarded as a sympathetic power, willing to listen and learn, if not necessarily always willing to heed.

Another important step down the road to long-term population sta-

bility would be for Western nations to step up their acceptance of legal immigrants. For political reasons, this is the most unlikely to happen in the ethnically homogeneous nations of Japan and Western Europe. It would seem to be politically plausible—but still difficult—in the United States. Now that the attempt has been made to curb *illegal* immigration with “employer sanctions” legislation, we should push for more *legal* immigration. This will be an uphill fight. Recall that the 1986 bill passed in large measure because legislators who favored immigration feared that if the bill didn’t pass in its current form, we would end up getting one *even more restrictive*. Here is how the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* described what went on behind the scenes:

Members of Congress and staff aides said that a major force for passage came from constituents who called their lawmakers after the bill’s Sept. 26 defeat, talked about their fears of increasing violence, drugs, and crime along the Mexican-American border, and said it was time to do something about illegal immigration. Another factor was a fear by congressional proponents, such as Reps. Peter W. Rodino, Jr. (D-N.J.) and Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) that if the bill were not enacted this year, it would come back later in a more repressive form. (*Wash Post*, Oct. 11, 1986.)

In the past, Hispanic Americans, including members of Congress, denounced the immigration bill because they said it would encourage employers to discriminate against Hispanic workers. But on Thursday four Hispanic members of the House voted for the bill. In general, they said they feared that any immigration bill in a future Congress would be even more restrictive. (*NY Times*, Oct. 10, 1986.)

In fact, we still may get immigration roll-backs, precisely because Americans are anti-immigration. Yet a fight for more legal immigration is legislative combat worth the effort. Moderately increased *legal* immigration could alleviate (although not wholly solve) some of the economic and geopolitical aspects of the Birth Dearth problems discussed here. As noted earlier, this would be less socially disruptive, and accordingly more politically plausible, if it occurred while the fertility rates of existing Americans were climbing back toward the replacement rate, away from Birth Dearth levels.

In any event, it would be useful to set to rest for once and for all the economically simplistic notion that immigrants take away jobs from natives. They don’t. Immigrants, at the same time, also create markets and other jobs.

Chapter 13

Spirit

An author often becomes obsessed by the thesis of the book he is working on. His Johnny-one-note ear is attuned to everything he hears, reads, or sees that has any relevance to his topic. And he also notes the significance of things he does not hear.

In late 1986 I attended a large dinner in Washington given by the Ethics and Public Policy Center. The honoree was William F. Buckley, Jr., who gave an interesting address. A major speech was delivered by President Reagan. Short toasts were offered by Jeane Kirkpatrick, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Nitze.

The substance of all the speechifying boiled down to this: There is a great global struggle going on, the future of liberty is at stake, Western values are under challenge, we do not yet know the outcome of this struggle. Strong military budgets were advocated; Star Wars was endorsed; Reagan-doctrine assertiveness in Nicaragua, Angola, Afghanistan, and Cambodia was applauded; frail, striped-pants, cookie-pusher State Department types were by implication denounced as not fully aware of the dangers of a hostile world.

As it happens, I agree with much (not all) of that point of view about the nature and proper role of American foreign policy. But as I sat there that night I was thinking about what I was not hearing. In my judgement, the major threat to Western values and the free world concerns the fact that, as the next century progresses, there won't be many free Westerners around to protect and promote those values. But American conservatives have not taken up this cause in a serious public way. To my ear that night, the silence was deafening.

Also in 1986, the Reagan administration issued a long-awaited task force report entitled *The Family: Preserving America's Future*. It dealt with welfare reform, taxation, education, divorce, poverty, illegitimacy, and adoption, among other things. Although it had a harsh, liberal-bashing tonality to it, a number of recommendations were quite sound. (Some of them resemble some ideas listed in this book.) But for a report aimed at preserving America's future, it is interesting to note that there was no mention of any plan, program or idea that was related specifically to the idea of raising fertility levels in this below-replacement-level nation of ours. Mind you, some of the programs endorsed had pro-natal effects, but that was not the rationale offered. These Reaganauts were profamily all right, but apparently afraid of the political repercussions of coming out in favor of more of that of which families are made: children.

The liberals are just as bad. They propose many programs to make it easier for women to have children. That is fine, and pronatalist. But the rationale offered for such programs never concerns the idea that below-replacement fertility rates are a problem in and of themselves. Too many liberals are still hung up on the idea that people are polluters. But they are also producers and providers. Vote for clean water bills *and* pro-natalist policies. They are not in conflict. More people provide the funds for more pollution control.

This avoidance of pronatalism for its own sake is not as common to the political democracies of Western Europe. Perhaps because their birth rates and immigration rates are generally lower than ours, it is at least politically acceptable to bring up the topic and propose remedies, although most typically the remedies suggested are not nearly commensurate with the magnitude of the problem they face.

In the U.S., everyone is for a family policy, everyone is for taking better care of children—and hardly a soul can be heard endorsing the idea of *more* children. And yet, I believe, that may be our major long-term problem both domestically, and as the leader of an alliance of free nations. On this issue, the American eagle is an ostrich.

It is about time we paid attention.

One of the very few modern countries in this world that has a fertility rate substantially above replacement value is Israel. The Israeli TFR, among the Jewish population, is 2.7. A bit of this stems from very high birth rates among ultraorthodox fundamentalist Jews, but even discounting that, it is very high by Western standards. It is high among Jews from both European and Oriental backgrounds. And, Israel's Jewish TFR is almost twice as high as that for Jews living elsewhere.

Why? Israel is not a perfect country by any means. Indeed, it is wracked by internal dissent, external threat, a staggering economy, a huge debt, and out-migration. Yet fertility is high.

Why is this? Is there a lesson here for us? I think, in a general way, perhaps there is. My sense is that Israel's fertility is high for two intertwined reasons: pride and fear.

For all their problems, most Israelis are proud of their beleaguered state and the transcendental mission they believe it has: to provide a well-populated Jewish homeland. And Israeli parents are afraid. Five major wars, other smaller conflicts, and terrorism have taken their toll of young Israeli men. Every time there is a war, Israeli soldiers get killed. About 2,500 young men were lost in the 1973 war with Egypt and Syria.

The parents of the dead soldiers grieve. And then many other parents think, maybe we'd better have another child, just in case in the future we lose our son. Obviously, this phenomenon cannot be measured. But it may well be that for every soldier killed in war, scores of new babies are conceived for personal "insurance."

Pride and fear. These intertwined elements should be present in our own demographic equation as well. We have something to fear and something to be proud of.

As I reflect upon our situation, it seems that despite all the plans and schemes advanced earlier, the real and lasting solution to our dilemma is not finally to be found in the realm of politics, the tax code, or the immigration code. Our central problem is in the realm of spirit. For in the last analysis, it is our spirit that shapes our politics, our tax code, and our immigration codes.

If our young people remain a generation that can be characterized as "me-oriented" or "self-actualizing," they probably will continue to have few children.

But suppose we could re-enspirit this generation to understand and take pride in the fact that they are part of a remarkable, potent, pro-

ductive, humane, beneficent culture. Suppose our young people in America and the other Western nations came to know in the marrow of their bones that the West is, as Lincoln said, the last best hope of mankind. Suppose it was explained that only they can preserve it and that there is something real to fear if they don't.

If such a spiritual rekindling process actually takes place among our young people—reacting to both pride and fear—it might bolster a civilization that has been a long time in the building. After all, it's not such a big deal: All it involves is having another baby.

I began this book saying it was a speculation. I end it that way, too: It is a speculation based on trends in motion, trends hard to reverse. Upon examination and reflection it should be clear that we have every reason to be concerned about the portents these trends may yield. And we should try to do something about it.

Appendix

The basic question asked in this book is this: what might happen in the future if Western fertility rates remain roughly where they are now? It is an elemental question, and a realistic one; it does not assume either an increase or decrease of fertility in the nations involved.

One would imagine that international projections with such assumptions are readily available. They are not. Most projections from major agencies dealing with international demographic statistics reflexively assume that low fertility rates in the West will rise within the fairly near future—even though rates currently still seem to be heading lower. One senses that there is a political and psychological aspect to these sunny projections. If you don't posit an up-turn the results are scary; they show nations slowly withering away.

In any event, to get the data necessary to examine a demographic future based on the demographic present, Karl Zinsmeister, my (then) research associate at the American Enterprise Institute, enlisted the help of Mrs. My T. Vu of the World Bank Policy and Research Division, Population, Health and Nutrition Department. Mrs. Vu is the editor of the World Bank's annual volume entitled *World Population Projections*, the most exhaustive and complete collection of its kind. For my purposes here, she ran a special projection, for what the World Bank calls the "Industrial Market Economy" countries (referred to in this book as the "Industrial Democracies," the "Western Community" or just "the West").

The standard projections used by the World Bank and the UN assume that Western fertility rates will climb in the future. (Thus, the "middle series" UN projection for a nine nation grouping in Western Europe assumes that the current Total Fertility Rate goes up to 2.1 by 2025, although the rate is now 1.5, and in the last few years went down. Even the "low series" variant incorporates, after a brief dip, assumptions of a major fertility increase among the Western nations.)

What Mrs. Vu did was feed in an assumption that held the Total Fertility Rate of each Industrial Democracy constant at its latest reported level as of 1984.

In only one other way do the projections used here differ from the

standard UN/World Bank model. The UN/World Bank estimate holds that net immigration will decline to zero for most Industrial Democracies by the year 2000, and for all by the year 2025. Given the historical pattern of immigration to the United States, this did not seem to be a supportable proposition. It is an important element of this book; after all, if immigration to the U.S. continues, it will help alleviate some, but by no means all, of the effects of low fertility patterns now evident. Accordingly, the figure of 435,000 net U.S. immigrants per year, which was the rate used by the World Bank when the projections were made, was held constant for the future in the projections used here, rather than allowing it to descend to zero. For reasons explained in the text on page 22 and in a technical footnote on page 25, this projection seems to be as valid as any offered up in a confused field.

All the other demographic assumptions used in this projection are the standard ones used by the UN/World Bank in their publications. Thus, population for the base year of 1980 is taken from standard UN figures. Mortality levels and trends were taken from standard UN figures (which posit that life expectancy at birth in the West will rise from 75.5 years today to over 80 years by 2025). Third World nations are assumed to continue on a downward fertility path (from their current high levels), ultimately reaching replacement levels about 60 years from now. Extant fertility levels were also taken from standard UN sources.

The results of these projections are summarized in this appendix. They are displayed in a number of charts in the book. And they are speculated upon at length.

**CHART 1 TOTAL FERTILITY RATE IN THE UNITED STATES
1945-85**

Expressed as lifetime births per woman

1945	2.49	1966	2.72
1946	2.94	1967	2.56
1947	3.27	1968	2.46
1948	3.11	1969	2.46
1949	3.11	1970	2.48
1950	3.09	1971	2.27
1951	3.27	1972	2.01
1952	3.36	1973	1.88
1953	3.42	1974	1.84
1954	3.54	1975	1.78
1955	3.58	1976	1.74
1956	3.69	1977	1.79
1957	3.77	1978	1.76
1958	3.70	1979	1.81
1959	3.71	1980	1.84
1960	3.65	1981	1.82
1961	3.63	1982	1.83
1962	3.47	1983	1.80
1963	3.33	1984	1.81
1964	3.21	1985	1.84 (Provisional)
1965	2.91	1986	1.80 (Provisional)

Source: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, *Vital Statistics of the United States.*

CHART 2A TOTAL FERTILITY RATES IN THE WESTERN COMMUNITY 1960-1985*

	Expressed as lifetime children per woman					
	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985 (or latest available)
Canada	3.8	3.1	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.7 (1984)
Sweden	2.2	2.4	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7
Japan	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.8 (1984)
Belgium	2.5	2.6	2.2	1.7	1.7	1.5
Austria	2.6	2.7	2.3	1.8	1.7	1.5
Italy	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.1	1.7	1.4
Switzerland	2.3	2.6	2.1	1.6	1.6	1.5
Finland	2.7	2.4	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.7
France	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.0	2.0	1.8
U.K.	2.7	2.7	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.8
U.S.	3.7	2.9	2.5	1.8	1.8	1.8
Norway	2.8	2.9	2.5	2.0	1.7	1.7
Luxembourg	2.3	2.3	2.0	1.5	N.A.	1.4
Netherlands	3.1	3.0	2.6	1.7	1.6	1.5
Denmark	2.5	2.6	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.4
West Germany	2.3	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.5	1.3
Ireland	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.5	3.3	2.5
Israel (Jewish Population)	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.2	2.8	2.7 (1984)
Iceland	4.3	3.7	2.8	2.6	N.A.	1.9
Spain	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.5	1.7 (1983)
Australia	3.5	3.0	2.9	2.2	1.9	2.0 (1984)
New Zealand	3.9	3.6	3.2	2.3	2.1	2.2 (1984)

*Includes some data of later date than reflected on Chart 2A, page 17.

Source: World Tables, Third Edition, Volume II, World Bank. Recent Demographic Developments in the Member States of the Council of Europe, Council of Europe, 1986. World Development Report, World Bank, various years. Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1981.

CHART 4A PERCENT CHANGE OVER DECADE IN TOTAL POPULATION OF WESTERN INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES 1950-2100*

1950-1960	+12.5 percent
1960-1970	+10.9 "
1970-1980	+ 8.2 "
<i>Projected</i>	
1980-1990	+ 5.0 "
1990-2000	+ 3.6 "
2000-2010	+ 1.9 "
2010-2020	+ 0.5 "
2020-2030	- 1.3 "
2030-2040	- 3.1 "
2040-2050	- 4.2 "
2050-2060	- 4.3 "
2060-2070	- 4.3 "
2070-2080	- 4.3 "
2080-2090	- 4.2 "
2090-2100	- 4.1 "

**Note:* Industrial democracies include Canada, U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Source: Calculated from *World Population Prospects*, United Nations, 1985; and Special World Bank projection (see Appendix "Notes," page 170).

CHART 4B PROJECTED TOTAL POPULATION OF CURRENT WESTERN DEMOCRATIC INDUSTRIAL NATIONS 1985-2100* (MILLIONS)

1985	732
1990	749
2000	776
2010	791
2020	795
2030	785
2040	761
2050	729
2060	698
2070	668
2080	639
2090	612
2100	587

**Note:* Current industrial democracies include Canada, U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Source: Special World Bank projection (see Appendix "Notes," page 170).

**CHART 4F PROJECTED POPULATION OF EASTERN EUROPE
1985-2100* (MILLIONS)**

1985	116
1990	119
2000	124
2010	130
2020	134
2030	138
2050	141
2080	145
2100	146

**Note:* Includes the following countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania.

Source: World Population Projections 1984, The World Bank.

**CHART 4G PROJECTED POPULATION OF THE SOVIET UNION
1985-2100 (MILLIONS)**

1985	277
1990	288
2000	306
2010	320
2020	333
2030	344
2050	357
2080	372
2100	375

Source: World Population Projections 1984, The World Bank.

**CHART 4H PROJECTED POPULATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL
COMMUNIST WORLD 1985-2100* (MILLIONS)**

1985	393
1990	407
2000	430
2010	450
2020	467
2030	482
2050	498
2080	517
2100	521

**Note:* Includes the following countries: USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania.

CHART 4I PROJECTED POPULATION OF THE LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES 1985-2100* (BILLIONS)

1985	3.66
1990	4.05
2000	4.88
2010	5.75
2020	6.55
2030	7.30
2050	8.40
2080	9.24
2100	9.46

*Note: Less Developed Countries include all nations of Africa, Asia, Central and South America, except Japan.

Source: *World Population Projections 1984*, World Bank.

CHART 4J WORLD POPULATION 1950-2100* (MILLIONS)

	Industrial Democracies	Less Developed Countries plus Soviet Bloc
1950	528	1,942
1960	594	2,382
1970	659	2,983
1980	713	3,696
1985	731	4,064
<i>Projected</i>		
1990	749	4,455
2000	776	5,312
2010	791	6,202
2020	795	7,019
2030	785	7,784
2040	761	
2050	729	8,898
2060	698	
2070	668	
2080	639	9,761
2090	612	
2100	587	9,984

*Note: Industrial democracies include the following countries: Canada, U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Soviet Bloc refers to the USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. Less Developed Countries as according to standard UN definition.

Source: Actual Population Levels—*World Population Prospects*, United Nations, 1985. Projections—For Industrial Democracies, Special World Bank projection (see Appendix “Notes,” page 170). For rest of world, *World Population Projections 1984*, World Bank.

CHART 5A CHANGE IN U.S. POPULATION BY DECADE 1850-2100 (PERCENT)

1850-1950	+20.6 percent per decade		
1950-1960	+18.4	”	”
1960-1970	+13.4	”	”
1970-1980	+11.4	”	”
<i>Projected</i>			
	at constant current-level fertility		at a TFR of 1.63 by '2000
1980-1990	+8.5	percent per decade	+8.5 percent per decade
1990-2000	+6.1	”	+5.2
2000-2010	+5.1	”	+3.9
2010-2020	+4.1	”	+2.4
2020-2030	+1.5	”	-0.5
2030-2040	-0.6	”	-2.7
2040-2050	-1.4	”	-3.8
2050-2060	-1.4	”	-4.1
2060-2070	-1.9	”	-4.6
2070-2080	-1.8	”	-4.3
2080-2090	-1.8	”	-4.2
2090-2100	-1.8	”	-4.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. Special World Bank projection (see Appendix “Notes,” page 170).

CHART 5B U.S. POPULATION 1950-2100 (MILLIONS)

1950	151 million	
1960	179	”
1970	203	”
1980	227	”
<i>Projected</i>		
	at constant current-level fertility	at a TFR of 1.63 by 2000
1990	247 million	247 million
2000	262	”
2010	76	”
2020	287	”
2030	291	”
2040	289	”
2050	285	”
2060	281	”
2070	276	”
2080	271	”
2090	266	”
2100	261	”

Source: Special World Bank projection (see Appendix “Notes,” page 170).

**CHART 8A POPULATION OF EUROPEAN ALLIES 1985-2100*
(MILLIONS)**

	Total	West Germany Alone
1985	329 million	61 million
2005	337 "	59 "
2025	324 "	51 "
2045	294 "	41 "
2060	257 "	32 "
2085	226 "	26 "
2100	205 "	20 "

**Note:* European allies include Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Source: Special World Bank projection (see Appendix "Notes," page 170).

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When today's American children grow up, he warns, they may no longer be living in the most important nation in the world. In fact, the most cherished values of our Western Civilization may be under attack or eroding.

Already, Ben Wattenberg writes, as a result of the early part of the Birth Dearth—the part that has *already* happened—in the 1990s the number of young adults in their late twenties and early thirties in the U.S. will diminish by almost 20 percent.

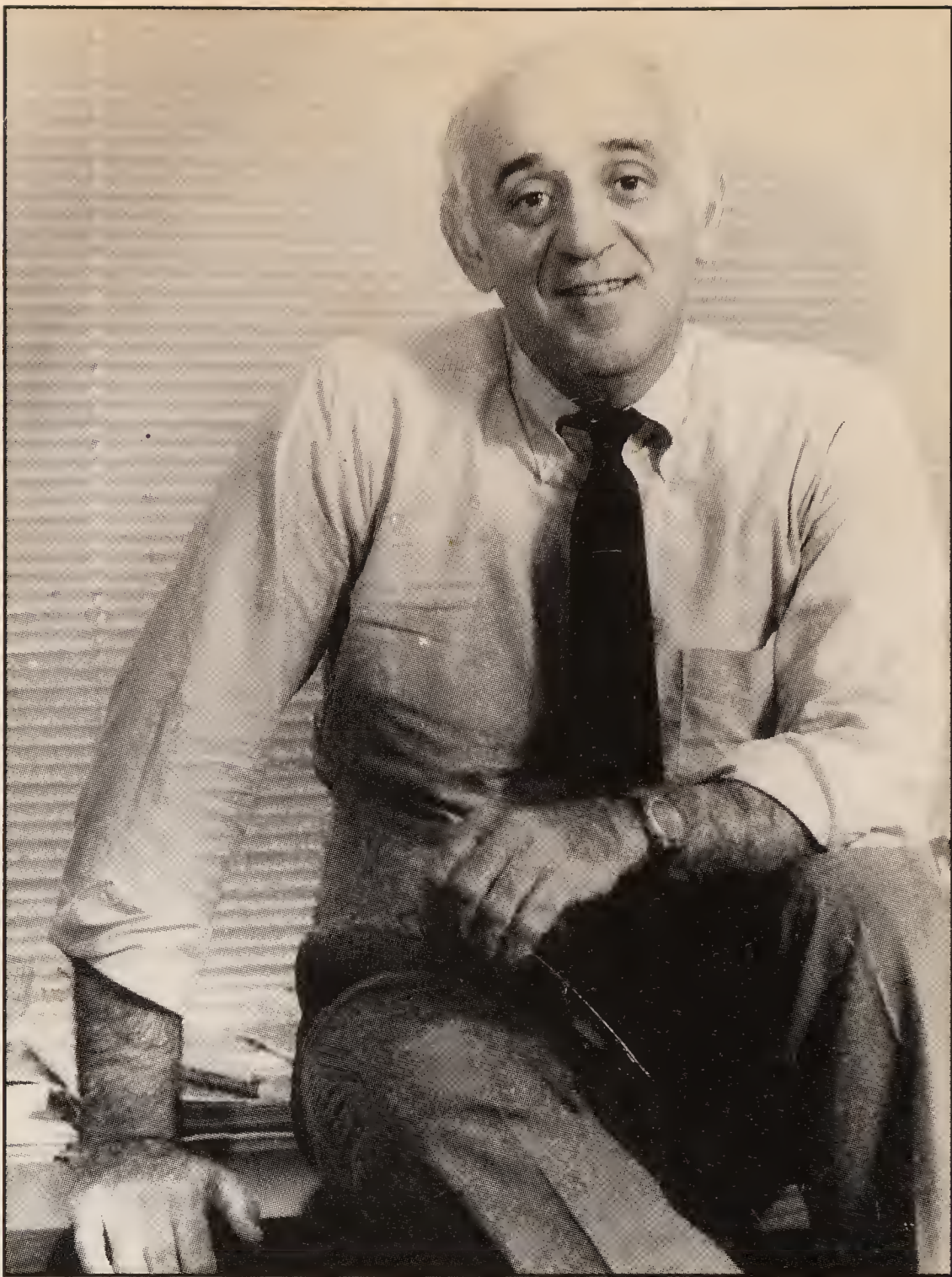
Consider some business implications: With fewer young adults, who will buy houses? What will happen to construction workers? Who will buy the records and the movie tickets? What will happen to the profit streams of U.S. corporations as their European subsidiaries face population decline even more quickly than we?

One thing is sure: It will be a very different America.

In earlier times, population growth covered a multitude of sins. A business could lose a share of its market but still increase sales and profits, making mediocre executives look like heroes. Not in the future: lose a share of a constant-size market—and you lose!

For both businessmen and government planners, a simple and familiar message with a new urgency: *forewarned is forearmed.*

The same is true for today's young men and women, Wattenberg says. They are less likely to marry and less likely to bear children. The single and childless life can be fun today—but it may lead to a hollow existence in the future, when all the children and the grandchildren belong to someone else.



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