

ANNOTATIONS

THE FUTURE POPULATION OF EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION

WHILE this study of Dr. Notestein and the staff of the Office of Population Research¹ is essentially a statistical horoscope of Europe in its demographic aspects, its findings must be carefully considered by the statesmen who are charged with establishing a stable peace; for what can and must be done regarding peace is circumscribed by the findings of this study, together with what is known of demographic trends in other parts of the world.

The methods employed by the authors to determine prospective mortality and fertility trends — methods somewhat unique albeit convincing — are described and evaluated in the first chapter and in the first and second appendices. The population projections themselves, on which most of the textual discussion is founded, are given, by sex and five-year age groups at five-year intervals, for the period 1940-1970, in a separate appendix.

The second chapter is devoted to a review of growth trends in Europe in 1900-1970. The historical demographic pattern of Europe reflects rather closely the historical pattern of the development and spread of those conditions which distinguish the modern industrial and urban parts of the world from these same parts a century ago. The death rate and, subsequently, the birth rate first began to fall in Western Europe where commerce and industry first became dominant. Only as, and somewhat in proportion as, these new conditions spread eastward and southward

¹ Notestein, Frank W.; Taeuber, Irene B.; Kirk, Dudley; Coale, Ansley J.; and Kiser, Louise K.: *THE FUTURE POPULATION OF EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION: POPULATION PROJECTIONS 1940-1970*. League of Nations, Geneva, 1944, 315 pp. \$3.50.

in Europe did mortality and, subsequently, natality begin to fall in these latter areas. In consequence, although demographic indices will pass through the same stages in non-Western Europe as they have already traced in the west, actual rates of growth, by country, will differ markedly in 1940-1970. Generally they will be low at the West, and high at the East and South. Whence, assuming no international migration, the demographic face of Europe will change considerably. Europe, exclusive of Soviet Russia, which numbered 399 millions in 1940 will number only 417 millions in 1970. The population of Northwestern and Central Europe will fall from 234 to 225 millions, while that of Southern and Eastern Europe will increase from 165 to 192 millions. Meanwhile the population of the U.S.S.R. will increase from 174 to 251 millions. Furthermore, while the populations of Soviet Russia and the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe will, in most instances, still be growing, the populations of the countries of Northwestern and Central Europe will have declined below their peaks. The Slavic element will have outdistanced both the Latin and the Teutonic elements.

These population projections do not take into account war losses. Careful analysis of the demographic effects of World War I indicate, however, that the present war is not likely to modify underlying trends; and that while it will shift the path of actual population growth somewhat, it will not change it significantly.

Chapters IV and V have to do with the coming changes in age structure, and with the effects of the change in age structure (together with the change in population totals) upon the number, character, and distribution of productive manpower. Future demographic military potentials are also considered. As of 1970 the German military manpower potential will approximately equal that of the United Kingdom and France combined; that of the U.S.S.R. will approximately equal that of the next eight most populous countries of Europe combined. In part as a consequence of these trends, E. M. Earle recently concluded that "it is even probable that before the twentieth century has run its course, the Soviet Union will be the most powerful nation in the world."²

Had it not been for the present war, the relative number of females would have decreased by 1970. Actually "at the end of the present conflict the relative surplus of women in Europe may be the greatest in the

² Earle, Edward M. (Ed.): *MAKERS OF MODERN STRATEGY*. Princeton University Press, 1943, p. 364.

history of the continent." This surplus, it is pointed out, "will tend to depress fertility and encourage the gainful employment of women"; it may facilitate the development of values unfavorable to home and children, and so make more difficult reconciliation of the economic and maternal functions of women.

Total dependency ratios — dependents to persons of productive age — will decline everywhere but in Northwestern and Central Europe; here they will decline until about 1960, and then move upward gradually. Specifically, the number of children under 15 will decline in greater measure than the number 65 and over will increase throughout all or most of the period under study.

In the closing chapter two of the problems that grow out of the main future demographic trends, the development of population pressure in Eastern Europe and the growing threat of population decline in Western Europe are considered. Eastern Europe is already overpopulated in relation to its developed resources. Something like one third of its agricultural population could be withdrawn without reducing total agricultural production. Should these be withdrawn, and should the future working population in this agrarian area increase by another 20 millions, a very considerable population must either be provided with jobs in industry, or with outlets to areas willing to accept immigrants. While industrialization is the preferable solution, adequate industrialization may not prove easy of accomplishment; whence some recourse to emigration may be necessary. More detailed economic analysis than is offered appears necessary. However, Dr. Notestein and his coworkers have under way further studies of this problem area. Russia can accommodate her prospective growth.

In the analysis of the problems of countries facing an eventual decline in numbers, it is indicated that reduction of mortality is no solution; it is necessary to create a social situation in which parents will choose, in view of their own and their children's interest, to have families adequate to maintain the population. It is important, however, that pro-natalist measures not accentuate the values initially responsible for the decline in fertility. The authors doubt that a volume of migration from East to West sufficient to equalize growth rates in both areas is practicable.

Population students and statesmen will await eagerly the further volumes promised in the series of which this valuable volume is the first.

JOSEPH J. SPENGLER