

Although its central theme is geographic distribution, the last volume of DEMOGRAPHIC YEARBOOK contains one new table on divorce rates and two new tables "presenting statistics of resettlement and repatriation of refugees under the auspices of the International Refugee Organization."

DEMOGRAPHIC YEARBOOK has been a boon to students of population and vital statistics throughout the world. Its publication provides them a stream of up-to-date demographic statistics and it is helping to stimulate various countries to improve their national statistical systems.

CLYDE V. KISER

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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION¹

THIS recent report by the United Nations' Department of Social Affairs, despite its somewhat ambitious title, is a carefully documented inventory and analysis of selected social conditions throughout the world. This publication is the result of an invitation to the Economic and Social Council by the General Assembly to prepare a report outlining and summarizing the world's social needs by analyzing data available to the United Nations that is collected in the course of its official duties. Reliance on limited secondary sources is, of course, a serious restriction. This and other limitations, inherent both in the organization and scope of the project, are enumerated fully in the Preface and throughout the various chapters. Especially crucial are problems of the reliability of the data, its incompleteness, and the comparability of the statistics.

The report is organized around the following topics: population, health, food and nutrition, housing, education, work and employment conditions, and standards of living. Relying primarily on quantitative indices of these phenomena, the appropriate statistics for each cooperating nation are presented and discussed in a manner which enables comparison. In order to delimit the scope of the inquiry, attention is focussed on exist-

¹ United Nations, Department of Social Affairs. PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION. New York, 1952, 180 pp.

ing social needs and conditions to the exclusion of any systematic attempt to evaluate the actual or potential effects of programs which are designed to alleviate depressed conditions where they exist. The net effect of these comparisons is to indicate vividly the existing differentials and inequalities of levels of living throughout the world. A comparison of national populations on the basis of a number of objective indices of *levels* of living cannot of course as the report admits, be regarded unqualifiedly as an accurate evaluation of national *standards* of living. In other words, the more elusive cultural evaluations of these situations must be regarded as mitigating factors. This type of information is not easily accessible, to say the least. Nevertheless, the objective situations reflect clearly the existence of discrepancies so great that no amount of cultural relativism could satisfactorily account for them. Although a great deal has been accomplished comparatively in recent decades, especially in the so-called "underdeveloped" areas of the world, this report indicates that in the economic area the "gap between the rich and the poor countries in general levels of production and consumption is wider than before the Second World War" although in terms of distribution a leveling process can be discerned.

The subjects discussed are treated unevenly. The chapter on Education, for example, is far more extensive and detailed than the chapter on Housing. These differences of emphasis are at least partly due to differences in the amount of information available on the various subjects. One weakness of the analysis, which is due probably to the division of labor in its production, is a noticeable lack of integration of the interrelated subjects that are presented. Only once in the report is this referred to at any length (in a theoretical context) and only very briefly in the space of two pages (pp. 134-135). Probably in a volume which attempts to cover so much territory in so little space this is to ask too much. The authors of the report are quite aware of the problem. A form of integration at a different level is accomplished in the last three chapters which present a regional approach to social conditions in Latin America, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia.

No effort can be made in this review to summarize any of

the substantive findings of this research. Perhaps the general "tone" of these findings can be stated in the words of the authors' comment concerning the shifting picture of disease and death (in the Chapter on Health) which "shows that there are no frontiers to our health problems, only a succession of horizons."

This carefully prepared and well-written report performs the very useful service of bringing together in a single volume an up-to-date series of succinct summaries of social trends in all areas of the world in a form which facilitates international comparisons.

CHARLES F. WESTOFF

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A STUDY OF THE AETIOLOGY OF CARCINOMA OF THE LUNG¹

FROM 1948–1952, a large-scale investigation was conducted in England to obtain a better understanding of the etiology of carcinoma of the lung. The first results of this study were reported in a paper written by Doll and Hill in 1950. At this time the authors came to the conclusion that smoking was a factor in the production of lung cancer. In 1950 the study was extended to other parts of the country and more detailed information on smoking habits was obtained. This second paper presents an analysis of all of the material collected by the authors.

During the four years of the study nearly 5,000 patients were interviewed in hospitals in Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, London, Dorset, and Wiltshire. The authors were notified of all patients admitted to these hospitals who had cancer of the lung, stomach, or large bowel. At the beginning of the study, patients with carcinoma of the stomach or large bowel comprised one control group; another group of controls consisted of patients who had diseases other than cancer. Since these two groups were found to be quite similar in their smoking histories, in the second half of the study the

¹ Doll, Richard and Hill, A. Bradford: A Study of the Aetiology of Carcinoma of the Lung. *British Medical Journal*, December 13, 1952, II, p. 1271.