

1936

## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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THORSTEN SELLIN [Ed.]

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LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND CRIME CONTROL. By A. C. *Millspaugh*. xii+259 pp. The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1936. \$2.00.

This volume reviews the findings of research studies on crime control in the United States, and projects them against the general background of local self-government philosophies. While the contrast between the two is so striking as to raise doubts whether programs of functional integration can ever be realized in large measure, there is no mistaking the direction and meaning of the general trend, and the author is encouraged to note that this trend, as a whole, meets the test of rationality. The emphasis of this book is therefore placed on what he terms the strategy of evolution, with adaptation and adjustment to the ends of expediency. He observes that "re-orientation of thinking, perfecting of research, and strengthening of promotive effort are academic exercises unless they lead to official action. Each must look forward to a fairly definite, theoretically sound, practicable step-by-step program of legislation. . . . Each step must be such as to facilitate and expedite the next step. Each move may be something of a compromise; but a temporary compromise should never be permitted to obscure the permanent goal."

Any such scheme of approach requires close coordination be-

tween the parties seeking changes along more rational lines, and on this score the author finds much to criticize. The general student of public administration, while comprehending the whole field of local government in his plans, tends to stress control and economy, strives for coordination, and ends by proposing a centralization of executive authority. On the other hand, the functional specialist is likely to ignore the larger problems of government at each of its several levels, and to concentrate upon his own limited field of governmental service.

The author's concept of the "strategy of evolution" would start with a reconciliation of these two differing viewpoints. His grand conclusion, however, is that "the obstacles in the way of organizing effective crime control cannot be easily or quickly removed—perhaps not removed at all—except as the larger problems of democratic government are advanced toward solution."

In its summary of the results of the many studies which have been conducted for the purpose of developing new governmental relationships in crime control, this volume performs a valuable service. There is a stimulating introduction, which briefly deals with the broader aspects of the whole question.

BRUCE SMITH.

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Administration, New York

**WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE.** By David Lamson. xii+338 pp Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1935. \$2.50.

Behind the grim title of this book a condemned man reveals, in a manner remarkable chiefly for its objectivity, the life of men who count their days in the shadow of San Quentin Prison's gallows.

David Lamson, the author, is a very intelligent young man, a graduate of Stanford University, who, at the time of the tragedy leading to his story, was Manager of the Stanford University Press. On Decoration Day, 1933, his wife, with whom he had apparently been living very happily in their home on the university campus, was found in her bathtub dead of a fractured skull. He was accused of murdering her, and on purely circumstantial evidence, which a Supreme Court judge in reversing the case a year later characterized as a "mere suspicion," he was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to hang. The case will be readily recalled by the reader because of its recency, the sensational nature imparted to it by the press, and the final discharge of Lamson within the past few months.

For thirteen months the author lived in San Quentin Prison on the Condemned Row—the row of thirteen cells where men sentenced to expiate with their lives the crime of murder in California—await the hangman's noose. It is these men whom he describes—not, strangely, as one of them so deeply steeped in his own misfortune that he ob-

serves everything about him with a jaundiced eye, but rather as an analytical observer who interprets what he sees with the human interest of the psychologist and the impartiality of the statistician and discovers that convicts are simply "people" with human emotions, thoughts, and interests and individual differences. He breaks through their disguise of casualness to reveal the tenseness of their circumscribed lives, the maddening monotony of routine that looks to sporadic intrigues, escapes, and outbreaks for occasional relief. His observations are necessarily limited, for they are confined to the minutest part of that great walled Sodom; but he does not pretend to present a comprehensive picture of prison life, being careful to distinguish hearsay from personal experience.

While his postscript of statistics is informative and sheds some light on the prison problem in California at least, which is fairly, typical, Lamson's comments on penology and criminology are merely such as any well informed, intelligently thinking person might make without ever having seen the inside of a prison. These things, however, are only incidental. He is concerned chiefly with stripping the anonymity of numbers from men condemned to die and revealing "people" in all their human intensity. This he does skillfully with an unusual combination of personal involvement and calm detachment.

HENRY C. HILL.

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THE RELATION BETWEEN MORALITY AND INTELLECT. By *Clara Frances Chassell*. 556 pp. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, 1935. \$4.50

This comprehensive study, provided for in part by the Social Science Research Council, begins with the thesis that there is a positive correlation between morality and intellect. In fact, the author says that "so practically unanimous and unequivocal have been the results of inquiries into the mutual relationship of desirable qualities that the principle now appears to be established that correlation and not compensation is the rule." Accepting this statement, the author leaves for herself the task of showing the degree of the positive correlation between morality and intellect.

At the outset she states that the more exact definition of the relation is important both theoretically and practically because it will make possible "a more enlightened public opinion" upon such topics as: race suicide, sterilization of criminals, and emphasis in social work. Furthermore, she says that the more exact answer to her problem "will serve as a guide in the improvement of society through training and eugenics." Thus she hopes to obtain some insight into the relative influence of heredity and environment in determining conduct.

Dr. Chassell painstakingly approaches her problem from three angles, as follows: (1) the relation between delinquency and mental inferiority; (2) the relation between moral and intellectual traits, and (3) the relation between conduct and intelligence.

In her work she reviews practically every study of merit completed in the United States and in numerous foreign countries. She also includes important work of her own. Her research is done with great care and with much critical analysis of each step. In fact, her book is the outstanding compendium on the subject of morality and intelligence.

In each of the three fields of investigation she finds that the preponderant majority of the available studies show a positive correlation between morality and intellect. Consequently, her final conclusion is that "the relation between morality and intellect in restricted groups is clearly direct," and, expressed in terms of correlation she finds it usually falls "between .10 and .39, and the true relation under .50." In the population at large she estimates, by means of a statistical interpretation, a correlation below .70. Thus, Dr. Chassell finds her main thesis unchallenged.

Are these correlations sufficiently high to have much practical meaning? Dr. Chassell provides the answer. Her key to the classification of coefficients of correlation shows coefficients of .10—.39 low, coefficients of .50 well marked, and coefficients of .70 fairly high. Then she cites statisticians who show that these correlations are not sufficiently high for purposes of individual prognosis. Even the prognosis for group behavior is considered by Dr. Chassell to be of moderate value. Furthermore, she recognizes that the positive correlations she has found "do not establish which of the two qualities, morality and intellect, is antecedent and which is consequent." Thus, the relative importance of

heredity and environment in influencing conduct, she states, is not determined by her investigation.

It appears, then, that this able study has contributed little to clarify public opinion upon significant issues and problems, such as sterilization of criminals, listed in her first chapter.

There is reason to believe, however, that Dr. Chassell's correlations may be negligible instead of marked or low. This criticism is directed especially toward her studies of delinquency and mental inferiority.

Dr. Chassell summarized, by the statistically doubtful use of pooled percentages (see Slawson) and equally doubtful coefficients of colligation figured for variates which are continuous (see Pearson) most of the extant studies of the intelligence of criminals and delinquents, but she apparently failed to analyze sufficiently the measures of intellect themselves. This may be a fundamental oversight because the higher age groups have made low scores on mental tests standardized on children under thirteen. About 2 or 3 per cent of children have tested below I. Q. 70 or 75, but relatively high percentages of adults test below these figures. For example, Pintner and Paterson have shown that 7.1 per cent of the thirteen-year-olds among a group of 4,429 persons tested with the early forms of the Binet test were below I. Q. 75 and that 28.0 per cent of the fifteen-year-olds were below I. Q. 75. Again, an analysis of the original data published by Terman when he brought out *The Stanford Revision and Extension of the Binet-Simon Scale for Measuring Intelligence* shows that at age thirteen, 8 per cent fall below I. Q. 76. Again, 30.3 per cent of the

draft army scored below I. Q. 75. Thus it appears that persons age thirteen and above make low scores on intelligence tests which have been, as is the practice, standardized on children—not because they are feebleminded or because they are criminals, but merely because they are near adults and adults.

Since delinquents and criminals are usually age thirteen and above it is possible that they have scored low merely because they are adults and not because they are criminals. If this be the case, Dr. Chassell's correlations would be considerably lowered—enough to become negligible.

Dr. Chassell's own report of results with Army Mental Tests show a negligible or low correlation (page 83). She overlooks this in her conclusions because the preponderance of evidence is otherwise. Perhaps Dr. Chassell considered the standards for adult intelligence based upon Army Mental Tests invalid because the draft was selective-eliminating *high scoring* individuals. But the traditional standard of general intelligence, used by most of the test results summarized by Dr. Chassell is that established by Terman who tested 1,000 *native white California school children from city schools in communities of average social status*. These factors of selection eliminated many *low scoring* persons from the sample and hence raised unduly high the psychological criterion for feeblemindedness. Thus, if one would discard the Army Test Results as a standard of comparison because of selective factors so must one discard standards based upon the Stanford Binet Test or similar tests which correlate with it.

This criticism of the writer, how-

ever, is not to be considered sufficient to invalidate Dr. Chassell's fundamental thesis. It does suggest, however, that the degree of positive correlation, so far as criminality and intellect is concerned, may be negligible instead of low or marked. Without doubt the problem of determining the relation between morality and intellect is a difficult one—as yet not fully solved. Dr. Chassell wisely suggests the need for further research employing, "improved measures and refined statistical procedures, and choosing as subjects large numbers of cases so selected as to form a fair sample of the general population.

To conclude her study, Dr. Chassell quotes from Dr. Terman, an acknowledged leader of the intelligence testing movement in Amer-

ica and one of the originators of the I. Q. criterion for feeble-mindedness who says,

" . . . There are few things more certain than that *some* correlation exists between intelligence and conduct.

"On the other hand, the correlation is not such as to afford much of a basis for predicting that a mentally inferior individual will become delinquent. He may, and indeed is more likely to than the person of average intelligence, but there are far more chances that he will not become delinquent than that he will. Intelligence tests of delinquents are worth while, but they do not carry us very far in the problem with which we are here concerned."

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