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The Population Reference Bureau

JULIAN HUXLEY has said that "human population is probably the gravest problem of our time. Certainly more serious in the long perspective than war or peace. . . ." The close relationship of population to war and peace is obvious to all who understand population trends.

The Population Reference Bureau, Inc., has, since it was founded in 1929 by the late Guy Irving Burch, pioneered in its endeavor to awaken public interest in the problem. A nonprofit, scientific organization which is sponsored by a group of biologists, sociologists, and economists, the Bureau gathers, coordinates, and distributes population data. Its Board of Trustees consists of Dr. C. C. Little, Director, Jackson Memorial Laboratory, Bar Harbor, Maine; Donald J. O'Connor, Director, The Office of Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C.; Mrs. Guy Irving Burch, Arlington, Virginia; Samuel W. Anderson, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, Washington, D.C.; Dr. Kingsley Davis, Sociologist-Demographer, Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.; Dr. Clarence J. Gamble, Co-Director, College Project, Milton, Mass.; Dr. Frank H. Hankins, distinguished emeritus professor of sociology at Smith College, Northampton, Mass.; Dr. Joseph J. Spengler, economist, Duke University, Durham, N.C.; and William Vogt, National Director, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, New York, N.Y. Robert C. Cook is Director of the Bureau.

A steadily growing awareness of population problems on the part of the public has been the Bureau's reward for its pioneering effort. Today the Bureau is a clearing-house for population information. Its main objective is to make available in accurate, nontechnical form the essential facts upon which rational population policies must be based. It does not sponsor action programs to implement population policies in either their quantitative or qualitative aspects. A three-year grant from the Ford Foundation in August 1952 has made it possible to strengthen and further develop the Bureau's program.

Since 1945 one of the Bureau's main activities has been the publication of its *Population Bulletin*, which is used as a source of demographic information by teachers, students, libraries, laymen, editors, publishers, news

and editorial writers, columnists, radio commentators, businessmen, and industrial consultants. Each issue is devoted to some particular aspect of the population problem, or to an analysis of the demographic "health" of a particular country. Subjects recently covered by the *Bulletin* include: Latin America, Area of Population Explosion; Italy, A Population Paradox; Falling Birth Rates—What Do They Mean?; Soviet Population Policy; and Why People Refuse to Face Population Problems. Two issues, devoted to U.S.A. A.D. 1975–2000, anticipate population growth in terms of the consumption of resources. A third issue of this series, scheduled for 1954, will deal with the qualitative aspects of population change.

Since 1946 the Bureau has undertaken a continuing study of the birth rate of college graduates. The study has confirmed earlier reports that the graduates of many American colleges are not reproducing themselves. It has established two other important facts: the alumni of some colleges are exceptions to this rule; and there is at present a clear trend toward a higher birth rate among college graduates generally.

As part of its expanded program the Bureau conducts a Population Information Service, this now being widely used by research groups, government and social agencies, congressional committees, other information services, and by the group mentioned above who read the *Population Bulletin*.

Looking to the future, the Bureau has recently turned its attention to the interested student in its effort to help develop that leadership which the younger generation will be called upon to give as population problems inevitably increase in momentum. A six-week workshop with a limited number of graduate students participating is the medium with which the Bureau has experimented during the past two summers. Each student completes a research project, participates in a series of seminar discussions which includes demographers, conservationists, and representatives of the press and radio, and assists in the preparation and editing of at least one issue of the *Bulletin*. The workshop has proved a successful technique, and it is hoped that it can be expanded in 1954.

ROBERT C. COOK

Population Reference Bureau

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