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## Book Review of *Abortion and Public Policy*

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# Book

## Review

### Review by

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There is an obvious, ever increasing barrage of propaganda being thrust at the American public via lay journals, television, etc., by elements of our population who disregard the sacredness of human life in advocating liberalization of abortion laws. In view of this, booklets such as *Abortion and Public Policy* by the well-known Catholic writer, Mr. Russell B. Shaw, are particularly welcome and timely. His views concur with the majority of both Catholics and non-Catholics who adhere to Judeo-Christian principles in recognizing the sacredness of human life — whether this existence be in-utero or in infancy, at which times dependence upon others is necessary for survival, or if this existence be critically dependent on others in later life because of infirmity from illness or old age.

In the introduction of this book the author points out some of the factors that have evoked recent pressures on behalf of liberalizing abortion laws. These include an increase in illegitimate pregnancies, the failure of contraceptives to prevent an unwanted child, and the recourse of some women to "illegal abortionists." The thalidomide tragedy and complications of rubella in early pregnancy have also focused attention on these laws.

The second chapter "Abortion and the Law" includes a review of the proposals in the section on abortion in the "Model Penal Code," and effectively enumerates and elucidates the chief legal and constitutional objections to these proposals.

In the next section we see how medical indications for abortion are no longer considered valid, since improved medical care permits us to give the expectant mother a much better prognosis than would a potentially hazardous abortion. If any valid objection to the content of this book can be made, it might well be that Mr. Shaw should have omitted a quotation in this chapter which suggests a casual relationship between induced abortion and "cancerous growths," this being, to my knowledge, statistically untenable.

The following section convincingly refutes arguments in favor of abortions on psychiatric grounds, pointing out that the termination of the pregnancy in a mentally ill patient may compound her emotional problems.

After reviewing statistics on and problems resulting from "legal" abortions in Japan, Sweden, and Hungary, the author concludes with the chapter on "Abortion and Christian Tradition."

The list of references which follows this concise, scholarly presentation of the case against induced abortion comprises an excellent bibliography.

ABORTION AND PUBLIC POLICY

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