

will give work. The state does not have a choice on the one hand or the individual on the other. As the universal payment has been discussed lately in the United States, in a not uncommon historic reversal it has become associated with the expectation that work will *not* be required.¹⁰ For the next decade, at least, this is probably a fantasy. In any event, the universal payment, if it provided enough money for decent living, would bring about a sweeping redistribution of income in the United States. It is doubtful that this objective will be reached in one step.

PARTIAL DEMOGRANT

A partial form of the universal payment is the sixth and last alternative. If we are not likely to have a universal demogrant in the very near future, it seems much more nearly practical to extend a payment to specific population groups, without income test or any qualifying test other than age. The two candidates for such a program that come readily to mind are the aged and children. We have in fact already opted for a demogrant in proposing that the aged be blanketed into social security. There will be a certain amount of academic argument over the principle involved. The writer ventures to prophesy that scholars will decide that these old people are receiving demogrant but that they themselves will call it social security.

As has been noted, the critical group that is omitted in our system of income maintenance is children. A demogrant for children—that is, a children's allowance—might correct this long-standing oversight. It will be said that a children's allowance wastes money on children who are not poor that could be spent, in an income-limited

program, on children who are poor. A children's allowance designed carefully in relation to the income tax system would waste little money. In any event, that money is well wasted that purchases a sense of its rightness. It will be said that children's allowances would increase the birth rate, especially among those who really should have fewer children. Since the subject requires its own paper, the writer simply offers a dictum (but one complete with citation): *There is no evidence that children's allowances will affect the birth rate. If any effect at all is seen, it is likely to be trivial.*¹¹

Apart from the sense of rightness that may be provided by a demogrant, because it is not related to income it quite avoids interfering with incentive to work. A third point has already been made and two estimates will underline it. A children's allowance of \$50.00 a month would take beyond the reach of poverty three out of four children now poor. Moreover, family income is generally pooled; a child exits from poverty only when his whole family avoids poverty. If poverty were only eliminated for families with children, therefore, fewer than a third of those now counted poor would remain poor. It is perfectly plain who the citizens are who require income maintenance. How is it that we turn everywhere else?

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Where have we arrived in this discussion? If we strengthen the existing income maintenance mechanisms and add a couple of new ones, we can assure a decent income to virtually everyone in the United States. In addition, many whom Mollie Orshansky calls the "near poor" would find their income improved.¹² The writer has rejected

credits William Anderson, a Canadian actuary, with inventing it. See Burns, "Social Security in Evolution: Toward What?"

¹⁰ Robert Theobald, *Free Men and Free Markets* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1963).

¹¹ Alvin L. Schorr, "Income Maintenance and the Birth Rate," *Social Security Bulletin*, Vol. 28, No. 12 (December 1965), pp. 22-30.

¹² *Op. cit.*