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Rethinking Orphanages for the 21st Century. Richard B. McKenzie
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Book Notes

Richard B. McKenzie (Ed.), *Rethinking Orphanages for the 21st Century*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999. \$72.00 hardcover, \$34.95 papercover.

In 1994, Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, attracted considerable media and public attention by proposing that residential care facilities be more widely used to care for the children of welfare mothers. He claimed that these children would be far better served at facilities such as Boy's Town which, he noted, had an impeccable record of caring for needy children. The furor which greeted the Speaker's proposal has since dissipated but, as this book reveals, the debate on the merits of residential or congregate care (as it is known) has hardly ended. Indeed, it has serious advocates who believe that residential services offer a viable alternative to current child welfare policies that emphasize the use of foster care as an interim step towards family reunification.

Richard McKenzie, the editor of this collection, is a professor of Management at the University of California at Irvine. He was himself raised in a residential care facility in a rural area of North Carolina. His own positive experience frames the discussion but, to support the case for residential care, he has assembled a group of experts to review different aspects of the issue. Their conclusions run contrary to established wisdom in the field. Two researchers, Conna Craig and Derek Herbert, believe that the problems facing the nation's child welfare system can be largely attributed to the futile attempt to promote family preservation. Estella Moriaty, a federal judge with child welfare experience supports this view. Marvin Olasky reviews the history of residential care and concludes that its achievements have been maligned. Margaret Wright examines the role of residential care in promoting positive work habits but notes that child labor laws have impeded the ability of residential facilities to use children to carry out the chores needed to operate these institutions. As MacKenzie notes, the costs of residential care could be greatly reduced if these laws could be relaxed.

These and other chapters in this book offer a provocative case for the return of residential care as a primary instrument of child welfare policy. However, it is unlikely that this proposal will gather much support either in professional or political circles. While simple solutions to very complex problems were once greeted with acclaim, there is greater recognition today that no single, apparently straightforward remedy to perplexing social issues can be found. Residential services have an obvious role to play in a complex, multifaceted child welfare service system but they are not the panacea to the difficult challenges it faces.

John Macnicol, *The Politics of Retirement in Britain, 1878–1948*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. \$74.95 hardcover.

In 1942, at the height of the Second World War, the British government published a document proposing the creation of a comprehensive, national social security system. The document, which subsequently became known as the Beveridge Report, attracted widespread attention and was hailed for its visionary proposals to eradicate poverty, ignorance and disease. Its appeal was understandable. After the privations of the Great Depression and the death and destruction of the war, it offered the hope of a new society from which social need, deprivation and injustice would be banished.

Although the Beveridge Report laid the foundation for the post-War expansion of the British welfare state, it was not, as Macnicol demonstrates, the result of a flash of utopian inspiration but rather of many decades of intense political struggle to introduce state funded retirement provisions. The struggle reflected the activities of which different interests groups who campaigned around issues of poverty, aging and dependence. The struggle also reflected changing demographic, social and economic realities which changed the way elderly people participated in economic and social life. While the impact of the Beveridge report should not be underestimated, it was not as revolutionary as many historians have suggested but rather an attempt by the state to accommodate diverse and complex social forces.

This detailed and readable account of the history of state funded retirement pensions in Britain in the 70 or so years preceding the Beveridge report shows once again how deeply issues