

# Book Reviews

## GROW OR DIE!

By James A. Weber. Arlington House Publishers, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1977. Pp. 255. Price \$11.95.

This book argues that the claim of zero population growth advocates that the United States is overpopulated is nonsense. It argues that their recipe is one for stagnation, the evanescence of American power, and the twilight of American freedom.

Now I happen to agree that the flight of European man from fertility is an ominous indication of civilizational decay and that every effort should be made to reverse this trend. The main reason is that European man, including those of us born in overseas areas of European settlement naturally, is the primary creator of modern civilization. For better or worse, we are the main carriers and developers of that civilization. Should we condemn ourselves to biological extinction, the fate of civilization would probably rest in the hands of the other large group of highly intelligent and creative peoples—the Mongolids of Japan and perhaps China. They would conceivably do a better job than we have. They deserve our good wishes, but there is no good reason why we should retire from the scene and leave the burden entirely to them.

But, unfortunately, Mr Weber does not see that the issue is precisely that of the *quality* of populations, of a direction of Darwinian selection such that the more intelligent, innovative and creative peoples should multiply and cover the earth.

In fact, he explicitly condemns population control advocates for taking the *e* out of equality. To him, it would seem, everybody who fits biologically into the species *Homo sapiens* is of equal value.

With this populist approach—one that is popular in the U.S. today in the era of corn-pone and peanut democracy—it is inevitable that he should proclaim absurdities. We learn that “the history of the past few centuries constitutes a complete refutation of Malthus’s views,” that “the ideology of population control is ultimately a moral aberration resulting from man’s turning away from God . . .” and so forth. The book is filled with beguiling arguments, industriously buttressed with evidence, which often unfortunately miss the point.

Yet this book has enough valuable material in it to make it well worth reading. Weber blasts the argument that the United States is today overpopulated. He shows that the Cassandras of ZPG have underestimated our raw materials resources and been proved wrong by events. He demonstrates, to my mind cogently, that the environmentalists’ chant of doom on ecology misreads the historic record. On balance, man has been a pollution eliminator. The contrast between Nature and Artifice, which seems to be part of the naive Rouseauian *Weltanschauung* of the self-appointed friends of the earth is as ridiculous as the Noble Savage. All this is supported by a wealth of factual evidence admirably presented.

Mr Weber has done his readers an additional service. He has pointed to some of the inhuman, totalitarian and—to put it plainly—vicious proposals which some zero population growth advocates have sought to foist on the American people as social reforms. Kingsley Davis is quoted as making the evil suggestion that the state force unmarried pregnant women to abort their fetuses. Planned Parenthood-World Population entertains as possibilities compulsory sterilization of every parent of two children and governmental encouragement of homosexuality! Martha K. Willing, treasurer of Population Dynamics, proposed that parents of a third child should be forced to present themselves to Big Brother for

sterilization, failing which their child should be sterilized. Some of the people quoted seem to combine a pathological hatred of children with a desire to force the American middle class and intelligentsia to commit biological hara-kiri. One regrets that their parents were not all third children in the Martha Willing utopia.

NATHANIEL WEYL

## THE HUNTING HYPOTHESIS

By Robert Ardrey. Atheneum, 1976. Pp. 242. Price \$10.00.

Ardrey's latest book co-ordinates the available evidence in support of the significant generalizations concerning human evolution which he has advanced over the past 15 years. Since the publication of *African Genesis*, field studies by Goodall, Kruuk, Mech, Schaller and Turnbull; skeletal discoveries by the Leakeys, Johanson and Howell, and the theoretical and synthesizing works of Clark, Cole, Darlington, Washburn, De Vore and Wilson have reinforced some of Ardrey's insights and helped transform heresy into established dogma.

A central thesis of the present volume is: "Man is a man, and not a chimpanzee, because for millions upon millions of evolving years we killed for a living."

The forced transition of our remote ancestors from arboreal life and a largely vegetarian diet during the Pliocene drought gave them bipedal stance, caused changes in skeletal and foot structure, made them hunters and carnivores, fathered the invention of weapons, and encouraged the growth of brain. A sexual revolution marked by year-round female availability for sex and breeding strengthened the family bond and the sexual differentiation of roles. As predators, we developed such traits as co-operation, courage, and sacrifice of the individual for group survival.

The glacial challenge is depicted as central to the mental and social development of *Homo sapiens*. Originally harnessed to keep man warm in the intense cold of the ice ages, fire became a basic instrument of socialization and a milestone of evolution. It stimulated the development of language and religion. With the evolution of speech, hunting bands could expand into large aggregations under a single command, capable of firedriving mammoth and oryx into cul-de-sacs and over cliffs.

A plausible, but unstated, implication is that those races which remained in regions little affected by glaciation lacked the incentive to create fire (though they probably utilized existing fires) and hence missed a fundamental stage in the transformation of manlike bipeds into human beings capable of creating civilizations.

Ardrey sees the Neolithic Revolution as a direct response to the recession of the glacial ice in the North Temperate Zone some 12,000 years ago. This made whole continental regions suitable for tillage. Mastery of fire, enabling our ancestors to make grains and legumes readily digestible through cooking, was another catalyst. The time-span between glacial recession and Neolithic Revolution may have been devoted to the restoration of formerly ice-covered lands to climax vegetation and to the expansion of human numbers from the hunting bands that created the Lascaux cave paintings to the millions needed for the irrigation civilizations.

Ardrey's new book summarizes a great deal of tantalizing new research and work in progress on the frontiers of the several sciences cognate to the study of the origins of man. The book is marred by an excessively exuberant style and by Ardrey's tendency to describe processes in terms of simple cause and effect rather than casual interaction and positive feedback. *The Hunting Hypothesis* is rich in insights and speculations. It is perhaps more important for the questions it asks than for the answers it proffers.

NATHANIEL WEYL