

constantly reaching for is democracy at home and abroad. The main trend in its history is the gradual realization of the American Creed." (p. 1021.)

Space limitations preclude a full and just appraisal of this book. If it were widely read by all classes of people the general reactions might range from complete endorsement to complete damnation of the author's point of view. Neither would one expect uniformity of reaction from social scientists regarding matters quite apart from the racial issues, i.e., the basic premises, the methodology, or general interpretation. Odum, for instance, has taken the author to task on several points regarding methodology, but he probably voices the opinion of many in prefacing his discussion "with the assumption that *An American Dilemma*, in its comprehensiveness, in its originality, in its analysis, is the best thing that has been done on the Negro and is likely to be the best for a considerable time to come. To the social scientist and the 'intellectual' planners, publicists, and reformers, the book is a 'must.'"⁸

The Carnegie Corporation may justly feel that its decision to import an outsider for this task has panned out exceedingly well. The chief disadvantage is that the author, skilled as a social engineer in his own country, must leave to others the solution of the problem. When the patient finds a promising doctor he wants to keep him around. He is hardly satisfied with a written diagnosis or even with a prescription.

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RACE SUICIDE?¹

DR. McCLEARY presents here in brief and simple form most of the more significant results relating to the growth of national populations arrived at by study in this field during the past several decades. He understands well the meaning of these facts and does not misuse them for his particular purpose as so often happens when laymen use such materials, nor has he let personal bias lead him astray in his interpretations although he has a thesis to support.

⁸ Odum, Howard W.: Problem and Methodology in *An American Dilemma* (a review). *Social Forces*, October, 1944, xxiii, No. 1, p. 95.

¹ McCleary, G. F.: *RACE SUICIDE?* London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1945, 126 pp. 6s.

His purpose in this book is to convince the reader of the need of raising the birth rate in Western nations, particularly in Great Britain, if these peoples are not to become a relatively less significant part of mankind. Naturally in a book of this size and limited objective he does not discuss many political, social, and economic problems involved in maintaining even the present population in Great Britain or any of the other countries of Western Europe. The tendency of the lay reader will probably be to say: All right, you have shown that we are going to decline in numbers in the not distant future! So what? Why need we concern ourselves with such matters?

In order to convince the mass of the people that this situation requires individual personal action if it is to be changed, it will be necessary to convince them that larger families have a value to them personally which is much greater than that now attached to them. The weakness of this book is that it does not really attack this problem which, in the opinion of the reviewer, lies at the root of the matter. As an instructed and much interested layman Dr. McCleary might have been expected to suggest what the values attaching to families large enough to maintain the population are, both those which would accrue to the individual and those which pertain to the maintenance of the national group and its culture. He has limited his suggestions to those values which attach to being a member of a national group with a definite culture, he has not indicated the personal values which might be achieved in large measure within the family and the small community, where alone the maintenance of numbers is now being achieved.

To the reviewer it seems probable that this failure to appreciate the importance of personal values in reproduction proceeds from Dr. McCleary's lack of interest in one very important result of modern population study, *viz.*, in the wide difference in birth rates of city and country people. This difference is still large although the birth rate of country people is declining much like that of city people. He does not raise the question of why this is and, of course, offers no suggestion of how the values which still lead rural people to reproduce might be encouraged in those who no longer make their living from the land.

It is no doubt quite true as Dr. McCleary implies that the first step in gaining serious consideration for the revision of attitudes towards the birth rate in the Western lands is to show the consequences in terms of their national existence of following their present *laissez faire* policy

and thus to convince the people that they must adopt some definite population policy. But when this is done it remains to choose between policies and then to put the one chosen into effect. Both the choice of policy and the means of effecting it must in the long run come from the informed public in any democratic system. We do not know whether child allowances and public health work and subsidized housing and marriage loans and other devices now being tried out in various countries can effect a higher birth rate. Dr. McCleary recognizes this and the tone of his plea is not too hopeful. But he is undoubtedly right in urging that as a first step we gather more information and make the facts known since this is the only way in which we can develop democratic opinion on a matter of high policy. What he does not seem to recognize is that in a democratic culture the mere spread of knowledge and discussion is not likely to effect any considerable change in personal attitudes towards raising three or four, instead of one or two, children unless the mass of the people are shown where they will get some personal return, psychical as well as economic, out of their families. I do not question that economic conditions play an important role in the moulding of personal attitudes towards the size of one's family but I do not believe that economic values are the only values which determine our conduct in the matter of raising children. Dr. McCleary's discussion adds almost nothing to our understanding of these other values.

In spite of this shortcoming I would like to see this book widely read. It poses a problem of prime importance to all of us and we shall never make any headway in its solution until we recognize it as a problem and begin to discuss it on the basis of fact.

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