

The Sham of the Cities

Toward a National Urban Policy

edited by Daniel P. Moynihan

Basic Books, \$7.95

Now as the responsible editor that I am, I must caution my fellow students against leaping impulsively into Banfield. Bearing in mind the warm bath of platitude and fatuity which our professors have prepared for the discussion of social problems, an unconditioned reading of Banfield would be like a reckless plunge into icewater—it could place a perilous strain on one's system. Thankfully, *Toward a National Urban Policy*, edited by Daniel P. Moynihan, will acclimate students for Banfield.

It is an admirable collection of essays embracing every aspect of urban life. Population trends, housing, crime and the problems of local government are but some of the subjects discussed in the book's twenty-five essays—though not all the essays are of symmetrical quality, and some are redundant.

There is the ever-engaging Mr. Moynihan, who writes poignantly about the hysterical rhetoric of "crisis," and the lingering "Themes in Urban Experience" of violence, migration, wealth (relatively speaking, everyone's), mobility, intellectual disdain and ugliness. Moynihan discusses the ambiguous patrimony of technology, which brings us more rapid personal transportation, more comfortable housing, dilated opportunity...pollution. Sounding—in his preliminary essay—many of Banfield's contentions, Moynihan disagrees with Banfield on others. He exhorts Americans to develop a "national urban policy," for "ought not the vast efforts to control the situation of the present, be at least informed by some sense of goals for the future?" As always Moynihan is provocative.

Another first-rate essay in this collection is that of James Q. Wilson, whose clinical analysis of urban crime will both silence the shrieks of those crime fighters whose comfort depends on evermore lush governmental subsidies, and agonize the thalidomide intellectuals, who from their sanctuaries at Berkeley or Ann Arbor or his own Harvard, are eternally confusing the criminal with the criminal's victim and playing make-believe with the lives of urban folk. Wilson's essay is a masterful composition of profundity and compactness, eloquence and good sense. He is about the soundest student of urban crime and crime prevention writing from the campuses today. And if you doubt my claims to his intelligence, I refer you to *The New York Review of Books*, 5 November 1970, where his latest book (*Varieties of Police Behavior*, Atheneum) brought tears to the eyes and water to the pen of that iron-jowled realist, Mr. Murray Kempton.

As always Nathan Glazer and Martin Meyerson are thoughtful and engaging. But as I said at the outset, this collection has just enough cool revisionist thought to stimulate serious students, while its

discussion of poverty, education, racism and economics is warmed by the familiar academic nonsense which suffuses so many classrooms and editorial tabernacles these days.

Take Lee Rainwater's essay, "Poverty in the United States." In discussing the reality of American poverty, he admirably refrains from *The New Republic* editorialists' technique of going for the reader's funny bone, and instead intelligently concludes that "what is called poverty in the United States is a relative matter—relative to time and place and how well off the rest of the population is—and not a question of some absolute level of subsistence..." which is to say that contrary to the fabulists of poverty, American poverty is a matter of relative deprivation not destitution.

Further he exonerates American capitalism at least by implication in admitting that over the past twenty years the proportion of families who would be considered poor (in absolute terms) has been cut in half. When we lament poverty in America we are not—if we know what we are talking about—lamenting a social injustice; we are remarking on a social problem, or rather congeries of social problems. For what frustrates and perplexes the liberal and the Middle Americano is the lower-class individual's deviant behavior (crime, illegitimacy, disease). Clearly Rainwater knows what he is talking about. But the rub comes over what he is talking for. Rainwater's vision has fixed on *The Solution* to poverty, and as he leads us through his essay his discussion evolves into an argument, thence a screed. Rainwater realizes that the greatest problem with a poverty of relative deprivation is not that babies are suffering the distended bellies of the Ibo, but that "the poor and near poor (lower class) live a life somewhat separated from that of the stable working- and middle-class members of the society." *The Solution* to this separation is socioeconomic "Togetherness"—variously called, in lands across the sea, "socialism and communism." But supposedly everyone lives equally well. The only trouble is that some live a little more well, namely the politicians, bureaucrats and police. And the rest live less well; bureaucracy—as the Russian communists and the British socialists have proven—is ignominiously inefficient.

Now as the British are dismantling their socialistic contraptions and the crafty Russians are quietly switching over to free enterprise, proponents of socialism have a difficult task. And not surprisingly Rainwater's argument becomes a little tacky and even evasive towards the end. He asserts that studies during the Depression found that families in which the husband was not a stable wage earner showed a high incidence of desertion and divorce. Thus he concludes that impoverished families dissolve because of lack of income. Unfortunately more recent studies of slum life in New York discovered that when impoverished families enjoyed income accretions either from welfare or wages, the rate of desertion was even higher. Now I cannot believe Rainwater is unfamiliar with such studies. Rather the author—like the saints

—has beheld a revelation (this time concerning poverty) and is duty-bound to convert us to his brand of swamp root. Unfortunately I fear poverty is more difficult than Rainwater's spirits would have us believe.

Another essay in this collection whose rhetoric will have a familiar smack is Mr. Robert Dentler's "The Challenge of Urban Education in the United States." Early in his essay Dentler states that some of the obstacles to better urban education have been bureaucracy and the inability of school systems to show tolerance for different approaches to teaching.

Several pages later Mr. Dentler spies the answer to improved education: that is, the "gradual emergence of a national coalition pressing for a system of education with relatively uniform standards of excellence but with a high tolerance for different approaches to teaching and learning," which is to say a bureaucracy which does not act like a bureaucracy. Oh well, perhaps Mr. Dentler will find his beautiful beast atop the snowy reaches of the Himalayas.

At any rate this collection will give you a glimpse of an enormously complicated network of problems. If nothing else it will give you an appreciation for the orneriness of urban problems and maybe a sympathy for those who have tried to deal with them in the past.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Mrs. Robinson in '72

The Real Majority

by

Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg

Coward-MacCann, \$7.95

The election of 1970 was preceded by a number of interpretive works on the American electorate. Kevin Phillips articulated the conservative dream in *The Emerging Republican Majority*. Samuel Lubell updated his *Future of American Politics* with a *Crisis of Confidence*. Professor Galbraith asked us *Who needs the Democrats*, and proceeded to sketch his new majority several degrees left of the present national Democratic party. Finally, Richard Scammon, probably the country's foremost psychologist, combines with Ben Wattenberg to set up straight on what really is *The Real Majority*. It has been a remarkably influential book.

The central thesis of the book rests on the premise that if the President is able to wind down the war and relatively stabilize the economy, Presidential elections throughout the coming decade will turn on the "social issue." First discovered by Goldwater and Wallace, the social issue is now the issue on which Middle America will vote, provided one candidate is on the "wrong" side. This social issue embraces drugs, demonstrations, pornography, riots, "kidlash" and crimes. The authors hold that voters will not tolerate a "liberal" on these issues, and will vote against soft candidates—a truth amply demonstrated by Daley in Chicago, Maier in Milwaukee and most notably Stenvig in Minneapolis and Yorty in Los Angeles.

The *Real Majority* we are told is "in

the center of American politics". The authors cite polls which demonstrate conclusively that this center of American politics today wants tougher administrators on campus, a crackdown on crime, pornography and drugs. They admonish their party, "it is the judgement of the authors that the matter in which the Democratic party handles the Social Issue will largely determine how potent a political force the party will be in America in the years to come".

At the same time that Americans are issuing non-negotiable demands on the social issue, the authors conclude that the *Real Majority* clearly favors Medicare, aid to cities, anti-poverty efforts, aid to education and other issues traditionally defined as "liberal." The apparent dichotomy is explained: "the attitudinal center of American politics today involves progressiveism on economic issues and toughness on the 'Social Issue.'" And, as an all pervading corollary, "The party that can hold this center will win the Presidency!"

In a broader context, the author's keep hammering away at certain myths which have become the prevailing wisdom on college campuses. For one, they dismiss the idea that a coalition of the young, the poor, the black and the intellectuals can put together a winning coalition. Rather they see this as a prescription for electoral disaster. Instead they describe the typical American voter (70% of us) as unyoung, unblack, unpoor, and unintellectual, though certainly not stupid. "The average voter is a 47 year old housewife from Dayton, Ohio whose brother-in-law is a cop and who is herself married to a machinist."

They also point out that the popular notion of Robert Kennedy's victory in Gary, uniting hard hats and blacks and thus making him a formidable candidate in a general election, is false. What is formidable is their documentation by polls and precinct data contesting this thesis.

The impact of this book, however, has already been felt far beyond the borders of this review. The scramble of liberal Democrats like Adlai Stevenson (who called Daley's cops storm-troopers in blue and then played for 70% of their votes) to get back to center ground is a lesson to all of us in practical politics. To get elected one must go where the votes are and as Vance Hartke discovered, Indiana wouldn't follow him down his primrose path to permissiveness and retreat. So, around the first of May he started edging toward the center. An American flag appeared on his lapel. He became concerned about that machinist's wife and worried about crime instead of the criminal for a change. He started to "talk tough" after eleven years of voting soft. Then, feeling that the "social issue" was neutralized, he began to run against Nixon's economic policies, a safe stance for any candidate in Indiana this year.

Such rapid movement while setting many track records, was partially successful. The Nixon administration's slogan-deep approach to the same problems left too many liberal Democrats in undeserved good health. The litany of narrow "social issue" slogans showed no

awareness of the broader malaise. Besides its largely unsuccessful venture, to project a positive law and order image, the administration articulated anti-middle-American stands on expanded welfare and suburb busting. It also showed little awareness of the need to demonstrate economic empathy and concern for the machinist's wife who fears her husband may be laid off work. Thus, the issues of 1970 campaign were blurred. Personally, I consider the author's claim--that though the American electorate is upset about crime, pornography and drugs, it will accept liberal economic programming--as rather shallow. Permissiveness, anarchy and amorality did not, after all, come out of thin air. Their emergence has a distinct relationship to the ideology of the sixties. If Republicans would articulate this relationship, liberal Democrats like Hartke and Stevenson would not be allowed to escape their due simply by donning police uniforms, and Ed Muskie would not be allowed to say, as he did on election eve, "We are all against violence and crime . . . so you see there is no "issue."

The media-tinged ads of conservative candidates this year did not try to articulate philosophical strengths. Somehow people were thought to just "know" that the radic-libs were to blame for much of the social unrest. It didn't work, as the election results showed. Perhaps Republicans were following Scammon too closely. For, their "social issue" is too simplistic, too divorced from economics to really be effectively interpreted. In truth, the middle segment of the American population feels itself attacked from every direction. The erosion of traditional values and respect for authority, the decline of patriotism, the rise in welfarism (instead of taxing the few to help the many as the New Deal did, we are now taxing the many to help the few) the attack on neighborhoods by the "intellectual" social planners and the lack of establishment concern for the average worker's job security and economic well-being, are all part of a more broad "socio-economic issue." Thus, this estrangement from government goes far beyond softness on crime.

Congressman Bill Cramer ran a hard-line law and order campaign in Florida, but was beaten by an unknown who cut beneath the slogans, walked the length of the state talking with troubled Floridians about their problems, and voiced concern over the broader "socio-economic" issue, not just the narrower "tough on crime" approach recommended by Messrs. Scammon and Wattenberg.

Finally, the election results can hardly be interpreted as a liberal left resurgence. Remember that even Hartke was getting tough on crime. Thus, the political center was shifted a bit to the right as the liberals moved toward more hard-line stands. This phenomenon, in itself, is a victory over the radic-libs. The *Real Majority* is still waiting to be found. The authors vainly attempt to tie it up in a "social issue" which can be neutralized by tough talk, and then let economics and personalities predominate. But, as the authors suggest, "the average voter is not stupid."

We conservatives are not helping our-

selves by becoming entangled in the web of social confusion. The materialism, permissiveness and economic precursors to the social unrest of the seventies, should not be forgotten. We cannot afford to let it be in 1972 when the stakes will be much higher than there were in 1970. Perhaps by then the *Real Majority* will have been provided a substantive program instead of "tough talk" for their malaise.

Tom Davis

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Death and Transcription

The Assassination of John F. Kennedy: The Reasons Why

by Albert H. Newman

Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., \$10.00

How many times did we read or hear it? Oswald was a nut who was driven to assassinate Kennedy by the climate of hate in the South. Or, Oswald was an irrational man; who else would first try to assassinate General Walker (a right-wing extremist) and then kill Kennedy? Yet, in fact, a few days after the assassination, it was known that Oswald had close ties with Marxism and Cuba. But your friendly next door liberal would claim that Oswald was mentally deranged because he tried to assassinate two such different people. However, at last there is some solid material to answer the myths.

In *The Assassination of John F. Kennedy: The Reasons Why*, Mr. Newman has shown that Oswald, far from being irrational or a nut, was a capable man devoted to an ideology. He assassinated Kennedy, shot at General Walker, and once threatened Richard Nixon (three men of very different politics), because they all shared a hard-line position on Cuba. Mr. Newman also gives a reasonable explanation for the Tippit shooting. His theory is that Oswald planned to assassinate Walker right after Kennedy. He went home to get a gun and was in fact waiting for a bus to the Central Transfer Point (from which he could board another bus taking him within a block and a half of General Walker's home), when Tippit accosted him and was shot.

Over half the book is a chronology of Oswald from 1959 until his death. While this is certainly interesting, it is, I think, somewhat out of balance with the first and last parts of the book, inasmuch as the chronology here is so detailed as to be of concern only to an expert.

In the last section of the book Mr. Newman analyzes the complexities of the assassination itself. He offers many theories, in addition to giving the key testimonies of the eye-witnesses. Their testimonies conflict violently at times, especially as to the number of shots fired. Mr. Newman himself subscribes to the "one-bullet" theory--that is, one bullet hit Kennedy and Connolly; a second bullet hit Kennedy alone, and a third one missed. But he adds a new wrinkle: he believes the