

August 2015

Book Review: Narcotics and Drug Abuse; By Samuel F. Levine

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Recommended Citation

Royko, Raymond T. (1974) "Book Review: Narcotics and Drug Abuse; By Samuel F. Levine," *Akron Law Review*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 2 , Article 8.

Available at: <http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/akronlawreview/vol7/iss2/8>

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BOOK REVIEW

NARCOTICS AND DRUG ABUSE:

By SAMUEL F. LEVINE

The W. H. Anderson Company, Cincinnati, 1973. Pp. 438.

ONE OF THE MOST urgent school problems of the early 1970's has little to do with formal education or the old-fashioned triad of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Instead, the key words are "uppers," "downers," "grass," and "smack"—amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana and heroin, and there has been a steady decline of the age at which youngsters are introduced to them on what is known as the drug scene. In July, 1969, President Nixon called attention to the rise by almost 800% of juvenile drug arrests and stated that "within the last decade the abuse of drugs has grown from essentially a police problem into a national threat to millions of Americans."

Narcotics and Drug Abuse by Samuel F. Levine reiterates this warning of over-simplifying the problem by considering narcotic and drug addiction as only a law enforcement problem. It is obviously the primary concern of law enforcement professionals, but the author realizes that it is also the concern of other professionals as well, *i.e.*, those of the rehabilitative, preventive, social and behavioral sciences. Although geared to the student of criminal justice this work takes a multi-directional approach to the problem.

In gaining an understanding of the multi-dimensional aspects of the drug problem it is necessary to be acquainted with the drugs themselves—their nature, properties, uses, effects, and long-term consequences. Heroin, morphine, barbiturates, amphetamines, and hallucinogens all act upon the central nervous system, but there is no simple, reliable cause and effect relationship between a given drug and behavior which may result from its use. When properly used these drugs have a significant usefulness in the practice of medicine. The real problem then, is not necessarily the drug itself but its misuse and the people who use it.

In response to the President's message, Congress passed the Controlled Substances Act which covers all known narcotic and dangerous drugs and provides a different treatment scheme for each general type of drug in relation to its dangerous potentialities. It likewise provides for graduated penalties according to the relative danger inherent in each type of drug controlled. Furthermore, the law distinguishes between the addict, user, and trafficker, and provides severe penalties for other violators. This law will perhaps inhibit judges from embarking on personal crusades

against narcotic offenders determined to use anti-tank howitzers to kill mosquitoes. This reviewer believes the Act should receive wide praise for its stringency in attacking the suppliers and distributors of narcotics in addition to halting the aforementioned methods of judicial overkill.

In order for this law to be totally effective, Mr. Levine feels that the individual states will have to enact similar legislation to prevent drug abuse through law enforcement, rehabilitation and education. According to the author enforcement of drug laws at the state level is far from uniform and such lack of uniformity greatly impairs efforts to stop the drug flow. To expect the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs to acquire the ability to solve the drug abuse problem is simply unrealistic. Local communities must assume more responsibility in establishing a total commitment to combating the drug enforcement problem. To achieve an efficient level of enforcement the local police authorities should develop programs oriented toward eliminating the desire and opportunity to use and sell dangerous drugs. The author realizes, however, that no police organization has all the tools necessary to implement a totally successful program proposed to eliminate the desire to use drugs. Obviously, the psychological and sociological conditions which lead to dangerous drug abuse are beyond the ability of law enforcement resources to rectify. Yet, local police departments do have the responsibility to reduce the inclination to abuse drugs. The suggestions offered by Mr. Levine are both coercive and remedial—increase the probability that dangerous drug users will be apprehended, and implement educational programs and encourage development of treatment facilities.

The method best suited to reduce the opportunity to use drugs illegally is to eliminate the supply at all points of manufacture, process, entry importation and distribution. It is therefore believed essential that the law enforcement officers comprehend the methods employed to smuggle narcotics into the country. Although the United States does not grow nor cultivate the poppy, it is the prime market for opium and its derivative—heroin—which arrives through highly detailed circuitous routes from Europe, South America and Asia. Large business-like organizations are responsible for much of the illicit drug traffic in the United States and many of the leaders of those groups (who recently seem to be glamorized by many novelists) are ethnic French Corsicans and ethnic Italians who maintain close ties with their countrymen in Europe. To illustrate the enormous profit involved in such operations the author of *Narcotics and Drug Abuse* furnishes a detailed account of the initial investment through the final return. Three hundred fifty dollars paid to a poppy grower in Asia for 10 kilograms of raw opium can be parlayed into a quarter of a million dollars when sold as a finished product to the addict on the street. Although illicit traffickers take enormous risks to import, often by brilliantly devious methods, there is seldom a shortage of entrepreneurs.

The main thrust of Mr. Levine's endeavor is directed with considerable toil and research, toward amplifying methods to develop the legally valid prosecutable case: effective case development. By specifically training law enforcement officers in the proper use of information gathering techniques, surveillance methods, investigative procedures, interviewing techniques, undercover agents, informants, field tests and abuser identification the narcotics case can be effectively developed from initiation to conviction. The instructions offered to law enforcement officers in all of these procedures is imparted in a lucidly sagacious manner which can be expected considering Mr. Levine's 30 years of experience and expertise in the law enforcement arena.

Addiction is defined by the World Health Organization as a state of periodic or chronic intoxication detrimental to the individual and society, which is characterized by an overwhelming desire to continue taking the drug and obtaining it by any means. This definition combines the two most prevalent views on the nature of drug addiction—that it is both a crime and a disease.

It is a crime, but is addiction a victimless crime? The author thinks not. He estimates that there are at least 200,000 heroin users of varying degrees of addiction in the United States (a rather characteristically conservative estimate) and that the cost of crimes committed and associated with addiction is nearly 3 billion dollars annually. Although studies may indicate that the addict was involved in criminal, deviant and anti-social behavior before introduction to drugs, follow-up studies, however, conclude that criminal activity increased after the onset of addiction. Hence is refuted the argument that drug dependency is a victimless crime: everyone is a victim, or at least potentially so. It is interesting to note that although the studies discussed indicate that drugs and criminality share a congruous relationship, they do not establish that drugs are a causative agent of crime.

Since addiction is also now recognized as a disease, drug abuse treatment has blossomed into a billion-dollar national "industry" of its own with an ambiguous clientele and an uncertain product. In the capitalistic tradition, this "industry," born of public perception to crisis, is fiercely competitive. Protagonists of different methods and philosophies—methadone vs. drug-free programs vs. chemotherapy and tell-it-like-it-is vs. scare-'em-to-death advocates—vie for public support. Methadone does not prevent readdiction because the ex-addict is now addicted to methadone. The author feels that many methadone program coordinators tend to mistake this replacement as success and in essence are advocating legalized addiction—obviously not an intelligent long-range solution. He refuses, however, to sell such programs short. If the methadone maintenance program has proper objectives with specified, controlled procedures and adequate evaluation (again, all of which he feels is lacking in most programs) then such a program would receive his overwhelming

support. As for the drug-free therapeutic community approach, such as Synanon, the author is rather skeptical of its potential for success, partially due to the unavailability of accurate statistics and the limited appeal such programs seem to generate to the drug community as a whole.

A major weakness—if it can be called that—in the author's approach is that he expends less than five percent of his time discussing abuse prevention, youth awareness programs, and education. Most authorities believe in education, but beyond that basic premise there is little agreement and the author does little to temper those disagreements. Admittedly, the greatest potential in combating the problem over the long term depends upon educating our youth to respect, not abuse, drugs. The question remains, *how*? The suggested methods are at best general and as a whole, superficial. This reviewer must hasten to add that the topic encompasses a myriad of problems, all of which cannot be given an in-depth analysis in a one-volume text. The materials discussed are in proportion to their relative importance in the field of law enforcement, and emphasis of effective case development over treatment and education can therefore be understood. It is an extensive product developed by a law enforcement official intended for use in combating and understanding the problems of drug abuse by other law enforcement personnel as well as all students of the American system of criminal justice. To that end the author has succeeded. The weaknesses observed can be anticipated; no one to date has designed totally effective treatment procedures nor devised absolutely effective educational guidelines. This is a problem of national concern and one to which the author demands that society soon respond. It is obviously a law enforcement problem and it is here that the author's expertise is shown and here lies his strength. Yet the efforts to control the problem of narcotics and drug abuse cannot rest with law enforcement agencies alone but must necessarily be based upon a total community commitment. Mr. Levine has done his part; will we?

RAYMOND T. ROYKO