

# philippine studies

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## **Catholic and Censorship: Catholic Viewpoint on Censorship**

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rank the third major export category, with a promising future for greater expansion. The processing or refinement of agricultural and mineral products must be undertaken, the report recommends, to exploit more fully the advantages of this export group.

Discussion on the various economic indicators are taken up in the second part of the report. Actual performance is viewed against the requirements necessary to realize the "Development Decade" as sponsored by the United Nations. A very rapid population increase is noted among the various countries of the region. This has been accompanied by a very slow growth of agricultural production and a modest expansion in mining activities and power development. Cash crops of the region have shown widely fluctuating growths due to the combined effects of bad weather and adverse changes in export markets. The only sunny spot in the 1962 economic horizons of the region is the high rate in industrial growth. Japan leads with a growth rate of 16 per cent during the first half of 1962 and the rest of the region registers a 10 per cent improvement. However, monetary and financial statistics show the existence of inflationary pressures of varying degrees. The various causal factors are indicated and the broad outlines of recommended measures are suggested to contain the pressure within tolerable limits.

The various countries of the region have already shown the energy and the desire to improve their standard of living as demonstrated by their development plans. It is noteworthy that greater consciousness and reliance have been placed on such plans. The Commission anticipates that many of the countries will encounter not only disappointments in the realization of their development goals but also setbacks that will test the resiliency and adaptability of their economies. But with increasing knowledge from the people within the region in addition to the help that the advanced countries may extend, there seems to be no room for pessimism in the execution and fulfillment of the desired goals.

Numerous analytical tables and statistics covering all the economic indicators of the region are appended to the body of the report and this facet of the report makes country by country comparison very useful and interesting. The various economists of the different countries covered by the report will find this survey report of Asia and the Far East for 1962 very helpful and enlightening in the exercise of their profession.

EUGENIO NIERRAS, JR.

## CATHOLICS AND CENSORSHIP

CATHOLIC VIEWPOINT ON CENSORSHIP. By Harold C. Gardiner, S.J. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Image Book, 1961. Rev. ed.

The 1961 revised edition of Fr. Gardiner's *Catholic Viewpoint on Censorship* should be read by anyone interested in the problems that hover about censorship. In clearly reasoned chapters the first half of the book presents the Church's position on Authority, Freedom, and Coercion, in relation to censorship. Even for those who most disagree with this position, Fr. Gardiner's logical and reasonable explanation will be of great value.

The second half of the book deals with the Legion of Decency and the National Office for Decent Literature (N.O.D.L.) in terms of the controversies which these organizations have caused in the United States. Fr. Gardiner clarifies the position of these two groups and defends them against their critics.

For the Philippines the first part of the book has great relevance since it enumerates general principles and shows some aspects of the censorship problem which Catholics particularly are likely to ignore. For example, Fr. Gardiner agrees with the founders of the Legion of Decency that state censorship is undesirable. Here where state censorship of movies holds sway, his cautions about such censorship can be weighed with great profit.

The second half of the book offers less of value for the Philippines. Although we use the Legion of Decency lists, there seems to be far less controversy about the organization, perhaps because it does not exercise much influence on any but zealous Catholics.

On the negative side, I would criticize the book on the following points. First, Fr. Gardiner speaks of the Church's viewpoint without making it sufficiently clear that in its practical conclusions this viewpoint is subject to change. As was evident in the recent session of the Council, there are some voices raised in favor of the abolition of the Index. It would have expanded the value of the book had Fr. Gardiner chosen to add a chapter explaining the reasons why even good Catholics can oppose any form of censorship.

In my opinion, Fr. Gardiner does not give enough weight to the historical reasons why many men of good will fear every type of censorship and why this fear has led in some instances to a false exaggeration of man's freedom of expression. History shows censorship so often the instrument of tyranny that many sincere men would rather put up with other serious abuses than endanger freedom of speech and expression. "Let the condemnation and punishment follow the publication" can be subscribed to for very good motives, and fear of censorship particularly by a religious group is not an unfounded fear. Fr. Gardiner does not embrace pre-censorship nor any real censorship of movies but he does not seem sufficiently aware of the motives for fear that opponents of any type of censorship (even the appearance of censorship) justly entertain. In the Philippines the dangers latent

in any form of censorship are perhaps even more real and in need of close attention.

Fr. Gardiner underestimates the actual coercive power of the N.O.D.L. in the United States. It is well enough to say that the N.O.D.L. is not responsible for the zealots, but some Catholics do use the N.O.D.L. as an excuse for coercive measures. A question which needs more discussion is whether or not the very nature of the N.O.D.L. activity tends towards such coercion.

Finally, Fr. Gardiner does not touch what seems an important problem with relation to the Legion of Decency. I believe that an informed Catholic has every right to disagree with a rating given by the Legion. Its lists are guides. Sometimes a movie rated B (objectionable in part) receives much praise from recognized dramatic critics. To insist that a Catholic refrain from seeing it when he can be morally certain that the movie will not harm him, or to create such an atmosphere that by seeing it he seems to do evil in the eyes of other Catholics, is harmful and an unnecessary curtailment of his freedom. This problem seems pinpointed by such critics as William Mooring (who appears in some American Catholic papers). Mr. Mooring uses stars to indicate his dramatic evaluation of a movie and often enough two or three stars mark a B movie. I believe that the Legion should do more to insist that the printed ratings are Guides and not absolute moral ratings. Especially in the question of B movies, where the board of reviewers itself may have been closely divided between an A IV and a B rating, freedom should be indicated; and the Legion promise to avoid theaters that regularly show objectionable movies should be explained as applying only to theaters that frequently show C movies.

As can be seen, most of my negative criticism of this book but expresses a regret that Fr. Gardiner did not discuss other related questions. The book merits the attention of everyone who wishes to speak intelligently about censorship. It well deserves the praise given it by Morris L. Ernst, Director Emeritus of the American Civil Liberties Union, (the organization which has been most opposed to the activities of the Legion of Decency and the N.O.D.L.): "This volume is, in my sober judgment, the single greatest contribution to the problem of censorship over the past decades."

JOSEPH P. DEL TUFO

## NEW MORAL APPROACH TO BUSINESS

ETHICS IN BUSINESS. By Thomas M. Garrett, S.J. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963. 181 pp.