

## *Acknowledgments for the Second Edition* \_\_\_\_\_

HELP WITH THIS second edition came from many. Elizabeth Sobo valiantly battled resistant bureaucrats and wielded the Freedom of Information Act to dig up valuable information about government operations. Carl Gosline sent many useful newspaper reports out of his volunteer clipping service. Donald Bishop drew my attention to the poem about Lincoln which ends the book.

Editor Jack Repcheck sponsored this edition at Princeton University Press and has been effective and generous in his treatment of it. Will Hively again edited the book, this time widening his role to split chapters that were too long, moving some material from place to place, and organizing the logistics of editing and typing. Karen Verde did such a good job as copy editor for a previous book that I asked for her again, and she excelled herself. Beth Gianfagna is a cheerful, efficient, and forceful production editor. Kathy Rochelle did a spectacular job of word (and paragraph and endnote) processing, managing to step around pitfall after pitfall of bad handwriting and confusing instructions. Helen Demarest continues to be the world's best secretary; what more can I say? Rebecca Boggs came along as a summer intern at the Cato Institute when the graphs were desperately disorganized and badly labeled, and with stupendous diligence and great good sense, in a few days relieved me of much work and great anxiety. Guenter Weinrauch helped prepare many of the figures, and was as competent a research assistant as I have ever seen; if he didn't know how to do something, he said he would learn how, and did so—an attitude I always admire greatly.

I would like to thank the Cato Institute for its support of my research and this book. Ed Crane and David Boaz of Cato are as steadfast as people can be in their commitments to liberty and truth; these ends are their only agenda, and they are exceedingly effective in promoting them. I appreciate their help and their comradeship in these happy battles.

I am grateful for extensive comments and generous editorial suggestions by Kenneth Elzinga about the note on Shakespeare's sonnet in chapter 19. I also appreciate useful readings of that section by Jim Cook, Stephen Louis Goldman, Stephen Miller, and Jack Stillinger. Cal Beisner enlightened me about the parable of the talents.

When the first edition was written, there had been few other works that discussed critically the unfounded prophecies of doom about resources, the environment, and population—mainly books by Barnett and Morse (a classic which was one of the pillars on which this book rests), Beckerman, Clark (who almost alone carried the flag of truth about population growth for many years), Kahn and associates, Maddox, Weber, and long before, Mather. There

also existed—though I did not know about it until he contacted me about my 1977 book because it provided empirical evidence for ideas he had held for half a century but had never published because they ran counter to the supposed data—Hayek's remarkable *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960). Its chapters on resources analyze the issues in astonishing breadth and depth, in the more general context of his vision of modern society and economic progress, which I have come to find more fundamentally sound and important than any book I have ever read, and with which I agree in almost every detail. And of course the studies of Boserup, Kuznets, and Schultz and some other great predecessors were in print, but did not aggressively confront the Malthusian doomsters.

The volume of available data and analysis—although not the volume of usable theory, I regret to say—has skyrocketed since the first edition, especially concerning the environment, pollution, and conservation. A confirmed doomsayer would extrapolate that we will soon be crowded out of existence by this trend. I do not worry about that, but I do wish to note both the blessings and the burdens that this has imposed on the creation of this second edition.

The welcome outpouring of books on these subjects constitutes most of those that are listed with asterisks in the references at the end of the book. The existence of all these books makes it possible for me to refer to their detailed treatment of such topics as nuclear waste, carbon dioxide emissions, and the ozone layer. Hence, I can reduce my treatment of these topics.

Unlike Malthus, when he published a second edition of his book on population, I have no need to change the first-edition conclusions; everything in the first edition of this book can stand as written. This edition mainly adduces new data and brings the old data series up to date (though this also makes it nearly twice as long).

It is now possible to better document many of the statements made in the first edition. But it is much harder to present enough material so that the reader feels comfortable that I have done the necessary homework. Should there be another edition, the scope of the volume probably will need to be curtailed to allow for the increase in supporting material. The first volume was able to be sufficiently comprehensive to serve as something of a handbook. This volume may still serve somewhat in that role. But in the future no one-author volume can do that job.

It is a bit ironic that the volume of literature about the effects of population growth has not grown nearly so much. The direct economic effects of population growth were and are my central interest, and the only reason that I wrote this book was because the profession ignored my technical articles and 1977 technical book on the subject; I hoped to reach the public directly, and the profession indirectly through the public's interest, with this book. And the only reason that I wrote about the environment, conservation, pollution, and

related topics is that whenever I would talk about the direct economic effects, people would say, "Yes, maybe that's true, but what about the effects on pollution? On the wilderness? What about crime and war?" They would keep moving down the ladder of possible negative effects, becoming ever less important, but providing an endless change of objections—quibbles—and each has to be addressed. Now the tail wags the dog, if we measure topics by the space devoted to them.

I cannot claim that I have done well enough in coping with this deluge of material. But I have worked hard at the task. My concurrent editing of the volume *The State of Humanity* has been a big help in keeping me apprised of developments of the past few years. And that volume should serve as the handbook that this book cannot be. Yet now I feel it appropriate to quote Hayek (1960) as follows:

It is perhaps inevitable that the more ambitious the task, the more inadequate will be the performance. On a subject as comprehensive as that of this book, the task of making it as good as one is capable of is never completed while one's faculties last. . . . I will merely claim that I have worked on the book until I did not know how I could adequately present the chief argument in briefer form.



## THE ULTIMATE RESOURCE 2

---

