The wages of the poor diminish as their wants and families increase, for the care and labor of attending to the family leaves them fewer hours for profitable work. With negro slaves, their wages invariably increase with their wants. The master increases the provision for the family as the family increases in number and helplessness. It is a beautiful example of communism, where each one receives not according to his labor, but according to his wants.  

The absolute size of the families stands in inverse proportion to the wage level, that is, to the mass of means of subsistence at the disposal of the various categories of workers. This law of capitalist society would sound absurd among savages.... It recalls the mass reproduction of individually weak and much-hunted-down animal species.

Both the workingmen and their political patrons...firmly maintain the belief that the rate of wages ought to be what a workingman needs to make him "comfortable," let his habits and the size of his family...be what they may.... This, disguise it as we may, is communism, doubtless imperfectly developed and unorganized, but still communism....

The most specialized or targeted policy that states (and employers) have developed for alleviating the impoverishment associated with above-average or even any reproduction is the system of family or children's allowances or endowments. The controversy surrounding these redistributive programs is rooted in their perceived multivalence, ranging from payments for reproductive services rendered to an authoritarian state to a proto-to-each-according-to-his-needs regime. The first section of this chapter is devoted to the theoretical and social policy arguments that have traditionally been used to justify or attack such intervention. The second and third sections then survey the history of such programs in Europe and of their exceptional absence in the United States.
The significant question is not whether they have more dependants than their wages can support, or what level of wage supports a "reasonable" number of dependants, but why...such a high proportion of the national resources available for distribution...is channeled through the individual wage system rather than through the child benefit and social security systems and, say, an income scheme for married women working in the home.5

For two centuries, from the time of the classical political economists' debates over the relationship between wages and the poor laws to late-twentieth-century polemics in the United States over capping AFDC payments to mothers who continue to procreate while on the dole, contestants have bemoaned or extolled the fact that wages are paid without reference to individual workers' special needs, in particular to the costs associated with the size of their generational contribution. Malthus, for example, asserted that "nothing would tend so effectually to destroy" the purchasing power of the working classes as family allowances. A century later, Beatrice Webb rejected the principle of determining wages based on family obligations because it contravened the trade union principle of a standard rate of remuneration. Wages differentiated according to family size would prompt employers to hire childless workers, whose lower wages would contradict the principles underlying the market, individual differences in efficiency, and collective bargaining. With both employers and workers opposed to wages that made provision for dependents, Webb proposed a state-organized children's endowment in order to maintain the population without recourse to alien immigration.6

When European Catholics, feminists, humanitarians, and socialists began, about the time of World War I, advocating state-financed redistributional schemes in the form of family allowances in order to avoid the major cause of poverty associated with large families that employers could not be expected to alleviate by means of individually graduated wages, both critics and supporters promptly recognized the proposal as ushering in a quasi-communist regime of "to each according to his needs." In Australia, a pioneer in state intervention in capital-labor relations, the notion that the costs of producing the supply of labor should be socialized gained ground in the 1920s. A.B. Piddington, an industrial arbitration court judge, conceded that individual employers had no economic or humane obligation to pay their workers according to family size, but insisted that there was "every reason why employers as a whole...should pay for the living needs of their employees as a whole. Indeed, that they should do so is the basis of the whole theory of the living wage."77

A typical antisocialist response of the 1920s characterized family allowances as "a scheme for the nationalisation of children and married women." And D.H. Macgregor, the editor of Britain's most prestigious economics journal and a professor at Oxford, expressed his contempt by asking whether "there were no such
thing as personal responsibility” especially since children, rather than being “a pure tax, an obligation undertaken by parents on behalf of the community...should be regarded as...a usual way of obtaining the real values from money.” Paternalist and socialist advocates of the allowance praised it for exactly the same reason antisocialists rejected it. A French deputy, proposing the adoption of family allowances for state employees in 1908, reasoned that whereas the wage was “an act of justice” and consequently did not signify any inequality between the bachelor and married man, the allowance “is a remuneration for a service. The family is a social service.” Even in opposition, Harry Holland, the first parliamentary leader of the Labour Party in New Zealand, the first country to enact a state-financed family allowance, justified it on the ground that “every mother of a large family, who renders a supreme service to the country by the fact of her motherhood, is made to suffer because she has rendered that service.”

The Swedish social democrats Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, who internationalized and reenergized the debate about family allowances and population in the 1930s, rejected the family wage as a dysfunctional ideological merger between employers’ interest in low wage costs and a national interest in children’s welfare. Alva Myrdal also detected an unacceptable connection between substandard wages and family allowances: the family wage becomes “a belly-strap...drawn as close to the spine as possible” because employers can use family allowances to reduce the wage level. The solution that the Myrdals offered—driven in part by a eugenicist program—was to “nationalize differential child costs” by socializing segments of consumption through in-kind, non-means-tested free goods and services associated with childbirth and childrearing largely by redistributing income from those with below-average procreative contributions. In-kind programs would moderate the cost because they would make possible economies of cooperation and large-scale enterprise. Although the costs would be colossal, since children had to be supported in any case, they represented transfers rather than additional costs.

Liberal Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King, a lifelong bachelor, whose World War II government enacted North America’s first and only universal state-financed family allowance program, also paternalistically stressed the service rendered by the one-fifth of the gainfully employed who were raising 84 percent of the children—who “are an asset to the state”—“by ensuring the survival of the nation.” But King also advanced an egalitarian motive. Although he denied that he was inveighing against capital in the interests of labor, he observed that “the new order of things” would cease to take for granted “these differences in class and opportunity” and would “shift the emphasis from the sacredness of possession to the sacredness of life.” Arguing that only the agency of the state could save the industrial classes from the degradation of their standard of living, King supported family allowances because generally: “Capital...can wait; labour cannot wait. Capital can find other means of investment; labour cannot. Labour...cannot change quickly from one occupation to another; capital is mobile; labour is not...” The egalitarian rhetoric is impressive—especially in light of the legislation’s origin in Canadian capital’s interest in devising an alternative to the removal of controls on
substandard wages to which King was known to be sympathetic.\textsuperscript{10}  

Family allowances, like many family- and birth control-related policies, are politically multivalent. The European experience of rationing during World War I made family-size as a criterion of distribution both familiar and plausible. After all: “No one would have proposed...that the unmarried worker should have as much sugar or flour as his fellow-employee who was the father of a family. The absurdity of giving uniform allowances of food to men with unequal numbers of mouths to feed was so patent that it led...to the inquiry whether it was any less absurd to give these men equal amounts of money to spend for food.” When French socialist unions attacked the system in the early 1920s on the grounds that it both relieved employers of even larger wage payments and aimed at playing off parents and childless workers against each other: “The paradoxical spectacle was then presented of the C.G.T. unionists, who are anti-capitalistic and largely communistic in their beliefs, raising the individualistic shibboleth of ‘equal pay, equal work,’ while the conservative French capitalists declared that the proper standard of wage payment was that of ‘to each according to his needs.’”\textsuperscript{11}  

In contrast, other early advocates sought to cast economic subsidies for large families as yet another contingency or vicissitude of life against which social insurance could protect workers: “The arrival of a child and the cost of providing for it have the same effect in lowering the standard of living as a stretch of unemployment or the occurrence of illness.” Just as a segment of the British labor movement in the 1920s took a socialist view of family allowances as falling within the scope of the principle, “to each according to his needs,” by the following decade Conservatives favored them in imperialist, racialist, and pronatalist terms. The British government, in turn, adopted family allowances in order to hold down wages, combat inflation, and enforce labor mobility, work incentives, and the welfare principle of less eligibility. Yet another part of the labor movement opposed family allowances precisely because of their wage-suppressing properties, while the radical left, arguing that allowances transformed the poor into paupers, instead proposed a guaranteed minimum in kind.\textsuperscript{12}  

British eugenicists on the eve of World War I offered yet another reason for family endowments. Harold Laski, who as a precocious high school student had fallen under the influence of Francis Galton and Karl Pearson, found in his study of Glaswegian families that: “The addition of 9 to 10 children to a family does not on the average involve an increase of the wages by more than a shilling a week, which is absolutely inadequate.... No regard is on the whole paid to size of family when the wages are fixed.” Viewing this relationship as “one of the gravest points of our modern civilisation,” Laski joined Pearson and the latter’s collaborators in positing the proportionality between wages and “social value as measured by physique and mentality” as well as between family size and wages as “for the future of the race far more important than doles to the aged or vails to the sick and unemployable.”\textsuperscript{13}  

Catholic doctrine, animated especially by Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 anti-socialist encyclical, \textit{Rerum novarum}, and even more specifically, by Pius XI’s
Quadragesimo anno, took the position that "to each according to his needs" as a principle of compensation both embraced family allowances and was consistent with the family living wage in its full patriarchal sense of gender subordination. John Ryan, a Catholic theologian who provided a powerful animus to the movement for the family living wage at the beginning of the twentieth century, personified this dual position. Not only did he vindicate "the right to a family Living Wage...to every adult male laborer, whether he intends to marry or not" and propose four or five children as the average number to be supported by that wage, but he also urged that: "The welfare of the whole family, and that of society likewise, renders it imperative that the wife and mother should not engage in any labor except that of the household." The wife who became a worker was no longer a wife because she would no longer be able to "make her home what it should be for her husband, her children and herself." In the United States, President Samuel Gompers of the still youthful American Federation of Labor, while opposing any state measures to impose such a wage on private employers and employees, supported a minimum living wage as "sufficient to maintain an average-sized family in a manner consistent with whatever the contemporary local civilization recognizes as indispensable to physical and mental health...."

Although the assumption that an adult male worker's wage should be sufficient to support his family may at one point have been "the cornerstone of our social organization with its family unit," it was equally true that his wage was "inadequate to maintain a desirable standard of living" for a family with several children. This pre-World War II finding assumes greater comparative significance in light of recent right-wing antifeminist lamentations over the state's "infinite capacity to harm...the family and very limited ability to help it." Allan Carlson has stood at the scholarly center of these efforts. Without offering a historically detailed account of its chronological rise, Carlson asserts that an informally or culturally constructed family wage emerged in the United States prior to World War I, which was then supplemented by a state-coerced family wage during the New Deal. He finds that this living wage system, which enabled the male of the species to finance its reproduction while the female was linked to motherhood and home, "held together" until the early 1970s. At that point it began to collapse under the weight of "the devastating effects of state-enforced gender equality in the workplace...."

The breakdown of gender-segregation is symbolized above all by the rise of the wage-working wife-mother. Thus if the participation rate in the civilian labor force of married women (spouse present) with offspring under 6 years of age was only 10.8 percent in 1948 and 18.6 percent in 1960, by 1987 the figure had tripled to 56.8 percent; the corresponding figures for those with offspring between the ages of 6 and 17 were 26.0, 39.0, and 70.6 percent respectively. For all married women with children, the participation rates in 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1992 were 27.6, 39.7, 54.1, and 67.8 percent respectively. Looked at from a somewhat different perspective: in 1962, two-thirds of white families with children consisted of two parents of whom the wife-mother was not a wage-worker while one-quarter...
consisted of two parents including a wage-working wife-mother; by 1983 parity was almost achieved: the corresponding figures were 44.8 percent and 40.9 percent respectively.\textsuperscript{16}

The problem with Carlson's idealized account of the halcyon days of the family living wage is that they never existed. The need for and introduction of family allowances in Europe and Australasia beginning in the 1920s demonstrated at the time that going wages for men, even specifically designated by arbitration courts as family living wages, did not suffice to support large families.\textsuperscript{17} Worse still for Carlson's thesis, the minimum wage established in the United States by the Fair Labor Standards Act, which he views as the centerpiece of the New Deal's creation of a "family wage for dad" and as "keyed to a 'living standard' for a family of four," was never seriously considered as guaranteeing a family living wage—especially since at the time of its enactment the vast majority of sub-minimum-wage workers were excluded from coverage. Even at 40 cents an hour, which was 15 cents higher than the initial minimum wage in 1938, Congress was clear that this mandatory floor could not, even for those workers "fortunate enough" to work year-round, guarantee "a wage sufficient to maintain...the minimum American standard of living." By 1959, at the height of what Carlson calls the postwar resurgence of family values, and the first year for which the federal government created poverty thresholds, the minimum wage failed to reach that line for families even with one child. By the mid-1980s, it fell below the poverty threshold even for two people.\textsuperscript{18} The failure of the family wage was underscored when the Bureau of the Census revealed that, in 1992, 14 percent of men working full-time received wages below the poverty level for a family of four—a share almost double that in 1979. Nevertheless, conservative poverty policy analysts blithely continue to assert that: "It seems clear that wages are generally high enough to avoid poverty by the government's definition."\textsuperscript{19}

Precisely the multipurpose and multivalent character of the agitation on behalf of family allowances prompted the dean of pre-New Deal U.S. advocates of social security to complain about the extraneous ideological baggage with which family wage proponents had unnecessarily weighed down the security for the overburdened large family, which was the last of all the contingencies of modern life to be recognized. Abraham Epstein believed that shorn of "exotic theories...to...reform...everything in sight," to redistribute income, create a living and minimum wage, establish the principle of "to each according to his needs," or equal pay for equal work, to improve the race, honor motherhood, promote feminism, or increase or decrease the birth rate, family allowances could escape from their supposed status as a panacea and be reduced to social insurance against yet another form of economic insecurity.\textsuperscript{20} Ironically, Epstein advanced this criticism just as family allowances had embarked on their almost universal incorporation into the world's social welfare systems.

Whether, however, the "general case for Family Allowances follows so clearly from the Socialist maxim, 'To each according to his need': that we do not propose to enlarge upon the principle," as the British socialist Independent Labour
Part of the ILP’s advocacy of family allowances was an adjunct to its campaign for a more clear-cut socialist policy (“Socialism in our Time”), which it pressed after the fall of the Labour government in 1924. Although the drive subsided in the wake of the defeat of the general strike of 1926, for several years the ILP achieved some success in impressing upon the Labour Party the overarching importance of a living wage for all workers as a first charge on national income.

One obstacle to the implementation of such a proposal was the frequently voiced empirical complaint—which can be traced back to the Ricardo-Trower debate—that if the principle of equal pay for equal work was to be preserved, childless workers would receive a bonus. Thus in the 1920s, more than half of English adult male workers were bachelors, widowers, or married with no children, whereas only one-fifth had more than three dependent children; in Australia, the corresponding figures were three-fifths and one fifth, whereas only one-fifth of Belgian families had no children and more than two-fifths had three or more. Rowntree’s special study of the working class in York in 1936 revealed that of men 21 years of age and older 58 percent had no dependent children, 21 percent only one child, 12 percent two children, and 5 percent three children; among the child-rich fathers, only 2 percent four children, and 2 percent five or more children, although they accounted for 23 percent of all children.

Early twentieth-century budget studies scrutinizing the adequacy of adult males’ wages commonly adopted the three-child family as a norm. Researchers may have used this standard because they believed both that it was empirically accurate and represented replacement-level reproduction. By the mid-1920s, however, Paul Douglas demonstrated that the five-person family was far from modal. In England and the United States only 10 percent and 12 percent respectively of adult male workers supported three children; and whereas 50-60 percent of workers had fewer children, 10-15 percent had more. Consequently, a wage sufficient to support a five-person family “would be more than adequate in English speaking countries for between 70 and 80 per cent of all workers while it would be less than needed in from 10 to 15 per cent.” In the United States alone such a wage “would mean paying for...47 million fictitious dependents.... Without meeting the basic needs of those with large families, it would pour into the pockets of the unmarried and the married with few or no children a great excess over their wants.”

Accepting the statistical demolition of the myth that the three-child family was modal, the ILP conceded that “[n]o living wage which would satisfy a civilised standard of life [wa]s attainable” on that model. In order to avoid bankrupting the fisc, the ILP therefore proposed “to base the Living Wage on the needs of a man and his wife” and to add to it a children’s allowance. Disbelieving the ability of grown men to clean up for themselves, the ILP justified wage equality between a married man and a bachelor or widower on the ground that “the latter must pay in some way for the services of a housekeeper....” Equally arresting was the ILP’s Malthusian proposal to cap payments. Although it found it implausible that
allowances would cause “undesirable multiplication” because it was convinced that “[r]eckless breeding” was a product of “abject poverty” rather than well-being, it nevertheless recommended out of an overabundance of caution that either the weekly sum be reduced as family size increased, or that the allowance, “while providing for all children born before the appointed date, should thereafter cease after the fourth or fifth child.”

The Labour Party leadership, prodded by the trade unions, scorned and buried the ILP’s family allowances. One reason for this standoff was the “gender tension” the plan produced: “There were men who deeply resented cash allowances paid to wives whose husbands were earning wages because it threatened the traditional division of responsibility in the working-class household.” This perception by male trade unionists that their financial potency was under attack corresponded, in other countries, such as New Zealand, where the allowances were implemented, to a sense of increased financial independence among wives. Eleanor Rathbone, England’s most vigorous campaigner for family allowances, explained some men’s paternalistic opposition to allowances as based on their “dislike [of] the recognition of their wives and children as separate personalities with claims equivalent to their own.” This attitude was congruent with the presuppositions underlying the family or living wage, which regard[ed] the family not as it really is—an aggregate of individual human beings, each with an actual or potential value to the community—but as the “dependants” of the wage-earner. The very word suggests something parasitic, accessory, non-essential. A wife and children, and the wherewithal to keep them, are conceded to the wage-earner as though they were part of the “comforts and decencies promotive of better habits” for which he may reasonably ask as necessary to his development as a full human being. But if he prefers to use the margin thus allowed him for breeding pigeons or racing dogs or for some other form of personal gratification...that is assumed to be his affair, not the State’s or his employer’s.

While the ILP program was under attack from the right, the Communist Party of Great Britain challenged it from the left. R. Palme Dutt criticized the proposal as of a piece with the demand for a living wage: a lever not for socialism but for Fordism, it encouraged the illusion that redistribution rather than class struggle over production was the key to overcoming capitalism. Approving of a “provision for motherhood and for the complete upbringing of children (but certainly not ‘family allowances’) [a]s a first obligation of Socialism,” Dutt did not question the possibility that, like social insurance, family allowances might benefit workers under capitalism. What he did dispute was that a system that capitalists supported as a means of lowering the aggregate wage bill would redistribute income toward the working class, let alone hasten the transition to socialism. Dutt reasoned that once “capitalist statistical hacks” had uncovered the three-child family as a myth, capital discovered that “[i]f only some collective pooling system
could be devised to pay for the actual dependent children in the minority of cases
where these do exist, then a much lower basic wage could be fixed for...the
majority of workers....” Even where family allowances were financed wholly by
the capitalist class through income taxes, Dutt insisted, “the more scientific system
of only paying for...children in the minority of cases where such...children exist”
and thus reducing the aggregate wage bill constituted “under capitalism...the
inevitable working out of any system of Family Allowances.”

The fact that German socialist trade unions in the 1920s opposed private
firm-level family allowances based on a minimum-existence wage standard for
unmarried men, which would in turn be used to exert downward pressure on all
wages in the same way as piecework, was contemporaneously viewed as ironically
revealing the tenuousness of their commitment to socialist principles:

Their principle of ‘equal pay for equal work’ has a definitely socialist
character only when it is applied to those who receive incomes without
working. When it is applied inside the world of labour it appears as
pure orthodox liberalism. It acknowledges as just the results of the
existing competitive system on a unitary wage basis without reference
to human needs. In true liberal style the socialists accept the pursuit of
gain as a motive of all conduct; only recognising solidarity in theory,
where it is profitable.

Yet in making this criticism, the economist Eduard Heimann failed to
integrate the fact that the family wage or social wage or bonuses granted by em­
ployers were “merely redistributed as between fathers of families and bachelors.”
Especially because young workers without children had been able before World
War I to save enough from their higher wage to prepare for creating a family,
which was no longer possible, and because unionists feared that the reduction of
the bachelors’ wage was merely a prelude to a future take-back of the parents’
bonus as a temporary measure and a reduction of the general wage level, accusing
them of having abandoned socialist principles was an impermissible simplification
of a complex overlay of motives. In particular, Heimann overlooked the poten­
tially critical problem that in the post-World War I period “single men [we]re...vir­
tually the only members of the working class who ha[d] a surplus of money over
and above their needs. To pare this surplus down would...deprive the labor
movement of one of its chief sources of funds.” Redistributing some or even all
of this “surplus” to parents could not provide any relief to the depleted treasuries
of working-class organizations because those parents were supposed to spend the
allowances on their children.

Family allowances can also be viewed in a capital-logical framework as
state intervention to enforce the aggregate interest in the long-term flow of income
sources (including the creation of the next generation of the working class) against
the economic interests of individual wage workers, which the invisible hand would
not transmogrify in a manner necessary to reproduce the proletariat. In this sense
state-financed child endowments represent a transition from merely alleviating the
poverty of large families to the tendential creation of equal conditions for all who contribute to reproduction.  

The need for children’s allowances has also been justified by reference to the deep ethical obligation that those who, despite their own nonconsensual existence, owe to the next generation whom they create without prior mutual agreement. As generalized by John Stuart Mill: “Since no one is responsible for having been born, no pecuniary sacrifice is too great to be made by those who have more than enough, for the purpose of securing enough to all persons already in existence.” The comparatively extensive Swedish system of children’s allowance further specifies the guiding policy as “the ultimate right of every child...to be welcomed, to have an economically and socially secure childhood..., with equal opportunities for a good start in life....” Underlying this policy is the fundamental redistributive principle “that the costs of raising a family should, to a reasonable extent, be shared by all members of society through measures decided by and carried out through society.” The rationale buttressing this principle is threefold: (1) reducing the differences in the standard of living between families with and without children; (2) eliminating poverty; and (3) recognizing the fact that children will eventually work and, through the social security system, support the aging regardless of whether the latter have contributed children to society or not. The salient principle in Sweden then has been that the childless must contribute to the “necessary investment in the future generation.”

Morally based redistributional considerations also underlay the Conservative Political Centre’s advocacy of the expansion of family allowances in Britain in the 1950s. Emphasizing that poverty had not yet been abolished in large families, it argued that per capita food expenditures were affected more by family composition than by social class: “Those who grumble about contributing to the upbringing of other people’s children might ponder” data showing how much more relatively well-off childless couples spent on food than poor families.

Such an approach, however, fails to deal with the following question: If the number of children whom parents create is the independent variable to which they accommodate their standard of living, is it meaningful to say that children bring about a decline in their parents’ standard of living since in some utilitarian sense, at least with regard to “planned” or intended children, parents must be obtaining more utility from eating fast food with their creations than eating filet mignon by themselves? Moreover, why should parents be subsidized for augmenting the national wealth when such a contribution is merely the unintended consequence of their acts and intentions? This position has been taken seriously in the United States, where one member of the Reagan administration subcabinet hinted at dismantling richer families’ children’s allowance, the personal income tax deduction for dependent children, on the ground that the latter are consumption goods. And Reagan ideologue George Gilder underscored the point by asserting that, although the income of a two-child family must after ten years be double that of a childless couple in order to maintain the same standard of living: “No one who has children is likely to accept the idea that one’s life is impoverished by their
arrival, that one’s standard of living declines when money is spent on them rather than on maintaining a childless person’s schedule of outside entertainments.  

One response to this arch-American view, which would be scarcely imaginable in Europe, suggests that it is in capitalism’s own interest to subsidize proletarian procreation lest the golden geese disappear. As Magdalen Reeves pointed out in Britain on the eve of World War I, the “masculine State,” which represented an all-male electorate, was dealing crudely and unwisely with “all parents guilty of the crime of poverty” by imposing responsibilities on them without the requisite assistance. Instead, theories were being advanced to “cure...poverty by the dying out of all the poor people”:

[W]ere the children of the poor limited according to wage...the wage-earner would automatically cease to reproduce himself. It seems an heroic way of curing his difficulties. Obviously as a palliative in individual cases the plan of limiting the family according to wage appeals with great force to the well-fed and more fortunate observer, but as a national measure to deal with poverty it fails to convince. That a man with 24s. a week is unwise to have six children is perfectly true. But, then, what sized family would he be wise to have? If he were really prudent and careful of his future he would...neither marry nor have children at all.... But we cannot expect...2,500,000 adult men to act on those lines. The fact is they want to marry and they want to have children. As either of these courses is unwise on 24s. a week, they are in for a life of imprudence anyhow.

Despite their broadly egalitarian redistributional impact, family allowances in their earliest manifestations—especially as private, voluntary employer-initiated plans—failed to find favor with labor unions, which viewed them as insidious plots by employers to control their workforces by penalizing strikes and mobility and to “drive a wedge between [heads of families] and the childless workers who have not so much to lose.” In post-World War I Germany, many employers favored firm-level family allowances in order to retain their older workers, who were more “conscious of [their] responsibility” to their employer and who formed “the best breakwater against” younger workers who “often introduce[d] revolutionary...elements into the factory....” Unions also acted on the premise that family allowances operated to lower the unmarried workers’ wages. In France, unions ultimately abandoned their opposition in the 1920s only because the allowances became too deeply embedded in economic life and workers sought to fight the increasing cost of living. Even Eleanor Rathbone conceded at the time that family allowances would create redistributional losers, but in effect advised those who had benefited from wages calculated by reference to phantom wives and children that they had been free riders on “Society’s provision for maternity and childhood as the reserve force of industry and of the State.”

Family allowances undeniably have also been put to much less egalitarian uses by fascist states pursuing neomercantilist population policies designed to
recapture women as a professional class of labor-power procreators. Sidney Webb, a social Darwinist-eugenicist Fabian socialist, adduced the record-low birth rates in England and Wales at the beginning of the twentieth century as a refutation of the political economy of Ricardo and Senior, which claimed that limiting population would save the lowest grade of laborers from starvation and famine. In fact, however, depopulation did not spare them “the horrors of ‘sweating’ or the terrors of prolonged lack of employment.” Because factory acts and trade union collective bargaining had secured a national minimum, Webb thought it time to shift the focus of demographic policy

to alter the economic incidence of child-bearing. Under the present social conditions the birth of children in households maintained on less than three pounds a week (and these form four-fifths of the nation) is attended by almost penal consequences.... The parents know that for the next fourteen years they will have to dock themselves and their other children of luxuries and even of some of the necessaries of life, just because there will be another mouth to feed. To four-fifths of all the households...each succeeding baby means...less opportunity for advancement for every member of the family.38

Because “the most valuable of the year’s crops, as it is the most costly, is not the wheat harvest or the lambing, but the year’s quota of adolescent young men and women enlisted in the productive service of the country,” Webb favored “the systematic ‘endowment of motherhood’ [to] place this most indispensable of all professions upon an honorable economic basis.” As if anticipating a more ominous Kinder und Küche agenda, Webb contended that: “To the vast majority of women...the rearing of children would be the most attractive occupation, if it offered economic advantages equal to those, say, of school teaching or service in the post office.” Webb and his wife Beatrice, whose massive scholarly productions substituted for any contribution of their own to the human harvest, knew that: “Child-bearing...is an occupation that the bulk of women would prefer to any other, if any proper provision were made for it.”39

Their fellow Fabian, H. G. Wells, partial to the same kinds of metaphors, argued that: “The children people bring into the world can be no more their private concern entirely, than the disease germs they disseminate or the noises a man makes in a thin-floored flat.” In order to combat the “Strike against Parentage” in which the British middle class was engaged at the turn of the century, Wells proposed that the socialist state, which denied parents the right “to beget children carelessly and promiscuously,” pay women a wage “for children born legitimately in the marriage it will sanction.”40

Hitler took important steps toward implementing the Fabians’ authoritarian vision. In the 1920s Mein Kampf announced that the mission of his future völkisch state was “to make sure that the healthy woman’s fertility is not limited by the financially debauched economy of a state regime that shapes the blessing of children into a curse for the parents.” Once in power, the Nazis undertook an
unprecedented array of statutory programs subsidizing large families. Indeed, it was this type of gendered regimentation that purportedly induced a contemporaneous Australian Royal Commission to recommend against adoption of family allowances: "we are opposed to a scheme which would treat a mother as a salaried servant of the State, by virtue of her child-bearing." Yet precisely this commodified view of reproductive services and utilitarian view of children have found favor at times among advocates of family allowances. Thus the commission appointed by President Johnson to study income maintenance programs found both that U.S. "social policy does not reflect any...recognition to children as a resource of the country for whom society has an interest in equalizing the burden of their care" and that "children's allowances can be considered a remuneration for the hard work that child-rearing and housekeeping entail."

FAMILY ALLOWANCES EVERYWHERE EXCEPT THE UNITED STATES?

Referring to the family-allowance program..., a French government official insisted that..."[i]n France, when you have children, you have solved the poverty problem. The French poverty problem is a problem of childless adults." The British antipodean states became family allowance pioneers because their industrial arbitration award systems had encountered difficulties in fixing minimum wages based on the cost of maintaining a family of average size. Facing the same dilemma that Ricardo and Trower had debated a century earlier, New Zealand and Australian state officials discovered that calibrating that wage to a two-child, four-person family provided smaller families with more and larger families with less than a "fair living wage." In New Zealand in the early 1920s, for example, almost three-quarters of adult males either were unmarried or married without children, or had only one child.

The first modern general, if not universal, national legislated family allowance scheme was enacted in New Zealand in 1926 by an "ostensibly anti-socialist Government." As enacted, the allowance was chiefly restricted by reference to the number of children, size of income, and race. Application for the allowance could be made "by any person being the father of three or more children," although it was actually paid to the mother, for every child in excess of two under the age of 15 years. Only three-child-or-more families with weekly incomes of £4 or less were eligible for the two-shilling per child weekly allowance. At the time, families with more than two children accounted for three-eighths of all families with such incomes, the family-size cut-off point supposedly representing the number of people whom the family wage was thought sufficient to support. Despite these limitations, this first enactment was comprehensive in the sense that it was not limited to the working class and was financed out of general revenues.
Because New Zealand was then, and continues to be, regarded by the bulk of its inhabitants as underpopulated in the sense of falling below some optimum population size permitting the efficient production of certain material and cultural goods, family allowances found favor among pronatalists there although the perfunctory New Zealand parliamentary debate did not deal with the issue. Instead, allowances were designed to raise the living standard of the one-eighth of the country's children in the larger than four-person households whose condition neared destitution. A decade later, in 1936, the legislature inserted a pronatalist element into the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act by requiring the Arbitration Court to fix the basic rate of wages for adult male workers at a level "sufficient to enable a man...to maintain a wife and three children in a fair and reasonable standard of comfort." By the end of World War II, all of the aforementioned limitations were abolished in favor of a universal family benefit.46

From its inception at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Australian Court of Conciliation and Arbitration articulated the following principle as the foundation of its wage-setting: "Treating marriage as the usual fate of adult men, a wage which does not allow of the matrimonial condition and the maintenance of about five persons...would not be treated as a living wage." That basic wage, the court's president explained, "is the same for the employee with no family as for the family with a large family. [T]he employer need not concern himself with his employee's domestic affairs." In the landmark case, the so-called Harvester Judgment of 1907, the court, applying the statutory terms of reference "fair and reasonable" to the wage, declared the standard as "the normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being living in a civilized community." A study of household budgets led the judge to deem a five-person family the average.47 The five-person standard family was then incorporated into several state statutes. The Queensland Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916 provided that: "The basic wage of an adult male employee shall be not less than is sufficient to maintain a well-conducted employee of average health, strength, and competence and his wife and a family of three children in a fair and average standard of comfort...." The Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912, of the state of Western Australia provided that no minimum wage could be awarded "which is not sufficient to enable the average worker...to live in reasonable comfort, having regard to any domestic obligations to which such average worker would be ordinarily subject."48

Yet the suspicion that the industrial arbitration award system was requiring employers to pay a basic wage on behalf of 450,000 nonexistent wives and 2,100,000 nonexistent children also drove the politics of family allowances in Australia in the post-World War I period. In 1927, the Australian state of New South Wales shifted the basis of its industrial arbitration wage awards from a four-person, two-child family to "a man and wife without children." Having removed the number of children from consideration for the purposes of wage settings, the state government was in a position to address the poverty of large families through the Family Endowment Act enacted that same year. It provided five shillings weekly to every mother for each child 14 and under if the family income during the
preceding year did not exceed "the living wage based on the requirements of a man and wife without children" plus £13 per child. Unlike the New Zealand scheme, the New South Wales allowances were financed by employers and payable only to employees. The New South Wales regime became "the centre of violent controversy" when the Industrial Commission, on the ground of vested rights, retained the old basic wage despite employers' contention that the legislature's intention in adopting a smaller family unit as the foundation of the basic wage was to reduce the latter. After the Industrial Commission reversed itself, the legislature intervened, requiring the Commission to use the needs of a man with a wife and one child as the basis. The initial result of the new basic wage and family endowment was a reduction in annual payroll for employers by £60,000, which "was probably gratifying to the employers in New South Wales," and may explain why unions remained skeptical of family allowances. When the Commonwealth of Australia enacted a national child endowment in 1941, the scope was both narrowed and expanded. It covered only families with more than one child, but with state assumption of responsibility for financing, all families, not merely those of employees, became eligible.

As early as 1921, Austria enacted a welfare statute that conferred an entitlement on employees to receive children's subsidies from their employers, but it was a temporary measure during a period of high prices driven by the simultaneous repeal of state subsidies for certain foodstuffs, and was opposed by labor and capital. The first national family allowance to cover even only children was enacted in Belgium in 1930, although it was confined to employees and financed by employers. Six decades later, Belgium’s family program came closer to covering the additional costs of child-rich families than any other system in the European Community.

The French state had a long tradition of providing child subsidies to its employees. The Ministry of the Navy initiated this practice in 1860, and the state, under the influence of the inflation brought on by World War I, extended the system to all its functionaries. As early as 1913, the French parliament, wishing both to "discharge a social debt...to the unhappy family, overburdened by the number of children and deprived of the resources necessary to provide for their needs" and to combat the "national peril" of a declining natality, enacted aid to families whose resources were insufficient to raise more than three children. Again in 1923 the French parliament, actuated by the need to encourage large families in order to "expiate[] the blame of those whom a narrow calculation, whom a criminal egotism had persuaded to reduce the number of their children"—thus giving Germany ground for believing that it could successfully attack France—provided for state allowances for each child in families of four or more children.

In France, where the concern that the advent of a third child brought about the financial ruin of the typical working-class household and thus held back procreation united pronatalist organizations and the Catholic family movement, the legislature struggled for a dozen years, against the opposition of employers' associations, to generalize and make compulsory membership in a compensation
fund for the pooled payment of what until 1932 had been voluntarily paid family allowances. In order to frustrate the temptation to discriminate against child-rich workers, employers had created equalization funds into which they paid on the basis of a criterion unrelated to the number of children in their employees’ families such as their total wage bill or total employment. Ironically, French employers that were already paying family allowances to their employees resisted state intervention precisely because they feared that converting a gratuity granted by a benevolent employer into a legal entitlement would create a rights consciousness that might prompt demands by workers for higher allowances and thus spawn a new area of labor-capital conflict. Ultimately, however, the refusal of many smaller and medium-sized firms to join the funds prompted antietatist employers’ organizations to accept state intervention.54

Unsurprisingly, the left-wing of the labor movement opposed privately organized allowances, which employers were wont to use as a weapon by withdrawing them from employees who participated in strikes or whose children worked in firms outside the fund. These unions did, however, support collectively organized allowances for child-rich families as a social right and completely independent of work and interruptions of work such as sickness and unemployment, although even after enactment of a state-supported program unions continued to criticize the lack of redistributory financing, which required childless workers to finance the allowances of proletarian families. This class policy reached its high point under the Vichy government, which enacted a tax on agricultural products to finance family allowances for the agrarian sector; consequently, the allowances of child-rich urban families spent on such necessities as meat, wheat, and sugar in effect paid for the agrarians’ allowances.55

The statute enacted in 1932 accommodated the strategy of larger employers, which had been heavily influenced by price rises during World War I, of using allowances “to equalize and restrain their wage costs and to bind workers to the firm”; the new law imposed that strategy on small businesses, which had tended to ignore their obligations especially since allowances were less functional for them. By the 1930s, family allowances had also found favor with French employers, which recognized that the payments had “prevented trade unions from making use of family men for helping in their ‘revolutionary’ aims, and that the majority of family men...had remained outside the ‘class-struggle.’”56

The reasons for the structure assumed by the French system during the 1930s, as shown by Joseph Spengler’s contemporary historical-demographic analysis, lay in the merging of the struggle for population with class struggle. Since the effort to increase population tended to depress labor income and raise income from property, and since the pronatalists were largely representatives of the propertied classes, it was hardly surprising that their program bore a “pronounced class bias” and benefited largely the “haute bourgeoisie.” This bias embraced the following elements: allowances were in large part self-financed by the working class; the pronatalist economic arguments were motivated by such “anti-worker” considerations as providing an adequate labor supply and stimulating industry; and
"the military arguments [we]re essentially 'cannon fodder' arguments...." Spengler was of the opinion that this class contradiction could be solved together with the problem of avoiding depopulation if the state financed the private costs of demographic reproduction out of surplus income, which would simultaneously reduce inequalities in income distribution. This solution, however, turned out merely to exacerbate the contradiction since taxing away the surplus would have caused the upper classes to resist the destruction of the foundation of their economic and political power.57

On the eve of World War II, when government officials expressed grave concern over the military impact of the falling birth rate, France, which had amended its Labor Code in 1934 to prohibit employers from using the introduction of obligatory allowances as a pretext to reduce wages, incorporated family allowances into its Family Code. The French legislature viewed the allowances as a "solidary contribution of all the French" designed to reverse the trend toward smaller families. Instead of "encouraging them to increase the number of their children to send them to prospect for new sources of wealth," "solicitude for preserving a situation as fortunate for their descendants" caused parents to reduce their fertility. The new legislation provided both a one-time premium for the birth of the first child and a monthly allocation for each child thereafter amounting to 10 percent of the (notional) average monthly departmental adult salary and higher proportions for higher birth-order children. The allowances did not presuppose an employment relationship and thus travailleurs indépendants were also entitled to receive them. The Family Code's pronatalist thrust was amply on display in its penal sanction for abortion and sale of birth control devices. The allowances were financed by means of graduated income taxes on bachelors and divorced men and widows without children as well as on childless husbands who had been married at least two years. The Vichy government in 1941 granted allowances to one-earner families (or persons) already for the first child.58

That family allowances failed to eliminate the sharply hierarchical French income pattern, amounting to a "disequilibrium" in family budgets—per capita incomes (including family allowances) in four-child families were less than one-third those in two-earner childless families—was discovered during World War II. Statistical confirmation of the "great social injustice" of condemning those who insured the country's "perenniality" to an insufficient standard of living far inferior to that of childless households triggered more intense debate about the role of family allowances, which nevertheless prevented large families literally from starving to death. A series of studies in the French journal Population, which began appearing as soon as the postwar allowance program went into effect, revealed a permanent gap in the standard of living between the childless family in which both spouses worked and the family with children in which only the husband worked. Defined as the result of the confrontation between revenues and needs, the standard of living of a three-child family in 1946 was only about half of that of a childless family, which retained its privileged position despite the expansion of family allowances. Later studies consistently confirmed this gap.59
When the allowance rates were increased in 1946, France, impelled for reasons of "social justice" and as "a confirmation of the right to exist" to reduce "the inequality in the standards of living according to family burdens," was well on its way to offering the world's most developed program, which eventually has come to encompass more than a dozen different benefits including prenatal and postnatal grants, housing allowances (which covered almost half of the rent even in two-child families), loans to young couples, paid maternity leaves, and free kindergartens for virtually all children from the age of three.60

In a country where large families (three or more children) account for 40 percent and very large families (five or more children) for 8 percent respectively of all children, family allowances have become a vital source of income maintenance. Thus despite the fact that large wage-earning families in France still have, on average, lower incomes than childless couples, in large part because unemployment is much more common among the fathers and more than two-thirds of the mothers of three or more children do not work outside the home, the comprehensive family allowances, which entitle the five-child wage-earning family to the equivalent of a second full wage, have created rough total income parity between childless couples and families with five children. But even France's "world's family-friendliest" system of subsidies, which has provided more than two-thirds of the net income of a childless couple in additional income to a four-child family, is insufficient to compensate for more than a tiny part of the significant gap in per capita living standards between large and small families. They have compressed but nevertheless left intact "an income pyramid, in which the childless double-earners stand on top and the child-rich families with only one earner at the bottom."61

That family allowances large enough to hold parents harmless are now regarded as financially "utopian" in France is less surprising than that they have failed to realize Paul Douglas's prediction in the 1920s that they "would largely abolish poverty." French allowances nevertheless still make up a higher proportion of total social security payments and national income than in most advanced capitalist countries.62

When William Beveridge floated a family allowance proposal in Britain at the beginning of World War II, he was acutely aware of the same problems that had beset the program in the antipodes. Thus Beveridge and The Times agreed that among the luxuries that wartime Britain could not afford was state subsidization of "non-existent children." As the Australian state had charged two decades earlier, "in the case of children inadequate incomes and large families are so strongly correlated that any attempt to remedy the former by measures which treated all households as equal units would be fantastically expensive." The Chancellor of the Exchequer echoed these sentiments, alluding to "the difficulty of putting the parents of large families into a position to meet the increased cost of living by means of increased wages without increasing wages all round, and so setting up an inflationary movement." Shortly before the beginning of the war, Seebohm Rowntree, the private poverty investigator and convert to the cause of family allowances, had urged concentrating the allowance on three-or-more-child families
Beveridge included children’s allowances in his comprehensive wartime social insurance program in part because large families, together with unemployment, remained the chief cause of want in Britain despite the advance in real wages, which, based on productivity, could never afford a national minimum for families of different sizes. Malthus-like incentives constituted another basis for inclusion. In order to create the "the greater fluidity of labour" that he saw as the prerequisite for maintaining high employment after the war, Beveridge reverted to the lesser eligibility principle of the New Poor Law of 1834: "The first and most essential of all conditions...is that his situation...shall not be made really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class.... Every penny bestowed that tends to render the condition of the pauper more eligible than that of the independent labourer, is a bounty on indolence and vice." The modern version of the principle read: "the gap between income during earning and during interruption of earning should be as large as possible for every man." The only acceptable way to keep the gap large for low-paid workers with large families and to prevent them from attaining a higher standard of living out of work than while employed was to provide children’s allowances during periods of employment and unemployment. Finally, Beveridge recommended allowances as a means of increasing the rate of reproduction in order to insure the survival of the "British race." Although the allowance was not set at a level that would "lead parents who do not desire children to rear children for gain," it would enable parents to have additional children without harming the interests of their already existing ones—a point that eugenicists had been making for at least two decades.

In the event, the Family Allowances Act, as hived off from the rest of Beveridge’s National Insurance Act and enacted in 1945, scarcely contravened the lesser eligibility principle. It provided only five shillings weekly for each child beyond the first. Thus for a British worker with three children, the allowance amounted to only one-tenth of the average adult male wage. Nevertheless, allowances did initially make a moderate contribution to the alleviation of reproduction-related poverty. When Rowntree resurveyed York in 1950, a half-century after his first study there, he found that without family allowances, an additional 19 percent of all families with two or more children would have been in poverty. When, during the following decades, the state permitted the family allowances to lag behind the cost of living, families with many children bulked larger among the total population in poverty.

The much more generous early post-World War II French family allowance provided approximately as much again as the average wage. Because the French allowances were financed by employers’ contributions based on their wage bills, they became an alternative to higher wages. The French system implemented intraclass horizontal redistribution by means of which childless workers subsidized their co-workers’ human production—as European labor unions had always predicted. Indeed, the French system, within which ultimately a married worker with two children received the lowest annual gross income and
The greater material support that European states provide for families with children may in part account for the relatively subordinate position that respondents there attribute to superabundant children as a cause of poverty. As shown in table 22, when presented with twelve causes and asked to choose three, those questioned in the European Community in 1989 listed too many children in ninth place:

Table 22: Most Frequently Listed Reasons for Poverty in the EC, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Poverty</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Victims of long-term unemployment</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Alcoholism or drug abuse</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sickness</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Family breakups</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Brought up in deprived conditions</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social welfare cuts</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Laziness</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Loss of community spirit</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Too many children</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Living in a poor area</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Educational system not catering to them</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Lack of concern among neighbors</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only countries in which respondents accorded “too many children” a significantly above-average rank as a cause of poverty were the poorest EC members, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and Italy.

**AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM**

A voluntary, Bohemian poverty for adults is one thing; an involuntary poverty imposed upon babies is something else. [T]he nuclear family…is based on the egotistic assumption that one’s children should have at least as many opportunities as one has had, preferably more. It therefore provides an idealistic self-sacrificing rationale for greed,
It is commonly said that: "The United States is the only Western industrialized nation that does not have a child allowance policy or some other universal public benefit for families raising children." Yet the United States has, a popular misconception to the contrary notwithstanding, dispensed family subsidies through the income tax system almost since the inception of the federal individual income tax. This effect is achieved primarily by means of dependent child exemptions, which enable parents to reduce their tax liability. What makes the United States unique is that it has relied almost entirely on this method to the exclusion of a direct family allowance. The only express national family policy in the United States operates through the AFDC poor-law system. Thus whereas European family allowance programs aspirationally pursue a preventive approach to poverty and deprivation, assistance in the United States is triggered only when impoverishment has already beset a family—an arrangement that in countries with non-poor-law programs such as Canada, Britain, and France, would, as Moynihan has observed, "be viewed as a form of social insanity." 

This lack of public, universal children's allowances characteristic of virtually the entire rest of the industrialized world has meant that social insurance benefits for families with children is much more extensive and generous in Europe as are child care facilities and parental leave programs. Unsurprisingly, the poverty rate among adults with children is 2.4 times higher in the United States (12.7 percent) than in other wealthy capitalist countries (5.4 percent). Similarly, a much higher proportion of poor families with children is classified as "severely poor" (75 percent of the U.S. poverty line or below) in the United States than in other relatively wealthy advanced capitalist countries—57 percent compared with a low of 30 percent in West Germany and a high of 46 percent in Canada.

A special study comparing non-Hispanic white children in two-parent families in the United States and children in Sweden revealed that in the mid-1980s, 9 percent of the former and 5 percent of the latter were market-poor—that is, lived in families with less than 40 percent of the national median disposable income adjusted for family size. But whereas virtually all such market-poor Swedish families received government transfer payments, only 71 percent of their U.S. counterparts did; consequently, fewer than 2 percent of Swedish children in two-parent families were disposable-income-poor, whereas the meager means-tested U.S. transfer payments left the proportion of poor children barely touched at 9 percent. These very low poverty rates in Sweden are all the more remarkable in light of the fact that children's allowances make up a small proportion of total family income even among the lowest-income families. Thus even in societies with advanced welfare systems, child allowances have sufficed only to eliminate poverty for some families, but have not provided enough support "to solve the child poverty problem in any country." Nevertheless, the gap in state-redistributed monetary benefits between the United States and Western Europe is so significant that even in Italy, where the median income is much lower than in the
Is the Road to Communism Paved with Family Allowances?

United States, the income of poor households with children (defined as at the 90th percentile) is absolutely greater ($12,552 and $10,923 respectively). More recent data reinforce the finding that U.S. government assistance programs are the most ineffective in reducing child poverty. Whereas state aid in Sweden, Britain, and France, for example, reduced the poverty rate from 14 to 3 percent, 30 to 10 percent, and 25 to 7 percent respectively, U.S. programs managed to lower it merely from 26 to 22 percent—a level more than 50 percent higher than the next highest rate.74

One of the earliest important contributions to the discussion of reproductive subsidies in the United States stemmed from the country’s leading labor statistics official. In what was perhaps one of the first such proposals anywhere, Carroll Wright, the then chief of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor and later the first U.S. Commissioner of Labor, was animated by his disappointment with the reality of the family wage. His starting point was the belief that “it seems natural and just that a man’s labor should be worth, and that his wages should be as much as, with economy and prudence, will comfortably maintain himself and his family, enable him to educate his children, and also to lay by enough for his decent support when his laboring powers have failed.” But a study that Wright conducted of 397 working-class families in Massachusetts in 1875 concluded that the wage system enabled only a minority of workingmen to achieve that end by their own earnings; a majority maintained that standard of living by the labor of their wives and especially of their children. The wage system thus “usurps to its benefit the future productive power of the state, by employing children who should be in school or at play....”75

Without offering a substitute for the wage system, Wright proposed a twofold reform to ameliorate it. On the one hand, he recommended that all competent adult labor be paid a minimum yearly or daily wage to be enforced, if necessary, by legislation. Wright conceived of the minimum wage as enabling the unmarried workman to save money towards marriage. On the other hand: “An advance would be made for one child, then for the second and third, providing him with the means for their support and education. At the proper age, he could give to the state healthy workers.... And what would the state have done for him? Simply provided that his return for labor should pay for his living, and that of his children,—the latter, in turn, adding to the productive power of the state.” This remarkably precocious yet instrumental statism, designed in part to eliminate “baneful...wife-labor” and to restore the mother to the home “for her own physical good,” was in part driven by Wright’s speculation that the wage system might eventually be superseded by cooperation, industrial partnerships, or even communism.76

By the beginning of the twentieth century, procreation-subsidizing state intervention had emerged. The state of Wisconsin, for example, included a $200 exemption for each child under the age of 18 in its income tax statute in 1911. The national income tax also contained such exemptions early on. The Senate version of the first post-16th Amendment federal income tax law provided for a dependent
child exemption (of up to $1,000) on equitable grounds in recognition of the additional obligations associated with childrearing and also to “emphasiz[e] the family as the unit in our social structure.”

The Senate debate on the issue was instructive. Controversy centered on the limitation of the $500 per child exemption to a maximum of two children. Proponents of an amendment to eliminate this cap motivated it expressly by reference to the need to combat “race suicide.” Since the basic exemption level was set high enough to exclude the vast majority of income recipients from the tax, senators were concerned exclusively with the procreational habits of the relatively well-off and not at all with the size of the working class. Senator Lawrence Sherman, for example, who would have put “a bounty on children,” in opposing the limitation to “the fashionable number” of two children, adopted the eugenic position that “race suicide...began...among the people who ought to raise children and send them out into the world, because they are able so to nurture and train them as to make them good citizens and better fathers and mothers of future generations. Do not leave all the babies in the country to be raised by those who have not the means so to nurture them as well as have some whom I have in mind.” When Progressive Republican George Norris moved to strike the cap on the ground that there “ought to be encouragement...to the men and the women who are raising families and perpetuating the race and continuing the stability of the country,” Senator John Williams of Mississippi, speaking on behalf of the committee that reported out the bill, merely stated that its purpose was “to adapt the tax to the ability of the taxpayer, and not...as a means to encourage large families....” Norris tried to meet Williams’s argument by denying that he wished to give a “premium for families of any particular size” and emphasizing the reduced ability to pay of the man with many children. Yet when Williams observed that 10 let alone 17 children were too many to subsidize, Norris replied that “we ought to let nature take its course, and not make an arbitrary stop....”

The exemption cap prompted ex-President Theodore Roosevelt, who had led the rhetorical struggle against race suicide while in office, to rebuke “these Solons of the income tax [for] deliberately penalizing this third child, whose absence means speedy racial extinction, speedy racial death.” Whereas legislatures in some countries with declining birth rates had “sought to reward an honorable woman who performs her prime duty to the State by bearing and rearing the children without whom the State will have no future whatever,” Roosevelt continued, “this is the first time that any legislative body has ever put itself on record as in favor of discouraging the performance of the most sacred and the most vital of all duties.” Although the child-exemption provision was absent from the statute in 1913, even it contained a $1,000 personal exemption for a head of family or married person. In 1917 Congress amended the statute, establishing a $200 personal exemption for dependent children under the age of eighteen.

Another early discussion of reproductive subsidies took place in the 1920s at a time of intense debate over family allowances in Europe. U.S. Commissioner of Labor Statistics Ethelbert Stewart started from the assumption that just as firms
must set aside amortization funds to replace worn-out machinery, so too "industry must provide for the renewal of the labor supply." But when he had broached the issue of the European family wage with U.S. manufacturers, they objected that whereas children in Europe might work in the same industry as their parents, in the United States there was no assurance "that the children born to the workers engaged by such industry...would be available to that industry as a labor supply when such children were grown." Despite capitalists' self-paralyzing fears of free-riding competitors, Stewart believed that family allowances, even in the form of a wage, could be defended on an industry basis if an industry-wide pool were created to finance it in the manner of workers' compensation. Nevertheless, he regarded the industrial argument as too narrow. From an aggregate-capitalist perspective, he directed attention to the larger question: "The existence of the State, the existence of society, of civilization, the perpetuation of the race, is much more essential than that any particular industry or all industries should have an ample supply of workers." Stewart's core demographic concern, however, was that although firms could substitute machines for men, "[w]e have utterly failed...to invent a machine which will use and pay cash down for the products of other machines."80

Segueing to the problem of rich and poor, Stewart sought to unravel cause and effect: "The poor do not have children because they are poor, they are poor because they have children." This hardly novel but nevertheless controversial claim was then linked to an original claim: "The rich are not childless because they are rich, they are rich because they are childless. It is the cost of rearing a family." Coming at the height of the speculative boom of the 1920s, Stewart's fairy-tale account of the ontogeny of capitalist wealth did point out that at whatever standard of living, rearing a child to the age of 18 amounted to three years of a man's earnings. Concentrating on these "real facts," Stewart believed that unless the discussion moved "away from the replacing labor supply theory as expressed in the term 'family wage,'" the movement to hold harmless those who have been impoverishing themselves while enriching the world would not "be able to carry with it a sufficient increase of compensation to make it of any great value." Stewart rejected industrial wage-rate marriage differentials because "every man should earn enough to enable him to marry and rear a family of five if he wants to and...every married man should receive a wage which will enable him to save up against the day when he will have a family of five or more." He did, however, advocate a "social allowance by which our political and social institutions will pay for the replacement of the race" so that no "man...should be penalized for his loyalty to the race...." This allowance assumed so much the greater importance as the spread of birth control meant that men and women could for the first time "simply refuse to become poor for the public welfare...." Unwilling to trust the invisible hand, Stewart predicted that if the visible hand of the public fisc did not intervene, "the race will...cease to exist."81

Despite his key government position, Stewart failed to move the debate in the United States into new channels. Unlike some European governments,
which introduced children’s allowances early in the twentieth century for their own state employees, U.S. governmental employers did not adopt such differentiated compensation systems. The isolated exceptions failed to coalesce into a movement. Public school teachers in some districts received allowances earlier in the century, while Congress introduced family allowances for dependents of enlisted members of the military during World War II.82

As the federal government made plans to avoid a replication of the economic depression that had followed in the wake of demobilization after World War I, the left-leaning National Resources Planning Board as early as 1942 raised the issue of the need for family allowances as part of a basic family-security program for the postwar period. At the same time the Board published a brochure by the leading U.S. Keynesian, Alvin Hansen, who proposed family allowances among the expanded public-welfare expenditures that he regarded as prerequisites of the shift toward a postwar high consumption economy. Wilbur Cohen, one of the key figures in the formulation of the original U.S. Social Security program and technical adviser to the Social Security Board during World War II, also recommended family allowances in 1942 as part of a more comprehensive system. In light of this quasi-official support, it was “distressing” to the Left (and the Catholic Church) that the so-called American Beveridge plan, the wide-ranging security program embodied in the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill, lacked a system of children’s allowances. The Nation, for example, found “no other phase of social security...more important.” Spurred by stories of poor families who had furnished as many as eight soldiers for the war and of a million boys who failed to meet the simple military educational tests, Senator William Langer introduced a bill in 1945 to pay “gratuites” (of $500 to $1,000) to future parents of two or more children, but it was stillborn.83

During World War II, the popular press published a spate of articles praising family allowances in the wake of Beveridge’s inclusion of them in his plan. F. Emerson Andrews, who worked at the Russell Sage Foundation, was particularly adept at placing his deftly argued pieces. In the Atlantic Monthly he introduced children’s allowances—“in effect, salaries for mothers”—as a “democratic, practical” way out of the insolvency into which “we” had plunged families.

And why not salaries for mothers?... A woman who raises pigs is called a producer by the Census Bureau and is paid for her pigs. A few years ago she was even paid money for not raising pigs. But a woman who chooses the vastly more difficult occupation of both producing and rearing children—the job that is basically the most important to us as a nation—is not even a “gainful worker”...and is not paid, either by the government or her husband....84

Because the adoption of children’s allowances by Germany, Italy, and Japan had enabled conservative opponents to disqualify them “as totalitarian devices for increasing cannon fodder,” Andrews tried to remove the alien stigma
by alluding to institutions such as public schools, “which the bachelor landowner helps to pay.” Pulling out all the propagandistic stops, Andrews somberly depicted a postwar economy that might find the former “soldier father,” whose military family allowance had supported his children, beginning civilian life again “at the bottom,” perhaps even “selling apples on street corners,” cut loose by a society for which he had risked his life. By D-Day, Andrews was explaining to the middle-class readers of Parents’ Magazine that the $10,000 that each of their children cost them was the equivalent of a 20-year mortgage. But “if America was to survive as a nation,” they would have to contract for the equivalent of three concurrent mortgages—except that “[u]nlike houses, children cannot handily be abandoned if the going gets rough, to be repossessed by the bank.” Andrews pushed the historical analogy to the democratic-labor-liberal struggle for free public schools as confiscation of bachelors’ property to subsidize other people’s children’s education.85

By the end of the war, children’s allowances had become a sufficiently respectable income maintenance proposal that the Brookings Institution published a large-scale study of the Social Security system that included means-tested allowances as a component of a future comprehensive program. The resurgence of interest in children’s allowances in the United States during the 1950s was institutionally manifested by Senator Richard Neuberger’s repeated filing of bills modeled on the World War II-era Canadian system. Enacted in 1944, Canadian allowances, which unions initially opposed and then tentatively accepted, were funded by the state and covered all children, providing $5 per month for those under 6 years of age and up to $8 monthly for those 13 to 15 years of age. To be sure, as a “concession to the clash of racial attitudes,” the allowances were reduced for the fifth child and all higher birth-order children, who were disproportionately represented among French-Canadian families in Quebec.86

In 1955, as the U.S. birth rate reached its highest level ever and the proportion of childless married couples under the age of 45 declined significantly vis-à-vis the pre-World War II period, Neuberger, together with seven of the most liberal senators, including Paul Douglas, who had written extensively on allowances three decades earlier, submitted a resolution to create a special committee to study the Canadian program with a view to implementing a similar system in the United States. Why, when “America [wa]s growing its biggest crop of children” ever without direct state subsidies, family allowances had become “unusually pertinent” Neuberger failed to explain. Nor did his proposal to omit any means test and make the payment a universal entitlement, thus reducing administrative costs, make it any more palatable to Congress. The same year, the congressional Subcommittee on Low-Income Families heard testimony from several witnesses who tentatively advocated family allowances. The somewhat iconoclastic economist, Richard Lester, “thr[е]w out what some people may think is a wild idea”: if low-income families have proportionately more children, “I am not sure but that we ought to consider seriously...family allowances....” The only interest that it sparked on the committee was a personal pecuniary one in Alabama Senator John
Sparkman, who, upon hearing that it might amount to $6 to $7 per month per child, opined that he would like to have it for his tenant farmer.87

The 1950s were not, however, ideologically propitious for such blatant state intervention, and only sparse mainstream support for allowances emerged; emblematic of the subject’s marginalization was the inclusion of a proposal for a $3 per week family allowance in the 1952 platform of the radical Progressive Party. The glorification in the popular media and social sciences of the male-headed medium-sized family, taking care of which fully occupied the wife/mother, constructed a norm that left no room for government largesse. Yet that same middle-class family appreciatively became the recipient of government handouts in the form of pro-family tax code revisions such as joint filing, increases in the personal exemption, and homeowner-related tax benefits paid for by lower-income taxpayers, and Veterans Administration and Federal Housing Administration home mortgage insurance programs, which encouraged the proliferation of child-focused suburbs.88

Interest in family allowances was sustained propagandistically during this period by Catholic welfare specialists “as an alternative to limiting family size.” Thus a leading Catholic magazine stated that: “The answer to the economic problem they [children] create must not be a limiting of family size to fit income. Rather we must find ways to help the larger families obtain the income they need for a decent family life.” Based on census data showing that median family income peaked in families with two children, the authors proposed that the allowance be triggered by the advent of the third child: “Our present wage system is geared to the needs of the two-child family, so that in many families with only one or two children the need for supplementing income is slight.” The misogynist orientation of some Catholic contributions, however, was scarcely calculated to appeal to women.89

Family allowances found a new champion in Representative John Conyers, who introduced the Family Allowances Act in 1967, which would have paid $10 per month per child. Like its predecessors, however, it died. At the same time, Daniel Moynihan, in between high-ranking policy appointments in the Johnson and Nixon administrations, was agitating for a universal non-means-tested family allowance. In the 1960s, too, Mollie Orshansky, creator of the federal government’s poverty definition, was showing how monthly child allowances of $50 would push the vast majority of large families above the poverty line. Perhaps the most thoroughly thought-out proposal came from an economist, Harvey Brazer, who had been the Treasury Department’s principal economic advisor on tax policy. He coupled a children’s allowance and discontinuation of the dependent child exemptions under the federal income tax with a children’s allowance tax, which at its maximum would have equaled 95 percent of the allowance received. Peaking at $3,300 for a four-child family and no other income, it would have cost $7.6 billion and efficiently reduced the poverty gap in families with children by 81 percent, removing more than half of all poor children from poverty.90

By the end of the Johnson administration, Congress heard several more
advocates of family allowances as components of income maintenance programs. New York State and New York City welfare officials, for example, urged adoption of a non-means-tested universal program to close the gap between “a worker’s productive capacity and the cycle of his family needs.” Family sociologists proposed income maintenance programs specifically keyed to the phases of the family life cycle in which the gap between needs and resources was greatest. The radical potential of the late Johnson administration, thwarted by its Indochina war, was symbolized by an intraliberal debate in which negative income tax supporters such as James Tobin and Henry Aaron could afford the political luxury of criticizing family allowances on the grounds that they not only wasted resources on the nonpoor while offering monetarily mere token gestures to large families, but failed to do anything for the 10 million single adults and childless couples below the poverty line. A children’s allowance demonstration project planned by the federal government in 1968 to study its effects on birth rates and labor force participation rates was cancelled the next year when the Nixon administration began pursuing its (abortive) Family Assistance Plan.91

When the U.S. Congress in 1993 amended the Internal Revenue Code to introduce a modest increment in the Earned Income Tax Credit for families with two or more children, it institutionally and ideologically opened the way to the ultimate enactment of a family allowance—albeit one that initially would be confined to low-income families. In light of the renewed call by feminists and policy analysts for a full-fledged family endowment especially to help the burgeoning number of single-parent families, the United States may yet introduce a program that the rest of the capitalist world began implementing 70 years ago.92 Until that time, however, Myrdal’s rhetorical admonition that it was “impossible that the majority of good Americans should really think that so many...families who are forced into poverty or destitution because the number of their children is so large...should be left largely unaided” will remain unheeded.93

Such a prospect is, however, dimmed by the lingering effects of eugenicist, racist, and antipaternalistic individualist ideologies. During the Great Depression, for example, Paul Popenoe, a eugenicist at the Human Betterment Foundation, was appalled that families on public relief in Los Angeles were “producing children steadily at public expense,” necessitating further “charitable aid.” By means of this “vicious circle,” the “self-supporting part of the population” is so burdened that it reduces its own procreation while “paying for...the reproduction of a class of persons many of whom are eugenically inferior.” The multivalence of family allowances was amply on display when eugenicists became anxious because the fertility rate had fallen below the replacement level in the United States. Popenoe, convinced that the wage system was incompatible with the family, demanded equalization of “the economic position of the fertile and the sterile.” The particular object of his concern, however, was that “the feeble-minded and the dependent...on relief” were overreproducing while “educated people” were not. He therefore suggested a “selective family wage” for the “white collar class” “not to evaluate the children of the community and say one is worth more than
another [but] merely to neutralize the economic pressure for childlessness [and] to ensure that educated people will not have to sacrifice their own standard of living....

Thirty years later, even the staff of President Johnson’s liberal Commission on Income Maintenance Programs warned that:

The point is made much too frequently that every industrialized nation except the United States has a children’s allowance.... What is never mentioned...is that those countries...are demographically much more homogeneous.... To the middle income white suburbanite, black has significant negative externalities. So does illegitimacy. The combination is overwhelming. Although illegitimate black children are a small proportion of children in poverty, the myth of a high proportion is real impediment to adoption of general programs in aid of children.

Moynihan, whose 1965 memorandum was responsible for galvanizing public debate about black families, observed in connection with his account of the Nixon administration’s failure to enact its Family Assistance Plan that by the end of the 1960s it had become clear that poor families with children were large, southern (or southern migrant), black, and “living in a state almost of population siege.” The likelihood of passage of a family allowance diminished in proportion as it was projected as a “‘baby bonus’” for “teeming working-class quarters so disagreeable to social welfare enthusiasts.” For Moynihan, the chances of introducing a family wage in the United States were diminished by its association with religion and race: on the one hand, its “pronatalist conservative cast was disastrously confirmed by the zeal that the Roman Catholic Church exhibited for the subject”; and, on the other, at “its most crude, the question of family policy...might be reduced to that of providing stability for the Negro slums.” Nor is the continued pull of original Malthusianism to be underestimated. Even as liberal a policy analyst as David Ellwood, who became the guiding intellect in the Clinton administration’s project to “end welfare as we know it,” rejected children’s allowances on the ground that “if...set at a high level, it becomes simply a guaranteed income” and by “offering a reasonable level of security...may discourage work.”

If there was a time when it was not outlandish for the early nineteenth-century Ricardian socialist William Thompson to ask: “Why should a father and mother be punished—in diminished comforts—for having large families?,” that period lies as far in the past as the belief that large families were caused by “[p]eculiar fecundity,” which struck people by “chance [or] causes which they could not...controll....” The widespread availability of birth control means in combination with the Center’s adoption of the Right’s emphasis on personal responsibility makes such a position politically untenable in the United States.

Ironically, recent trends in family size undermine the racially motivated Malthusian claim that poor law payments promote large families. Thus from 1976 to 1992, the proportion of single women receiving AFDC payments who had one
child rose from 29.5 percent to 35.9 percent while that of single-women AFDC-recipients with four or more children dropped from 22.5 percent to 12.8 percent. Moreover, the birthrate among welfare recipients is lower than the national average. In fact, with the possible exception of the ideologically unique case of Nazi Germany, scholars have been unable to conclude that modern family allowances or the nineteenth-century English poor laws have stimulated birth rates.

There may therefore be some validity to Eveline Burns's claim that, for opposite reasons—namely, wealth and hopelessness—financial considerations play little or no part in decisions about family size among high- and low-income families, so that only middle-income groups are fully subject to Malthusian preventive checks of economic rationality. Nevertheless, regardless of whether they are a demographic incentive, children's allowances are one of the most efficacious and egalitarian means of alleviating impoverishment associated with the unequal burdens that people bear in contributing to the production of the next generation.

NOTES

1. George Fitzhugh, Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society, reprinted in Ante-Bellum: Writings of George Fitzhugh and Hinton Rowan Helper on Slavery 41-95 at 59 (Harvey Wish ed., 1960 [1854]).
2. Karl Marx, 1 Das Kapital, in Karl Marx [&] Friedrich Engels, Werke 23:672 (1962 [1867]).
4. The terms will be used interchangeably here although in some countries they may have different meanings. By “family or child benefits” is sometimes meant a more inclusive category embracing cash and in-kind transfers including direct benefits for children with a social security program, tax exemptions, and means-tested public assistance; “family allowances,” a narrower category, may include in addition to cash allowances social services and earmarked cash transfers; the narrowest category, “children’s allowances,” refers only to unrestricted cash transfers for children. T. Marmor & Martin Rein, “Post-War European Experience with Cash Transfers: Pensions, Child Allowances, and Public Assistance,” in The President’s Commission on Income Maintenance Programs, Technical Studies 259-91 at 269 (n.d. [1969]).

9. Alva Myrdal, *Nation and Family: The Swedish Experiment in Democratic Family and Population Policy* 138, 135, 98, 126-27, 133, 140-41 (1941); Gunnar Myrdal, *Population: A Problem for Democracy* 209 (1940). On the Myrdals' eugenics, see Alva Myrdal & Gunnar Myrdal, *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* 223, 224 (1934): “Society is...purely economically interested in a limiting of this reproductive freedom of the slightly imbecilic. Again and again we see for example large flocks of children of imbecilic mothers, where the whole litter has to be supported by the public.” The “race-biological” and “race-hygienic” considerations prompting a decision to limit or expand reproduction were in their view, however, not tied to social classes.


17. At the other extreme, the demographer Martha Riche is wrong in claiming that the special conditions generated by U.S. hegemony between the end of World War II and the 1960s marked “the one and only time in our history [when] an ordinary guy with a high school degree could afford to have a non-working wife.” Mary Lee, “The American Family Isn’t Mom, Dad, and the Kids Anymore,” *Atlanta J. and Constitution*, Nov. 13, 1988, at 1A, col. 1, at 16, col. 1 (Lexis).


22. Ch. 4 above; International Labour Office [ILO], *Family Allowances: The Remuneration of Labour According to Need* 3-4 (Studies and Reports, Ser. D [Wages & Hours] No. 13, 1924); B. Seebom Rowntree, *Poverty and Progress: A Second Social Survey of York* 171 (1941). Although the data were not available at the time, the 1921 census for England and Wales revealed that three-fifths of all men over 20 years of age were either single or married or widowers with no children; the proportion was as high as 65 percent among agricultural workers and as low as 48 percent among miners. Eleanor Rathbone, *Family Allowances* 258 (1947 [1924]).


24. Brailsford et al., *The Living Wage* at 21-23. The ILP was merely following the English-speaking world’s foremost advocate of family allowances: “The provision for phantom wives may...be defended on the ground that a man who has not a wife to keep has to pay someone to do his cooking, washing and housekeeping for him, whether it be a
landlady, a mother or some other woman relative.” Eleanor Rathbone, *The Disinherited Family: A Plea for the Endowment of the Family* 20 (1924). See also ibid. at 296.

25. Pamela Graves, *Labour Women: Women in British Working-Class Politics 1918-1939*, at 106-107 (1994) (quote); oral communication by Geoffrey Palmer, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, of his recollections of the significance of family allowances while he was growing up during the 1940s (Sept. 15, 1994); Rathbone, *The Disinherited Family* at 256-57. As ultimately enacted in Britain, family allowances “shall belong...to the wife....” Family Allowances Act, 1945, 8 & 9 Geo. 6, ch. 41, § 4-(I)(a).


34. Mrs. [Magdalen] Pember Reeves, *Round About a Pound a Week* 215 (1913).


45. R. Campbell, “Family Allowances in New Zealand,” *Econ. J.* 37 (147):369-83 at 379 (Sept. 1927) (quote); Family Allowances Act, 1926, N.Z. Stat., 1926, No. 30, §§ 2, 3, 6(1.), 8(1.)(a.), 18 (quote); New Zealand, *Parliamentary Debates*, 21st Sess., 22d Parl., 210:590 (1926) (statement of Mr. Anderson, Minister in Charge of Pensions). The family allowance, which was not payable to Asians, was not intended for single mothers.


47. Henry Higgins, “A New Province for Law and Order,” *Harv. Law Rev.* 29 (1):13-39 at 16 (Nov. 1915) (quote); Ex parte McKay, 2 Commonwealth Arbitration Reports 1, 3, 6 (1907) (quote). The statute, the Excise Tariff 1906, imposed excise duties on agricultural implements but exempted firms in Australia that provided fair and reasonable remuneration. Rhetorically interesting was the judge’s use of analogy in determining the standard: “If A lets B have the use of his horses, on the terms that he give them fair and reasonable treatment...it is B’s duty to give them proper food and water, and such shelter and rest as they need; and as wages...” *Ibid.* at 4.


49. E. Burns, *Wages and the State: A Comparative Study of the Problems of State Wage Regulation* 326-34 (1926); “Progress of Family Endowment Movement in Australia and New Zealand” at 568-69; Industrial Arbitration (Living Wage Declaration) Act, N.S.W. Stat., No. 38, 1927, § 2(2) (quote); Family Endowment Act, New South Wales Stat., 1927, No. 39, §§ 3, 12, 39 (quote). For a description of the dead end to which efforts to adjust wage-fixings for so-called normal families had led, see Burns, “The Economics of Family Endowment” at 158. According to the 1921 census, one-third of all male employee householders in New South Wales had no children and only one-seventh had more than three. In re Standard of Living Determination and Living Wage Declarations, N.S.W. Industrial Arbitration Reports 165, tab. IV at 207 (1927).


53. Dominique Ceccaldi, *Histoire des prestations familiales en France* 14-16 (1957); Loi relative à l’assistance aux familles nombreuses, Sirey, Législation 614-23 at 615 (July 14, 1913) (1914) (quote from Senate legislative history); Loi concernant l’encouragement national à donner aux familles nombreuses, Sirey, Législation 1770 (1924) (quote from legislative history in Chamber of Deputies); Loi concernant l’encouragement national à donner aux familles nombreuses, Sirey, Législation 1770-74 (July 22, 1923) (1924).


56. Watson, “Population Policy in France” at 270; Sirey, Législation 1433-34 (Dec. 9, 1934) (1935); “Décret relatif à la famille et à la natalité françaises: Rapport au Président de la République Française,” *Journal officiel de la République Française* 9607-9609 at 9607 (July 30, 1939) (quote); “Décret relatif aux allocations familiales: Rapport au Président de la République Française,” *Journal officiel de la République Française* 12,978-79 (Nov. 15, 1938); Code de la famille, Sirey, Législation, art. 1, 10, 13, 34, 82, 91, 160 at 1361, 1362, 1364, 1367-68, 1376 (July 29, 1939); Loi portant création d’une allocation de salaire unique, Sirey, Législation 395-96 (Mar. 29, 1941).

Is the Road to Communism Paved with Family Allowances?


68. Ibid. at 41. The survey conducted by the Commission of the European Communities did not even present low wages as a choice.


70. National Commission on Children, Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families: Final Report 94 (1991). Ibid. at 85, states erroneously that the personal exemption was established in 1948. Allan Carlson, "A Pro-Family Income," Pub. Interest, No. 94:69-76 at 71 (Winter 1989), incorrectly asserts that the 1948 amendments to the tax code were "strongly pro-child" because they "raised the personal exemption from $200 to $600 per family member, in a conscious attempt to relieve the financial burdens of parents with numerous children." In fact, the Revenue Act of 1948 increased the exemption only by $100 (from $500 to $600) expressly to compensate for the postwar inflation. H. Rep. No. 1274, 80th Cong., 2d Sess., reprinted in 1948 U.S. Code Cong. Service 1258, 1269. For an overview of the history of the exemption levels, see John Witte, The Politics and Development of the Federal Income Tax, fig. 6.3 at 127 (1985); for an overview of other elements of the social wage containing a reproductive component, see below ch. 10.


73. Timothy Smeeding, "Why the U.S. Antipoverty System Doesn’t Work Very Well," Challenge 35 (1):30-35, tab. 1 at 31 (Jan. 1992) (poverty defined as less than 40 percent of the adjusted median family income after taxes and transfer payments; the other countries are Canada, Australia, Sweden, W. Germany, Netherlands, France, and U.K.; data refer to the mid-1980s); Timothy Smeeding, Barbara Torrey, & Martin Rein, "Patterns of Income and Poverty: The Economic Status of Children and the Elderly in Eight Countries,” in The Vulnerable at 89, tab. 5.4 at 90.


76. “Condition of Workingmen’s Families” at 447-49, 360-61, 450.

77. Ch. 658, § 1087-5(c), 1911 Wis. Laws ch. 658; U.S. Senate Report No. 80, 63d Cong., 1st Sess. 25 (1913).

78. 50 *Cong. Rec.* 3801-3802, 3851-52 (1913).


81. Stewart, “A Family Wage Rate” at 121-25. Kenneth Boulding, *The Meaning of the Twentieth Century: The Great Transition* 135-36 (1964), fancifully proposed equalizing income by inducing the rich to become poor by establishing marketable licenses to give birth: each female would be given a certificate entitling her to have the number of children corresponding to the replacement rate; the rich could then purchase the rights, thus spending themselves into poverty.


89. Gilbert Steiner, The State of Welfare 7 (1971) (quote); Robert Cissell & Helen Cissell, “Case for Family Allowances,” America 92(3):65-67 (Oct. 16, 1954) (quote; in 1952, the median income of two-children families was $4,268 and that of families with six or more children was $3,045); John Cort, “Wages and Big-Family Men,” Commonweal 53 (25):614, 616 at 614 (Mar. 30, 1951): “Men should be superior in the economic marketplace. Any system under which it is easier for women to get jobs than for men is headed for the dogs.”


Is the Road to Communism Paved with Family Allowances?


93. Gunnar Myrdal, Challenge to Affluence 63 (1965 [1962]).


95. The President’s Commission on Income Maintenance Programs, Background Papers 15 (1970).


97. William Thompson, An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth 553 (1968 [1824]).


100. Burns, “Childhood Poverty and the Children’s Allowance” at 13. T. J. Woofter, Jr., “Size of Family in Relation to Family Income and Age of Family Head,” Am. Sociological Rev. 9 (6):678-84 at 684 (Dec. 1944), argued at a time when there was interest in using allowances to increase family size that direct assistance to the lowest-income families was problematical since “the higher birth rate in this group is controlled by disregard rather than regard for family financial competence.”