

kons hinsichtlich der Erarbeitung der Gesamtkonzeption wie auch der Verwirklichung des vorliegenden ersten Bandes gelungen ist. Ohne Übertreibung: ein großer Wurf.

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Wolfgang Köllmann / Peter Marschalck (Hrsg.), *Bevölkerungsgeschichte* (= Neue Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek, Bd. 54), Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Köln 1972, 413 S., kart., 38 DM.

Carlo M. Cipolla, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte und Weltbevölkerung* (= dtv 4110: Wissenschaftliche Reihe), Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, München 1972, 122 S., kart., 3,80 DM.

These two books, Cipolla's a translation of a work that appeared originally in English over ten years ago and the Köllmann-Marschalck collection of essays already published elsewhere, will be of interest mainly to university students and the general reader. *Cipolla's* little masterpiece links the story of changing systems of production over the last ten thousand years to changes in the size of the population. Two revolutions have shaped the human geography of this planet: the agricultural one in the Near East eighty centuries before Christ, and the industrial one in Western Europe eighteen centuries after. They mattered by transforming the energy supply. In the first case the domestication of plants and animals permitted several upward lurches in the amount of calories available for nutrition and work, thus permitting, for example, village life and such niceties as the creation of a social surplus; the second revolution rigged up a series of efficient converters of inanimate energy to transform the physical conditions of life. Both revolutions modified profoundly patterns of birth and death, but it is above all the demographic explosion of the industrial revolution that preoccupies Cipolla. With better nutrition and medical care death rates dropped off; because a corresponding fall in birth rates occurred only much later, in the intervening period the population went through the ceiling, a ceiling which the limited energy supply of traditional society had set low. That is the story Cipolla tells, and the simplicity of the prose, the clarity of the illustrations, the master raconteur's control of a complex narrative – all make this slim volume ideal for people who want to get a rough sense of how the basic conditions of birth and death have shifted over the ages, and what difference in these matters economics has made.

The trouble with translations which come ten years delayed is that they capture like a fly in amber in the mind set of a bygone era, in this case the early sixties. When Cipolla was writing the big problems were whether Third World birth rates were going to slow sufficiently to let the food supply catch up, and whether all these new bodies in both West and East were going to become sufficiently educated to preserve all us middle-class liberals from »eine Welle der Vulgarität«. Ten years later it is evident that Third World birth rates are in fact dropping, just beginning that ski-jump passage to low fertility which the industrial West raced into a hundred years ago. What we have come to discover as the sheer vulgarity of our own technocratic culture makes us the last people who should wave fingers at »ungebildete oder halbgebildete Massen« anywhere. The story of the expansion of the world's energy supply may be rewritten as the tale of its domination by a small clutch of western nations. And the big problem now, as in a »Grande Bouffe« of all time we lie stinking in our own consumerism, is what are we going to say to all those folks in the Third World when they discover the world's energy resources are too limited to permit them to do the same.

The *Köllmann-Marschalck* collection is for scholars interested in the nuts and bolts of

historical demography over just the last two hundred years. All the essays have already been published, although some in fairly obscure places. All will be known to specialists, although the convenience of having such a compilation under a single cover recommends the book's purchase to historians and demographers. Among some of the classics are:

- an excerpt from the Prussian pastor Johann Peter Süssmilch's »Die göttliche Ordnung in den Veränderungen des menschlichen Geschlechts« (1761), which shows that in historical demography the Germans at least have ancestors who are as respectable as anyone's.
- D. E. C. Eversley's essay »Bevölkerung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft« which covers for the advanced student the same range of problems (though not of time) that Cipolla's book does for the beginner, a most convenient piece to have in translation.
- Gunther Ipsen's »Die preußische Bauernbefreiung als Landesausbau«, to which the author has added some supplementary material: though not so highly demographic, essential for nineteenth-century social history.
- Friedrich Burgdorfer's 1930 piece »Die Wanderungen über die deutschen Reichsgrenzen im letzten Jahrhundert«, an invaluable and hard-to-find compendium of statistics.

Other important problems in historical demography are touched on, such as the demographic composition of growing cities, the population size of the various German states during the Vormärz, the impact of changes in the sex ratio upon mating habits, and postwar family planning. Other important areas are missed, but then, in a book inexpensive enough to sell students you can't do everything. The selection of essays will introduce competently the curious to historical demography.

Only in one area is the silence positively deafening: local demographic studies. It is precisely in the realm of village and town monographs, done with the aid of family reconstitution (the linking together of records on birth, marriage and death in order to see how demographic behavior changed at the level of the family), that the French have made themselves the world's leading historical demographers. Louis Henry (from whom the authors have included a methodological selection), Pierre Goubert, Maurice Garden, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie – these are men whose work is admired universally, imitated in virtually every land where such research is done at all, except in Germany. Indicatively, the authors mistake Goubert's first name as »Philippe«. The sad fact is that the essays Köllmann and Marschalck include are all macro-studies, done at the level of the region or nation, or else theoretical pieces. And if they incorporated no village monographs for Germany, it was partly because so few were available – for excellent local German studies by Jacques Houdaille and John Knodel were published only around the time this volume was going to press<sup>1</sup>. Yet the authors could easily have included some French or English essay in translation. In omitting to do so they signaled to us their own conviction that such work is marginal.

Yet, in my view, if German historical demography is to thrive, it must rest upon a foundation of precisely this kind of local investigation, the careful mining of village registers of baptism, marriage and burial in order to get at such matters as the average age at marriage, whether the wife was pregnant before marriage, the typical length of time between children, the age at which the mother bore her last child, and so forth. These are questions that aggregate statistics, the kind upon which this volume rests, do not address. And they are questions which provide the key to the most important problems in historical demography, such as why the great fertility decline took place at the end of the last century, or what the relationship is between the likelihood of a given child's surviving to

<sup>1</sup> Houdaille, Quelques résultats sur la démographie de trois villages d'Allemagne de 1750 à 1879, in: *Population* 25, 1970, pp. 649 – 654; Knodel, Two and a Half Centuries of Demographic History in a Bavarian Village, in: *Population Studies* 24, 1970, pp. 353 – 376.

adulthood and the total number of children a couple intends to have, or whether indeed in the years before 1850 couples gave much thought at all to how many children they wanted. It is true that the historical demographers in no other nation come close to the massive advance of the French. Yet in other lands smaller teams are currently whittling industriously away at their own demographic histories: Sune Åkerman's in Sweden, Carlo Corsini's in Italy, the »Cambridge Group's« in England: a crew of researchers at the University of Montreal is currently reconstituting the population of Quebec in the seventeenth and eighteenth century; in Poland several investigations are underway. The Americans have no official team in these Olympics, but numerous individual scholars are churning into historical records of despairingly poor quality. How unfortunate therefore that in Germany, where demographic materials are absolutely superb, an inexhaustible fund for decades, virtually nothing is happening.

What is most interesting about these two books from the specialists' viewpoint is that they are being published now in Germany. The publishers manifestly believe that the academic public is ready to start consuming historical demography. The question now becomes: are German scholars ready to start producing it? Edward Shorter

Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow, Vernunft und Republik. Studien zu Georg Forsters Schriften. Verlag Gehlen, Bad Homburg v. d. H. / Berlin / Zürich 1970, 134 S., kart., 9,80 DM.

Der Autor verfolgt die Absicht, zur Lektüre Forsters anzuregen, in seine sehr zu Unrecht vergessenen Schriften einzuführen und etwas von dem Wesen Forsterschen Denkens zu vermitteln. Forsters Schriften werden von der »Reise um die Welt« (1778) bis zu den »Parisischen Umrissen« (1793) chronologisch in fünf Kapiteln behandelt. Bei dieser einführenden Kommentierung sieht Wuthenow von Forsters Lebenspraxis weitgehend ab und begnügt sich damit, über dessen Schriften zu reflektieren. Es entsteht so das Bild eines humanen, vielseitig gebildeten und interessierten Schriftstellers, der von Grund auf ebenso menschenfreundlich wie vernünftig gewesen ist. Forsters widersprüchliche Entwicklung, die freilich nicht auf der inneren Widersprüchlichkeit seines Denkens und Schreibens basiert, sondern vor allem durch die sozialen und politischen Erfahrungen – mit der bäuerlichen Leibeigenschaft und der Mißwirtschaft des polnischen Adels während seines langjährigen Aufenthalts in Polen, dem Fürstendienst als Bibliothekar des Kurfürsten von Mainz, seiner Reise im Jahre 1790, die er in die an Frankreich angrenzenden Staaten und Gebiete machte, wo unter dem Einfluß der Französischen Revolution die feudale Ordnung durch Unruhen und politische Kämpfe erschüttert wurde, seiner Tätigkeit während der Mainzer Revolution und schließlich dem Aufenthalt im revolutionären Paris – vorangetrieben wurde, bleibt außerhalb der Erörterung. Ohne es klar zu benennen, charakterisiert der Verfasser Forster lediglich als Ideologen des Frühliberalismus; er ignoriert die Korrekturen, die Forster selbst an seinen reformerischen Positionen vorgenommen hat, und problematisiert an keiner Stelle, welche Abstraktheit den aufklärerischen Reflexionen zur Geschichtsphilosophie anhaftet.

Das Verfahren, Forster als urbanen, vernünftigen und allseitig interessierten Schriftsteller zu propagieren, führt letztlich zu einer Vernachlässigung des Politischen. So werden die »Ansichten vom Niederrhein« vor allem wegen der Form der Darstellung gelobt: »Lebhaftigkeit der Eindrücke wirkt auf dem Umweg über die Reflexion auf die Lebhaftigkeit der Darstellung. Doch diese hängt auch damit zusammen, daß hier niemals ein isolierter Gegenstand Interesse findet, sondern zu jeder Zeit eine Fülle von Eindrücken zu Ansichten und Erörterungen führt, weil Natur und Kunst, Mensch und Gesellschaft in gleicher Weise