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## Solving Social Ills: Major Social Problems

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## **Solving Social Ills: Major Social Problems**

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universities went through a similar process of development—with a head-start of more than a hundred years—while Catholics in the American colonies were second-class citizens.

This book is highly recommended to those concerned with higher education—Catholic and otherwise—in the Philippines. Warned by the lessons of history, higher education might be able to develop here with less fumbling than elsewhere.

JAMES J. MEANY

## SOLVING SOCIAL ILLS

MAJOR SOCIAL PROBLEMS. By Earl Raab and Gertrude Jaeger Selznick. Evanston, Ill.: Rowe, Peterson and Company, 1959. xvi, 582p.

The authors define a social problem as "any social situation which makes a substantial number of people unhappy or which seems to threaten society's ability to keep house." It is felt that in a changing society some social problems are symptomatic of a change for the better. That is, they indicate that some at least are attempting to remedy a situation. There is not only an objective measurement of the social problem, for example, the number of persons involved, but also a subjective measure based on value judgments. Selecting seven problem areas, the authors devote more than one-half of the text to the combined problems of Delinquency, Crime, and Group Prejudice. More than one-third of the text is devoted to the problems of Family, School, and Dependency. The remainder considers the problem of Immigration.

The procedure of the authors is to present the *meaning* of the problem, followed by *causation*, and concluding with *meeting the problem*. This procedure provides an orderly text making it possible to select individual problems for consideration and to follow them easily in continued reading. If one agrees with the authors' definition of social problems and favors a multi-causal approach he will find this text valuable.

Social workers in New York's Borough of Richmond might question the authors' statement "that the only referral agency for juveniles in trouble is the juvenile court". Social workers will find their role in a psychiatric clinic to be under-played (p. 127) in contrast to the correct description in the "Adaptation" on page 98. Few would agree that fee-charging by family social agencies (p. 393) is *usual*.

Before proceeding further, we must state that we consider this book useful for the study of social problems, and the following criticisms are not intended to deny its value. Because the text is basically an objective scientific study, the casual reader may fail to recognize

the occasional subjective element introduced in the evaluation of the facts.

One juvenile court judge (p. 50) is selected to speak concerning moving pictures in connection with delinquency. While referring to the "many" who oppose governmental censorship of comic books, the authors fail to mention any who favor such control, and ignore the extensive writings of Dr. Frederick Wertham (e.g. *Seduction of the Innocent*, Rinehart, 1954).

Little place is given by the authors to sanction on law with relation to the treatment of offenders; and not all would agree that juvenile courts hold as *basic philosophy* the non-responsibility of children (p. 108). Too little attention is given (on pp. 148 and 152) to the *serious* nature of some offences committed by drug addicts. When consideration is made of the "remedial paths generally suggested for the reduction of... illegal narcotics" it is stated that "there is no evidence that more severe sentences would deter the illegal sale of narcotics." However, *Federal Probation* (March 1959, p. 66) cites Harry J. Anslinger, U.S. Commissioner of Narcotics, as attributing (in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, January 1959) the drop in addiction in many cities to the Narcotic Control Act of 1956, with its mandatory-sentence provisions.

The authors state (p. 153), without substantiation, that for crime "retribution is no longer morally defensible in Western society". A distinction should be made (p. 153) between punishment which *deters* and that which might be expected to *eradicate* crime.

One who subscribes to the precepts of the natural law (and therefore potentially all persons, and not just Catholics) would not favor the removal of moral obstacles to divorce (pp. 362-363) nor would he see the principal bond in marriage to be emotional. Similarly, sterilization (p. 496) involves more than merely society's justification. In a scientific text the phrase retained in the "Adaptation" on page 527 is in poor taste. To anyone who realizes the pervasive influence of religion, it is difficult to see how the authors fail to recognize the marked "day-to-day" differences it makes (p. 371).

Following the secularist pattern, the authors (pp. 383 ff.) consider family "loss of function" as an accepted fact. Concerning this pattern, Zimmerman (Carle C. Zimmerman and Lucius F. Cervantes, *Marriage and the Family*, Regnery, 1956) stresses the many functions which *are* carried by the family—contrary to the notion that these are lost. Zimmerman notes that the key social fact is *procreation*, and that *all* basic functions of the family inhere in, or are defined as stemming from, procreation. The basic functions are still with the family if procreation is.

We will never know, Zimmerman states, how much the popular belief in the family-function-decay theory was fostered by transfer to America of Marxian teachings. He notes also that a basic tenet of

Marxian teaching has decay of the family as a necessary step to Communism. Many accepted the family-decay theory, who would not have knowingly accepted other Marxian doctrine. Further, the family-decay theory became popular in the United States when left-wing ideas were in vogue among the intelligentsia, before Communism was unmasked. In a summary, Zimmerman refers to the loss-of-function theory as one of the greatest, if not the greatest academic illusion of the century. John Thomas (*The American Catholic Family*, Prentice-Hall, 1956) distinguishes between function and structure, holding that function refers to *what* is to be done, and that structure indicates *how* it is done. Thus function remains even when structure changes.

Recognizing parental influence on behavior, the authors fail to distinguish (pp. 408-409) between conscience and "super-ego". Granting the interest of Catholics in *decency*, recognition might be given (p. 424) to other religious groups also so interested, and it is difficult to find in the context any real reason for enclosing the word "indecent" in quotation marks.

The "evils" of the anti-communist oath are mentioned (pp. 436-437), with no mention of reasons in behalf of the oath. There are sound reasons for disagreeing with the statement on p. 438 that "one of the prime functions of the schools is to serve as a unifying force in a diverse America. Any emphasis on religion is necessarily a divisive force."

The impression is given (p. 429) that a simple statement of opinion by Mrs. Roosevelt against the use of public funds for private schools provoked in Cardinal Spellman an inordinately strong reaction. No mention is made of her attack on "Church organizations", *preceding* the Cardinal's statement. Mrs. Roosevelt said:

Sometimes I think Church organizations are foolish because they do things that lead people to believe that they are not interested mainly in the spiritual side of the Church but that they have a decided interest also in temporal affairs (*Time*, Pacific Overseas Edition, August 1, 1949, p. 7).

The Cardinal addressed his remarks after *this* statement, and had been silent following her previous reference to the schools.

Concerning medical insurance, the subscriber to the private plan mentioned (p. 483) will be surprised at the implication that they are insured only against "catastrophic" illness. Paul de Kruif will find here his 1954 statement concerning medical expenses, without any mention of his later strong statements against a specific medical prepayment plan.

In conclusion we refer to one of the "Adaptations". The authors indicate that the 32 "Adaptations" do not necessarily reflect their own views. "Adaptation" No. 19, for example, is entitled "Divorce—Catholic View". In the introduction to the "Adaptation" the authors mention it as the view of two writers who are formally identified with the Catholic Church.

Comparison of the "Adaptation" with the original writings of John Thomas and Clement Mihanovich reveals that the originals have

been reduced to one-tenth their quantity, and the reduction was effected by quoting or paraphrasing a few paragraphs.

The writings of Thomas are voluminous and his person not obscure, as attested by a two-column notice in *Time* (U. S. edition, March 23, 1956, pp. 52 and 55). From Thomas' original work, nine paragraphs (11-15, 36-39) are used, but no paraphrase is attempted of his material on birth control par. 14). In his 38th paragraph Thomas speaks of "novelist and Hollywood," but this appears in the "Adaptation" as "novelist in Hollywood."

From the 24 pages of Mihanovich's text the authors selected four paragraphs (1,4,6, and 8) and from his three-page summary they chose the last two paragraphs to quote or paraphrase. In his 4th paragraph, Mihanovich spoke of "the Catholic teaching on the indissolubility of marriage." which appears in the "Adaptation" as "the dissolubility of marriage." The chapter of Mihanovich from which the "Adaptation" is made is devoted explicitly to an over-all view of divorce. It contains abundant data on the extent and effects of divorce, and on civil legislation relating to divorce. This material is not paraphrased.

The authors present no explanation for having selected excerpts from Thomas' first chapter, "The Changing Family", to the neglect of his fifth chapter in the same text. The fifth chapter is explicitly on "Church Laws on Marriage".

Having called attention to the aspects of the book which are not as objective as they might appear, we again recommend it for its value as an empirical study.

CHARLES MCKENNEY

## FIGHTING COCKS

OF COCKS AND KITES AND OTHER SHORT STORIES. By Alejandro R. Roces. Manila: Regal Publishing Co., 1959. 140p.

It would probably be an exaggeration to claim that this book is to cockfighting what Tom Lea's *The Brave Bulls* and Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* are to bullfighting. However, anyone who reads this book, even if he has never blown a puff of cigar smoke at his favorite rooster's face, can now sit in at the most sophisticated cockfight without feeling like a paleface in a crowd of sun worshippers.

Mr. Roces—so Fr. Bernad who writes the preface tells us—has never been inside a cockpit. Yet by diligent research he has brought to the English language a new set of technical terms used in the fine art of alectryomachy (cockfighting to you). This is the more remarkable if we consider that the terminology available to him is probably all in the dialect or at most in Spanish. A bit of American