

DAVID GLASS

DAVID VICTOR GLASS¹

1911-1978

DAVID GLASS was born in 1911 and died in London on 23 September 1978. The record of his academic career and of his published work has been accurately documented by his lifelong colleague in population studies, Professor Eugene Grebenik.² The purpose of this memoir is, therefore, not to repeat those details, but to assess the contribution which David Glass made in fields of demography and sociology.

His life of sixty-seven years was not a long one by standards assumed today to be 'normal': he fell short of the current male expectation of life of about sixty-nine years. But his life did span the most remarkable transformation of demographic behaviour in human history. He was born at a time when, even in the rich, imperial European nations, families were still large, when infant mortality of between eighty and a hundred deaths per thousand live births was still appallingly high, judged by today's levels of ten to twelve deaths, when expectations of life at birth averaged scarcely fifty years compared with seventy and over today. Adults living in the United Kingdom and its far-flung empire when David Glass was born no doubt looked back and counted themselves lucky to live in such affluent times and may also have marvelled at the technological miracles that were even then transforming the European world. The urbanization of their societies was well advanced; steam power had given new dimensions to the mobility of both people and agricultural and industrial products, not only within national boundaries, but also in the rapid peopling of and expanding trade with the American continent and with the far-flung southern outposts of empires, even to the ultima Thule of the South Pacific.

The nineteenth century had brought sustained growth to most European countries, a growth which encouraged visions of a great redistribution of people from the imperial heartlands to their

- ¹ References to David Glass's publications in the footnotes to this memoir are to the date and number of each entry of the bibliography prepared by Professor E. Grebenik and Mr Richard Jones and reprinted here with their kind permission as an Appendix.
- ² E. Grebenik, 'David Victor Glass (1911-1978)', *Population Studies*, xxxiii. 1 (1979), 6-17.

overseas territories. Such visions were nowhere better illustrated than in the final report in 1917 of the UK Dominions Royal Commission, which envisaged a redistribution of the white population of the empire through emigration from the United Kingdom to the dominions and colonies. Yet the growth which encouraged these grand plans was modest by the standards of today: even at the peak of their demographic transition European countries seldom reached an annual growth rate much above one per cent (compared with over three per cent in some 'developing' countries in recent years). The unique element in their situations was the strengthening as they approached the twentieth century of their control over mortality: the Malthusian trap of recurring bouts of crippling mortality had at last been broken.²

An infant death rate of between eighty and a hundred per thousand live births as the twentieth century dawned was still a marked improvement over the situation at the height of the industrial revolution; and the expectation of life was at least fifteen years above that of the early nineteenth century when, for example, Liverpool was estimated to have an expectation of only twenty-seven years, Manchester about twenty-four years, and London about thirty-seven years.³ The threshold had also been reached where the attack on infectious diseases was really beginning to take effect, with quite dramatic results as the century advanced.

Those completing their families in the first decade of the century still averaged about six children ever-born; but the portents of change in fertility were also there. The upper classes were learning how to limit family size without remaining unmarried; and as the century advanced the movement spread more and more widely through successive sectors of society until the vital indices pointed towards population decline instead of that steady rate of growth that was assumed to be the necessary

¹ See G. F. Plant, Overseas Settlement from the United Kingdom to the Dominions (London, 1951).

² For assessments of mortality trends in the demographic transition of England and Wales see T. McKeown and R. G. Brown, 'Medical evidence related to English population changes in the eighteenth century', *Population Studies*, ix. 2 (1955), 119-41; and T. McKeown and R. G. Record, 'Reasons for the decline of mortality in England and Wales during the nineteenth century', ibid. xvi 2 (1962), 94-122. See also T. McKeown, *The Modern Rise of Population* (London, 1976).

³ Glass, 1940 [22], p. 419 (j). Glass cites the Seventeenth Annual Report of Registrar General and W. Farr, Vital Statistics, ed. N. R. Humphreys (London, 1885).

component of the success of mercantilist society. The generation born in the same decade as David Glass were to become the most infertile in the nation's history, at least until the generation who are in the process of having children around 1981.

It was at this stage of the first dramatic fall of period fertility to sub-replacement levels in the 1930s that the subject of population studies took on a new significance. Major studies were sponsored by the League of Nations to analyse and explain the trends and different patterns of European and Soviet Union Populations.² Many scholars were busy analysing the trends and projecting the consequences of what was happening,3 and others began patient studies of the social and psychological factors involved in the decline of fertility.4 There was a strong emphasis upon that section of the world now termed 'developed', but where data were available, as in areas of India and Africa which were under imperial control, some remarkably comprehensive demographic studies had also been achieved. The main thrust was, however, in Europe and in the overseas societies peopled by Europeans. The most conspicuous centres of research were in the United States of America, but new studies of population were spread widely throughout Europe, with Sweden, Germany, France, and Italy in the forefront. The new approach was essentially analytical and empirical rather than in the broad theoretical tradition of Malthus or Spencer. This approach reflected the improvement

¹ For an analysis of trends in fertility in England and Wales between 1850 and 1930 see Glass, 1938 [12], pp. 161-212.

- ² These studies brought to light a new range of studies and a new generation of 'demographers', although their official titles did not carry this label but were in such fields as economics, sociology, and history. See, for example, F. W. Notestein, The Future Population of Europe and the Soviet Union; Population Projections, 1940-70 (1944), and its companion pieces by F. Lorimer, The Population of the Soviet Union: History and Prospects (1946), and D. Kirk, Europe's Population in the Inter-War Years (1946); all published in Geneva by the League of Nations.
- ³ For a collection of UK studies see L. Hogben (ed.), *Political Arithmetic*, A Symposium of Population Studies (London, 1938). Glass was a contributor to this volume (see 1938 [12, 13, 14]).
- ⁴ Particularly in the USA. See, for example, the many studies on social and psychological factors published in the *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, particularly C. V. Kiser and P. K. Whelpton, 'Differential fertility among 41,498 native-white couples in Indianapolis', ibid. xxi. 3 (1943), 221-80.
- ⁵ For example, A. M. Carr-Saunders, World Population: Past Growth and Present Trends (Oxford, 1936); and R. R. Kuczynski, Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire, i West Africa, ii East Africa etc. (Oxford, 1948 and 1949). The contents of these massive studies by Kuczynski amounted to more than 1,800 pages.

in data arising from the compulsory registration of births in the European world and the marked improvement of census data which had occurred in many countries in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

But an important attribute was also the advance in the methodologies of analysis, and it was here that scholars in the United Kingdom were to play a significant part. These followed Lotka's work on stable population theory, particularly his article in 1925, published jointly with L. I. Dublin. His concepts, which were applied to demographic analysis by a number of scholars, were given their widest application for the study of reproductive behaviour in human populations by R. R. Kuczynski, in his twovolume work The Balance of Births and Deaths, published in 1928 and 1931, and in his later work, The Measurement of Population Growth: Methods and Results, published in 1935, three years before he became Reader in Demography at the London School of Economics. But London was the centre of wider aspects of population studies as well: biologists and geneticists were also active. Lancelot Hogben, Professor of Social Biology at the London School of Economics, was concerned with demographic behaviour as one of the variables essential to an understanding of social biological processes.2 His wife, Enid Charles, measured social differences in fertility and family size and projected the results that would flow from a continuation of sub-replacement fertility as revealed by current gross and net reproduction rates.3

- ¹ L. I. Dublin and A. J. Lotka, 'On the true rate of natural increase as exemplified by the population of the United States, 1920', Journal of the American Statistical Association, new series, vol. xx, no. 150 (1925), 305-39. Glass, 1940 [22], acknowledges Lotka's work in several places and wrote (p. 405) that 'The writer is greatly indebted to Dr Lotka not only for providing many very valuable reprints, but also for his detailed suggestions concerning the form of the present summary [of the true rate of natural increase and the stable population]'.
- ² For a summary of his views see L. Hogben, op. cit., pp. 13-46, 'Prolegomena to Political Arithmetic'. Obviously, Hogben had not found easy his attempt to be inter-disciplinary in his approach, for he writes that his six years in his chair of Social Biology, from which he had just resigned, had failed to convince his professional colleagues 'that some knowledge of natural science should be part of the training of those who specialize in social studies'. It might be said that his young colleague David Glass was eventually to reverse the proposition, by establishing the recognition of the significance of social studies in biological and natural sciences by his election to a Fellowship of the Royal Society in 1971.
- ³ Enid Charles, 'The effect of present trends in fertility and mortality upon the future population of England and Wales and upon its age composition', *London and Cambridge Economic Service*, special memorandum, no. 40 (London, 1935).

In 1936 A. M. Carr Saunders also published a major contribution to the field which may now be described as 'substantive demography' with his new book World Population; Past Growth and Present Trends.

This was the intellectual climate into which David Glass began to move after graduation in 1931. His special topic in his initial degree of B.Sc. (Economics) at the London School of Economics was Geography. After a short period in France with the Secretariat of the International Chamber of Commerce he returned in 1932 to become Research Assistant to the Director of the London School of Economics, Sir William Beveridge. There he had opportunities for studying family and social welfare matters, but probably the strongest impact upon him at this time was through his association with Lancelot Hogben, the eminent social biologist at the School. In 1938 Dr R. R. Kuczynski, by then a demographic scholar with an international reputation, was appointed Reader in Demography at the School. This was to give a new academic dimension to population studies in the United Kingdom.

David Glass's first publication appeared in 1934, on the measurement of trends in divorce in England and Wales;1 but he was simultaneously pursuing his wider sociological interests, which resulted in his first book, in 1935, The Town and a Changing Civilization. A year later came his The Struggle for Population.² The main lines of his academic interests had now taken shape: the structure and function of major cities, social differentiation in complex societies, social mobility and social equity, the measurement of recent demographic trends, and historical demography. Glass's research path was eased at this stage by the fact that, apart from some extramural teaching of his own choice, his duties allowed him to devote his whole time to research, in topics mostly of his own choosing. In 1935 he had become the first Research Secretary of the newly founded Population Investigation Committee—a creation of Carr-Saunders and the British Eugenics Society. Glass's output was prodigious: two books and eight articles published in the four years 1934-7. Then came the vintage year of 1938 with no fewer than ten published articles and chapters in books, all of them directly in the field of demography.3 The next year, 1939, was a quiet one—one article⁴—and the reason is obvious, for in the following year Oxford published his Population Policies and Movements in Europe, which stemmed from his Ph.D. thesis.⁵ Glass's

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<sup>1</sup> Glass, 1934 [1].

<sup>2</sup> Glass, 1935 [2], 1936 [5].

<sup>3</sup> Glass, 1938 [11] to [20].

<sup>4</sup> Glass, 1939 [21].

<sup>5</sup> Glass, 1940 [22].
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lifelong colleague Eugene Grebenik has aptly summarized the significance of this seminal work:

After nearly 40 years this work remains as an indispensable record of the population history and policies of Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany and Scandinavia. A second, virtually unchanged edition was brought out in 1967; it must be rare for an author to be able to re-publish a work after nearly 27 years almost without alteration, particularly in a subject in which a great deal of research had been done during the intervening years. The work bears witness to Glass's erudition and to the catholicity of his reading. It also marks the beginning of his interest in a subject that increasingly fascinated him during the later years of his life: the history of population and of thought on population questions.¹

This book and his two articles published in Hogben's *Political* Arithmetic, dealing with trends in fertility and marriage in England and Wales during approximately the previous hundred years,² established both Glass's skill as a demographic analyst and his capacity to relate trends to their sociological setting. His approach was firmly in the British empirical tradition: he seldom speculated; he tended to keep clear of the uncertain ground of demographic projections, although he did cautiously enter this field in the final chapter of *Population Policies and Movements*. He sought rather to explain, through historical analysis, how things had come to be as they were, with reproduction rates in England, Wales, and many north and western European countries below replacement levels. This was the heyday of the use of reproduction rates and nuptioreproduction rates, which had been popularized by R. R. Kuczynski, and Glass was a master of these techniques. More than most, he also sought to analyse changes in the patterns of marriage and to compare nuptial and total fertility trends. His mastery of these statistical skills is nowhere better illustrated than in the Appendix—covering forty-one pages—in his Population Policies and Movements in Europe: this methodological appendix became compulsory reading and an indispensable guide for budding demographers the world over.

Population Policies and Movements is not, however, primarily a statistical treatise: it is still one of the most vivid and balanced sociological accounts of the decline of fertility in European countries to sub-replacement levels and of the measures instituted—generally for political rather than social or economic reasons—to reverse these trends. The closing chapter reveals Glass's political philosophy, which was to motivate much of his subsequent

¹ E. Grebenik, loc. cit., p. 7.

² Glass, 1938 [13] and [15].

research and writing. He argued¹ that the previous seventy years had 'produced with cumulative intensity, a social and economic system in which it has become increasingly difficult for parents to bring up large families'. He did not wish or expect to see a return of the large family system, but, clearly, neither did he wish to see the decline of western European societies through depopulation. As he saw it, the problem was that governments which had initiated population policies (the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, France, Italy, and Germany) had been trying 'to buy babies at bargain prices' through either repressive measures or inadequate financial hand-outs, whereas the root of the problem was the current structure of society:

... the population is not a single problem, but an aspect of all the social and economic problems by which the individual and the family are affected. To solve the population aspect of such problems may involve either a direct overhaul of the social and economic structure, or else the provision of monetary grants which are large enough, when taken in bulk, to allow parents sufficiently to alter the present system of social life through the mechanism of effective demand. Nor are these really alternative methods, for both would mean a considerable vertical and horizontal distribution of income. . . . But we have a considerable time before the actual decline of numbers is likely to be serious. Perhaps in that period society may become convinced that it is worth while to spend almost as much in maintaining the population as in promoting its extinction by unnatural causes.²

David Glass's search for social equity, his hatred of cant as the buttress of privilege, and his profound hatred of war are all apparent here. The war, however, interrupted Glass's research. He was recruited in the USA, where he had taken up a research fellowship, to work as Deputy Director of the British Petroleum Mission in Washington; he then returned in 1942 to work for the Ministry of Supply. In 1945 he succeeded Kuczynski in the Readership in Demography at the London School of Economics, and in 1948 was appointed to the Chair of Sociology. There he remained, after 1961 as Martin White Professor, until his death.

On his return to academic work at the London School of Economics after his war-time commitments, Glass became deeply involved in work for the Royal Commission which had been set up in 1944 'to examine the facts relating to present population trends in Great Britain; to investigate the causes of these trends and to consider their probable consequences; to consider what measures should be taken in the national interest to influence the future

¹ Glass, 1940 [22], pp. 371-3.

² Ibid., pp. 372-3.

trend of population and to make recommendations'.1 Glass was never a member of the Commission itself, but played a major role in the methodologies of its inquiries, particularly as a member of the Statistics Committee and of the Biological and Medical Committee. He also found time to indulge his love of British historical demography with a notable background paper prepared for the Statistics Committee on 'Population Movements in England and Wales between 1700 and 1850'.2 In addition he had a major hand in designing, and in analysing the data of, the investigation carried out by the Council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists on behalf of the Royal Commission into the extent to which contraception was practised in the United Kingdom. This broke new ground in an area of social inquiry felt to be verging on the improper unless conducted on a highly confidential basis by doctors with their own maternity patients as a natural part of clinical investigations. The questionnaires were still administered by the medical personnel, but one suspects the influence of David Glass (and C. P. Blacker) in having the universe of sample extended to include not only maternity cases, but all classes of female patients in the general wards of hospitals in selected areas throughout Britain. Over 11,000 questionnaires were completed between August 1946 and June 1947, 10,297 of them relating to married women. The main analysis was confined to the group of 3,281 non-maternity married women patients.3 There is little doubt that this remarkable report owes its success basically to the careful planning and design work of David Glass.

However, Glass's most significant contribution at this time seems to have been the planning and organization of the Family Census, covering a sample of ten per cent, or 1.25 million cases, of all married women in Britain. The drawing of the sample began in 1946 and the complete report was published in 1954.⁴ As Glass's distinguished colleague in this enterprise, Eugene Grebenik, has written, this was 'the first occasion since John Rickman ceased to

¹ UK Royal Commission on Population, Report [Cmd. 7695] (London, 1949), 1.

² This paper was not published at that time, but appeared in 1965 in *Population in History*, pp. 221-46, under the title of 'Population Movements in England and Wales, 1700 to 1850' (see Glass, 1965 [76]).

³ Papers of the Royal Commission on Population, 1 Family Limitation and its Influence on Human Fertility During the Past Fifty Years, by Lewis Faning (London, 1949).

⁴ D. V. Glass and E. Grebenik, The Trend and Pattern of Fertility in Great Britain. A Report on the Family Census of 1946, 2 vols. (London, 1954).

be responsible for the census of 1831 that someone who was not a serving civil servant had been entrusted with the task of conducting a national census'. It was also one of the first major studies to use cohort as opposed to cross-sectional analysis based on a specific point of time and for this reason was able to 'correct' some of the excesses of earlier projections which suggested a drastic reduction of population in Britain because of sub-replacement fertility. The family census showed that in fact the decline of family size had been a long, slow historical process, and that there seemed every possibility that women who were in the process of having children when the family survey was taken would end up with family size at or even above replacement level. The survey analysis also espied the trend to more and younger marriage, which was to become a major factor (rather than a shift in completed family size) in producing the 'baby boom' in the following decade.

It is difficult for an outsider to judge the precise influence of David Glass in the conduct and findings of the Royal Commission as a whole, but besides being associate author of the Report on the Family Census of 1947, he was a member of the Statistics Committee appointed in 1944 and of the Biological and Medical Committee, and more particularly of the 'Questionnaire Committee' appointed by the Council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to supervise its sample study into family limitation. Suffice it to say that the Reports on Family Limitation and of the Statistics Committee, together with the Report on the Family Census, were the outstanding products of the Royal Commission: much of their methodology set the patterns of demographic analysis for the next twenty years or so, and the methods they used were a major breakthrough in social inquiry in areas of human behaviour that had long been excluded from scrutiny by taboos and prejudices.

Both the intensity and diversity of Glass's intellectual activities have been clearly expressed in Eugene Grebenik's memoir and need no repetition here. Population studies seemed to be spreading everywhere and almost wherever they spread the hand and mind of David Glass, still in his thirties, could be detected, advising, influencing through membership of steering committees, and encouraging when enthusiasm flagged or doubts tended to overcome endeavour. This was also the time when Glass established what is surely his greatest contribution to population studies as a scientific and intellectual discipline—the launching of

¹ E. Grebenik, loc. cit., p. 8.

the journal *Population Studies* in 1947. The journal was essentially his creation and he and Eugene Grebenik guided its course for thirty-one years as joint editors. Glass, Grebenik records, 'read every single contribution submitted for publication'.¹ What is more, the standard of editorial supervision was immaculate, with scarcely a flaw or error. *Population Studies* quickly became and has remained the premier learned demographic publication in the English language; it has done more than any other publication, through its exacting standards of scholarship, its quality of publication, and wide dissemination through individual subscribers and libraries, to establish and sustain population studies as a field of intellectual endeavour and a recognized and respected branch of the social sciences.

Demography, interpreted essentially as a statistical and mathematical approach to population studies, was a focus too narrow for David Glass's eclectic intellectual interests; nor did he see population as an independent variable. He approached population studies essentially from the standpoint of their role in improving understanding of the operation of complex societies. He did not set out to test any grand theory, or even middle-range theory, but was concerned rather to measure, record, and explain; and these things he did superbly. He also set down his findings in immaculate prose, with a neat balance of illustrative material and with every significant fact faultlessly documented.

These qualities are nowhere better illustrated than in the next major publication with which Glass was associated, now (since 1948) as Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics. Social Mobility in Britain, published in 1954,2 was again based on data gathered in a major social survey. This study was a symposium with Glass as the editor: it began a series of major studies in which he collaborated with other scholars, all of which bear the stamp of his mastery of methodology, clarity of expression, precision of documentation, and, above all, both the breadth and depth of his knowledge of the field under study. His contributions to Social Mobility in Britain consisted of the 'Introduction', three chapters with J. R. Hall, one describing the aim and methodology of the sample survey used, another examining inter-generation changes in status, and the final one dealing with education and social mobility. The chapter on 'Social Mobility in Britain: A Study of Inter-Generation Changes in Status' (chapter VIII) pioneered new methodologies in the use of quantitative data and is still the basic reason why the book continues to be

¹ E. Grebenik, loc. cit., p. 8. ² Glass, 1954 [45].

widely used as a significant text in teaching and research concerned with social structure and mobility. The same vigorous methodology—let the facts speak—is apparent in chapter X on 'Education and Social Mobility'.

The finding that there seemed to be increasing social mobility must have pleased Glass, for his egalitarian philosophy was fiercely against entrenched privilege. He concluded that the new Education Act of 1944 'will do much to enable ability to fulfil itself' but remained concerned that the 'threefold system of grammar, technical and modern secondary schools will by no means minimise the disadvantages of the new unstable relationships between successive generations'. His basic sociological philosophy, which remained firm to the end, is expressed in his observations in his introductory chapter to Social Mobility in Britain:

There are two primary reasons for wishing to see the possibility of high social mobility in a community. First, in order to increase economic and social efficiency, since with a fluid social structure there is more likelihood that positions requiring high ability will in fact be held by individuals who possess high ability. A fluid social structure is also, on that account, more capable of adapting itself to internal and external change. Secondly, from the point of view of the individual, social mobility should ensure that there are fewer square pegs in round holes and the existence of opportunity to rise to status will in any case provide an incentive for the fuller utilization of a person's capacities. There may, as a consequence, be less feeling of personal frustration and a greater possibility of social harmony. . . . Certainly it is one of the postulates of a democratic and egalitarian society that ability, whatever its social background, shall not be denied the chance to fulfil itself.²

David Glass's reputation in the field of sociology was confirmed with his appointment in 1961 to the Martin White Professorship at the London School of Economics, as successor to Morris Ginsberg, who had helped to conceive the social mobility study; but hereafter Glass's interests returned primarily to demography. As one commentator has written, 'Research on population was David Glass's life'. Yet that statement underestimates the man's astonishing versatility and influence upon a wide range of important new social inquiries. Some of the major ones in which Glass was intimately involved have already been mentioned; but there were others which owed much to his counsel. For example, he was a member of the Steering Committee which guided

¹ Glass, 1954 [45], p. 29.
² Ibid., pp. 24-5.

Dr J. W. B. Douglas's survey of social and economic aspects of pregnancy and childbirth which was begun in 1946, and which has continued ever since surveying the children then born, to become probably the world's longest 'longitudinal' survey.¹ Glass had also a hand in the Scottish Mental Survey of 1947, again as a member of the project's Steering Committee, which tested and threw out the hypotheses that patterns of differential fertility were leading to a decline in measured intelligence.²

In addition to all these intellectual activities through the late 1940s and 1950s, David Glass had represented the United Kingdom on the United Nations Population Division, continued as Research Secretary of the Population Investigation Committee to promote studies of contemporary and historical trends of the British population, edited *Population Studies* with Eugene Grebenik, carried a full load of teaching and administration as a Professor of Sociology—and somehow through it all found time to devote to his family and to offer hospitality to the many scholars from the United Kingdom and from overseas who valued both his friendship and counsel, as well as to provide lectures to his students which have been described as 'superbly substantive and witty' and 'always crowded, with every continent well represented'.³

By 1960 both the scope and emphasis of population studies were changing. The World Population Conference held in Rome in 1954 had heralded the change towards greater emphasis on the study of high fertility and increasing growth rates in what came to be known as the 'developing countries', the threat of 'overpopulation' with respect to food supplies, and the study of measures that might be taken to reduce family size to put a brake on growth. India was soon to make a valiant but on the whole

The initial major research paper was J. W. B. Douglas, 'Social Class differences in health and survival during the first two years of life; the results of

a national survey', Population Studies, v. 1 (1951), 35-58.

² Population Investigation Committee and the Scottish Council for Research in Education, The Trend of Scottish Intelligence. A Comparison of the 1947 and 1932 Surveys of the Intelligence of eleven-year-old Pupils (London, 1949). Controlled for social class and family size, children of the 1947 survey performed better than those of the 1932 survey. Glass must have been extremely happy with these results, which put an end to the assertions of a series of articles through the 1930s and 1940s by R. B. Cattell, Cyril Burt, and others, which claimed that the negative correlation between intelligence and fertility was having 'dysgenic' effects that would ultimately lower 'national intelligence'. Glass had long been sceptical of the validity of such conclusions, but worried nevertheless that they just might be right. (See Glass, 1940 [22], pp. 74-5.)

³ B. Maxwell Stamper, International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, xviii (1979), 242, s.v. Glass, D. V.

unsuccessful attempt to develop a population policy which would bring growth down decade by decade to predetermined targets. Other countries began to follow suit, particularly in the Asian region, and international aid through private foundations, the United Nations, and individual governments marshalled considerable resources to assist these endeavours.

David Glass's main response to these new developments was, characteristically, in the field of teaching and training. His views in this area had already been adumbrated in the UNESCO Series, The University Teaching of Social Sciences, in which Glass contributed the volume on Demography, published in 1957.1 His concern was clearly with demography as an academic subject, its theoretical base, its association with other fields of learning (particularly statistics, biology, and history) and the contribution which rigorous analysis could make to increase understanding of demographic processes. He saw a role for an introductory course in demography as an input to other disciplines, but he also advocated an advanced study in demography as an appropriate specialist training at the postgraduate level. In 1965 he established such a training centre at the London School of Economics leading to a Master's degree. Students came from many parts of the world, particularly from Africa and India. Glass himself made a deep study of demographic events in India and other parts of Asia and in Latin America, but his published work continued to be primarily in the demography of Europe and Great Britain, and increasingly he turned to history.

His publications continued at an impressive pace over a wide range of topics, despite his increased involvement in administrative matters in his university, as well as other onerous duties, such as the presidency of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population between 1963 and 1965. Twenty substantial articles were published between 1958 and 1965. His perceptive piece on John Graunt and his Natural and Political Observations appeared in the Proceedings of the Royal Society in 1963. Two years later he edited with D. E. C. Eversley Population in History, a magnificent collection of scholarly papers with two major contributions from Glass himself. These were 'Two Papers on Gregory King' and 'Population and Population Movements in England and Wales, 1700–1850'. In 1966 he edited and contributed to London Inhabitants within the Walls, published by the London Record Society. Yet, while delving into the more distant

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<sup>1</sup> Glass, 1957 [55].

<sup>2</sup> Glass, 1958-65 [56] to [76].

<sup>3</sup> Glass, 1963 [71].

<sup>4</sup> Glass, 1965 [76].

<sup>5</sup> Glass, 1966 [77].
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past, he continued to keep pace with more recent trends and events and in the 1960s he produced some of his most significant 'trend' studies, dealing with such diverse subjects as family planning programmes and policies in Europe, migration, fertility trends in Europe since the Second World War, and Demographic Prediction, which was the subject of the Third Royal Society Nuffield Lecture. With Eugene Grebenik he had also produced in 1965 a major review of world population trends since 1800 for the Cambridge Economic History of Europe.

One review of David Glass refers to him as 'in many ways, trying not to be distracted by the popularity of his field'. The judgement is both true and not true. As the 1970s approached Glass was concentrating increasingly on his own research on population history from the eighteenth century—the demography of London, socio-economic status and occupations in the City of London at the end of the seventeenth century, are turn to the eighteenth-century population controversy, and the development of census and vital statistics in Britain. These were primarily the work of the lone scholar. So too was his return to the study of recent and prospective trends in fertility in developed countries, the last version of which was published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in 1976¹¹—in order, as he jokingly remarked to this author, to continue to justify his admission as a Fellow of that august body.

It is true that David Glass did tend to absent himself increasingly from about 1966 from many of the international gatherings of demographers. They were not his forte. Nor did he move easily in the complex field of academic politics. His devotions continued to be, as they had always been, to his home, his personal scholarly studies, London, and his students. But he was far from being a recluse. His many collaborative studies also provide ample evidence of his capacity to work in close harmony with chosen colleagues. With his wife, Ruth, he also travelled frequently to India; he visited Singapore; but he never ventured far into the southern hemisphere. He remained first a Londoner and next a European. Many of the international trends of the sixties distressed him: he hated violence, inequality, authoritarian regimes, and held fiercely to democratic freedoms and human

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      1 Glass, 1962 [66]; 1966 [78].
      2 Glass, 1966 [82].

      3 Glass, 1968 [85].
      4 Glass, 1967 [83].
      5 Glass, 1965 [75].

      6 B. Maxwell Stamper, loc. cit.
      7 Glass, 1968 [84].

      8 Glass, 1969 [88].
      9 Glass, 1973 [99].

      10 Glass, 1973 [98], [100].
      11 Glass, 1976 [104].
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rights. As Grebenik wrote: 'Glass was a man of strong moral and political views, who made no secret of his political convictions and expressed them vigorously. However he preferred scholarship to politics... He believed that social and political judgement should be based on a thorough examination of factual evidence, wherever possible quantitative evidence, rather than theoretical constructs or preconceptions.'

While his travels and international activities, and even his circle of scholarly associates in the United Kingdom, may have become increasingly selective as he concentrated on his teaching and his output of historical studies, the interventions which Glass did make in group activities were as effective as ever. This was particularly so in the Supplement of May 1970 to the journal Population Studies, under the title of Towards a Population Policy for the United Kingdom.2 The Supplement brought together a galaxy of leading writers and thinkers to contribute to such diverse topics as the statistical analysis of population growth in England and Wales, the interrelationship of demography and economics, family planning, and the interrelation between genetics and the social sciences. Glass himself contributed two scholarly articles, again historical, on 'The Components of Natural Increase in England and Wales' and 'The Registrar General and Demographic Studies in England and Wales'.3 He was also a contributor to three other papers.

A later symposium, published in 1972, reveals Glass's associations with other historical demographers,4 particularly in Europe, but the papers in this symposium relate to earlier conferences of 1966 and 1967 sponsored by the Harvard Centre for Population Studies and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Nevertheless, Glass's two contributions—his general introduction to the volume and the reprint of his 'Notes on the Demography of London at the End of the Seventeenth Century' (first published in Daedalus in 1968)—reveal once again the attributes of Glass's scholarship—his incredible memory, the width of his learning as well as its depth, his skill with quantitative methods, and his concern to document faultlessly every piece of data. This individualistic approach explains much of the 'lone scholar' hypothesis: while he led and collaborated with many joint enterprises, his major contributions to knowledge are individual, from the storehouse of his mind, a storehouse built up and replenished from a lifetime of data collection and analysis of historical records. Yet

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<sup>1</sup> E. Grebenik, loc. cit., p. 12.
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² Glass, 1970 [90] to [95].

³ Glass, 1970 [90] and [91].

⁴ Glass, 1972 [92].

he is said to have described his love of historical demography as a spare-time occupation. This modest understatement belies his intellectual energy, his capacity for sustained work, and above all a memory which, as a colleague remarked, seemed incapable of forgetting anything he had ever read.¹

After about 1965, as already indicated, whole new worlds of demographic research and activities began to open up with the consolidation of population policies in many 'developing' countries, particularly in Asia, aimed at checking the soaring growth rates through fertility control. Funds for research—particularly 'action-oriented research'-grew and multiplied through United Nations Agencies, governments' bilateral aid-funding, and through Foundation support (particularly in the USA). But before trends could be measured relevant data had to be collected and, with often inaccurate and inadequate censuses, and usually with no registration systems to record vital events, new methodologies had to be developed both to generate and interpret these new data, which were mostly based on quite small surveys, with regard to levels and trends in mortality, fertility, patterns of family formation and size, and migration and urbanization. The ingenious methods developed provided something of a breakthrough in demographic techniques and therefore in demographic knowledge of the populations in many developing countries, particularly in Asia and Africa.

David Glass knew and admired the quality and ingenuity of this new methodological work by scholars such as Freedman of Michigan, Coale of Princeton, and Brass of London; his courses in the Masters Degree in Demography at the London School of Economics also provided a thorough grounding in these new techniques, but his personal research never extended thus far.²

Some may find in this lacuna a cause for criticism, but the fact was that the subject of demography had extended by the sixties into such a diversity of topics that, as with other longer-established 'disciplines', scholars were tending to pick their fields of specialization: there were now historical demographers,

- ¹ Quoted in Grebenik, loc. cit., p. 6.
- ² It is interesting to note, for example, that in bibliographies dealing with methodological aspects of demography in a widely used textbook, David Glass is not mentioned; but his colleagues at LSE are included (e.g. J. Blacker, N. Carrier, J. Hajnal), as are other UK scholars who concentrated on statistical and mathematical aspects of demography (e.g. B. Benjamin, W. Brass, P. Cox, and E. Grebenik). See D. J. Bogue, *Principles of Demography* (New York and London, etc., 1969), 109–13 and 125–6.

social demographers, economic demographers, mathematical demographers, and so on.¹

That David Glass chose to stick essentially to the historical and sociological aspects of the burgeoning fields of population studies was surely a wise and happy choice, for it allowed him to bring to fruition and publication much of the storehouse of knowledge which he had been garnering over some four decades. No one who consulted with him or who was taught by him doubted his deep grasp of the mathematical aspects of his subject, or his knowledge of the new developments in techniques of measurement; they were just not—to use a phrase—what turned him on. Technical and mathematical aspects were the tools of his trade, not the end-product; but as anyone who has followed *Population Studies* over the years must know, he realized the importance of good tools and knew well how to handle them.

During the last ten or so years of his life, David Glass was not present at many of the international conferences that brought demographers together in increasing numbers ever more frequently. For this period the sobriquet 'lone scholar' has relevance, but the pay-off for future generations is the outpouring of the final products of his historical scholarship over this period.

The academic honours bestowed upon him carry their own testimony: President of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population 1963-5; Fellow of the British Academy 1964; Fellow of the Royal Society 1971; Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences 1971; Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences 1973. In addition he received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Michigan and Edinburgh, and from The Queen's University, Belfast.

The scholarly works now flowing from David Glass's demographic successors at the London School of Economics, Professor E. A. Wrigley and his associates, which carry the study of the population history of England back from the nineteenth to the

¹ It is of further interest to note that the bibliographies mentioned above also carried no reference to many of the other 'greats' in historical and social demography (e.g. K. Davis, D. Kirk, F. Notestein, although F. Lorimer is included because of his work in Africa). Glass would not have resented his own exclusion from these bibliographies, but he might have suggested and regretted that the selection emphasized the absence of a historical approach to the teaching of demography as an academic discipline. This imbalance could of course be corrected by turning to another 'global' text, the UN The Determinants and Consequences of Population Trends, Population Studies Nos. 17 and 50 (1953 and 1978), in which Glass's works are copiously referenced.

sixteenth century, seem a fitting epitaph to the man who did so much, in his own lifetime, to pioneer the field.¹

The other fitting memorial to David Glass is the continued production of that great journal, *Population Studies*, which he brought to life, nurtured, and developed into one of the great social science journals of our time—a monument published under his direct supervision for thirty-one years. The continued use of his two major scholarly books, *Population Policies and Movements* (1940), of which he was the sole author, and *Social Mobility in Britain* (1954), in which he was the major contributor, bears further witness to the quality and endurance of his scholarship.

David Glass's obituary in *The Times* of 27 September 1978 aptly concludes with these words:

Some found David Glass a hermetic person, introvert and ascetic. Others liked to see him thaw when he talked about books, or about India. His passionate craving for justice, and his equally passionate desire to understand were two of the motives of his life and work. His happiest time at the London School of Economics was probably that of the association with Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders. He will be remembered at LSE as one of the great men who have given distinction to this unique academic institution.

His 36-year association with his wife, Ruth Glass, herself a formidable scholar, was the stable centre of his life. Theirs was a rare intellectual and personal union. Their two children are Helen Duane and Robert Glass.

W. D. Borrie

¹ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England* 1541-1871: A Reconstruction, Studies in social and demographic history (London, 1981).

APPENDIX

[I am indebted to Professor E. Grebenik and Mr Richard Jones for permission to reprint this Bibliography, which first appeared in *Population Studies*, xxxiii. (March 1979), 13-17. The only additions are entries 103 and 104—W.D.B.]

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