

ANNOTATIONS

THE POPULATION OF SWITZERLAND¹

DESPITE its modest title the book covers a wide range of subjects. The main purpose of the author is to enhance the understanding of Swiss social institutions through an analysis of the structure and changes of Switzerland's population. This small country of some 4.5 millions inhabitants, shows an extraordinary diversity not only of scenery, but also of language, religion, customs, and social and economic structure. However, its people have learned in the course of centuries to blend their cultural differences into a national equilibrium. The author believes that such a population analysis provides at least a partial explanation of the paradox of stability and harmony in diversity.

The author who probably does not claim to be a demographer, bases his study largely on the statistical material provided and interpreted by other authors, especially W. Bickel in his *BEVÖLKERUNGSGESCHICHTE UND BEVÖLKERUNGSPOLITIK DER SCHWEIZ* (Büchergilde Gutenberg, Zürich, 1947). His merit is to have absorbed in an intelligent way the mass of material available and to have interpreted it against the historical, economic and social background. He also appears to have been greatly influenced by the book by J. Christopher Herold: *THE SWISS WITHOUT HALOS* (Columbia University Press). People are prone to look at the Swiss as a nation of peaceful milkers and farmers, imbued since ancient times with a spirit of friendliness, devotion, hospitality and generosity. J. C. Herold made an attempt to remove from their heads the halos, the shrine of which is kept fresh by an adroit tourist propaganda. The au-

¹ Mayer, Kurt B.: *THE POPULATION OF SWITZERLAND*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1952, xii + 336 pp., \$5.00.

thor, who is himself a native of Switzerland, focusses his attention in a somewhat iconoclastic spirit on such remnants of the halos as may have escaped Herold's efforts.

Is Switzerland the "heart of Europe" or a "windowless antechamber"? Why is it that Switzerland is not a member of the United Nations whilst it welcomes United Nation offices on its territory? Is it a merciful haven or has it been engulfed in a "wave of narrow nationalism and xenophobia"? Is the country socially advanced and if so, how is it that it "is the last remaining Western country without women suffrage"?

Some of his developments may cause a shock to idealistic readers and may, at first sight, have little connection with a population analysis, but in fact they throw some light on population developments and population statistics. Thus the absence of reliable published records on refugees and on seasonal workers, their omission from population records, may simply reflect a mental attitude toward a problem.

Switzerland, a country without raw materials, has become, largely due to the merit of its honest and industrious population, one of the most industrialized countries of the world. Its national income per head of population is equally among the highest in the world. Its remarkable industry is, however, contrary to that of most other industrialized countries, largely decentralized, in many cases scattered over agricultural districts. By means of a thorough analysis the author helps the reader in avoiding pitfalls. It is difficult, in the case of Switzerland, to distinguish clear-cut geographical patterns, because most of the major socio-cultural factors cut across not only the political boundaries of the cantons, but across the geographical regions as well. Whereas the cantons with the highest nuptial fertility are mostly agricultural and Catholic, the industrial Protestant cantons have lower fertility rates. Vaud, an agricultural but Protestant French speaking canton has a low fertility rate and so has Geneva which likewise adheres to French culture. The author endorses Bickel's view that, whereas, as a rule, nuptial fertility in Switzerland depends primarily on the economic-occupational characteristics of the population, within an economically homogeneous population it is the religious affiliation which determines the fertility level, followed by the

linguistic factor. But what is the explanation of the low fertility of the canton Ticino, in spite of its agricultural character, its Catholic religion and Italian culture?

In a general way Switzerland has followed the demographic pattern of the Western countries with regard to mortality, fertility (general trend and differentials), industrialization, urbanization, trends in employment, etc. The author is, however, very well aware of the necessity of a minute differential analysis which, in the case of Switzerland, is needed possibly more than in many other countries.

The author states that as in other countries, industrialization has brought a growing concentration: the size of enterprises has tended to increase in industry, transport and commerce, there has been a decline of employers and independent workers as the result of both the flight from agriculture and the concentration process in the non-agricultural branches of the economy; the proportion of independents in the total labor force has likewise declined, while the proportion of the wage-earners has increased considerably. "Such fundamental changes in the social composition of the population go far to explain certain shifts in intellectual emphasis that have become increasingly noticeable in recent decades in all Western countries: it is only natural that the competitive spirit weakens when the number of opportunities for independent enterprise decline. The more a nation develops into a society of wage earners, the more does the desire for security tend to assert and manifest itself in its social institutions. . . . The decline of the 'old middle class' of farmers and independent business enterprises has thus been accompanied by a rapid rise of the 'new middle class' of salaried employees, a phenomenon of considerable social and political importance."

There is ample food for thought in these arguments which can be taken as applying to the whole Western world.

It would be easy to point out some flaws in the statistical material used, flaws which are due in part to the character of the Swiss statistics. Whereas much of the Swiss basic recording is among the best in the world, more detailed analytical data have not been readily available for past years or are not available at all for subjects such as religious affiliation (recorded in

Vital Statistics since 1940), data on age-specific death rates according to community size, on occupational mortality differentials, and on the average age at marriage. Moreover, considerable delay has occurred in tabulating the data concerning the "family size" as recorded for the first time in the 1941 census and births according to marriage duration, etc. The most conspicuous lacuna is possibly the absence of comprehensive migration statistics, "migration" being taken in a broad sense to include temporary immigrants, refugees, interned prisoners, etc.

Such statistical deficiencies as may be spotted here and there by an over-punctilious reader do not affect the general impression conveyed by this intellectually honest and stimulating book.

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CANCER ILLNESS AMONG RESIDENTS OF TEN METROPOLITAN AREAS¹

EFFECTIVE control of a disease necessitates accurate, current, and representative information on the amount and nature of the particular disease in the population. The National Cancer Institute, with the cooperation of state and county

¹ Cutler, Sidney J.: *Cancer Illness Among Residents in Atlanta, Georgia 1947*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 1, 1950;

Cutler, Sidney J.: *Cancer Illness Among Residents of Chicago, Illinois 1947*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 6, 1952;

Cutler, Sidney J.: *Cancer Illness Among Residents of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 1947*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 5, 1951;

Cutler, Sidney J. and Marcus, Samuel C.: *Cancer Illness Among Residents of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1948*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 10, 1952;

Cutler, Sidney J. and Rowan, John C.: *Cancer Illness Among Residents of Detroit, Michigan 1948*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 9, 1952;

Grodowitz, William: *Cancer Illness Among Residents of San Francisco and Alameda Counties, California 1947*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 2, 1951;

Marcus, Samuel C.: *Cancer Illness Among Residents of Birmingham, Alabama 1948*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 8, 1952;

Marcus, Samuel C.: *Cancer Illness Among Residents of Dallas, Texas 1948*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 7, 1952;

Marcus, Samuel C.: *Cancer Illness Among Residents of Denver, Colorado 1947*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 4, 1951;

Warran, Irving I.: *Cancer Illness Among Residents of New Orleans, Louisiana 1947*. United States National Cancer Institute. Cancer Morbidity Series No. 3, 1951.