

armed with the repeated experiences of plague, they claimed to have surpassed the ancients in the art of healing. No doubt, such success had less to do with their medicine than with their immune systems. Change from utter despondency over the first plague to a new culture of hope and hubris by the end of the fourteenth century rested on the particular character of the Black Death and its recurring bouts—the swiftness with which late medieval Europeans and the new bacillus (whatever it might have been) adapted to each other.

See also: AIDS; Epidemics; Historical Demography; World Population Growth.

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SAMUEL COHN, JR.

BLAKE, JUDITH

(1926–1993)

Judith Blake was born in New York City and spent most of the first three decades of her life there. She received her B.S. degree *magna cum laude* from Columbia University in 1951 and her Ph.D. in Sociology, also from Columbia, in 1961. Her first exposure to social demography came through a course co-taught by demographers Hope Eldridge and Kingsley Davis (1908–1997), whom she later married.

Blake moved to Berkeley, California, in 1955 and initially held a series of lectureships, first in the School of Nursing at the University of California, San Francisco, and later in Sociology and then Speech at the University of California, Berkeley. Having completed her dissertation, in 1962 she was appointed Acting Assistant Professor of Demography in the School of Public Health at Berkeley. She quickly advanced to the rank of Professor and along

the way established the Graduate Group in Demography (1965), soon to become the Department of Demography (1967), with herself as Chair.

The Department of Demography could not withstand the tumultuous anti-war protest years at Berkeley, and, under a new Chancellor, the department was disbanded in the early 1970s. Nevertheless, Blake, together with her two faculty colleagues in the department (demographers Samuel Preston and Nathan Keyfitz) and Kingsley Davis in the Sociology Department, managed to train an impressively large number of prominent demographers in a relatively short period of time. Following the closing of the department, Blake moved for a short while to the university's School of Public Policy. Then, in 1976, she became the first holder of the Fred N. Bixby Chair in Population Policy at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), with joint appointments in Public Health and Sociology. Blake was the first woman at UCLA to be appointed to an endowed chair.

From the beginning, Blake was intensely interested in the determinants and consequences of fertility-related attitudes and behaviors. Her dissertation, which was published as *Family Structure in Jamaica: The Social Context of Reproduction* in 1961, explored why Jamaica's birth rate was so much lower than Puerto Rico's. One of her most original and influential articles, "Social Structure and Fertility: An Analytic Framework," co-authored with Davis in 1956, identified a set of intermediate variables through which any social factors affecting fertility must operate. This line of research endures in contemporary work on the proximate determinants of fertility.

Blake's research on American fertility was wide ranging. In a 1968 article, she criticized economists for equating children with consumer durables and for ignoring important components of the opportunity cost of childrearing and other non-economic determinants of fertility differentials. She showed that, in their fertility attitudes and practices, American lay Catholics and non-Catholics were actually quite similar and that the Vatican's influence over the use of contraception was minimal. In her influential book *Family Size and Achievement* (1989), Blake demonstrated that single children were not disadvantaged in terms of their sociability and that children with few or no siblings experienced higher levels of material well-being and cognitive development. She showed that earlier studies of attitudes to-

ward abortion were simplistic, and she accurately predicted (to her dismay) the emergence of a backlash against abortion in the United States. She drew forceful attention to the pronatalism inherent in U.S. laws and institutions, including the emerging women's movement, and argued, at a time when U.S. fertility was still near its postwar peak and well above replacement level, that a reduction in fertility could be accomplished by a lifting of these incentives rather than by an introduction of disincentives.

Whether in her teaching, her performance at professional meetings, or in her published work, Judith Blake was invariably intellectually challenging and often provocative. She did not shy away from controversy, and she was a fearless and penetrating critic both of her own work and that of others. Her scientific contributions to social demography were recognized with her election as President of the Population Association of America in 1981, and, at the time of her death, she served as editor of the *Annual Review of Sociology*.

See also: Davis, Kingsley; Fertility, Proximate Determinants of; Population Thought, Contemporary.

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THOMAS J. ESPENSHADE

BOSERUP, ESTER

(1910-1999)

Ester Boserup was a Danish economist and internationally renowned writer on population and agrarian development. She graduated from the University of Copenhagen in 1935 and began her career in the Danish civil service, dealing with practical problems related to trade policy and regulatory issues. In 1947 Boserup moved to Geneva, having taken a position with the newly established United Nations Commission for Europe. The move marked the beginning of several decades of work in various international posts, assignments, and consultancies in the field of development economics, entailing long stays in India and Africa and extensive participation in international meetings, conferences, and committees. Living in Brissago, Switzerland, she remained professionally active until the early 1990s and was a productive scholar until her death at the age of 89.

Boserup rose to international prominence as an eminent social scientist and an influential intellectual figure with the publication, in 1965, of her book *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change under Population Pressure*. In India, she and her husband, the economist Mogens Boserup, had been part of the research team working on the massive study *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, under Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal. As a result of this experience, she became increasingly convinced that the then generally accepted theory of zero marginal productivity and agrarian surplus population in densely populated developing countries was an unrealistic theoretical construction. She resigned from the Myrdal study and started work on her book on the conditions of agricultural growth, drawing in addition

on studies she conducted in Africa. The book challenged the dominant Malthusian paradigm (accepted by the majority of classical economists) on the relationship between population growth and technical progress by arguing that population pressure can lead to agricultural intensification and to the adoption of improved methods of production. Looking back at her career at the end of her life, in a slim autobiographical volume published in 1999, Boserup gave a pithy summary of her 1965 message: "my conclusion was the opposite of the general opinion at that time, when it was believed that the carrying capacity of the globe was nearly exhausted and that the ongoing demographic transition in developing countries would result in soaring food prices and mass starvation" (p. 21). Two other important (and widely translated) books followed; they addressed the two major topics to which she had devoted most of her research and writings in the 1970s and 1980s: *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (1970) and *Population and Technological Change: A Study of Long-Term Trends* (1981). A selection of Boserup's major essays, *Economic and Demographic Relationships in Development*, appeared in 1990. In a review of that volume in *Population and Development Review* (December 1990, p. 775), the agricultural economist Vernon Ruttan commented: "Ester Boserup's writings have had a major impact over the last quarter century on the evolution of thought in anthropology, demography, economics, and sociology about the interrelationships among economic, demographic, and technical change."

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