

BOOK NOTES

CAROLE JEAN

These books on family-related topics are recent additions to the Institute's Family Information Centre. They are available through Libraries, through the Family Information Centre via the Inter Library Loan system, or for purchase from good book shops. Prices are given as and when supplied.

Trial and Error: A Review of UK Child Support Policy,

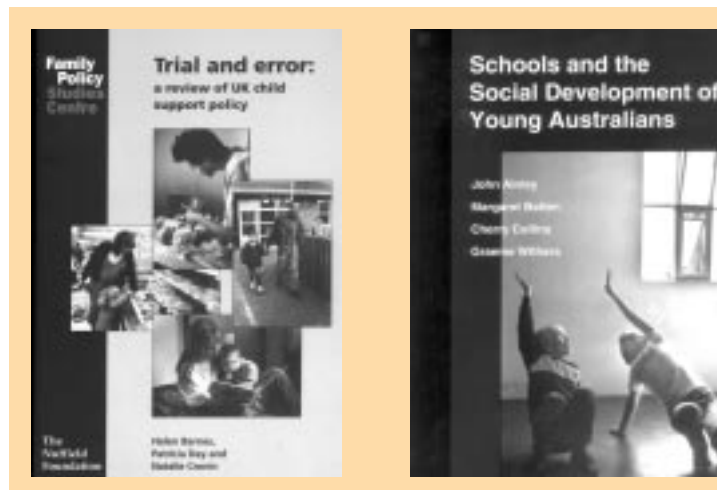
Helen Barnes, Patricia Day and Natalie Cronin, Family Policy Studies Centre, London, 1998. Price: UK 9.95.

This report critically examines the British Child Support Act and the formation of the Child Support Agency. It begins by explaining the background to the introduction of the Act, including the political philosophies current at the time, overviews of official reports, and excerpts from interviews with the key players (both politicians and civil servants). Discussion is given to examples of child support systems in other countries which existed at the time of the introduction of the British Act. The countries discussed include Australia, the United States, France, Germany, Norway and Sweden. The authors argue that insufficient investigation was undertaken into alternative systems of child support before the British system was created, and that if a more thorough investigation had been performed, some of the current problems of the British system could have been foreseen and therefore avoided. Suggestions are given for how the British system can be reformed and enhanced, through better enforcement of child support payments, streamlining administration of the system, marketing the child support policy, and improving client and public perceptions of fairness. The authors conclude that the problems associated with Britain's child support policy can give valuable lessons for public policy making in general. This report will make interesting reading for those interested in family law and child support, policy makers, and students of public policy.

Schools and the Social Development of Young Australians,

by John Ainley, Margaret Batten, Cherry Collins and Graeme Withers, ACER, Camberwell, 1998. Price: \$29.95

In our society schools play a much broader role than simply producing educational outcomes for students. This book is the result of a national sample study which reports on how social objectives are being pursued and achieved in Australia's primary and secondary schools.



Six social objectives were identified: how students relate to others; their commitment to community wellbeing; conformity to rules and conventions; interest in learning; self-confidence; and optimism about the future. Over 10,000 members of school communities, including Principals, teachers and students (in Years 5 and 10) were surveyed. Individual chapters are devoted to each of the six social objectives, with discussion on what school programs or courses are in place to teach the objectives, teachers' and principals' views, and student responses to questions relating to the objectives. Analysis and discussion is also devoted to the variations in responses among students and teachers according to their gender and social background, as well as differences in the characteristics of the schools. The detail of the report, as well as the clarity of its presentation, make it important reading for anyone involved in education. A detailed bibliography is included as are appendices which provide details of the survey and the questionnaire given to the secondary students.

The Sociology of Social Problems: Theoretical Perspectives and Methods of Intervention,

by Adam Jamrozik and Luisa Nocella, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998. Price: \$34.95

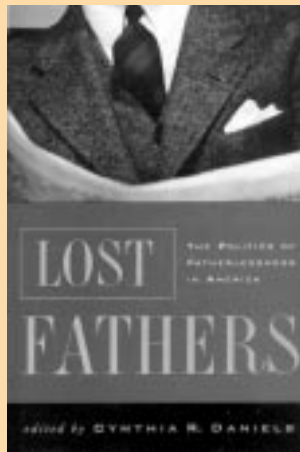
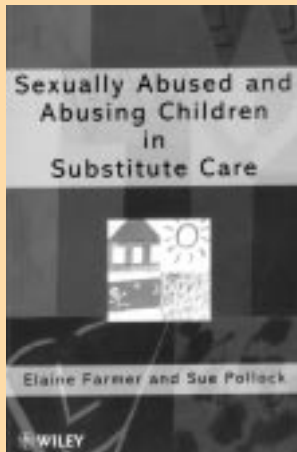
This book examines how social problems occur, how they impact upon society, and how society attempts to solve them. It is written from a theoretical rather than a practical perspective, and is intended as a text

for professionals and university students. The authors define a social problem as an issue that must fit into the following criteria: the problem must have an identifiable societal origin; it must be, or be perceived to be, a threat to values or interests; and it must be amenable to some type of alleviation or solution. Chapters cover: theoretical and contemporary perspectives on social problems; methods of intervention; the social actors involved in social problems; contemporary social problems (including unemployment, welfare and the environment); the social construction of family problems; and social order. A detailed index and bibliography is included.

Sexually Abused and Abusing Children in Substitute Care,

by Elaine Farmer and Sue Pollock, Wiley, Chichester, 1998.

Commissioned by the British Department of Health, this study examines how sexually abused and abusing children are managed in substitute care. The basis of the study is 250 case files of both sexually abused and abusing children in care, as well as non-abused children in care. A further component consisted of in-depth interviews with children in care, their social workers and carers. The main aim of the study was to identify the specific needs of these children (and their carers), so that the best possible outcomes could be achieved for them. Part One gives an overview of the existing literature in this area (which was found to be more practice-based than research-based), and details of



the study's methodology. Part Two examines the characteristics of the two groups of children, for example their family background and reasons for them coming into care. Relevant details of the professionals and carers working with the children, for example levels of qualification and experience, are also described. The management and care of the children is discussed in Part Three. The authors argue that there needs to be a greater emphasis on planning and preparation of carers before children who have either been abused, or who are abusing, are placed in institutional or foster care. The provision of therapeutic interventions for the children is also stressed. The report makes valuable reading for anyone concerned with child protection and child welfare, whether from a professional or policy-making viewpoint.

Community Health and Wellness: A Sociological Approach, by Anne McMurray, Mosby, Sydney, 1999. Price: \$52.95.

This Australian text is aimed at students in the health sciences field as well as health care professionals. It focuses on the concept of community health, which involves people working together to develop their community in a way that will allow positive health outcomes to be achieved. Health professionals play a role in this as they act as facilitators to create and sustain healthy communities. The text is divided into four sections. Part One examines public health, community health and community development, primary

health care, epidemiology and sustainable health. Part Two looks at the health of different groups in society (for example Aboriginal people), as well as health during the life cycle. Health promotion is the focus of Part Three which discusses different models of health education and health promotion, as well as the necessity for creating healthy workplaces and schools. Part Four looks at the broader aspects of community health, for example health care systems and the role of health care research in informing health policy and practices. Examples of health policies, such as occupational health and safety, environmental health, and mental health are also examined. Each chapter contains questions for further research or reflection as well as a list of readings.

Lost Fathers: The Politics of Fatherlessness in America, edited by Cynthia R. Daniels, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1998. Price: \$44.95.

The role of fathers in families, and conversely the effects of fatherlessness on families, has come under increasing scrutiny from the media, politicians and researchers. The nine papers in this collection, (originally presented to a conference held at Rutgers University in 1996) address these issues from varying perspectives. Individual papers examine the topics of the history and politics of fatherlessness; the decline of fatherhood in American society; the 'fatherhood' movement; the effects on children on growing up in a fatherless family; father myths and single mothers in

poor America; the absent black father; and teenage mothers. The papers should make fascinating reading for students, academics and anyone with an interest in fatherhood.

Young Adult Women, Work and Family: Living a Contradiction, by Ian Proctor and Maureen Padfield, Mansell, London, 1998. Price: UK 50.00.

This investigation into the work and family lives of young women in Britain in the early 1990s is based on a series of interviews with 79 young women aged between 18 and 27, approximately two-thirds of whom were single, childless and employed full-time; the remaining one-third were young mothers, who were either not in the labour force, or working part-time. The authors focus on the issues that are confronting young women in the 1990s with regard to choices about work and family. The first two chapters give a general introduction to the study, including details of the sample and research process. Chapters three to five examine the women between the time they finished education and the beginning of the research period. The authors discuss the differences in the labour market experiences of those who are single, compared to those who became mothers. In general, it was found that the young mothers group had received little vocational education and tended to be employed in low skilled jobs. The final chapters look at the future prospects of the two groups. While it was found that the single, childless women had a serious commitment to work,

the majority of the young mothers, while currently committing themselves to family responsibilities, were actively planning future employment careers. Discussion is also given as to whether womens' aspirations are the main guiding factor in their lives, or whether changing circumstances, such as job loss, forming a relationship or having a child, can lead to the readjustment of these aspirations. This book is extremely detailed in its scope and presentation of its data. A substantial list of references is included.

Dreams in the Shadows: Vietnamese-Australian Lives in Transition, by Mandy

Thomas, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1999. Price: \$35.00

This book is an account of the experiences of Vietnamese-Australians. As Professor Bruce Kapferer of James Cook University says in his Foreword: 'This is not merely the study of the cultural formations of a particular immigrant community and how its members break with their past or struggle to re-establish themselves in the context of often turbulent memories, but also a portrayal through immigrant eyes of the new realities they have entered and which play a role in immigrant social and cultural creation.' The book begins by discussing the context of Vietnamese migration to Australia, the origins of Vietnamese refugees and the establishment of Vietnamese 'communities' in Australia. This is followed by discussions on the meaning of 'home' for Vietnamese-Australians; family life (including intergenerational relations between grandparents, parents and children); ghetto-isation and marginalisation within Australian cities; occupation and class; Vietnamese-Australian women; and ties with their Vietnamese homeland. The text is interspersed with comments from the many Vietnamese-Australians interviewed by the author which illustrate statements made throughout the text. A detailed list of references is included. This book would make valuable reading for anyone specifically interested in Vietnamese migration to Australia or multicultural issues in general.

Carole Jean is the Reference Librarian in the Institute's Family Information Centre.