

Joseph Rowntree Foundation Press Release
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Britons hungry for change – a new book reveals extent of disillusionment with modern-day society

Deeply distressed by the erosion of trust and culture of fear in our society, a new book documents the public hunger for a new way of living post-recession. *Contemporary Social Evils*, published today (11 June) by The Policy Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, describes the high levels of unease felt by the public as greed, consumerism and individualism have pervaded our way of life.

The book is the culmination of a major two-year consultation among the public and leading commentators to nominate and explore the most destructive social evils affecting us today. The conclusion from participants – including those often excluded from society such as ex-offenders – was an unequivocal call for change.

Speaking in London at the launch of the book, JRF Chief Executive Julia Unwin, said: “I am excited by the appetite to change society for the better, as described in this book. Although the idea of the common good seems to have been lost, there is a real will to reclaim it and bring back the forgotten values of generosity, empathy and kindness.

“People want a new society post-recession, so let’s harness this energy. I strongly urge voluntary and community groups to take up the challenge of rebuilding trust and rediscovering humanity in our models of governance. This is our ‘Yes, we can!’ moment.”

Contemporary Social Evils documents the most pressing evils in our society, as identified by over 3,500 people during a public consultation exercise in 2007. Familiar evils such as drugs and alcohol and crime and violence were nominated, alongside deeper concerns regarding greed and individualism, the decline in values, inequality and the breakdown of family life. In response to the issues raised, the book features a

collection of essays by leading social commentators, from across the political spectrum, who explore the historical and social context behind them and suggest how we can move forward as a society.

In order to encourage further this debate on rethinking societal values, the JRF is supporting Debate Mate's Urban Debate League which will see the issues raised in the book debated by young people in deprived areas across England. For more information go to www.debatemate.com

For more information on the JRF's Social Evils project go to www.jrf.org.uk/social evils

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Notes to Editors

1. The book: *Contemporary Social Evils*, paperback ISBN 978-1-84742-408-2 RRP £17.99/hardback ISBN 978-1-84742-409-9 RRP £60, is published by The Policy Press and is available from all good book stores, and www.policypress.org.uk.
2. Journalists wishing to see a review copy should contact Abigail Scott Paul in the JRF Press Office by emailing abigail.scottpaul@jrf.org.uk or calling 01904 615919.
3. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is one of largest social policy research and development charities in the UK. Working with the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) it aims to influence policy and practice by searching for evidence and demonstrating solutions to help overcome the causes of poverty, disadvantage and social evil. www.jrf.org.uk
4. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust are completely separate from the other two Trusts set up by Joseph Rowntree in 1904; the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) and the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd (JRRT). Further information about each organisation can be found at www.josephrowntree.org.

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