P.S. to the NEWS

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Ph.D. UNEMPLOYMENT

Ph.D.s make up the new impoverished class of unemployed migrant workers, floating from state to state, in the hope of finding positions commensurate with their training.

For the last 30 years, Ph.D.s enjoyed a fertile hunting ground among the faculties of universities. The jobs are simply not there today. In some disciplines, there are six or seven applicants for every faculty vacancy. The National Board on Graduate Education predicts that, ten years from now, nine out of ten Ph.D.s will not be able to find jobs as college professors.

The prospeci;!i,in business are just as grim. Talk to personnel managers of most large businesses and you will find that they prefer to hire someone with a bachelor's degree rather than a Ph.D. Rightly or wrongly, many business executives believe that Ph.3).s are over-educated for available jobs and have acquired easy-going work habits that do not adjust well to the highly competi ve business world.

The principal reason for the scarcity of positions for Ph.D.s in the academic world, and the diminishing prospects for the future, is the dearth of students to teach, which in turn is due to our declining birth rate.

The drouth that has parched large areas of farm land can be revived by a series of good rains. But the Heavens can't open up and drop down students in colleges if they are not being born.

The American birth rate is now the lowest in our history. At current rates, each woman of childbearing age is expected to have only 1.8 children -- a level that cannot even maintain our existing population. If the crop isn't planted, no workers will be needed for a harvest.

Some currently unemployed Ph.D.s have complained bitterly that they weren't

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told about the harsh reality of prospective unemployment when they were en couraged to invest four to eight years of time and many thousands of dollars in one or more advanced degrees. Professors decline to accept the blame, claiming that career counseling is not their forte.

It would seem, however, that anyone who is smart enough to get a Ph.D. should be bright enough to discover the statistic about the birth rate. It is the most dramatic social fact of the decade.

Even if demographic statistics are not their field of study, aspiring Ph.D.s could hardly avoid discovering the same fact unless they live in isolation without associating with any women on college campuses.

Whereas in the 1960s, the clearest message beamed forth from college campuses was the disaffection of the men with the Vietnam War, in the 1970s the message coming through loud and clear is the disaffection of the women with having babies.

Statistics confirm what is obvious to anyone who converses with college women: the higher the level of women's education, the lower the birth rate.

Such anti-baby attitudes are enco,uraged by books such as a recent one financed by the Rockefeller Fund called THE UNFINISHED AGENDA. It calls for a "gradual population decrease." This is to be brought about by increased funding for contraceptives, abortions, and sterilizations, tax benefits for "single people and childless couples," and denial of tax deductions to "those with three or more children."

Even in the face of college women's lack of interest in childbearing, colleges are continuing to train men and women in postgraduate work to swell the growing ranks of unemployed Ph.D.s competing for fewer and fewer jobs.

Anyone who is thinking about embarking on the long course of working for a Ph.D. should ask himself or herself the question: After I get my Ph.D., whom am I going to teach?

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