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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Alfred R. Lindesmith [Ed.]

THE PRISON COMMUNITY: By *Donald Clemmer*. Boston: Christopher Pub. House, 1940. Pp. xi + 341. \$4.00.

This book is a genuine contribution to the literature of penology. Its argument is based upon its author's experience of nearly a decade of daily contacts with prisoners as Sociologist in the Division of the Criminologist of the Illinois Department of Public Welfare. Much of it is also based upon careful research into such matters as attitudes, ambitions, leisure-time activities, leadership, and social control among inmates in one of the Illinois prisons, and into the "prison culture" generally. It is generally well-written and in places fascinating reading. Though never narrow in its approach this book well illustrates the distinction between a sociological analysis, and one which follows the traditional patterns of the psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker. It contributes to criminological and probably to sociological theory. Yet it is eminently practical. If those responsible for the penal policies in Illinois or in other similar states should read it, appreciate its implications, and—so far as public opinion will allow—implyment them into the administration of prisons instead of sticking to procedures which have so largely failed, a sane experiment in prison community organization in the interest of social protection would be assured. Yet to the reviewer the most distinctive characteristic of the book is its objectivity. No one who, like Mr. Clemmer, has come to understand the processes by which the many types of life's failures which our prisons collect have developed, can fail to appreciate the prisoner's pathetic plight. Clemmer sees bad men as products. Few, also, can have been so long exposed to the ineffectiveness and the occasional cruelties of typical politically appointed prison administrators and guards, without developing animosity to some of them. But Clemmer also sees prison personnel as products. Never does the reader feel that the author has forgotten the need to protect the public, nor that he fails to appre-

ciate the difficult task of managing prisoners. In reading this book we see prisoners as they are, law breakers and often un-social, but a varied lot not so different from exploiters outside of the prison, and always as products. The prison community is revealed in its contrasts and its similarities to the normal community. Moreover, here and there it appears that the prison community not only has its own culture but is a product of American culture. One of the best features of the book is its wealth of illustrations which appear not as selections to prove a thesis, but as evidence which both supports and qualifies the conclusions drawn. The result is not a clear simple characterization of the prison community, but rather emphasis upon its complexity, the wide variety of its inmates, and the difficulty of generalization.

We have space only to mention a few significant findings of this study. The varied types of inmates are revealed as products largely of the culture and the group relations from which they have come. Their general absence of affiliation with normal groups is stressed. In a democracy where men of ambition are esteemed prisoners are shown to be relatively lacking in ambition. "* * * the bulk of the penal population is comprised of awkward, amateurish and occasional offenders," with professionals estimated at less than 20%. The need to know not the objective conditions in prison alone, but prisoner attitudes toward them is illustrated among other ways by showing how "gravy served for five consecutive breakfasts, creates collectively a configuration of attitudes which if ignited by leadership, might precipitate a riot." The baleful influence of politics on ineffective leadership is made evident, though without bitterness toward the politician and with credit awarded to wardens and guards where it is due. An appendix furnishes a 1200 word dictionary of prison argot, and the text classifies these words and shows their sociological significance. We learn of the absence of the use of

Christian names in prison. We see the inmate indulging in much self-reference and addressing himself when he talks to others as he strives to build up his lost social status. We feel inmate emotions as we read their correspondence with relatives and friends. We come to realize what wardens may forget, the seriousness of compelling two men who hate each other to cell together and never be more than six feet apart for the larger part of their prison experience.

A special study of social groups among inmates shows that it is only a minority that belong to real primary groups, and that while there are many instances of loyalty among thieves they are the exception rather than the rule. If prisoners often hate the warden or guards, they also often hate one another. Similarly, while there is a rudimentary prison code approximated by most prisoners, one is impressed rather with the inconsistencies and conflicts in inmate mores. " * * * the mores of prison are in a way characteristic of the mores in the free world; effectiveness is a matter of degree * * *"

A valuable chapter on discipline stresses the fact that guards who administer have as serious personality problems as inmates to whom discipline is administered. The reader comes somewhat to sympathize with the unreasonable or brutal guard, though realizing the serious effects of his unreasonableness or brutality. " * * * by dominance over a helpless group, prison workers are able to tickle their egos and obtain some satisfaction through the power of authority. It is more than amusing to observe a few prison guards who, all through their lives, have been in a subordinate position, loudly command a cowed, helpless inmate to perform such and such an act." Yet it is recognized that many guards do show kindness to prisoners. A mere recital of prison rules is sufficient to reveal their total lack of psychological basis. The reader feels the intensity of the prisoners' hatred for guards and their unscrupulousness, when an inmate opinion is quoted that prisoners would gladly see the auditorium destroyed by fire with a few hundred fellow convicts provided a few officials were also burned.

The most significant observation in an interesting chapter on leisure time and recreation in prison, is the conclusion that socialized instruction in the use of leisure time is more important than formal education and trade training and the other customary apparatus of reform.

An unusual chapter on sexual patterns in the prison culture contains valuable and detailed material. Some critics may feel that it is too frank for student use, but there is great need that this serious problem be understood. The naturalness of the most "unnatural" behavior is made evident. The chapter on the social significance of labor shows the impossibility that such labor prepare generally for work in free society. It makes the important suggestion that "Mass treatment (to increase occupational efficiency and habits of industry) should be supplanted not especially by methods of individualized treatment, but more particularly by treatment directed at small carefully selected groups."

Throughout, the book stresses the importance of the unseen environment, or prison culture, and the need for knowing prisoner attitudes and using the knowledge. The whole prison process is called not assimilation, but prisonization—a process by which different inmates acquire in different degrees the culture of the prison. Those who are most effectively prisonized are most certain to continue in crime, because the prison experience disqualifies them for adjustment on the outside.

Emphasis upon the prison as a community is, of course, not altogether new. Thomas Mott Osborne had the idea without so much scientific basis. More recently Reimer, Tannenbaum, Hayner, and Rasmussen have contributed to the concept. Clemmer's book is, however, unique as the first systematic treatment of the topic, bolstered with a wealth of facts.

It is not difficult to pick minor flaws in this book. There is very occasional misuse of words. In the reviewer's judgment the attempt to relate the analysis of the prison community to sociological theories of the free community adds little to the value of the book. More important the

attitude of the writer toward the prison situation seems almost static. One can share the deterministic philosophy of the author without wholly despairing that some day a more effective prison community may grow out of a somewhat changed general culture. The author is perhaps commendably too modest with respect to the significance of his own book for such a change. If this change comes it will be, the reviewer feels, through the gradual adoption of this very deterministic philosophy. That philosophy seems to be based upon facts, and the truth may yet make us free. Even before the lesson of the book is generally accepted, it is not inconceivable that some progressive warden with the personality of a Thomas Mott Osborne, but better trained in social science than he, may put some of the lessons of *The Prison Community* into effect. At some still later date the logic of facts and leadership may give us a culture which will produce effective prisons as logically as the culture of today still gives us prisons which make bad men worse. To this end an integration of psychological and sociological techniques is needed. In the meantime Clemmer's book shows us further that prisons are good places to keep criminals out of.

DONALD R. TAFT.

University of Illinois.

JUVENILE DELINQUENTS GROWN UP. By Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1940. Pp. 330. \$2.50.

As the title suggests, *Juvenile Delinquents Grown Up* is a research sequel to *One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents*, published by the same authors in 1934. The work is not just a "follow-up" study of the original "1,000 Boys" for it presents new data, an interesting technique in research and an excellent analysis of the process of "Maturation" of juvenile delinquents. In addition, the present volume dissipates the "gloomy" results of *One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents* and the storm of protest which it aroused.

The authors have followed the careers of the original "1,000 Boys" through a

ten year period from where they left them in the earlier book. They ask such questions as, What has happened to the delinquents as they mature? How can changes in conduct during this time be explained? Have social and juridical agencies contributed to the success or failure of the delinquents? What value are prediction methods when applied to juvenile offenders?

The authors succeeded in locating their cases by means of an extensive method of research covering a wide area. After ten years 604 of the boys still lived in Boston, 33 in other cities in Massachusetts, 112 in other states, 93 were in various penal institutions, 8 were in hospitals (6 mental cases), 11 were in the Army or the Navy, 3 were fugitives, 6 in foreign countries, 16 "wandering about," 7 at sea, 11 "whereabouts unknown in part," 60 were dead and 36 were "unknown" throughout the entire period. Between the original and the present study the mean age of the boys advanced from 13.5 to 29 years. By dividing the time analysis into two periods of five years each the authors developed "Trends in Conduct." During the two periods the number of arrests and the amount of crime tended to diminish as the men grew older. Even among those who "remained criminalistic—there was a notable and on the whole favorable change in the character of their offenses." (p. 86.) Of the original 1000 only 109 were classified as "non-delinquent" throughout the period, while 226 were "serious offenders" and 88 "minor offenders." Where a change in conduct occurred it usually took place at 18.8 years of age. The authors, however, warn that "abandonment of criminal conduct does not occur at any specific chronological age-level, but rather after the passage of a certain length of time from the point of first expression of definite delinquent trends." (p. 103.) It is not age but rather the acquisition of a certain degree of "maturation" which determines the change in conduct. Hence the offenders reform when they "have gotten delinquency out of their system." In addition "there are certain qualities of Nature and Nurture, which distinguish the offenders who reformed—from those who continued to commit crimes." (p. 115.) According to

the authors these two factors together with "maturation" explain the reformations. The conclusions naturally lead the authors into an analysis of characteristics of the reformed and the unreformed offenders and ultimately to prediction methods.

From 60 known factors in the lives of the delinquents the authors set up five "Prediction Factors" each with two or four "sub-categories." Following the former they established a "Coefficient of Mean Square Contingency" and after each of the latter a "Percentage Incidence of Serious Criminality." The "Prediction Factors" are (1) Birth Place of Father, (2) Birth Place of Mother, (3) Time Parents were in the United States, (4) Religion of Parents, and (5) Age of Offender at first misbehavior. With the "Factors" and the "sub-categories" they found the "Total Failure Score" for each offender during the time-span. The units on the criminal score ran from 100 to 180 and over. If a boy scored less than 100 he had six chances in 10 of reforming whereas if he made 100-140 he had three and a half chances in ten.

Thus the higher the score the less the opportunity for reformation. Next the authors determined the possibilities of change in conduct under 15 years of age, between 15 and 21 and over twenty-one years. From here they turned to the "Predictive Factors" in relation to Penitentiary treatment, Extra-mural Treatment, Probation, Parole and time in the Army and the Navy. Thereafter, they stressed the application of prediction charts in juvenile courts and added a note of caution. Although prediction charts must be used with great discretion they nevertheless provide the judge with a guide to treatment far more telling than the haphazard method now in use in disposing of cases." (p. 215.)

Chapter XXII contains a number of significant conclusions. (1) By the time the juvenile delinquents reached 29 years of age 40 per cent of them ceased to be criminals. (2) Regardless of age delinquency "runs a fairly steady and predictable course," depending on the general process of "Maturation." (3) Those who reformed "were endowed with a better

heredity and enjoyed a more wholesome early environment than the men who continued to commit crimes." (4) "A prediction table has been evolved—such that a juvenile court judge should be able to determine the probable behavior of different types of offenders—and approximately the age at which changes in their conduct are likely to occur." (5) Social adaptation is more a question of maturation than arrival at a particular age-level. Hence as a person advances through the *criminal age-zone* his chances for criminality become less. In addition to maturation there is a slowing down process in an organism after which the "human being loses some of his energy and aggressiveness." This leads the authors to suggest the possibility of an "M.Q." or "Maturation Quotient," which should be a primary factor in prediction.

In explaining the practical implications of the investigation the authors emphasize the importance of predictive tables in order to aid those offenders who are capable of reform and to incarcerate those who are not. Such a program, however, depends upon more basic factors. "A fundamental need in the administration of criminal justice is the integration, or at least the better articulation of various parts of the present disconnected 'system' of dealing with offenders." Once more the Gluecks have carried out a painstaking task, explained and interpreted their data and pointed the way to a sound program of criminal justice.

WALTER A. LUNDEN.

University of Pittsburgh

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION. By *John M. Pfiffner*. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1940. Pp. 582. \$4.00.

This book is designed primarily as a text and reference book for courses in political science. It realizes its objectives as well as any book of its dimensions may be expected to. Criticisms, primarily of omission, will be parried by the legitimate defense that the design is not encyclopedic.

For this specialized audience, this book is significant in that it places Part III on Protective Functions in a context of a broader range of interdependent func-

tions: public welfare, physical planning, public works, public utilities, cultural activities. Through all of these run problems of integration, control, finance, research, personnel policy, technology and professionalization, and developments in one department are full of implications for problems in another. For example, a section on "Common Characteristics of Institutions," only incidentally concerned with institutions for juvenile delinquents, is significant for the latter in that it touches lightly but succinctly on a series of problems with which all institutions must contend.

In like manner, all administrative departments, from police forces to public school systems, must face problems of adjustment to legal (legislative) and extra-legal or illegal policy-determining agencies. To understand them, we must see governmental functions in a context, not only of other governmental functions, but also of the concentrated and diffuse pressures from multifarious interest groups and the quaint political habits to urban America. Pfiffner is cognizant of this, and he mentions "one large field of municipal activity where an effective administrative procedure has not been developed. This is the problem of controlling vice and the underworld," where efforts are negated by the pay-off and the American propensity to pass sumptuary laws without intending to obey them. This phase of administration has been touched on but not developed to the extent which this reviewer would like. One would like also to suggest a livelier interest in the problems that ecological variation in social characteristics, economic status, population composition, community organization, and political pressures raise for administrative agencies.

Withal, however, it is a remarkably compendious, current and informed survey of the field of municipal administration, and the chapters on Protective Functions have a commendable ratio of high spots hit to pages consumed, though there is no pretense of exhaustive or definitive treatment.

A. COHEN.

Indiana University.

THE BIG CON: THE STORY OF THE CONFIDENCE MAN AND THE CONFIDENCE GAME. By *David W. Maurer*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs Merrill Company, 1940. Pp. 300. \$2.50.

Although Professor Maurer's book is a popular description of the confidence game, it is also scholarly and objective. Besides being immensely informative it is gay and amusing—as gay and amusing as the con men themselves from whom Mr. Maurer obtained his data. The techniques of the big con are faithfully recorded, and are illustrated by means of a series of short stories. Though these stories are not descriptions of actual episodes they are true to the spirit of the profession and they reveal with great effectiveness the way in which con men appeal to the avarice and vanity of the victim—known to them as "sucker," "mark" or "savage." In fact, Mr. Maurer's account seems to us to be superior to most others that we know of, in the sense that it does not treat the technique of the confidence game as a quasi-mystical thing which is beyond the capacity of the average man to understand. The motives and attitudes upon which the existence of the game depends emerge from this account as being all too common and all too human. The two attitudes which appear to be basic are contradictory ones. The initial appeal is to the mark's vanity, to his pride in his honesty and integrity. The final appeal is to the mark's willingness to obtain money by shady or dishonest means. In order to be a good victim the sucker himself must have larceny in his heart. It is hard to cheat an honest man.

According to Maurer the "big con" involves as an essential element the existence of "The big store" against which the "mark" is played. "The big store" is simply a phoney stock broker's office or gambling and betting joint. The big con is distinguished from the "short con" by the fact that in the big con the victim is sent home to raise as much money as he can by selling securities, mortgaging his property and so on, whereas in the short con the aim is the more modest one of relieving the victim of the funds he hap-

pens to have on his person at the time. The three main con games are known as "the wire," "the pay-off" and "the rag." The first two of these have to do with race track betting and gambling; the third has to do with stock market deals.

Maurer's description of the con game as a play in which all of the parts are learned and rehearsed in advance, with the exception of the part played unconsciously by the mark, is an illuminating comparison. The description of the various stages of the game begins with "roping the mark" (making the original contact), and continues when the "mark is steered against the store," and the inside man (who operates the store) along with his assistants "give him the convincer" and work the "part out" on him. The mark is "tied up" and finally relieved of his money. A victim may be so thoroughly taken in that he can immediately be played again. If he becomes angry or suspicious the confidence man has a way of "cooling him off" so that he will go home peacefully without consulting the police. This process is sometimes known as the "blow-off." One of the more interesting devices along these lines is the use of "the cackle bladder," which is simply a bladder filled with a fluid resembling blood. The confidence men stage a quarrel and the one who is supposed to be killed bites the bladder and spits blood all over the place and preferably on the mark, who then believes that he may become involved in a murder scandal and become very anxious to leave.

The account of the history of the big con places it as a twentieth century development. Professor Maurer's account of the evolution of this underworld institution in the culture of the American underworld is, I think, a distinct contribution.

Professor Maurer is a member of the English Department at the University of Louisville and is a specialist in underworld argot. His book is full of the salty dialect of the underworld. In his study of

the language of the underworld he has evidently learned a great deal in addition. Criminologists will find his book useful as well as interesting.

A. R. LINDESMITH.

Indiana University.

CHILD WELFARE IN GERMANY BEFORE AND AFTER NAZISM. By *Walter Friedlander and Earl Dewey Myers*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1940. Pp. xii—273. \$1.50.

This volume is published as another in the series of Social Service Monographs. It is very heavily documented—352 works are listed in the bibliography at the end of the book and there are numerous footnotes. The child welfare movement in Germany before the nazis is described and compared with the trend under the nazis. The authors find that although the legal changes that have been made are not extensive and do not represent radical departures from the traditions of the past, the entire underlying spirit of the program has been revolutionized in accordance with nazi philosophy. As the authors say, "While the fundamental law has only recently been changed in essential points, the basic concepts with regard to child welfare and education have undergone a complete transformation under the new regime. . . . The new trend . . . is to determine the scope of education as a collective goal related only to the nation and not to the personality of the individual. The right of the state to educate the child for the nation is emphasized but there is no longer an acceptance of the principle that the child himself has an individual right to development and growth as a human being. The new concept of education includes 'the training for capacity in bearing arms and fitness for military service.'" This of course, is what anyone familiar with the nazi's philosophy would expect from them.

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