

The Social Contract

A Note from the Editor

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The End of Cheap Energy

Inexpensive, ready sources of energy have fueled the economic and population booms that marked our planet's history since the late nineteenth century. This era is coming to an end. We feature in this issue a compelling article by Dr. Richard Duncan on the likely decline of civilization as we have experienced it.

If Dr. Duncan and his colleagues are correct, then it follows that we should be looking for ways to reduce our population, not increase it. Other countries will have to do likewise. "Energy alternatives" have their own consequences. Already, soaring prices for farm goods, driven by the demand for crop-based fuels, are starting to push up the price of food around the world. One example: CEC Entertainment, owner of the Chuck E. Cheese's pizza chain, reports that the cost of almost every ingredient in their popular pizzas will rise because of the shift to corn-based ethanol. Wheat prices are expected to rise as farmers devote more acreage to corn. Cattle, chickens, and hogs feed on corn. And corn-syrup is a key ingredient in tomato sauce. Prof. Michael Plain of the University of Missouri expects the price hikes to take off by next year. "It takes awhile for the livestock industry to respond because of the biological lag that's involved in raising animals," the agricultural economist points out.

Important New Website

Granting automatic citizenship to children born in the United States has created the phenomenon of "anchor babies." Foreigners who give birth to their children here make claim to the benefits of American citizenship, including health, housing, and education. This has come about because of a misinterpretation of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. A new website, www.14thAmendment.US has just been launched to try to draw attention to this problem. Fred Elbel's article in this issue outlines the issues involved and suggests measures that would close this loophole for illegal aliens.

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