

Frank J. Cavaioli and Salvatore J. LaGumina. *The Peripheral Americans*. (Melbourne, FL: Robert E. Krieger, 1984) xi, 256 pp., \$9.50 paper.

This book is primarily a discussion of foreign ethnic groups who have come to the United States. Perhaps the most striking thing about it is that it is a revision of *The Ethnic Dimension in American Society* (Holbrook Press, Boston, 1974) with the authors' names reversed.

The books are about the same length and cover, in general, the same material, although spot checking shows that most discussions of the groups appear somewhat shortened or at times unchanged as are the chapter-by-chapter bibliographies. The chapter on immigration policy and ethnicity, however, is considerably more detailed in the new version.

Despite the changes, the purpose and the format remain virtually unchanged: that is, to exhibit the diversity in American life and to show that "ethnic diversity has played and continues to play a major role in the weaving of the unique American social fabric."

Negatively, however, the book is not really the sort of study of the various ethnic groups that one might hope for since the usual format is one of general comment followed by long quotations from the "writings of peripheral Americans." For instance, in the section on Filipinos, after a page and a half of general comment, comes over two pages quoted from a sociologist on their assimilation problems. An average length paragraph about Filipinos and marriage is then elaborated on with two full pages of part of an article in *Commonweal*. To this reader, at least, these frequent two and three pagel long quotations would seem to suggest that the authors are not doing their real job — to assimilate raw material and present it in a coherent manner in, primarily, their own words.

Otherwise, *The Peripheral Americans* is an excellent summary of the experiences of ethnic groups in this country from the American Indians to the most recent Asian and Western Hemisphere groups. At times it also makes an eloquent plea for social justice.

A book such as this certainly should be part of the library of any serious student of ethnic affairs because it presents a broad and sufficiently detailed picture of American ethnicity, past and present. Those who own the previous version, on the other hand, might not wish to purchase the revision since the amount of change is not, on the whole, very substantial.

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