

ANNOTATIONS

EUROPE'S POPULATION IN THE INTERWAR YEARS

THIS volume by Dudley Kirk¹ is the last in a series of four² studies sponsored by the League of Nations and carried out by staff and collaborators of the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, under the general direction of Frank Notestein. Kirk's work is the most ambitious in scope and design of the four. He views Europe as a unit, to be broken down for purposes of analysis into regional subgroups transcending national boundaries. His analysis is focussed on "the most important resource of any nation or of any continent, its people." He relates the shifting pattern of this resource, historically and geographically, to variations in economic and political structure and in social heritage.

The study has several objectives: (1) to present "what might be regarded as a census of Europe, covering much of the materials normally included in national censuses without their very great numerical detail"; (2) to achieve complete coverage by supplementing official data with estimates from official, semi-official and private sources; (3) to break down the data for delineation of economic and cultural boundaries which may be at least as significant as the political boundary lines "arbitrarily fixed by man"; (4) to present the data in a form where the patterning of details can be grasped most readily and economically, and (5) to indicate the significance of empirical findings in a "logical structure."

¹ Kirk, Dudley: *EUROPE'S POPULATION IN THE INTERWAR YEARS*. Geneva, League of Nations, 1946, 340 pp.

² The three preceding volumes in the series are: *THE FUTURE POPULATION OF EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION: POPULATION PROJECTIONS 1940-1970*, published in 1944, *ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHY OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE*, published in 1945, and *THE POPULATION OF THE SOVIET UNION: HISTORY AND PROSPECTS*, published in 1946.

Kirk has been remarkably successful in achieving these objectives. As the title of the book suggests, he concentrates on the interwar period, the only span of years for which comprehensive and comparable data could be assembled "to show the more underlying and enduring aspects of Europe's human resources, aspects that do not change overnight and which have effectively survived war and conflict." Even for this limited and relatively recent period, the matter of assembling and collating data was a difficult task, complicated by the facts that the basic census data were originally collected at different times for twenty-nine different national purposes in twenty-five different languages, that regional subdivision involved classification by some 600 administrative districts, that there was little consistency or comparability in many important definitions (*e.g.*, urban and rural, occupational classes), or in such apparently straightforward matters as decisions as to what people should be counted in a census, and that estimates to supply missing data had often to be made on insecure bases.

The first seven chapters are arranged according to orthodox demographic practice: Population Distribution, Population Change, The Balance of Births and Deaths, Overseas Migration, International Migration within Europe, Internal Migration, and The Balance of Migration and Migration as a Factor in Population Growth. The next two chapters systematize materials on Social and Economic Development (health, literacy, occupational structure, and economic productivity in agriculture) and on Ethnic Diversity (criteria of nationality and language), while the final chapter pulls together all of the materials for an overall picture of "Europe's Population in a Changing World." The conclusions in this final chapter are founded firmly on the preceding orderly empirical analyses. The conditioning of the continental pattern of population distribution by socio-economic developments, against which national boundaries served as ineffective barriers, has been analyzed in detail. The concept of the vital revolution as a variable dependent upon the preceding agricultural and industrial revolutions is developed skillfully. Kirk lays particular emphasis on contrasts in the socio-psychological forces underlying the control of death and the control of birth. Both have resulted in downward

trends closely correlated with the rising level of living of industrialized populations. But, whereas the saving of life is in peace time a universal value, the means by which births are controlled (abortion and contraception) “flaunt and defy very deeply rooted mores,” often run counter to nationalistic objectives and require strong personal motivation. Kirk emphasizes, too, the role of the modern European state in facilitating mortality control, which it has achieved, in large measure, without even the active cooperation of the individuals concerned. “No earlier form of government can compare with it as a provider of public safety, as a guardian against epidemic and disease and in its interest in the general education and material welfare of its citizens.” Hence, reductions in mortality have tended to occur in an orderly manner, following the progress made in productive techniques, the rise in the level of living, and advances in medical science. The fall in the birth rate has been more erratic. Its spread is to be attributed not only to the same socio-economic and scientific trends which have affected the death rate, but also to the permeation of “new attitudes [unfavorable] towards the reckless creation of human life,” and to the inconveniences of large families in modern society. Pronatalist policies designed to curb the decline in births, whether through repressive, meliorative or propagandistic means have met with some success but “may well have a self-limiting aspect, in that they tend to reinforce and disseminate certain of the values that originally produced fertility decline (as, for example, the rising level of economic aspiration).”

The third factor affecting population change in Europe—migration—has tended to lose its earlier character of a mass movement “ebbing and flowing with opportunity abroad and crises at home,” for although crises “at home” persist, and have been accentuated by the backing up of displaced people, “opportunities” abroad have either dried up or been surrounded by the barriers of governmental restriction. Even internal migration has not been free from governmental restriction, and “should the internal distribution of the population become a matter of paramount military importance it seems likely that internal migration, too, will be increasingly guided by national rather than by personal considerations.”

The deviant position of Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe generally, from the patterning of population that followed the course of the vital revolution in Western and Northern Europe is considered although, in this connection, the companion volume by Frank Lorimer should be consulted for greater detail. Kirk concludes "that the countries of this region will be able to close up some of the more obvious gaps between this region and the West in the coming years," since "they are at the stage of development in which the cheap gains are to be made," particularly in respect to saving of lives, and since efforts towards rapid industrialization which precede the vital revolution "swim with the strongest of social trends."

In summary, the excellence of Kirk's study derives chiefly from the skillful organization of masses of empirical data around important sociological concepts. The data are handled with methodological sophistication. The book is exceptionally well-written. The charts and maps, beautifully executed by Daphne Notestein, not only supplement but at times supplant the text.

The book suffers from a few minor defects. A technical appendix, in which the reliability of data and estimates was more thoroughly discussed, would have enhanced the value of the volume for other investigators. In spite of the lavish use of chapter subheadings, an index should have been included. And the several "identification" maps which are presented without either alphabetical key or diacritical marks do not serve the purpose of "identifying" place names very efficiently.

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NUTRITION IN HEALTH AND DISEASE¹

THIS new and thoroughly revised edition of a book on nutrition which has an established place as a textbook should be warmly welcomed by many old and new students of the subject. The rapid growth in the science of nutrition has required the authors to make frequent revisions and this tenth edition since

¹ Cooper, Lenna F.; Barber, Edith M.; and Mitchell, Helen S.: *NUTRITION IN HEALTH AND DISEASE*. J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947, Tenth Edition, 729 pages.