

# Some Aspects of the Italian Demographic Situation : the First Results of the 1951 Census

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I. — On November 4th, 1951 the ninth general census of the Italian population was carried out, following at an interval of 15 years the eighth, which was taken on April 21st, 1936. The population census was linked with a census of housing accommodation, the last of this kind having been carried out in 1931; and one day later, *i.e.* on November 5th, the third census of industry and trade was taken, following on the previous similar censuses of 1937-1939.

The need for a statistical survey of the Italian population and economy was the more urgent inasmuch as, after the disturbances produced by the war, figures based on estimates were only of limited reliability. Although this need had been urged in more than one authoritative quarter, difficulties of finance had caused delay in the carrying out of the censuses, even after normal conditions had returned as regards the geographical distribution of the people, and after the country's economy had become relatively settled. Besides the delay in collecting the data there has also been a delay, again due to financial difficulties, in the work of collating them. This work, unfortunately, was begun only a few months back; and its completion will require some considerable time.

Pending completion of this work the Central Statistical Institute has so far been able to provide only some provisional and general results of the 1951 censuses (1).

(1) These were published in the volume entitled « Primi risultati generali dei censimenti (IX Censimento generale della popolazione e rilevazione delle abitazioni - III Censimento generale dell'industria e del commercio, 4 e 5 novembre 1951) », published by the Central Statistical Institute. The data were afterwards published in broad categories in the « Compendio Statistico Italiano, 1952 », and, more fully, in the « Annuario

We shall confine ourselves in this article to commenting on those which relate to the population and housing censuses.

As regards the population census, the first provisional results are indicative only of the changes which occurred during the fifteen years between 1936 and 1951 in the size of the population in the individual administrative areas (2). It is impossible as yet to obtain any precise knowledge of the structural changes which were produced by such factors as the sharp movements in birth and death rates, and by the profound economic and social disturbances which were produced by the war and by the subsequent economic crisis.

2. — On April 21st, 1936, within the frontiers as they then existed, the « resident » population of Italy as recorded by the census of that date was 42,993,602, while the « present in area » (3) population was 42,918,726. Within

Statistico Italiano 1952 » (State Printing Office, Rome, 1953). This last publication also gives comparisons, so far as possible, with the results of the earlier censuses, which have been reduced to approximately comparable form.

(2) It should be mentioned that for the communes (*i.e.* towns and villages) in the Province of Rovigo, and for the commune of Cavarzere near Venice, the figures were obtained by a process of estimation. This was because of the flood which laid waste the region known as the Polesine between the Adriatic, the Adige and the Po during the days immediately following the taking of the census, and destroyed the records which were lying in the offices of the communes.

(3) As many readers will know, the « resident » population of any commune consists of those persons who have their customary residence in that commune, whether they are physically present or temporarily absent on the date of the census; and the « present in area » population consists of those persons who were present on the relevant date in the commune, whether they had their customary residence there or were there only for the time being. Hence the « present in area » population includes not only persons resident in other communes, but also foreign residents.

the frontiers as they now exist the « resident » population on April 21st, 1936 was 42,127,123, while the « present in area » population was 42,024,584.

The provisional figures for the census of November 4th, 1951 show a « resident » population of 47,138,235, and a « present in area » population of 46,737,704. During the interval between the two censuses the « resident » population of Italy accordingly increased by 5,011,112, or by 11.9 per cent, while the « present in area » population rose by 4,713,120, or 11.2 per cent. The average annual increment for the fifteen year period was 6.9 per thousand if reference is made to the « present in area » population, and 7.3 per thousand on the basis of the « resident » population (4).

The increase in the population of Italy between 1936 and 1951 as thus recorded is relatively small if compared with that which occurred in other European countries, or countries with populations of European origin, between the pre-war and post-war periods. As will be seen from Table I, the rate of growth in Italy exceeds only the rates in France and Ireland (where there was a decrease during the ten years from 1936 to 1946) and in Belgium (where there was a population increase of only 3 per thousand between 1930 and 1947). It falls short, and in many cases a good deal short, of the rates of growth in the other countries (5).

The present rate of growth in the Italian population, though equal to the levels which prevailed at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, is as will be seen from Table II, appreciably less than the rate which prevailed during the previous fifteen-year period, from 1921 to 1936.

In interpreting the significance of the figure for the average annual rate of growth during

(4) The increment is calculated on the basis of a geometrical progression, according to the formula

$$r = \sqrt[n]{P_n : P_0} - 1$$

This assumes that the growth in the population took place in a manner analogous to that of a sum of money employed at compound interest.

(5) The comparison does not include the countries in Eastern Europe, where the great territorial and political changes were exceptional disturbing factors.

the interval between the last two censuses it must be borne in mind that this figure represents the net result of a number of very different sets of circumstances which succeeded each other during that interval. First there was a period of rapid growth from 1936 to 1940, when the natural increase remained roughly constant at 9 or 10 per thousand, and when emigration was virtually at a standstill. In the second period, from 1941 to 1945, the rate of natural increase was kept down by the war. The third period, from 1946 to 1948, was one of post-war recovery, during which the increase in the rate of natural growth was offset only to a very slight extent by the renewal of emigration, which was slow and difficult. Finally there was the fourth period, from 1949 to 1951, during which the rate of increase was kept down, although to a lesser extent than in the war-time years, by the continuing decline in the natural increment and by the growth of emigration.

It follows that the figure of 6.9 per thousand has little significance as an index of demographic tendencies in Italy. Indeed more recent figures suggest that the rate of population increase is likely to decline in the future, even if there is no increase in emigration (6), and that it may fall considerably below the present. Moreover, even though the present rate of growth appears not very different from that which prevailed in Italy during the fifty years before the first world war, the underlying significance is in reality different, inasmuch as the rate of emigration is now a good deal smaller.

According to the tradition of view, Italy is still believed to be a country with a high rate of population increase. This view, however, no longer corresponds with the facts, either in absolute or in comparative terms, and may be expected to do so still less in the future (7).

(6) The rate of natural increase tends to be reduced by the continuous decline in the birth rate. This is no longer neutralised by an accompanying fall in the death rate, which, after a considerable drop, now seems to have become approximately stable.

(7) The change in Italy's position relative to that of the other populations of Europe, or of European origin, is due to divergent movements in birth rates. In Italy, as has been already mentioned, the birth rate has continued to fall, and is still doing so; but in almost all the other countries inhabited by people of white race the birth rate recovered after about

3. — From both the demographic and the economic points of view great importance attaches not only to the quantitative variations which the population undergoes in the course of time, but also to the qualitative changes which modify its structure.

Although, as we stated earlier, it is not so far possible to say much about the changes of this kind which occurred in the population of Italy between 1936 and 1951, the Central Statistical Institute has drawn up an approximate distribution by sex and by age of the population as recorded in the 1951 census. These approximate figures, which are probably very close to the true results, clearly indicate an accentuation of the process of structural change in the age composition.

It is interesting to consider the successive censuses since the beginning of the present century, and to divide the population into major age groups, one object in so doing being to reduce the effect of changes caused by exceptional events such as wars, which particularly affect certain specific age groups. This allows us better to understand the stages by which the change in age composition has occurred, and to appreciate its demographic and economic effects (see Table III).

From the demographic point of view it is convenient to isolate the group between 15 and 50 years old, who by and large represent the people of reproductive age. Expressed as a percentage of total population, this age group showed little change from 1901 to 1911. It then rose, reaching about 50 per cent of the total population. It remained around that level until 1936, while it increased further during the fifteen years which followed. The changes were however smaller for the female population, for whom the age limits mentioned are particularly significant as regards their effect on reproduction (8).

1935 or 1940, in some cases very markedly, and this resulted in raising the rates of natural increase.

It should accordingly be borne in mind that the respective positions of Italy and of the other countries shown in Table I would be different if we took the increments registered in more recent periods. In that case, the rate would most probably be higher in the other countries; and it would certainly be lower in Italy.

(8) The divergence in the extent of the changes as between the two sexes is not only due to the differences in the movement of the death rate as between them. A more important

It is, however, particularly interesting to observe that the group aged from 15 to 50 has grown entirely at the cost of those aged from 0 to 15, whereas the relative size of the older group aged 50 and over has been continuously increasing, especially during the last 15 years. This phenomenon of an aging population began later in Italy than among most of the western populations (9); but during more recent years it has become especially marked in Italy. Unless the demographic tendencies change, and this seems for the present unlikely, the aging will become even more marked. In future moreover the process, which at the outset favoured the population increase because it enlarged the numbers of reproductive age, will operate more and more in the direction of reducing that increase (10), as and when the smaller annual contingents of those who now form the first age group, ranging from 0 to 15 years, attain reproductive age.

If the changes in age-composition are regarded from the point of view of their economic rather than their demographic repercussions, then it becomes convenient to isolate the group who are of economically productive age. This group, as is generally assumed,

cause is the fact that the female population is less affected by changes in the amount of emigration. This is both because the emigrants are predominantly males, and because in the case of the female emigrants the age-composition is less « abnormal » than among the male emigrants.

(9) The demographic tendencies as between the populations of white race show clear analogies with each other. These populations can however be split into two groups. The first is that of north-western Europe, to which may be added the populations of certain countries outside Europe, such as Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The second is that of southern and south-eastern Europe, to which may be added most of the populations of Latin America. In the first group the aging phase has gone a good deal further than in the second, although in the new countries the process is partly offset by immigration. Italy however, which may be regarded as being in an intermediate position, now seems to be rapidly assuming the characteristics of the first group.

(10) In fact, for some time now the internal structure of the reproductive age group has been changing in a manner unfavourable to a high rate of growth. This factor has partly offset the effect of the growth in the total number of persons in the group. The women of more mature ages, ranging from 40 to 50 years, among whom fertility is less, represented 10.8 per cent of the female population in 1901. In 1936 their proportion was 11.7 per cent, and in 1951 it had risen to 13.1 per cent. At the same three dates the proportions between those aged 40 to 50 and those in the entire group aged 15 to 50 were respectively 22.5, 23.3 and 25.2 per cent.

may be taken as including those aged from 15 to 65.

Remarks similar to those made above still apply here: that is to say, the number of people of productive age has increased in the course of time, most especially during the interval between the last two censuses, although the extent of the changes shows less divergence as between the two sexes (11). However, a fact which is not irrelevant from the economic point of view is that the unproductive population, which in 1901 consisted of young persons to the extent of about 85 per cent and of old persons to that of little more than 15 per cent, now consists to the extent of only 76 per cent of young and roughly 24 per cent of older people. The present favourable state of affairs resulting from the large relative increase in the number of people of productive age is therefore of a passing nature. It will become progressively less favourable as and when the smaller annual contingents of young persons reach productive age, and the larger contingents of older people pass the limit of 65 years, while at the same time the internal structure of the group aged from 15 to 65 will be going through a progressive aging process, with obvious effects on the productivity of labour.

Thus the aging of the population in Italy has already passed the first phase, which may be called « favourable », and has entered the second phase, which has been in progress for some time in many western populations (12). Apart from the demographic effects of this process, in the interpretation of which opinions may differ (13), the feeling of disquiet at the

(11) The higher degree of uniformity is due to the fact that among the persons aged from 50 to 65 the increase was larger in the case of women, owing to the greater extent to which the women in that age group benefited from the lowering of the death rate.

(12) A significant point in this connection is the proportion of persons over 65 years of age, which in many countries has already reached a level higher than in Italy. Among European populations it has done so in Ireland, Germany, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Switzerland; and outside Europe it has done so in New Zealand and Australia.

(13) As is well known, the experts are divided into two different camps in their way of looking at the tendency for the population increase to become smaller. Some look on this process with favour, and others with disfavour. It is these opposing views which give rise to the two opposed lines of

economic and social consequences can only be unanimous. Besides the more immediate problems of providing for the aged (14), there are certain more complex problems relating to the economic structure. These problems cannot safely be neglected. If they are, new factors will arise to cause disequilibrium in the labour market in addition to those already present (15).

4. — In considering the demographic position in Italy one must not forget that this differs greatly as between the various regions of the country. Geographical, historical and economic factors have given rise to great diversity between these regions, making each of them present a different appearance.

The area of the country within the more limited frontiers established after the second world war amounts to 301,055 square kilometres; but there are considerable inequalities in the distribution of the population throughout the area. Taken as a whole, the density of population is 155 inhabitants per square kilometre. The density however varies from regional minima of 30 to 50 inhabitants per square kilometre in the mountainous Alpine regions and the arid districts of Sardinia to maxima of 300 and more in certain of the flatter districts in both the north and the south. It is however not only the nature of the terrain and the soil which gives rise to these great differences in density of population. The contributing factors include a whole series of causes of a demographic and economic nature. These moreover are tending in the course of

demographic policy, the neo-malthusians advocating the keeping down of the population, while their opponents advocate stimulation of its growth.

(14) The rising proportion of older people apart from increasing the social burdens which have to be borne by those who are economically productive (burdens which, for a number of reasons, are heavier than those whom they have to bear in respect of the part of the population which has not yet reached working age), gives rise to specific problems relating to relief and maintenance. It may for instance be mentioned that sickness benefit payments have recently been proposed in Italy for pensioners, who up till now did not receive them.

(15) The importance of thoroughly studying the problems, including the economic problems, created by the aging of the population was clearly shown by the discussions which took place in the course of the « Journées d'études européennes sur la population » at Paris from 21st to 23rd May, 1953. One of the two principal subjects of discussion at that Conference related to the problems connected with the active working population.

time to modify the regional differences, and hence to modify the relative size of the population in the various regions.

The southern regions and the islands, which are mainly agricultural and poor in the economic sense, are characterised by a natural rate of growth of the population which is still relatively high (16), even though it is declining to a considerable extent. In the northern regions, which are in general more industrialised and have on the whole a higher standard of living, the rate of natural increase is low, and in certain areas such as Piedmont and Liguria it has begun to be negative (17). The central regions show greater variation as between one another; but on the whole they are in an intermediate position (18). As the result of these clear differences the population of Italy would tend to become progressively « southernised », were it not for migration, which evens out the growth of population as between the regions. The stream of emigration to foreign countries, at least as regards those persons who emigrate and do not return to Italy, has always come mainly from the south, and still on the whole does so. There has also been, and still is, internal migration from the south towards the north.

These references to the characteristic features of the movement of population in the various regions are a necessary preliminary to the task of interpreting the significance of the present territorial distribution of the population, and to judging the effect of the recent changes in that distribution which the 1951 census has brought to light.

Table IV shows the distribution as between regions in 1901, 1936 and 1951 both in absolute

(16) The rates of natural growth vary from 10 to 17 per thousand. In all cases they are well above the average for the whole of Italy, which was 7.6 per thousand in 1952.

(17) The only region in the north where the rate of natural increase is fairly high is the Veneto where in 1952 the rate was 7.8 per thousand. The economy of the Veneto is essentially agricultural, and not only in this respect but also from the demographic point of view its characteristics are like those found in the southern regions. In the other regions of the north the rate of natural growth is around 3 to 4 per thousand, except in Piedmont and Liguria, where a negative rate of minus 1 per thousand has been reached.

(18) Their intermediate position is an average resulting from regions where the rate of growth is extremely low, such as Tuscany and to a lesser extent Umbria, and other regions where the rate is near the average, as it is in the Marches, or high as in the case of Latium.

terms and in percentages. It also shows the increase which has been recorded during the whole period of 50 years.

The region in which the population has grown least in the course of the half century is Piedmont. This is the only region in Italy where three provinces out of the six, namely Alessandria, Asti and Cuneo, already show a declining population, in spite of the considerable additions which they receive through migration. At the opposite end of the scale, Latium has more than doubled its population during the 50 years. This has been the combined effect of a considerable rate of natural increase (19), coupled with a substantial influx of immigrants caused by the attraction of Rome (the population of that city having almost trebled between 1901 and 1951), as well as by the settlement of the marshy zone in Lower Latium which followed on the drainage and land improvement there.

The movement in population in the other regions has been less marked. The growth has been rather slight in those small regions in the Alpine chain which are mountainous or largely so, such as the Valley of Aosta, the Trentino and the Upper Adige, and in Friuli and Julian Venetia (20). The growth of population in the other regions has in general proceeded at an intermediate rate, apart from certain characteristic exceptions which are worthy of remark. It will for instance be seen that the growth has been rather small in two central regions, namely Tuscany and the Marches, in two southern regions, Abruzzi-Molise and the Basilicata, and also in Sicily. All of these regions are essentially agricultural; but if Tuscany (21) is excepted, the phenomenon is exclusively due to economic causes, which induce a very large outward flow of population.

On the whole, the relative demographic importance of the four great geographical areas into which Italy is traditionally divided has not shown much variation in the course of

(19) Even in 1952 this was as high as 9 per thousand.

(20) The smaller rate of growth in the mountainous regions is a well-known and almost universal phenomenon. In certain parts of the country it has gone so far as to take on the character of progressive depopulation.

(21) As already mentioned, Tuscany is the only one of the five regions named where the rate of natural growth of population is extremely low (2.2 per thousand in 1952).

fifty years. One change in particular is, however, seen to have taken place during the interval between the last two censuses. This is the slight decline in the relative importance of northern Italy (whose population fell from 45-46 per cent of the total in 1936 to 44 per cent in 1951), and the corresponding increase in the importance of all the other areas, including the south and the islands, whose percentage shares of the total had decreased during the previous 35 years. This feature indicates that the lack of balance as between the natural rates of growth of the population in the north and the south, which up to the time of the last war was outweighed by transfers of population, is now beginning to be reflected in the overall rate of growth because the streams of migration are slowing down. This applies not only to emigration to foreign countries, but probably also to internal migration between regions.

In point of fact it is not easy to estimate the magnitude of the internal movements, and therefore of the changes in them, since they are not one of the subjects on which statistics are collected. It is only when all the results of the census are known that it will be possible to attempt an approximate estimate of them (22). However, even apart from the reduction in the size of the migratory movements which certainly occurred during the war years, there are many economic indications which go to show that there has been a slowing down in the rate of absorption of southern populations by those regions in the north to which they used previously to move. If this state of affairs should continue, thereby indicating that the point of demographic saturation of the more highly industrialised regions was being approached, the result would be to bring forward in an even more pressing form the problem of economically developing the south of Italy, which still remains a genuine « depressed area » (23).

(22) As readers will be aware, the extent of the movements between regions can be estimated on the basis of the census results by calculating the percentages of people who are living in one region and were born in another. It is however obvious that this method of measurement cannot be more than broadly approximate.

(23) A significant pointer to the economic level of the south of Italy is afforded by the average income per inhabitant in the southern regions. Recently an attempt was made to break

5. — The distribution of the population as between the individual administrative areas may be considered not only from the territorial point of view, but also from that of the size of the population contained in those areas. When this is done, the inequality of the distribution affords a measure of the degree of concentration of the population.

One such measure is afforded by the percentage ratio of the urban population to the whole; the movement in this shows the variations in relative importance of the part of the population inhabiting centres of an urban character. Another such measure is afforded by the concentration ratio, which expresses in a single figure the way in which the population is distributed between communes of various size-groups.

The manner in which these two indices have moved is shown by the figures given in Table V.

The percentage ratio of the urban population (24) has progressively increased. The rate of increase would however seem to have become a little slower during the interval between the last two censuses; for during this fifteen year period the increase was about equal

down the national income of Italy as between the different regions by G. Tagliacarne in a paper which he presented to the 13th Scientific Meeting of the Italian Statistical Society in Rome on 8th and 9th January, 1953, and which was entitled « *Calcolo del reddito privato nelle provincie e regioni d'Italia per l'anno 1951 e comportamento di taluni consumi non alimentari* ». The conclusion of the paper is to estimate the average annual income per head of population in southern Italy and the islands at 85,900 lire and 88,800 lire respectively (equivalent to \$ 137 and \$ 142). The lowest regional minima are 79,200 lire in the Basilicata and 77,600 lire in Calabria. If the average income for the whole of Italy which was 149,300 lire or \$ 239, is taken as equal to 100, then index for northern Italy is 137, for central Italy 96, for southern Italy 58, and for the Italian islands 60. Even if Tagliacarne's estimates are only very rough, they are a sufficient indication of how far the standard of living of the southern populations falls below the average level, which is already very modest, for Italy as a whole.

(24) As is well known, this ratio is calculated by fixing a lower limit of population, above which concentrations of population are regarded as urban centres. The limit which is taken for this purpose varies in different countries, being mostly around 2,000 to 5,000 inhabitants. In Italy however, which is an essentially agricultural country, the limit has to be placed a good deal higher. For present purposes we have treated as urban those communes which have over 10,000 inhabitants. This is because in most cases communes with smaller populations than this retain a mainly rural character, inasmuch as, quite apart from and even more than differences in economic and occupational features, differences in habits of life and attitudes of mind distinguish their inhabitants from those of towns or cities.

to, or even smaller than, that which occurred during the previous ten-year intervals. Subject to the reservation that comparisons with other countries on this point can be no more than broadly approximate because of differences in the definition of what are urban centres, there is some evidence that a similar decline in the rate of increase also occurred in other countries (25). Hence it would appear that the movement in Italy is in conformity with a tendency of a more general character.

The figures representing the concentration ratio (26) again show that there has been a tendency towards increasing density, although it would seem that this tendency ceased during the years 1921 to 1931, after which it was resumed. There seems to be no clear evidence of slowing down during the last interval between censuses; and this may mean that, although the growth of the urban population as a whole has diminished, the process of concentrating that population further has not come to a halt.

Since the natural rate of increase of the population generally falls as the size of the population rises (27), and since the movement does not vary much in the course of time,

(25) See in this connection the figures published in the Demographic Yearbook of the United Nations Organisation.

(26) In this article the concentration ratio has been calculated on the basis of the approximate formula

$$R' = 1 - \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} (p_i + 1 - p_i) (q_i + 1 + q_i)$$

where  $p_i$  is the percentage ratio of the number of communes with a population less than a given limit to the total number of all communes, and  $q_i$  is the percentage ratio of the population residing in each class of communes to the total resident population. This formula affords only and approximate measure of concentration; it understates the real degree of concentration.

The figures given in Table V are multiplied by 100. They accordingly show the degree of concentration as a percentage of the possible maximum. This theoretical maximum, as readers will be aware, would be reached only if the entire population lived together in a single commune.

(27) This is a general phenomenon, mainly due to the great differences in birth rates between centres of population of different size. In the case of Italy an investigation of a historical character which was carried out before the war by P. Fortunati gives the result that, while the rate first rises as the size of the population rises, it starts to fall when the population reaches 10,000; and further that the largest drop occurs when the population moves up from 50,000 to 100,000, after which the figures show little change. See P. FORTUNATI, *Natalità, mortalità e nuzialità dei Comuni del Regno in ordine d'intensità di popolazione*, in « *Supplemento statistico ai nuovi problemi di politica, storia ed economia* », September-December, 1937.

there is no doubt that the rising tendency shown both by the percentage of urban population and by the concentration ratio indicates a process of urbanisation of the Italian population and that the changes shown by the said tendency during fifty years indicate changes in the degree of urbanisation.

Apart from the halt in the upward movement of the concentration ratio which occurred during the years 1921 to 1931, and which was in all probability due to the first steps taken by the Fascist Government in pursuance of their policy against the movement into towns (28), internal transfers of population have continued with some regularity and at a considerable rate up till the present time. It also seems that, even though the movement of people from rural districts into urban centres may during the last few years have become smaller as a whole, there has been no falling off in the movement towards the larger centres.

Some confirmation of this last conjecture may be seen in the changes which have occurred in the population of the 25 cities which now have more than 100,000 inhabitants (see Table VI). In these larger centres the rate of growth of the population has certainly not become any slower during the interval between the last two censuses, if one excepts certain cities in northern Italy, including Milan, Turin and Genoa among the larger ones, and Spezia and Reggio Emilia among the smaller ones. The exceptions in the case of these cities are incidentally of particular interest, especially since the rate of growth showed an opposite and upward movement between 1936 and 1951, both in Rome and in some of the southern towns, especially Bari and Taranto, and also in the principal towns of the two main islands, namely Palermo and still more Cagliari.

If these facts are taken in conjunction with those which were examined in section 4 of this article, it would seem possible to conclude

(28) The first legal measures on the subject were enacted in 1928. It is probable that these produced an immediate initial effect, and that thereafter, as their application was at the discretion of the provincial Prefects, they were less frequently applied. This hypothesis would explain the rise in the concentration ratio which again occurred in 1936. It may be indirectly confirmed by the fact that in 1939 a new law was promulgated which laid down strict regulations against transfers of residence into towns that were the administrative centres of provinces, or had a population of over 25,000.

that the movement into the towns in Italy is taking on new forms. In the first place it is becoming a process of urbanisation in the stricter sense of that term, that is to say, of a progressive concentration of the people in large urban centres, the growing attraction exerted by Rome being especially significant in this connection. In the second place the movement is now tending to take place within territorial limits which are narrower than in the past. Thus, the slowing down of the stream of internal migration from south to north, as mentioned in the previous section, is certainly related to the slower rate of growth in the population of some of the large cities in the north, as well as to the stronger attraction which is being exerted by some of the towns in the south and in the islands.

This last circumstance would seem to confirm the fact that the northern regions are beginning to show signs of saturation as regards the absorption of immigrants coming from the south and from the islands. These people are consequently seeking a partial outlet within a more confined area, and are going more particularly to those centres which seem to offer better economic opportunities (29).

6. — As has been more than once mentioned, the differing demographic characteristics of the various regions, as illustrated in the preceding sections of this article, form part of an economic and social situation which in turn shows clear regional differences.

One of the aspects of that situation, and one which reveals a good deal, is shown by the census of housing accommodation, which, as will be remembered, was carried out at the same time as the census of population.

In nearly all the countries of Europe the housing problem has become exceptionally important since the war owing to the destruction which took place during the period of

(29) This is certainly the case as regards the four towns—Bari, Taranto, Palermo and Cagliari mentioned above, which are all ports, and are therefore centres of trade and transport. In the case of Palermo and Cagliari there is the further fact that they are the principal towns of their respective regions, namely Sicily and Sardinia, to which regions the new Italian constitution has granted a wide measure of administrative autonomy.

hostilities. The problem is however particularly serious in Italy, where the state of affairs before the war was already bad, and where the slowness and difficulty of economic recovery has made it hard to maintain the rate of reconstructive work which would have been required for the purpose both of repairing the very serious damage caused by the war, and of accommodating the increase in the population.

The first brief data which have been published give us only a rough quantitative picture of the housing situation, and it will be necessary to await the detailed analysis of the results of the census in order to have a fuller description of housing conditions.

However, such provisional figures as have been published leave no doubt that the problem, while generally serious throughout the country, is especially acute in the southern areas.

The number of dwellings recorded by the census of November 4th, 1951 was 11,263,199, containing a total of 35,744,439 rooms. 10,630,891 of these dwellings and 33,585,360 of the rooms were occupied (30). In the dwellings which were occupied there were 11,373,712 families, with a total of 46,108,249 members, while 218,642 families were housed in 193,565 huts or caves.

It follows from this that about 2 per cent of the families in Italy have no proper dwelling, but occupy makeshift quarters, which in many cases contain more than one family each: there were in fact an average of 1.13 families in each hut or cave. In the proper dwellings the cases of families living together were a little less frequent, there being on the average 1.07 families per dwelling. The degree of crowding is however substantial; the average number of persons per room worked out at 1.37.

In order to arrive at the real meaning of these facts one must bear in mind that the definitions of «dwelling» and of «room» adopted by the Central Statistical Institute are

(30) The large difference between the number of dwellings in existence and the number occupied is presumably due to the fact that certain dwellings are intended as summer residences, and were not occupied during the winter period when the census was taken.

very wide (31), and that therefore the real state of affairs must be regarded as being even worse than appears from the figures.

There are however considerable differences between the regions. As will be seen from Table VII, the position shown by the various indices becomes gradually worse as one goes from the north to the south.

The degree of crowding, as expressed by the number of persons per room, is equal to or greater than the average for the country only in the southern regions, the islands, and in Latium, and it is particularly high in the south. Besides this, the percentage of families living in makeshift quarters such as caves, huts and so forth is greater than the national average in all the southern regions (except Campania) and in the two islands. It reaches a maximum of 5.43 per cent in Calabria. In the other sections of the country it is only in Latium and Liguria that the percentage is above the average. The only index in respect of which the position in the south does not appear consistently worse than elsewhere is that showing the cases where more than one family lives in the same dwelling, these being more frequent in certain regions in the north and the centre. It should however be remembered that, except in the case of Latium, the higher figures relate to regions in which there is a larger number of rooms per dwelling, which makes the matter less serious from the social and hygienic points of view.

Precise comparisons with the state of affairs before the war cannot be made, because the present definitions of «dwelling» and of

(31) The following are the definitions contained in the «Guide for making out the family sheet», which was used in connection with the census:

«A genuine dwelling will be taken to be a collection of rooms, or even a single room, intended for the purpose of being lived in — that is to say, suitably constructed or adapted for such use — and having an independent entrance giving access to the street, to a landing, court-yard, terrace or the like, and which at the date of the census is occupied or is intended to be occupied by any person, or by a family, or by several families living together».

«A usable apartment or room will be taken to be a room having direct light and air — that is to say, being directly lit and aired through openings in the external walls, or in the court-yard walls, or through skylights — and being of a size sufficient to contain at least one bed. The kitchen, the entrance hall, the rooms formed from spaces under roofs must be regarded as being rooms if they fulfil the requirements stated — that is, if they have direct light and air, and space sufficient to contain at least one bed».

«room» are not the same as those which were adopted for the previous census on April 21st, 1931. On the whole however it can be said that the position now is worse than it was in 1931, not so much in the entire country as in the southern regions, the regional differences having become greater (32). The different rate increase in the population, the differing extent of the damage caused by the war, and the varying rates at which reconstruction and fresh building have proceeded in the respective areas, are factors which, usually acting all together, have caused the position in the south and in the islands to become still worse than it was before.

It may perhaps be worth mentioning the specific causes to which the extremely serious housing crisis as revealed in Latium may be attributed. This has been found to be one of the regions in which conditions are worst: not only worse than in the north and elsewhere in the centre, but also worse than in many regions of the south, especially as regards the lack of proper dwellings. The figures for Latium are affected particularly by the bad situation in Rome, where the index representing the number of families per dwelling is as high as 1.27, while that indicating the average number of persons per room is 1.56, and the percentage of families living in huts or caves reaches 6.61 per cent, with an average of 1.21 families in each hut or cave. If all aspects of the situation are taken together, Rome is, of all the great Italian cities, the one where the housing problem appears in its most acute form, even though Rome did not suffer serious damage through the war. This is because, the population of Rome has increased to an exceptional extent, without being accompanied by the necessary building development, especially as regards working-class housing.

(32) For instance, the difference in the degree of crowding (number of persons per room) as between regions is now greater than it was in 1931. Direct comparison of the ratios for the two years has no great meaning, for the reasons stated above. However, the fact that the regional differences between the ratios, which were higher for the southern regions and the islands than for the rest of the country even in 1931, have now become larger, indicates greater dispersion. As measured by the mean difference (which represents the average variation of the number of persons per room from one region to another) the degree of dispersion rose from 0.18 in 1931 to 0.23 in 1951.

From these brief facts illustrating the housing situation in Italy it will be clear that the demand for dwellings is much greater than the supply. According to a recent estimate (33) the number of fresh rooms required each year is 548,000; and the total present demand, resulting from accumulated delays in its satisfaction, is for as much as 5.1 million rooms. As against this the annual number of rooms in dwellings reconstructed, or freshly constructed, and declared ready for habitation, although it has grown continuously and substantially since the end of the war, was only just over 346,000 in 1951. (The corresponding figures for 1952 are not yet available). This indicates that the number of dwellings becoming available is still much less even than the annual requirement. It follows that the rate of building will have to be greatly increased in order at least to avoid a still further worsening of the position (34).

7. — From this brief analysis of the first provisional results of the census it may be concluded that the population of Italy is still in-

(33) See S. ALBERTI, *Fabbisogno e costruzioni di abitazioni in Italia*, in « Rassegna di Statistiche del Lavoro » (Review of Labour Statistics), July-August, 1952.

(34) The number of rooms declared to be ready for habitation is taken from the « Annuario Statistico Italiano, 1952 », Table 221. Account should be taken of the fact that it may be proper to add to the number of rooms declared ready for habitation a certain number of rooms which are built and are occupied before the declaration that they are ready to be inhabited is issued. According to Alberti (cfr. the article quoted above) the number of such rooms is very large. We do not think, however, that it can be so large as to raise the total number of rooms available above the annual requirement.

creasing at a rate which cannot be regarded as negligible. The rate of increase is however becoming smaller as time goes on, owing to the rapid fall in the birth rate. Apart from this, the effect of demographic factors has been to produce structural changes, which can be clearly seen in the age-composition of the population. The result has been a progressive aging of the population. This process has now passed out of the favourable phase, in which the middle age groups were growing in size; and it is moving into the unfavourable phase, in which there is relative increase in the number of the aged.

Owing to the decline in emigration to foreign countries, and in internal migration, the demographic weight of the southern regions, where the rate of natural increase is faster, is tending to rise. There is also a tendency for the size of the population in the urban centres, and more especially in the large urban centres, to increase relatively to that in the country. In regard to the movement of people into the towns new tendencies can also be detected, there being in particular rapid growth in certain centres in the south and in the islands.

This picture of interrelated circumstances which determine the different demographic developments in the different areas is of particular importance in view of the opposite economic development in those areas. The effect is to cause a general worsening of conditions in the south. Clear evidence of this is to be seen in the housing situation, which, serious as it is throughout Italy, is especially bad in the southern regions.

## STATISTICAL TABLES

TABLE I - AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE OF POPULATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES  
(present in area population)

Countries	Interval between censuses	Increase per 1000 inhabitants	Countries	Interval between censuses	Increase per 1000 inhabitants
France . . . . .	1936-1946	-3.4	Sweden . . . . .	1940-1945	9.3
Belgium . . . . .	1930-1947	3.0	Australia . . . . .	1933-1947	9.6
Italy . . . . .	1936-1951	6.9	Denmark . . . . .	1940-1945	11.1
Norway . . . . .	1930-1946	7.2	Netherlands . . . . .	1930-1947	11.8
New Zealand . . . . .	1936-1945	8.3	United States . . . . .	1940-1950	13.6

TABLE II - AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE OF THE ITALIAN POPULATION

Date of census	Present in area population thousands (a)	Increase per 1000 inhabitants
1861 - 31-XII	25,633	—
1871 - 31-XII	27,437	6.8
1881 - 31-XII	29,116	5.9
1901 - 10-II	33,172	6.8
1911 - 10-VI	35,442	6.4
1921 - 1-XII	37,143	4.5
1931 - 21-IV	40,310	8.7
1936 - 21-IV	42,025	8.4
1951 - 4-XI	46,738	6.9

(a) Present boundaries.

TABLE III - PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION OF THE ITALIAN POPULATION BY MAIN GROUPS: 1901-1951

Year of census	0-15	15-50	50 & +	15-65	65 & +
	(age groups) (c)				
1901 (a) . . . . .	34.1	47.2	18.7	59.7	6.2
1911 . . . . .	33.8	46.9	19.3	59.3	6.9
1921 (b) . . . . .	31.0	49.5	19.5	61.8	7.2
1931 . . . . .	29.7	50.9	19.4	36.0	7.3
1936 . . . . .	30.6	49.7	19.7	62.0	7.4
1951 . . . . .	26.2	52.0	21.8	65.7	8.1

(a) Census brought back to 1st January. (b) Present in area population « non rectified ». (c) The last age group includes any percentage of population of unknown age, which may be considered as old.

TABLE IV - DISTRIBUTION OF THE ITALIAN POPULATION AS AMONG REGIONS: 1901, 1936, 1951  
(Administrative areas on 31/12/1951 - Present in area population)

Regions	Amount of the population in the years:						Index numbers (1901 = 100)
	(absolute figures - thousands)			(percentages)			
	1901	1936	1951	1901	1936	1951	
Piedmont . . . . .	3,232	3,439	3,533	9.8	8.2	7.5	109.3
Valley of Aosta . . . . .	82	85	96	0.2	0.2	0.2	117.1
Lombardy . . . . .	4,266	5,805	6,505	12.9	13.8	13.9	152.5
Trentino-Upper Adige . . . . .	578	693	737	1.7	1.7	1.6	127.5
Venetia . . . . .	2,549	3,546	3,832	7.7	8.4	8.2	150.3
Friuli-Julian Venetia . . . . .	707	850	902	2.1	2.0	1.9	127.6
Liguria . . . . .	1,086	1,483	1,566	3.3	3.5	3.4	144.2
Emilia-Romagna . . . . .	2,512	3,327	3,511	7.6	7.9	7.5	139.8
<i>North Italy</i>	15,012	19,228	20,682	45.3	45.7	44.2	137.8
Tuscany . . . . .	2,487	2,966	3,157	7.5	7.1	6.8	126.9
Umbria . . . . .	572	721	802	1.7	1.7	1.7	140.2
Marche . . . . .	1,061	1,262	1,347	3.2	3.0	2.9	127.0
Lazio . . . . .	1,619	2,684	3,371	4.9	6.4	7.2	208.2
<i>Central Italy</i>	5,739	7,633	8,677	17.3	18.2	18.6	151.2
Abruzzi-Molise . . . . .	1,388	1,555	1,615	4.2	3.7	3.5	116.4
Campania . . . . .	2,869	3,679	4,308	8.6	8.8	9.2	150.2
Apulia . . . . .	1,981	2,643	3,186	6.0	6.3	6.8	160.8
Basilicata . . . . .	491	538	614	1.5	1.3	1.3	125.1
Calabria . . . . .	1,370	1,742	1,974	4.1	4.1	4.2	144.1
<i>South Italy</i>	8,099	10,157	11,697	24.4	24.2	25.0	144.4
Sicily . . . . .	3,530	3,971	4,418	10.6	9.4	9.5	125.2
Sardinia . . . . .	792	1,036	1,264	2.4	2.5	2.7	159.6
<i>Islands</i>	4,322	5,007	5,682	13.0	11.9	12.2	131.5
<i>Italy-Total</i>	33,172	42,025	46,738	100.0	100.0	100.0	140.9

TABLE V - URBAN POPULATION AND CONCENTRATION RATIOS FROM 1901 TO 1951

Year of census	Urban population as a percentage of total population	Concentration ratio
1901	39.5	54.19
1911	42.6	55.29
1921	45.2	58.29
1931	50.3	55.88
1936	51.7	57.04
1951	55.1	60.85

TABLE VI - DEMOGRAPHIC INCREASE IN LARGER ITALIAN CITIES: 1901-1951  
(Administrative areas on 31st December, 1951)

Cities	Present in area population, censused (thousands)			Index numbers (1901=100)	
	1901	1936	1951	1936	1951
Rome . . . . .	423	1,151	1,658	272	392
Milan . . . . .	539	1,116	1,269	207	236
Naples . . . . .	621	739	1,012	140	163
Turin . . . . .	330	608	713	191	216
Genoa . . . . .	378	635	681	168	180
Palermo . . . . .	310	412	484	133	156
Florence . . . . .	237	272	376	135	159
Bologna . . . . .	153	227	339	184	221
Venice . . . . .	189	264	316	140	167
Catania . . . . .	148	245	298	166	201
Bari . . . . .	94	198	268	211	283
Messina . . . . .	148	192	219	130	148
Verona . . . . .	100	154	178	154	179
Taranto . . . . .	156	118	167	211	298
Padua . . . . .	81	139	166	172	204
Brescia . . . . .	73	123	142	169	194
Reggio Calabria . . . . .	78	120	141	154	181
Leghorn . . . . .	97	125	141	129	145
Cagliari . . . . .	65	104	137	160	211
Ferrara . . . . .	81	119	134	147	165
Parma . . . . .	77	109	122	142	159
Modena . . . . .	63	96	111	152	176
La Spezia . . . . .	74	106	110	143	149
Reggio Emilia . . . . .	59	94	106	159	180
Bergamo . . . . .	52	86	103	165	198

TABLE VII - HOUSING SITUATION IN THE ITALIAN REGIONS

Regions	Houses			Huts, caves, etc.	
	Rooms per house	Families per house	Persons per room	Families per hut, cave, etc.	% of total number of families
Piedmont . . . . .	3.2	1.03	1.01	1.05	0.45
Valley of Aosta . . . . .	3.0	1.02	1.14	1.00	0.67
Lombardy . . . . .	3.0	1.04	1.26	1.06	0.78
Trentino-Upper Adige . . . . .	3.8	1.05	1.13	1.42	1.62
Venetia (a) . . . . .	4.1	1.11	1.28	1.10	1.41
Friuli-Julian Venetia . . . . .	4.0	1.09	1.17	1.43	1.55
Liguria . . . . .	4.2	1.17	0.92	1.09	2.02
Emilia-Romagna . . . . .	3.5	1.06	1.23	1.10	1.19
<i>North Italy</i>	3.5	1.06	1.17	1.11	1.103
Tuscany . . . . .	4.1	1.11	1.06	1.28	1.32
Umbria . . . . .	3.8	1.06	1.30	1.06	0.92
Marche . . . . .	4.1	1.06	1.18	1.23	0.78
Latium . . . . .	3.2	1.17	1.53	1.16	5.37
<i>Central Italy</i>	3.7	1.12	1.25	1.18	2.81
Abruzzi-Molise . . . . .	3.2	1.04	1.43	1.16	1.93
Campania . . . . .	2.4	1.06	1.95	1.24	1.61
Apulia . . . . .	2.2	1.06	2.15	1.06	3.00
Basilicata . . . . .	2.0	1.03	2.16	1.01	1.95
Calabria . . . . .	2.2	1.04	2.08	1.05	5.43
<i>South Italy</i>	2.4	1.05	1.93	1.10	2.73
Sicily . . . . .	2.4	1.06	1.74	1.10	1.94
Sardinia . . . . .	3.5	1.07	1.39	1.28	2.97
<i>Islands</i>	2.6	1.06	1.65	1.15	2.15
<i>Italy-Total</i>	3.2	1.07	1.37	1.13	1.89

(a) The Communes of Rovigo and Cavarzere (Venice) are excluded.