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The Aglipayan Churches and the Census of 1960

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I. FROM 1918 TO 1960

IN 1918 when the population of the Philippines was slightly less than ten and one-half million, the Aglipayans numbered about one and one-half million, comprising 13.7 per cent of the population. By 1960 the total population had almost trebled: 27,087,685, or an increase of almost 17,000,000 from 1918. During those forty-two years, inspite of the soaring population, the Aglipayans had dropped from 13.7 per cent in 1918 to 5.2 per cent in 1960. In 1918, one in every 8 Filipinos was an Aglipayan; in 1939, one in every 10; in 1960, one in every 20.

The following table will show this rapid decrease as recorded by the Census of 1918, 1939, 1948, and 1960:

	1918	1939	1948	1960
Population	10,314,310	16,000,303	19,234,182	27,087,685
Aglipayans	1,417,448	1,573,608	1,456,114	1,414,431
Percentage	13.7%	9.8%	7.6%	5.2%

Table 1. Decline of Aglipayanism 1918-1960

MEANING OF "AGLIPAYAN." Moreover, the term "Aglipayan" has undergone a change in meaning. In the Census of 1918 and in that of 1939, the term "Aglipayan" was practically univocal: an "Aglipayan" was, with very few exceptions, a member of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (or Philippine Independent Church) headed by Bishop Gregorio Aglipay. In the Census of 1948, this univocal meaning still obtained: for, although the IFI was already split into two factions, nevertheless both factions claimed to be the genuine IFI. In 1948, therefore (as in 1918 and 1939), an "Aglipayan," with few exceptions, was a member of the Philippine Independent Church.

In the Census of 1960 this was no longer the case. By virtue of the decision of the Supreme Court of 1955 (upholding a Court of Appeals decision of 1952), only the faction headed by Bishop Isabelo de los Reyes Jr., continues to enjoy the right of calling itself the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (or Philippine Independent Church). All the other Aglipayans who do not belong to his faction have had to reorganize themselves under other names: for instance, the Independent Church of Filipino Christians, the Philippine Unitarian Church, the Aglipay Memorial Church, etc. The term "Aglipayan" in the 1960 Census includes the Philippine Independent Church and all these splinter churches.

Consequently, when the 1960 Census says that the total number of Aglipayans is 1,414,431 (or roughly, a million and a half), it follows that the Philippine Independent Church (PIC) cannot have more than that number. Its membership may possibly be much less.¹

THE 1960 CENSUS. The figures of the 1960 Census refer to the "census day" which was 15 February 1960. "As of February 15, 1960, the population of the country was counted at

¹ The figures from the Census of 1960 are taken from the two-volume report on Population and Housing. Volume I ("Report by Provinces") was issued in 55 separate brochures, one for each province. Volume II ("Summary Report") was a single brochure. (Cited here as PH, with volume and page number.)

27,087,685. . . The population increased at a yearly average of 600,000 or 3.1 per cent."²

With regard to religious affiliation, "The population of the Philippines was classified into the following religions: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Aglipayan, Iglesia ni Kristo, Moslem, and Buddhist. All others were grouped into the category 'others', including those without any religion at all." In the case of minor children, their religion was "considered as that of the parents, and if the mother and father did not profess the same religion, the religion of the child was that which the parents reported for him."³

In accordance with the foregoing classification, the Census reported that, as of 15 February 1960, the country was 83.8 per cent Roman Catholic and 5.2 per cent Aglipayan. In the twelve years since the preceding census (1948), the Roman Catholics had increased by 42.3 per cent, while the Aglipayans had decreased by 2.9.

This decrease on the part of the Aglipayans is all the more significant when it is remembered that during that same twelve-year period all other religions in the country (except the Buddhists) had increased, some at a phenomenal rate: the Protestants by 76 per cent; the Moslems by 66 per cent; and the Iglesia ni Kristo by 206 per cent. The exact figures are given in Table 2.

	1960		Increase since 1948	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total population	27,087,685	100	7,853,503	40.8
Roman Catholic	22,686,096	83.8	6,744,674	42.3
Protestant	785,399	2.9	340,908	76.7
Aglipayan	1,414,431	5.2	-41,683	-2.9
Iglesia ni Kristo	270,104	1.0	181,979	206.5
Moslem	1,317,475	4.9	525,658	66.4
Buddhist	39,631	0.1	-3,120	-7.3
Others	574,549	2.1	105,087	22.4

TABLE 2. Religion of the Population of the Philippines, 1960⁴

² PH, II, ix-xi.

³ PH, II, xxiii.

⁴ PH, II, p. 17, Table 19.

1950. Leaving the PIC, he at first joined another Aglipayan sect (the ICAN). Later on he broke off also from this latter church to form his own. The headquarters of the BC are at Umingan, Pangasinan.

5. CHRIST JESUS HOLY CHURCH (CJHC). The founder and head of this church is Bishop Pedro Aglipay, who was also instrumental in founding the Philippine Unitarian Church (PUC). The CJHC was organized in 1958 and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a corporation sole.⁵

6. IGLESIA CATÓLICA APOSTÓLICA NACIONAL (ICAN). This church broke off from the IFI in Aglipay's lifetime in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, on 12 January 1930. In 1944 during the Japanese occupation, the ICAN claimed 50,000 members and properties valued at ₱2,750. Its present membership would be difficult to determine.

7. FILIPINO CHRISTIAN CHURCH (FCC). This church also broke off from the IFI in Aglipay's lifetime. Its original seat was in Dolores, Tayabas. It was incorporated on 24 September 1928. In 1962 this church had 14 ministers registered with the Bureau of Public Libraries as being authorized to perform marriages. The founder and head of the FCC, Bishop Ciriaco de las Llagas, died in 1962.⁶

8. PHILIPPINE LIBERAL CHURCH (PLC). The "Iglesia Filipina Liberal" (PLC) was organized on 11 October 1930 by a group of Aglipayans who seceded from the IFI. The founder and first head was Bishop Ceferino Ramirez. The present head is Bishop Vicente Vergara.

9. IGLESIA CISMÁTICA FILIPINA NACIONAL (ICFN). The early history of this church has become of public record in a decision of the Court of Appeals, handed down in 1947, in-

⁵ According to *The Christian Yearbook*, ed. B. Guansing (Manila, 1961-1962), this church had 7,000 members.

⁶ Bishop de las Llagas' death was noted in the official organ of the PIC as that of a "prodigal priest." The same organ announced the "return" to the PIC of Llagas' "50,000 followers"; several months later, however, the return had not yet taken place. *The Christian Register* (Manila), Oct. 1962 pp. 12-13; also May 1963 p. 17.

volving its Supreme Bishop.⁷ The Directory of Philippine non-Catholic sects for 1956 recorded that the ICFN had 10,000 adult members; 14 full-time and 6 part-time ministers; 40 organized and 10 unorganized churches, and a clinic in Oroquieta, Misamis Occidental.⁸

10. IGLESIA DE LA LIBERTAD (IL). This church is a revival of the "Iglesia Filipina Independiente de Binakayan" organized in Kawit, Cavite, in 1904, and later absorbed in the national IFI. In 1938 the group seceded from the IFI. It is still registered with the Bureau of Public Libraries as a separate church under Bishop Jose Gamad.

11. CHURCH OF GOD (CG). This church, also called the "Catholic and Apostolic Aglipayan Memorial Church," has its headquarters in Bansud, Mindoro Oriental. Its head is the Rev. Felipe Yazaya. It has one Minister registered with the Bureau of Public Libraries.

12. IGLESIA NACIONAL DE FILIPINAS (INF). This church, under the leadership of the Rev. Proceso Reyes of Sampaloc, Manila (formerly of the IFI), has 9 ministers registered with the Bureau of Public Libraries.

13. Two other Aglipayan churches may be recorded, which existed at one time. One was the IGLESIA FILIPINA REFORMADA (IFR), founded by Angel Flor Mata. This church appears to have been dissolved when its leader returned to the Catholic Church in 1929. The other, IGLESIA FILIPINA EVANGÉLICA INDEPENDIENTE (IFEI) was founded in 1924 by Rev. Demetrio Pascual who assumed the title of Supreme Bishop. Of its present status the authors possess no information.

III. THE CENSUS AND THE PIC CLAIMS

There is a wide discrepancy between the figures of the 1960 Census and the claims made by the Philippine Indepen-

⁷ People vs. Camilo Diel, CA-G.R. 1120-R (decision promulgated 22 August 1947).

⁸ *Directory of Church and Missions (non-Roman) at Work in the Philippines* (Manila, 1956) p. 25. The 1961 edition of that work does not mention this church; but the church was still in existence in 1962 according to the records of the Bureau of Public Libraries for the solemnization of marriages.

dent Church. The PIC Official National Directory for 1955 contained the following statement:

Church Members, 1,456,114. The figure is the official government report as it appears in the Bureau of the Census publication "Statistical Handbook" dated 1953. However it does not coincide with our Church's records which show well over three million baptized members.⁹

If the PIC had "well over three million baptized members" in 1955, it must have gained one million and a half members since the 1948 Census, and lost a million and a half in the five-year period between 1955 and the Census of 1960. The alternative to that conclusion would be to claim that the 1960 Census (as well as the 1948 Census) was in error by one and one-half million, being an error of over 100 per cent.

The PIC Directory for 1961 gave a slightly lower figure: "2,781,990 followers."¹⁰ Between that figure and the number given by the 1960 Census, there is a discrepancy of 1,367,559. If the 1961 PIC Directory is correct, then the 1960 Census was in error by some 96 per cent.

The PIC claim of three million members has been accepted by the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. An editorial in the Episcopalian periodical *The Living Church* attributed three million members to the PIC.¹¹ The same figure is given by the Episcopalian organ in the Philippines, *The Diocesan Chronicle*.¹² The Executive Officer of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Stephen Bayne, in a report submitted in January 1963 to the Archbishop of Canterbury, informed the Anglican churches that the concordat of full communion between the American Episcopalians and the Filipino Aglipa-

⁹ *PIC Official National Directory* (Manila, 1955) p. iv; but cf. p. 7.

¹⁰ The figures given in the PIC National Directory of 1961 were also reprinted in *The Christian Century* (Chicago), 29 Nov. 1961, p. 1445.

¹¹ See *The Living Church* (Milwaukee, Wis.), 16 Oct. 1960 p. 16; 29 Oct. 1961 pp. 11-12.

¹² *The Diocesan Chronicle* (Manila), Oct. 1961 p. 3. The Episcopal Church Annual published in the United States in 1961 gave a similar figure, describing the PIC as being "almost as large" as the Protestant Episcopal Church (which has more than three million members).

yans "brought together in fullest sacramental brotherhood some six million Christians."¹³ The six million would refer to the three million American Episcopalians and the three million members of the PIC.

Bishop Bayne, in an earlier article, had described the Aglipayans as constituting "more than a tenth of the Christians in the Philippines."¹⁴ As there were at that time (1962) some 25 million Christians in the Philippines, "a tenth" would be at least two million and a half.

While some accepted the three-million figure, others accepted a far smaller number: two million. Thus, in January 1963, while the Archbishop of Canterbury and the churches of the Anglican communion were being informed that the PIC had three million members, the PIC itself published an article in its official organ stating that its membership was two million."¹⁵

The two-million figure was likewise accepted by officials of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, despite the fact that it exceeded the Census figures of 1948 and 1960 by some 30 per cent. The Rev. Dr. Joseph G. Moore, Director of the Episcopalian Strategy Advisory Committee, told the Episcopal Church that "With the ratification of the concordat between the Protestant Episcopal Church, U.S.A., and the Philippine Independent Church, the number of baptized Filipinos related to us in full communion has jumped from 40,000 to more than two million."¹⁶ The President of the Episcopalian House of Deputies, Mr. Clifford P. Moorehouse, declared in an article in *The Anglican World* that by the Detroit concordat "more than 2,000,000 Christians" belonging to the PIC had

¹³ "Extract from Bishop Bayne's Report to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 21 January 1963", *The Christian Register* (Manila), June 1963 p. 15.

¹⁴ *The Living Church* (Milwaukee), 18 March 1962 pp. 18-19; also reprinted in *The Christian Register* (Manila), Aug. 1962 pp. 26-27.

¹⁵ "Today, the IFI has 500 parishes with 3,000 chapels and 2 million members, and is the largest indigenous church in Asia."—Valentin de los Reyes, "Iglesia Filipina Independiente," *The Christian Register*, Jan. 1963 pp. 5-6.

¹⁶ J. G. Moore, "New Era in the Philippines", *The Christian Register*, June 1963 p. 15.

been "brought into full and active communion and fellowship with Anglicanism."¹⁷

The two-million figure was first mentioned in 1947 by Bishop Norman Spencer Binsted, at that time Missionary Bishop of the Philippine District of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. Writing to his Presiding Bishop in the United States (Henry St. George Tucker) in 1946, Bishop Binsted said at first that the PIC had "approximately one and one-half million members." He was obviously basing that estimate on the figures of the previous Census (1939), which were soon to receive confirmation also in the forthcoming Census (1948). A few months later, Bishop Binsted gave a much higher figure. Writing to the new Presiding Bishop in 1947 (Henry Knox Sherrill) Bishop Binsted said: "The Philippine Independent Church is a well-established self-supporting organization, with congregations in all parts of the Philippines, with a membership of baptized persons conservatively reckoned at 2,000,000."¹⁸

While some were thus attributing three million members to the PIC and others only two million, a third figure was added by the Secretary General of the PIC during a tour of the United States in 1962. At the meeting in South Carolina of the Episcopalian House of Bishops and in other conferences elsewhere, he gave the membership of the PIC as two million and a half.¹⁹

IV. THE PIC DIRECTORY OF 1961

This discrepancy in the number of members claimed for the PIC is not a new phenomenon. Early in the history of the Church, its two leaders, citing the same "official records," gave two widely divergent reports of their membership: Bishop

¹⁷ C. P. Moorehouse, "New Horizons in the Philippines", *The Christian Register*, July 1963 p. 6 (reprinted from *The Anglican World*).

¹⁸ Binsted to Tucker, 24 Oct. 1946, and Binsted to Sherrill, 12 Aug. 1947.—*Supplement to the Diocesan Chronicle* (Manila, 1947) pp. 1-28.

¹⁹ *Manila Times*, 31 Oct. 1962; *The Christian Register*, Dec. 1962 p. 17; *Buffalo Evening News*, 11 Jan. 1963.

Aglipay gave three million, and Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr., five million.²⁰

The root of the difficulty is the fact that the claims are based on rough estimates rather than on actual count. This tendency may be illustrated by an examination of the PIC Directory for 1961.

Two things are immediately evident in that Directory: first, the figures are all in round numbers; second, the figures of the Directory exceed the Census figures in many cases by enormous percentages. The province of Cebu, for instance, according to the 1960 Census had only 19,968 Aglipayans. The PIC Directory of 1961 claimed 79,000 members in Cebu—a discrepancy of over 59,000.

The following six provinces (chosen almost at random) may be used to illustrate the wide divergence between the figures of the Census and those of the PIC Directory:

Provinces	Census 1960	PIC Directory 1961	Discrepancy
Agusan	12,145	49,100	36,955
Cebu	19,968	79,000	59,032
Masbate	13,888	91,600	77,712
Misamis Occ.	61,218	113,500	52,282
Negros Or.	67,437	135,100	67,663
Surigao	43,321	71,100	27,779
Total	217,977	539,400	321,423

Similar huge discrepancies exist with regard to many municipalities and chartered cities. The following nine examples will suffice:

²⁰ See Achutegui-Bernad, *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, I, (Manila, 1960; second ed. 1961), 223-233.

City or Municipality	Census 1960	PIC Directory 1961	Discrepancy
Cebu City	340	16,000	15,660
Davao City	570	6,500	5,930
Cagayan de Oro	8,685	34,400	25,715
Lucena City	160	2,100	1,940
Ballesteros (Cagayan)	7,841	21,500	13,659
Candijay (Bohol)	1,904	19,500	17,596
Tangub (Misamis Occ.)	808	9,000	8,192
Sariaya (Quezon)	939	4,200	3,261
San Jose (Samar)	2,442	11,000	8,558
Total	23,689	124,200	100,511

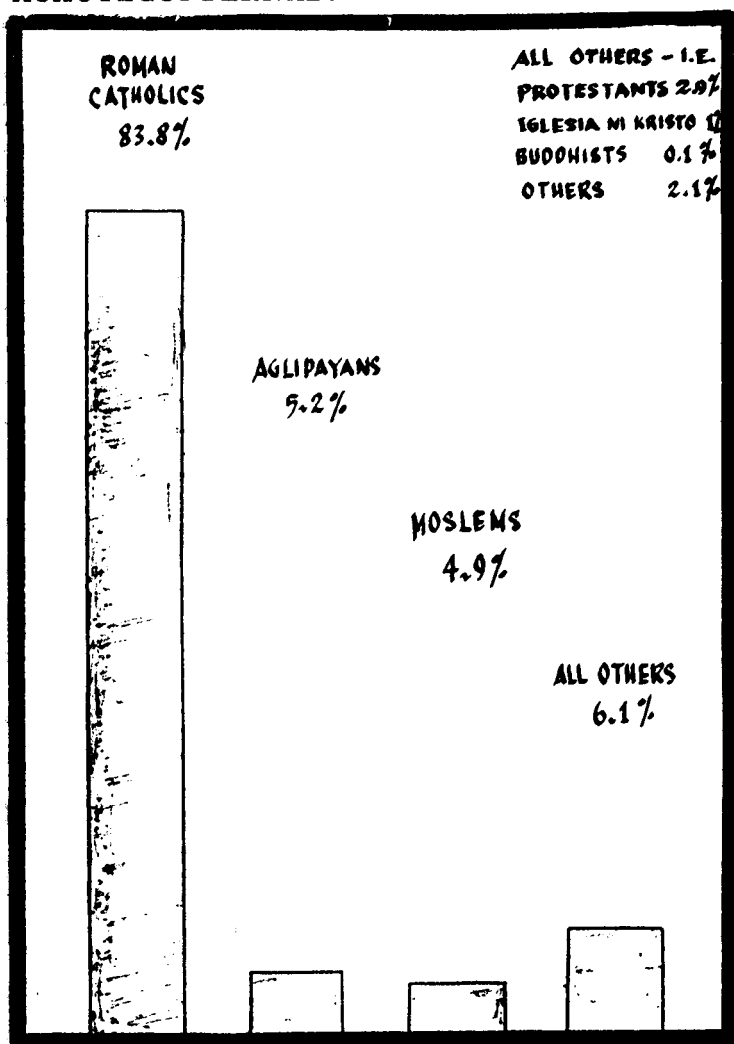
V. AGLIPAYANISM IN THE PROVINCES

Accepting the figures of the 1960 Census as reasonably accurate, at least for general purposes, several noteworthy facts emerge concerning the strength of Aglipayanism in the various provinces.

The two provinces with the largest number of Aglipayans are Ilocos Norte and Pangasinan. According to the Census, there were 157,972 Aglipayans in Ilocos Norte and 105,243 in Pangasinan. In Ilocos Norte, every other person was an Aglipayan; in Pangasinan, every tenth person.

Nevertheless, even in those two provinces where the numerical strength of Aglipayanism is greatest, the decline has been rapid. Ilocos Norte was 75 per cent Aglipayan in 1918; 59.7 per cent in 1948; 54.9 per cent in 1960. Pangasinan in 1918 was 22 per cent Aglipayan; 12.5 per cent in 1948; 9.3 per cent in 1960.

Of the fifty-five provinces in the Philippines at the time of the 1960 Census, the majority had few or no Aglipayans. Three-fourths (1,114,909) of the total number of Aglipayans were found in 20 provinces. These twenty provinces are listed in Table 5; the remaining provinces in Tables 3 and 4.



TOTAL POPULATION 27,087,685

THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES , 1960

Province	Population 1960	Roman Catholics 1960	Aglipayans 1960	
			Number	Percentage*
La Union	293,330	268,617	5,593	1.9 (3.2)
Mindoro Oriental	228,998	203,489	4,568	1.9 (—)
Lanao del Norte	270,603	198,210	5,732	1.9 (—)
Pampanga	617,259	574,539	9,574	1.5 (2.0)
Cebu	1,332,847	1,294,697	19,968	1.4 (1.7)
Cotabato	1,029,119	467,790	15,090	1.4 (2.2)
Bulacan	558,819	527,382	6,996	1.2 (2.4)
Zamboanga Sur	742,404	490,175	8,949	1.2 (—)
Zamboanga Norte	281,429	226,264	3,045	1.0 (—)
Capiz	315,079	304,907	3,152	1.0 (2.0)
MANILA	1,138,611	1,056,653	9,837	0.8 (2.0)
Batangas	681,414	664,053	4,018	0.5 (0.8)
Davao	893,023	777,996	5,209	0.5 (0.9)
Quezon	653,426	625,750	3,341	0.5 (1.6)
Palawan	162,669	116,493	712	0.4 (0.1)
Lanao del Sur	378,327	19,934	591	0.1 (—)
Sorsogon	347,771	343,273	474	0.1
Camarines Norte	188,091	183,893	79	0.04 (0.08)
Sulu	326,898	10,019	25	0.007
Albay	514,980	508,721	28	0.005
Batanes	10,309	10,097	0	0.0
Catanduanes	156,329	155,736	0	0.0
TOTAL	11,121,735	9,028,688	106,981	

Table 3. Provinces where Aglipayans Form Less than 2 per cent (1960)

* 1948 percentage in parentheses

Province	Population 1960	Roman Catholics 1960	Aglipayans 1960	
			Number	Percentage*
Bataan	145,323	130,296	7,160	4.9 (3.8)
Ilocos Sur	338,058	293,308	16,396	4.8 (9.3)
Agusan	271,010	243,573	12,145	4.4 (9.7)
Marinduque	114,586	108,400	4,941	4.3 (5.4)
Masbate	335,971	313,631	13,888	4.1 (4.8)
Aklan	226,232	214,270	7,019	3.0 (—)
Bukidnon	194,368	159,869	5,197	2.6 (4.3)
Rizal	1,456,362	1,348,498	36,953	2.5 (5.8)
Samar	867,994	832,773	21,647	2.4 (4.8)
Camarines Sur	819,565	787,195	19,189	2.3 (4.4)
Leyte	1,172,972	1,127,335	26,404	2.2 (2.3)
Bohol	592,194	570,342	12,650	2.1 (2.0)
Mountain Province	435,839	231,564	8,952	2.1 (2.9)
TOTALS	6,970,474	6,361,054	192,541	

Table 4. Provinces where Aglipayans form from 2 to 4.9 per cent (1960)

* 1948 percentages in parentheses

Province	Population 1960	Roman Catholics 1960	Aglipayans 1960	
			Number	Percentage*
Ilocos Norte	287,333	115,736	157,972	54.9 (59.7)
Zambales	213,442	139,399	56,024	26.1 (37.8)
Antique	238,405	160,652	61,844	25.9 (30.7)
Misamis Occidental	248,371	168,029	61,218	24.6 (37.1)
Romblon	131,658	100,085	25,516	19.4 (23.8)
Tarlac	426,647	318,527	70,861	16.6 (23.8)
Isabela	442,062	314,859	72,723	16.4 (24.7)
Surigao	359,997	304,255	42,321	11.7 (13.1)
Negros Oriental	597,761	489,319	67,437	11.2 (16.4)
Nueva Ecija	608,362	491,513	66,752	10.9 (18.3)
Cagayan	445,289	377,509	42,537	9.5 (12.5)
Misamis Oriental	388,615	338,307	37,416	9.6 (17.0)
Laguna	472,064	409,611	44,946	9.5 (12.4)
Pangasinan	1,124,144	942,625	105,243	9.3 (12.5)
Nueva Vizcaya	138,000	84,062	12,469	9.0 (10.0)
Cavite	378,138	324,955	30,782	8.1 (11.1)
Mindoro Occidental	84,316	70,318	6,537	7.7 (—)
Iloilo	966,266	862,266	71,505	7.4 (7.8)
Abra	115,193	95,848	6,506	5.6 (8.9)
Negros Occidental	1,332,323	1,188,479	74,300	5.6 (8.4)
TOTAL	8,998,476	7,296,354	1,114,909	

Table 5. Provinces where Aglipayans Constitute 5 per cent or more of the Population (1960)

* Percentage for 1948 in parentheses