

The Future of the White Race.¹

THIS subject is one which can be approached from many aspects. Whether our special interest is in anthropology, eugenics, world politics or the future of Christianity, it is a problem which must affect our thinking and planning. I propose in these remarks to confine my attention to the future balance of population between the white and other races of mankind and to the dangers which are already arising through the maldistribution of populations. Many people take the fatalistic view that we cannot hope to control or direct the growth and distribution of populations on a world scale, and it is therefore idle to trouble about such large matters. They forget, however, that most of the difficulties under which the world is labouring to-day are not due to the "blind course of Nature," but rather to man's blind and unthinking interference with it by such measures as birth-control here, saving of infant life there, narrow nationalisms with prevention of migration almost everywhere, not to mention wars and the control of epidemic diseases.

Let us first try to sum up the changes during the last century or two in a few figures. It is estimated that in the year 1770 there were 155 million persons of European stock in the world, and that now there are 750 million. One hundred years ago there were about 260 million of them, of whom 20 million lived in America, about 120,000 in Australia, a few in Asia and the rest in Europe. Now there are 200 millions in America, 8 millions in Australia, 4 in Africa and the rest, about 540 millions, in Europe. The world population being now round about 2,200 millions, the white race forms roughly one-third, and Europe's population one-quarter of the whole.

During the last hundred years, whilst the white race has increased nearly threefold, the rest of mankind has probably not increased at all, or may even have slightly decreased. In Europe births have exceeded deaths in every year since 1770, except 1916, 1917 and 1918. The increase has been maintained, in spite of the falling birth-rate since 1880, by the fall in death-rates and the consequent lengthening of life brought about by advances in the standard of living and in the art and science of medicine. The saving of life has been greatest in infancy and childhood,

¹ Opening remarks to a discussion at the Baptist Universities' Society on October 5th, 1936.

and for Europeans the number of years one may expect to live has been nearly doubled in 150 years. Thus in Sweden in 1770 the mean expectation of life was thirty-five years; now it is sixty-two or sixty-three. In England and Wales a hundred years ago an infant could expect to live forty years from birth, but the expectation is now sixty-one, and the same applies to white people in the United States of America. To put it in another way, whereas a century ago only one-third of the infants born in England would have reached the age of sixty according to the death-rates at that time, now nearly two-thirds can anticipate reaching that age.

What further improvement in longevity can we anticipate? In New Zealand the expectation of life of women has now reached sixty-eight years. On the other hand, the expectation of life of those who have attained their sixtieth year has changed very little in this country in a century, and it is therefore argued that even if every infant were to survive to sixty the total expectation of life is never likely to exceed seventy-five years. At the rate we have to live at present that is probably true, and there seems little prospect that the wear and tear on our arteries will grow less. The death-rate of people over sixty in Norway is only about two-thirds of that in England, however, and at these ages the rates in many European countries compare favourably with our own. We are forced to the conclusion, nevertheless, that, short of some revolutionary discovery, not much further improvement in longevity of the white race can be looked for. That being so, it is inevitable that, owing to the recent accumulation of older people in the population of Europe and depletion of the young by the falling birth-rate and slaughter of the War, we shall very shortly be faced with a rising death-rate when measured on the basis of the population as a whole, that is to say a rising "crude death-rate," in the language of the statisticians. To sum up the matter very tersely, the advances in hygiene, education and standard of living which have been pulling down the mortality of the white race during the last three-quarters of a century have enabled the white population to increase greatly, but now we can look for little further total increase by those means, and indeed must face some degree of paying back of the temporary advantages which have been gained in the matter of numbers.

This would not be a cause for concern, perhaps, were it not that the remaining two-thirds of mankind are now entering upon their period of falling mortality through the spread of knowledge from the whites, and the coming century may be expected, short of cataclysmic wars or epidemics, to produce a similar increase in population to that which the white race has experienced in

the last century. And what would that mean? Let us take a look at what is already happening in India. At the end of last century the population of British India was under 300 millions, and in 1921 it was about 320 millions. In the last fifteen years it has increased by 50 millions, and at the census of 1941 is expected to exceed 400, notwithstanding that the death-rate is still twice as great as in England. As the death-rate is brought lower and the social evils of child marriage and the ban on the remarriage of widows are removed the rate of increase is likely to become greater still. The serious problem for India which this raises is now recognised in that country, for economists estimate the limits of food production in India to be only sufficient to feed 440 millions. At the All-India Population Conference in Lucknow early in 1936, the Vice Chancellor of that University stated the problem in these words: "The inordinate increase of population produces such an amount of pressure on the food supply that the standard of living falls continually . . ." and he went on to say that the outlet by migration was practically closed to the people of India, since most countries are unwilling to admit Indians in any appreciable numbers. Professor Muckerjee, who occupies the Chair of Economics at Lucknow, expressed the view that the solution must be found mainly in birth-control. "Modern education, medicine and public hygiene have reached the Indian village and, as these spread more, birth-control will shock people less and an adaptive fertility will relieve the present heavy population pressure."

Speaking from the slight knowledge of the East which I have, I shall be surprised if birth-control becomes an effective factor in the Indian villages within the next half-century, however, and I anticipate that a very considerable reduction in mortality will occur before that begins to operate. The infant mortality rate is at present 180 per 1,000, or three times ours, and the expectation of life is twenty-seven years only, or less than half ours, so there is prospect of considerable improvement there. India's population increase during the next half-century is, therefore, likely to become a serious world problem. In Asiatic countries there is as yet no sign of any fall in the birth-rate save in Japan, where people are being driven to a limitation of families because openings for emigration from that overcrowded country are now so small. Korea and Manchuria have proved a disappointment as outlets for her population. But Japan has been imbibing Western ideas for a considerable time, and what is now beginning to happen there with regard to birth-control cannot be expected to exercise a serious influence in India and China for a long time. With regard to the Black race, although the increase in Africa may be unimportant, the coloured

population of North America has increased from some eight to thirty-two millions during the last hundred years. The present rate of increase is slight, however, owing to a low birth-rate.

So far I have said little about the effects of family limitation upon the white population of Europe and America. I have tried to make it clear that the further lengthening of life is not likely to help very much in maintaining the numbers of white people, and one may say that the future of the white race depends upon the course of its birth-rate. What that course is going to be no one can foretell, but its future lies in its own hands. The rate began to fall in North-West Europe about 1875 and it is now less than half what it was before that date. During the preceding centuries it was regarded as fixed and immutable, round about 35 per 1,000 living. Now it is about 15 per 1,000. The net reproduction rate, as Kuczynski has called it, was 1.3 in North-West Europe fifty years ago—that is to say, 100 mothers were then producing 130 future mothers, after allowing for the girls who would not survive to the age of motherhood. At present the rate is only 0.76, or 100 mothers are only producing 76 future mothers. This means that if the present birth-rate continues the population of North-West Europe will fall by one quarter every thirty years as soon as the temporary excess of old people has passed on. In most of the countries concerned the fall has not yet commenced, but unless immigration increases it is expected to start within the next ten or fifteen years. The white population of the United States of America and Australia is in little better position; it is no longer reproducing itself at the lower end of the age scale, but is still increasing by immigration and the effects of a falling death-rate. In Southern Europe, that is to say in Italy, Spain and Portugal, the birth-rate has not yet fallen so low and an excess of births over deaths is likely to continue for some time. In Russia and Eastern Europe there is at present a fairly high birth-rate.

With regard to the future, it will not be possible to raise the reproduction rate to any appreciable extent by reduction in the mortality of women, which is now very small before middle age, nor by a higher marriage rate, nor by earlier marriage. It can only be appreciably raised by a general desire for larger families, and of this there is little prospect. Failing this the countries of North-West Europe and North America must, unless they alter their immigration policy, look forward to a declining population and all that must involve. It seems to be a common belief that a reduction of five or ten millions in the population of England would be good for unemployment, but I believe that to be a complete fallacy and that, on the contrary, in order to reach such an adjustment we should have

to pass through more severe trade depression than we have ever experienced. Our manufacturing trades depend for their prosperity on an increasing output and not an ever-diminishing demand for the article they are producing. But we must keep away from economics in this discussion. The difficulties which face North-West Europe are not likely to be overcome by the provision of family or marriage allowances, although these may encourage a slight increase in the birth-rate. Eventually they must be overcome by alterations in migration policy.

For some time Southern and Eastern Europeans will continue to increase and from some countries such as Italy an outlet will be needed for the surplus population. No outlet on a large enough scale is likely to be found by new colonisation, short of a large development of the Australian continent. In 1914 there were only some 20,000 Germans in all the German colonies, and Italy has only succeeded so far in settling a few thousand Italians in her African colonies. But both Italy and Poland anticipate increases of about ten millions before their populations become stationary. Immigration barriers between one group of whites and another will probably have to be removed in order to solve that problem. At present the British colonies and Dominions and the United States of America are practically closed to Southern and Eastern Europeans, and so are most of the countries in North-West Europe. The only nationals who can find admittance to the British Dominions or North America in any appreciable numbers are North-West Europeans, that is to say, from just those countries which are or soon will be unwilling to part with their nationals. The population problems which will arise between one part of the white race and another during the next half-century—declining populations in one set of countries and surplus in another set—certainly can be met by a policy such as France has been pursuing since the War, the admission and rapid naturalisation of other Europeans, thus maintaining her own population and at the same time relieving pressure elsewhere. Narrow nationalistic policies such as are being pursued elsewhere in Europe and America, efforts to keep the birth-rate up just where the problem of over-population is becoming acute and prevention of immigration where it would be beneficial, can only lead to suffering if not to war. Would that the white races would get together and plan a sane policy for the future welfare, not only of the whites, but of all the races of mankind alike.

As to how the problem of India and Japan, and perhaps of China's growing population now in excess of 440 millions, are to be met in the future, whether by virtually forcing them to choose between famine or wars of expansion or birth-control

as we are doing to Japan, or by opening the fast-closed doors of certain parts of the British Empire which are as yet undeveloped, or by embarking upon an even broader policy of racial admixture, these are questions I must present to you with large marks of interrogation.

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