

FABIAN TRACT

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OUR AGEING  
POPULATION

BY

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# Our Ageing Population.

By A. EMIL DAVIES.

The reading public has suddenly become population-conscious, and is vaguely aware that at some future time we shall be faced with a declining population. According to a publication of the Population Investigation Committee, the number of inhabitants in the British Isles, which is now estimated to be about 49,000,000,\* will (assuming that there is no change in the present trend of the birth and death rates) be as follows:—

1940	...	...	40,700,000	} These figures refer to England and Wales only.
1950	...	...	39,800,000	
1970	...	...	33,800,000	
2000	...	...	17,700,000	

The purpose of this tract is not so much to deal with the decline in population which may occur many years hence, as rather to draw attention to a factor that is somewhat neglected by writers on population—a factor which is already in operation and will affect the present generation very considerably. *This is the increasing average age of the community.*

It is possible, by the use of statistics, to arrive at fantastic conclusions. An American authority, as the result of a so-called statistical investigation, once informed an astonished body of readers that the average American was aged 36, of dark complexion, 5ft. 7½in. in height, a Methodist, married and possessed of 3½ children, one of them black! One might argue statistically that, because the death-rate in Bournemouth is 13.9 per thousand, and in Lewisham only 10.9, the latter is a much healthier place than the former, whereas, of course, it is precisely because the seaside town is known to be healthy that a large number of ailing and elderly persons take up residence there.

One statistical fact, however, cannot be controverted, namely, that (apart from the question of immigration) one can state with certainty the *maximum* number of persons in this country who will be 21 years old and over in any one of the next twenty years, because all who will be 21 before then are alive to-day. It is not what will happen in 1958 that will decide how many men and women of 21 years there will be, but the number of children born in 1937.

\* England 38 millions, Wales 2½ millions, Scotland 4½ millions, Northern Ireland 1¼ millions, Eire 3 millions.



### Increase of Average Age.

Contrary to the general impression, the decline in the birth-rate is not of quite recent origin. It has been happening ever since 1875. In that year the number of live births per thousand of existing population was 35;\* in 1937 it had fallen to 14.9. There is still a slight annual excess of births over deaths, due to the continuous improvement in the death-rate which in 1875 was 22.8 per thousand, in 1936 12.1, and in 1937 12.4 per thousand. This actual increase in population, which is due to a fall in death-rate and not a rising birth-rate, has hitherto masked the fact that the average age of the population has steadily increased. The average expectation of life now is something like 20 years more than it was two generations ago, but as the average age increases, the death-rate must inevitably grow, and it is possible that this tendency has already set in, the death-rate for 1937 being 12.4 per thousand as against 12.1 per thousand in 1936. In 1914 there were, roughly speaking, 1 million persons over 70; now their number is 2 millions, of whom 1,200,000 are women.

In 1965 it is estimated that the number will reach  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions.

### Live Birth Rate.

The following table shows the number of live births every fifth year, beginning with 1905, the last seven years being given separately:—

1905	...	...	929,293
1910	...	...	896,962
1915	...	...	814,614
1920	...	...	957,782
1925	...	...	710,582
1930	...	...	648,811
1931	...	...	632,081
1932	...	...	613,972
1933	...	...	580,413
1934	...	...	597,642
1935	...	...	598,756
1936	...	...	605,292
1937	...	...	610,557

It will be seen that, generally speaking, these show a steady decline, with the result that the 1937 total is only two-thirds that of 1905. The sharp rise in 1920 was, of course, due to the conclusion of the war, and the slight rise that has occurred since 1933 will be commented upon in due course.

\* Except where otherwise stated, all statistics relate to England and Wales.

### Fewer Potential Mothers.

It is obvious that, other things being equal, there cannot be so many potential mothers among the 814,614 babies (399,409 girls) born in 1915 as among the 929,293 babies (456,407 girls) born in 1905, and that, as compared with the latter figure, there will be one-third fewer potential mothers when the 283,684 girls of the 1933 birth crop (580,413) are of child-bearing age.

The slight increase in births that has occurred during the past four years is probably due to the increased number of marriages since 1932, a phenomenon that invariably accompanies an improvement in trade. As a result of the fall in the birth-rate, however, the number of persons of marriageable age twenty years' hence will be less than two-thirds of what it is to-day.

This decline in the birth-rate is a new phenomenon in history. Hitherto, the human race has always automatically reproduced itself, and society to-day is therefore confronted with an unprecedented state of affairs, particularly in that there is a larger percentage of middle-aged and elderly people in the population than ever before. Roughly speaking, in 1901 there were two adults to one child; to-day the proportion is three to one, and unless some entirely new factor presents itself, in 1965 there will be five adults to one child.

### Social and Cultural Effects.

This increase in the average age of the community will affect—indeed, is already affecting—all fields of activity, be they cultural or economic. It must be realised, however, that owing to improved health conditions, people to-day are younger at a given age than was the case a generation ago, when the man of 60 probably shuffled about in carpet slippers, wearing a smoking-cap, and the woman of 50 spent her evenings at home wearing a mob-cap, whereas to-day both probably play tennis and almost certainly spend some of their evenings dancing. Nevertheless, there are to-day more people than ever before, feeling and thinking in the way that one does feel and think in middle age.

This tendency is already reflected in novels and plays. In the novel of 100 years or more ago, the average heroine was as immature in age as in intellect. In *Tom Jones* we meet Sophia Western at the age of 18. In *Quentin Durward* the heroine is aged 15, and the other principal female character, the Countess, aged 35, is described as an old woman. That a heroine should be as old as 30, was sufficiently striking for Balzac to choose *La Femme de 30 Ans*, as a title. If we turn to modern authors, however, we find that in Compton Mackenzie's *East Wind of Love*, the principal female character makes her appearance at the age of 39, whilst in Ann Bridge's *Illyrian Spring*, the heroine is described



as being in the early forties, and has a grown-up daughter. An increase in the average age of the principal male character is also discernible.

### Sports and Recreations.

A corollary of the increased average age is the greater attention paid to less active sports, games and recreations, such as golf (which is largely in the nature of a medical and alcoholic treatment), and bowls, which is gaining enormously in popularity. Bridge would not have attained its present vogue if it were not for the existence of so many middle-aged people. Cruises also have become more favoured on account of the fact that they afford the least laborious method of travel. A lady recently informed me that she had returned from a six-months' cruise and had had the time of her life, for she was the "baby of the ship" at the age of 41!

### A Californian Example.

In the course of a lecture tour some years ago, I found myself in the city of San Diego in Southern California, not far from the Mexican border. It appeared that those responsible warned every lecturer that he would be speaking to a "grey-haired audience." They explained that San Diego was, for climatic and other reasons, the favoured permanent home of people from the middle states who had saved enough to live on, with the result that the average age was unusually high. Regarding this city of 100,000 people as an example, in many ways, of future communities with a high average age, I took particular note of the conditions there, and summarised them as follows:—

*Much attention paid to gastronomy, special dishes, wines and the like, being a frequent topic of conversation. Nine Golf Courses and one Women's Golf Club. More than 100 different clubs, including a large number of Women's clubs. Several dramatic and musical societies, art centres, Open Air Greek Theatre, and the like. Dante, Mozart and Shakespeare societies. Lecture groups galore. Highly developed library system. Excellent series of evening classes, half the students being women between the ages of 40 and 70, many learning history, science, art—in fact, predominantly non-commercial subjects. Women the chief political factor, and crowds of them eager to do social work, but not enough poor to go round. One Church for every 1,000 of population (including the delightfully named Casanova Congregational Church). Numerous freak religions. Headquarters of the American Theosophical Society, the head of which was a woman, the late Mrs. Tingley. A "Metaphysical Library."*

### **A London Parallel.**

Many of the tendencies referred to in the description of the social life of San Diego are already finding expression in our own country, if one knows where to look for them. In 1919 the London County Council started, in an old building in a small street off Drury Lane, an institution termed the City Literary Institute, the primary object of which was to give facilities for adult education in the humanities and non-commercial subjects generally. As these facilities gradually became known, the Institute attracted an ever-growing number of persons, mostly of middle-age. From a membership of 182 in 1919-1920, it has grown to a membership of 7,000, which has necessitated the construction of an entirely new building. In visiting this wonderful Institution, one sees much the same phenomena as are particularised in the case of the Californian city, namely, large numbers of middle-aged people, predominantly women, studying languages, literature, drama, etc. The prospectus of the City Literary Institute gives details of no fewer than 269 courses.\* It is much more than a school; it is more like a people's university for the adult, having an intense social life, in proof of which I need merely enumerate the following societies:—Dance club, Debating society, Film society, Operatic society, Chess club, Dramatic societies, French, German and Italian circles, League of Friendship, Group for the Study of London.

So successful has this institution been, that the London County Council has found it desirable to create twelve others in various parts of its area.

### **Status of Women.**

It will have been noticed that women loom largely in the foregoing brief surveys. There is little doubt that the changes in population that are taking place are in the direction of improving the status of women. Childless marriages, or smaller families, give women more time for self-development and opportunities of playing a more prominent part in the various activities of life. Incidentally, the fact that the middle class now spends more upon the education of girls than it used to—when their interests were entirely subordinated to those of their brothers—acts as a further deterrent to large families among that class.

### **Decline in the Number of Children.**

Circular 1426 of the Ministry of Education issued in 1933 indicated that in the five years following its publication, the number of children on the registers of Elementary Schools in England and Wales was expected to fall by 629,000, and

\* Prospectus can be obtained on application to The Education Officer, The County Hall, London, S.E.1.



that by the year 1948 the fall would reach the million mark. On the basis of the present percentage of children enjoying Secondary School education, the number in those schools is estimated to drop 42 per cent by 1965—from 449,000 to 260,000. That children are becoming more rare, is within the experience of every person of middle age, and over. Nowadays, the presence of a baby, or two or three small children, in a public vehicle, arouses interest on the part of nearly all the other passengers, whereas a generation ago, these little family parties were so frequent and numerous that they were regarded more as a nuisance than otherwise. Children in a small family are apt to be more spoilt than where they are more numerous. To the State they are beginning to have scarcity value, and more and more protective measures are likely, as witness the milk scheme and the raising of the school age. With the increase in the school-leaving age children are no longer welcomed by their parents as contributors to the family income, and this is an additional deterrent to large families among considerable sections of the community.

#### **Health Services and the Medical Profession.**

The pursuit of better health already perceptible, e.g., National Fitness Campaign, holidays with pay, will proceed further and be accompanied by a huge extension of medical services and treatment, possibly ending in a State Medical Service, as now proposed in New Zealand. The effects on the medical profession of the increasing age content of the population are already visible. Private doctors complain that they get little or no experience in midwifery, on account of the smaller number of births and the increasing use of hospitals and clinics for maternity cases. Children's ailments are declining, not merely because of the smaller total of children, but because, in a one or two child family, there are fewer carriers of infection from school or cinema. On the other hand, diseases of middle and old age are increasing, those outstanding being:—chronic rheumatism, digestive troubles, kidney and liver troubles, gastric and duodenal ulcers, diabetes, psycho-neuroses caused by fears, anxieties and obsessions, cancer. One of the reasons why the treatment of cancer has not made as much progress as that of other diseases is that it is largely an affliction of old age, and it is only within the last few decades that it has become prominent—in other words, many people who would have had it, died before it made itself apparent. For obvious reasons, there will be an increasing demand for so-called rejuvenation processes and aphrodisiacs.

#### **Economic and Industrial Effects.**

As will have been seen from the figures on page one, it is estimated that there will be a fall in the population of these islands beginning shortly after 1940. It will be some years before the fall



is very noticeable, but gradually, industries organised for mass production, particularly necessities, will begin to suffer from a decreasing demand. Industrialists have thus far been accustomed to a large annual increase in the number of consumers, and with the present chaotic system it is probable that some time will elapse before they realise that they are making extensions and completing new factories to meet the requirements of consumers who will not be born. This is probably one of the underlying causes of the American depression, for not only is the birth-rate following the same course as with ourselves, but the practical cessation of immigration is accentuating the tendency referred to.

The increase in the average age is in our own country a more immediate factor affecting industry. Obviously, fewer children and more elderly people must result in considerable changes in demand, and gradually bring about large transfers of capital and labour from one industry to another. Not everything will show a reduction in demand; a population of 30 millions will require as well-developed a road and railway system as one of 40 millions, and even as regards housing, more houses will be required for a greater number of families up to at least 1950, for the number of marriages should continue to increase until then, before the reduction in the birth-rate makes itself felt in this respect. What we are experiencing is more marriages, but smaller families. Municipalities and other housing providers will have to construct more single-room tenements and hostels for old people who are without relatives or friends willing to look after them. Such provision is already urgently required, for slum-clearance operations have already revealed a large number of old people whose relatives or friends take the opportunity (or find themselves compelled) to rid themselves of an encumbrance.

The increasing average age is already stimulating the demand for all things making for better health; not only for foods but also for appliances such as improved cookers, refrigerators, and the like. Humanity being what it is, presumably lipstick and other beauty preparations, dentifrices and all preparations or apparatus purporting to keep people young, will flourish. For the ever-growing number of elderly people there will be an increasing demand for soft foods, drugs and alcohol. Those industries providing amenities and recreations favoured by the more mature, will meet with a continually growing demand, e.g., the book, radio, television and music trades. Gardening is obviously on the increase, and particularly greenhouse gardening, which does not call for so much bending as the outdoor variety. No one motoring throughout the country can fail to have been struck by the enormous number of establishments breeding and selling dogs, or providing homes for domestic pets during the owner's absence. Fewer babies, more pets. On the other hand, toyshops are becoming fewer and fewer.

### Financial Considerations.

Much will depend on the standard of living that the country can afford. A fall in the number of young people and a rise in the number of aged means that there will be a smaller number of able-bodied persons having to support a larger number of retired and infirm persons. (It may be remarked, incidentally, that half the applicants to the Public Assistance Department in London for relief are over 65). Twenty-five years hence, the cost of state Old Age Pensions will be double what it is to-day, with more recipients but fewer contributors and taxpayers. This applies, generally speaking, to all public and private pension funds. No matter whether the old are supported by their investments, savings, relatives or the State, their maintenance is a charge on the national income. Someone, somewhere, has to produce to meet their needs. On the other hand, the productivity of labour per head has enormously increased in the last 20 years, and if, as appears probable, this tendency continues, it should constitute some offset to the growing poverty of an ageing population.

### The National Debt.

It is not generally realised that during the past 17 years there has been no reduction, but an increase in the sum total of the National Debt. At the end of March, 1921, it was £7,623 millions; at 31st March, 1938, it was £8,149 millions. Only a small portion of the cost of rearmament will be paid for out of revenue, and the total debt will therefore be increased. The danger of a stationary—let alone an increasing—debt, with a fall in population, is too obvious to need comment. A devaluation of the pound, with its lightening of the burden of interest payments, appears inevitable.

### Overseas Investments.

With a declining working population, the income derived from overseas countries will be a factor of increasing importance. I am not here concerned with the question of ownership as between individuals; from the national point of view, the interest and dividends on overseas investments (irrespective of whether they are British Dominions or foreign countries) represent tribute requiring no present or future contribution on our part. Assuming such income to remain fairly stable, it would obviously represent a larger sum per head in a smaller population. I have long held the view that this tribute from abroad plays a greater part in maintaining the standard of living in this country, than is shown by merely relating the monetary value of the return from that source to the monetary value of the national income. The capital value of the national income includes all goods and services provided by private and public enterprise. These, according to the most recent estimate of Colin Clark ("*National Income and Outlay*"), amounted



to £3,897 millions in 1935. The income from our foreign investments during 1936 is given by Sir Robert Kindersley (*Economic Journal*, December, 1937) as £184 millions. If, for purposes of easy calculation, we regard the present national income as £4,000 millions, and the income from overseas investments as £200 millions, the latter represents one-twentieth of the former. True, the population at large does not possess these investments, but the income derived therefrom enables its recipients to employ fellow citizens to the extent of such income.

The point I wish to make, however, is that, measured by its importance to the national standard of living, the part played by this income from overseas is much more important than would appear from the bald statement that it represents 5% of the national income. Included in the £4,000 millions of national income are all the individual incomes derived from services, which means that if, out of an income of £1,000 a year, a man spends £100 on Doctors and loses £200 to bookmakers, these (less expenses) are aggregated for purposes of computation of the national income, as £1,300. Colin Clark, in his work already referred to, maintains (rightly) that this method of computation is correct, for certain services have been rendered, or have been supposed to be rendered, in return for these payments, and "the rate at which these services have been remunerated must have corresponded approximately to the rate at which these same workers could have sold their services on the market, if they had engaged in other work." I submit, however, that our income on overseas investments, coming as it does very largely in food-stuffs and raw materials, is not comparable with the national income which is made up so largely of services, and includes the profits or incomes of prize fighters, football pool promoters and greyhound racing track owners, jockeys, etc. Take the case of Argentina. In 1937 the income from British investments in that country is estimated to have been £12,861,413 (*South American Journal*, 22nd January, 1938). In 1936 the corresponding figure was £10,602,162. In the latter year we sold to Argentina goods to the value of £15½ millions, and "bought" of her £45 millions. Of this £45 millions, £10 millions was therefore in payment of interest and dividends. It reached us in the shape of wheat and other cereals, meat, hides, quebracho, etc.,\* which were necessary to us and could not be produced within our own country by any diversion of labour. This, in my opinion, renders our income from overseas investments a factor of the utmost importance in our national economy, and in its effect upon the standard of living in this country. Whether or not it will continue at

\* Should our population fall to a point when its consuming capacity was not equal to the "tribute" received in this form, the question of how payment can be made will become interesting.

its present rate is an open question, in view of certain recent defaults, but the fact that over 60% of the total of our overseas investments is in the British Empire is of some importance in this connection.

### **Social Services.**

As the financial effects of a reduction in the number of workers and an increase in the number of rentiers and pensioners become perceptible, the conflict between conservative and progressive elements in the state is likely to become acute. The smaller number of children and the larger number of old people will increase the demand for further extensions of social services, but the increased burden of indebtedness and the smaller number of workers will conduce to more support being given to economy campaigns. It is, indeed, possible that the average working age may be increased and the pension age retarded. It may be that the smaller number of people of working age may object to the old people, who are non-workers, having equal voting power with those who are producing what they, as a majority, receive. It is possible, also, that a more realistic policy will be adopted towards incurables and the hopelessly insane. At the present time an incurable idiot child in an institution costs the community 32s. 4d. per week, exclusive of capital charges, whilst the weekly allowance to an unemployed man, per child, is 3s. Women will be welcomed into industry. Changes in conventional morality will follow upon the community's need for children, and subsidies to mothers, whether married or not, will almost certainly be introduced and continually augmented. Immigration, instead of being discouraged as it is to-day, will be organised and stimulated, whilst those who endeavour to promote emigration to the Dominions or elsewhere will be regarded as enemies of the Motherland, for it is not good business to spend hundreds of pounds upon maintaining and educating the young, and then, just when they become producers, to export them without any return.

### **The Empire and Defence.**

Although, as is shown later, the population tendency here described is fairly general, the decline in births and increase in average age make the British Empire more vulnerable. The present white population of the entire Empire is roughly 70 millions (of whom 49 millions are in the British Isles) against 77 millions in the German Reich. In Australia the birth-rate has declined from 27 per thousand in 1911 to 17 per thousand in 1926, whilst in New Zealand the fall during the same period has been from 27 to 16.6 per thousand. In a speech broadcast throughout Australia in September, 1937, Mr. Lyons, the Prime Minister, stated that between 1931 and 1934 a total of 20,000 more people, chiefly of British stock, had left Australia, than had entered it.



He added that the last census showed 518,000 childless marriages, and of 866,000 families with dependent children, there were 342,000 with one child and only 248,000 with three or more children. He pointed out also that the population was growing older and there were relatively fewer women of child-bearing age.\* In Canada the birth-rate has fallen from 26.6 in 1920 to 20 per thousand, which is just about the replacement figure, but here the increase is almost wholly among the French population. In South Africa the birth-rate of those of European extraction has fallen from 31 per thousand in 1913 to 24 per thousand, which is a little over the replacement rate, but there again, it is the non-British population which is increasing. The religious factor does not seem to be of much importance, for if the French-speaking part of Canada is Roman Catholic, the South African Dutch are predominantly Lutheran.† It is noteworthy that both these peoples are largely peasant populations, which suggests that divorce from the land may be one cause of decreased fertility.

### **The U.S.A.**

The United States of America is following precisely the same course as Britain, with a time-lag of 10 or 20 years. In 1915 the birth-rate was 25.1 and in 1936 16.8 per thousand, which is under replacement rate. The 1930 census showed that as compared with 1920, there were 4,852,000 more married women, but 128,840 fewer children under five years of age.

### **Japan.**

Japan also shows a falling tendency, but is still well above replacement rate, the decline here having been from 35 per thousand in 1921 to 30 per thousand in 1934, but the slowness of the decline means that the average population is younger than is the case with most countries, although the military caste appears to be doing its best to alter this!

### **France.**

France was the first to start (in 1923) a system of State assistance for poor families, varying according to their size, but the allowances were very small, and the effects, if any, have been negligible. In 1911 the birth-rate was 19 per 1,000, in 1936 15, and in 1937 14.69 per 1,000. Deaths now actually exceed births in France.

\* *The Times*, 29th September, 1937.

† In 1936 there were 8 per cent. less births than the previous year, in Buenos Aires, the greatest city in South America, where the population is predominantly Catholic.

### Italy.

In Western Europe the tendency is the same throughout, and only Italy and Germany call for special comment, insofar as they have made the most determined efforts by subsidies, tax and other measures to bribe people into having larger families.

Mussolini in 1928 introduced marriage subsidies and taxed young bachelors, but the birth-rate continues to decline. In 1911 it was 31.5 per thousand, and during the first six years of the present decade it has been 26.7, 24.9, 23.8, 23.7, 23.4 and 23.3 respectively. Speaking to an assembly of 60 bishops and 2,000 priests in Rome, Signor Mussolini said :—

“The priests should help to raise the numerical strength of the population, since it was the big families which furnished the big battalions. Italy, as a Catholic nation, had a special duty to serve as a bulwark of Christian civilization, because of her intrinsic strength and the number of her sons.”\*

A decree dated 1st September, 1938, states that all State employees must marry if they desire to obtain promotion—before the age of 26 in subordinate grades, and 30 in the higher grades.

### Germany.

It is in Germany that the most active measures have been taken of late years to encourage large families. According to an official publication, the army authorities were perturbed at the official estimate that whereas in 1937 young people of both sexes who attained their fourteenth year numbered 1,100,000, in 1947 there would be only 822,000 reaching that age. By an ingenious system of marriage loans for the purchase of furniture, there has been a large increase in the number of marriages, 822,000 couples having availed themselves of these facilities during the four years up to September, 1937. Hardly a year passes without some increase in the inducements offered to increase the number of births. The following extract from the *Berliner Tageblatt* gives some idea of these measures :—

“A wide extension of the National-Socialist system for subsidising families with many children was announced by Herr Reinhardt, Secretary of State in the Finance Ministry, on December 30, 1937. As from April, 1938, the grant of 10m. (16s.) a month introduced in the summer of 1936 for fifth or later children of socially insured workers earning low wages, is to be given for the third or fourth child, and 20m. (32s.) a month will be given for the fifth or later child. The wage limit for beneficiaries, now 200m. (£16) is also increased to 600m. (£48) a month. The effect of these changes will be to quadruple the number of children for which grants will be made in 1938. Such payments are additional to the single grant of goods or assistance to the value of 330m. (£27 10s. 0d.) made since 1935 to needy families on the birth of a child, and a further 270,000,000 marks (£22,500,000) will be set aside for this purpose, in addition to the existing 250,000,000 marks.”

\**Daily Telegraph*, 10th January, 1938.



As an afterthought—for it had been apparently overlooked—some of these concessions, such as a rebate of Income Tax proportionate to the number of children, have been cancelled as regards the Jewish population. The result of all these measures has undoubtedly been to stop the fall in the birth-rate, which in 1911 was 28.6 per thousand, in 1921 25.3 and in 1933 14.7, for in 1934 it rose to 18, in 1935 18.9 and in 1936 19.0 per thousand; this is still probably under replacement rate, but on the surface it looks as though the measures taken have at least checked the decline. My own opinion is that the improvement will prove to be temporary, and that these subsidies and concessions promote earlier marriages, rather than larger families. If a couple marry earlier, they may have their children earlier, but those whose ideal is a two-child or three-child family are not going to produce a much larger number of children just because they have married younger. Time will show whether this supposition is correct, or not.

In Great Britain the number of marriages has also increased since 1933, without any subsidy, the reason being the improvement in trade, and that is already being reflected by the slight increase in the number of births mentioned previously.

#### **U.S.S.R.**

No figures are yet available for Russia, but it is generally understood that the birth-rate is above replacement level.

#### **Replacement or Reproduction Rate.**

These expressions have been much used in the foregoing notes. Professor Robert R. Kuczynski has provided the perfect formula for determining the reproduction rate in his book *The Measurement of Population Growth* (Sidgwick and Jackson, 12s. 6d.). He points out that for this statistical purpose one needs to take into account only the female population, and that if fertility and mortality are such that 1,000 newly-born girls, during the course of their lives, give birth to 1,000 girls, the first generation of 1,000 females will, at its death, have been fully replaced by the girls they have borne, and the population will remain constant; otherwise it will, in the long run, increase or decrease. It remains to be added that on this basis the population of England and Wales is reproducing itself to the extent of slightly less than 75%, and that to maintain the population, each woman of child-bearing age should, during her life, produce three children.

#### **Causes of the Decline.**

The theory sometimes heard that there is a strike against motherhood on account of the unsettled state of the world, does not find support from the high birth rates during periods when

wars were endemic. Greater knowledge of birth control methods, together with the determination of the modern woman to participate more fully in life itself than in its creation, is the more likely explanation.

#### **Conclusion.**

Unless some totally unforeseen circumstances arise, the outlook is that, beginning some time during the next decade, this country will have a declining population with, for several years, a sharp increase in the average age. The opinion may be expressed that, excluding the question of military power, there is no inherent virtue or advantage in a large population; the average inhabitant of Sweden or Switzerland is no less happy, or less prosperous, than his contemporary in France or Britain—let alone China. But the outcome of the social and economic effects of the changes here described, involving a decrease in the population, coupled with an increase in the proportion of the aged, at the expense of children and workers, will be far-reaching, and will involve great social disturbances unless preceded, or at least accompanied, by a drastic redistribution of income and a re-organization of society.



# THE FABIAN SOCIETY

11 DARTMOUTH STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.1.

Those willing to join the Labour Party, or desirous of obtaining information about its Programme and Principles, are invited to communicate with the Secretary of the Fabian Society.

The Fabian Society has been, from the outset, a constituent body of the Labour Party and membership of the Society carries with it full membership of the Labour Party; eligibility for nomination to all Conferences and Offices, and qualification for Labour Party candidatures for Parliament and Local Authorities, without obligation to belong to any other organisation.

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(TO BE SIGNED BY ALL MEMBERS.)

(Adopted May 23rd, 1919.)

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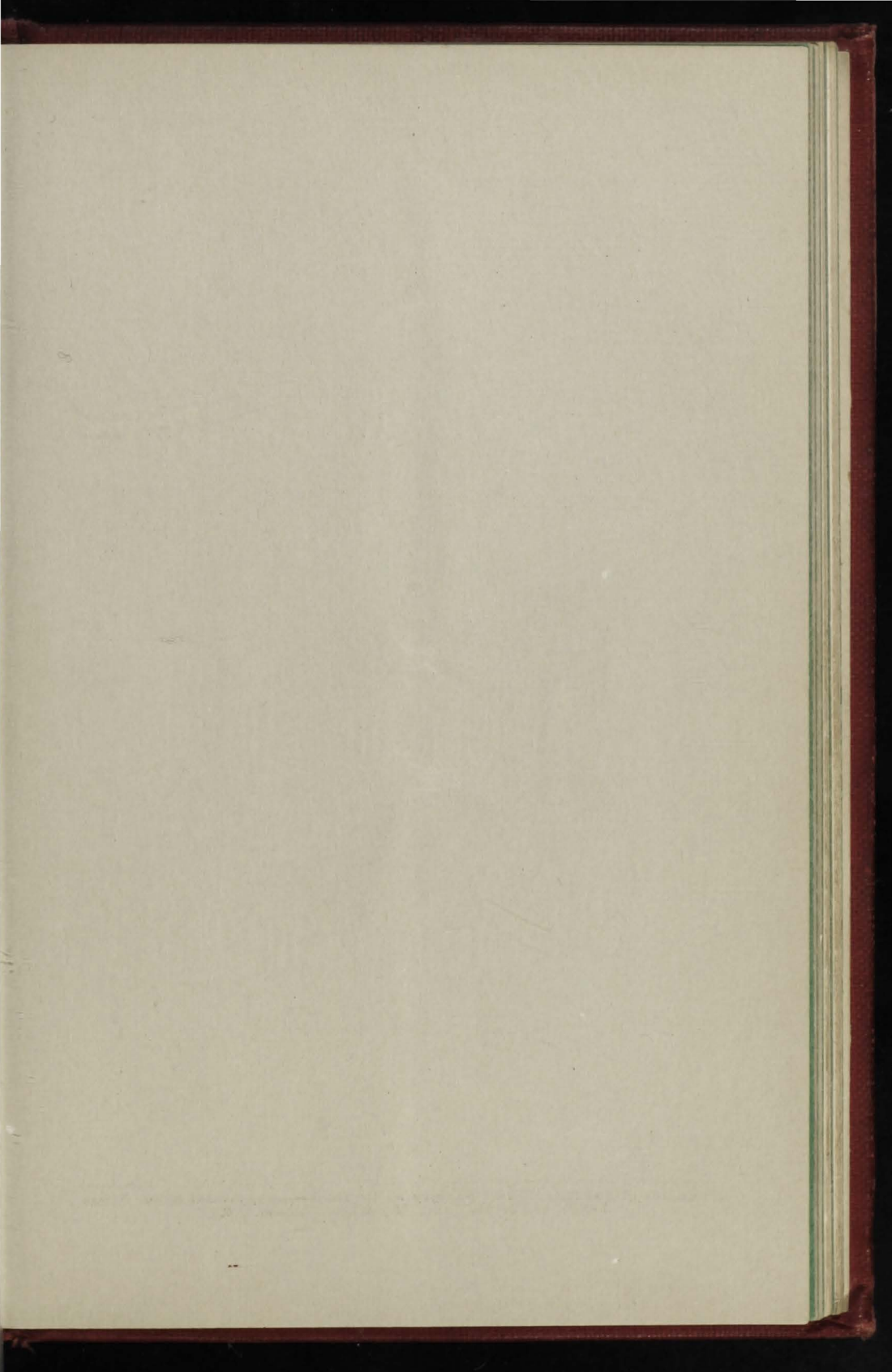
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