

## SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY

### **Criminology: Research and Practice**

AT a time when the upward trend in crime continues steadily and our annual total of indictable offences in 1960 is certain to be the highest ever recorded by the police, it is perhaps not unreasonable that many who are concerned with the day-to-day administration of the criminal law and the treatment of offenders, are doubting whether all this recent activity and expenditure in criminological research can produce results likely to be of practical value in dealing with this phenomenon of lawlessness, now universally regarded as a major social problem of contemporary society.

A survey of the results of research by sociologists and others in their efforts to solve delinquency problems which was published only two years ago by Lady Wootton offers little encouragement.<sup>1</sup> In it she seriously questioned the methods used and many of the conclusions reached by workers in this field. In fact, it was pointed out that current theories in criminology are so numerous that they can easily accommodate any facts, however mutually contradictory they may be! In fact, 'A lament for criminology' might have been the subtitle of this admirable book. It is true that since then the situation has to some extent improved, and in recent years the Government has strengthened the arm of research by its support and practical tokens of its interest.<sup>2</sup>

But on the basis of past experience, it would, nevertheless, be unwise to expect in the near future any spectacular results from research which could possibly lead to an immediate and substantial diminution in the annual volume of crime. The powers of the criminologist are limited; his role in the practical sphere is a minor contributory one only. This was clearly shown by Professor Radzinowicz in his presidential address to the recently founded British Academy of Forensic Sciences. He concludes the section on criminology with the observation that 'major innovations [in our penal system] were not devised on the strength of fresh and precise criminological knowledge, but they were largely evolved under the influence of growing social consciousness, and of religious and philanthropic movements, from temporary expedients and, last but not least, from common sense and experience'.<sup>3</sup>

In the same article he pointed out that, from the academic point of view, criminology 'is not a primary and a self-contained discipline'; its advances rest upon those made in 'many other sciences which treat of human nature and society'; he also made a plea that research in this subject should be

<sup>1</sup> *Social Science and Social Pathology* (1959) by Barbara Wootton. (Allen and Unwin.)

<sup>2</sup> See *Penal Practice in a Changing Society* (1959), H.M.S.O., and *Penal Reform and Research* (1960), by R. A. Butler.

<sup>3</sup> 'Criminal Law, Criminology and Forensic Science' by L. Radzinowicz, *Medical Science and the Law*, vol. 1, (1960) pp. 7-15.

operational, or applied, i.e. that it should concern itself with 'the study of problems connected with the actual combat against crime'. And finally, he suggested that confronted with the complexity of criminal behaviour 'the assumption that crime is the outcome of one single cause must be abandoned'.

It is interesting in the light of these comments to read the recent symposium on *Pioneers in Criminology* which has a long introductory essay by the editor.<sup>4</sup> Dr Mannheim discusses the influence of positivism and determinism in relation to the developments in criminological theory. He shows that positivism is largely discredited and that the classical school is too static and sterile to guide further progress. He therefore looks towards the emergence of a third school under the new movement of *défense sociale*, which originated on the Continent and is much better known there than in this country. Monsieur Marc Ancel, judge of the *cour de cassation*, one of its principal exponents in France, has emphasized that Social Defence is not deterministic; among its principal tenets are the uniqueness of human personality, the importance of moral values; and the duty of society towards the criminal; it condemns the rigid classification of offenders into types, and does not advocate measures of security against him as mere administrative counteractions; finally, while utilizing modern science it is strongly opposed to the 'scientisme' of the positivists. Dr Mannheim is cautious about the possible outcome and during this 'period of transition' feels that rather than draw up grandiose schemes and programmes it might be better 'to concentrate on more tangible objects'.

The series of essays which make up this symposium was originally published in the American *Journal of Criminology, Criminal Law and Police Science*, and makes an admirable introduction to the development of ideas and theories in one of the youngest social sciences. A volume such as this, written by no less than nineteen authors, cannot be of equal value throughout. Of particular interest are the article on Enrico Ferri by Professor Thorsten Sellin, that on Maudsley by Dr Peter Scott, and on Charles Goring by Dr Edwin Driver. The articles on the two French sociologists, Gabriel Tarde and Emile Durkheim, are somewhat disappointing but in each of these essays the author was confronted with a particularly difficult task in dealing with his subject. The final essay on 'The Historical Development of Criminology', by Professor Jeffery, is useful as an introductory guide although it tends to over-simplify a number of important issues. The book, as a whole, clearly shows the dichotomy which has prevailed between the Marxists and early socialists, on the one hand, who placed the main blame for crime upon environment, and Lombroso and his followers on the other, who attributed delinquency almost exclusively to heredity. The essays also indirectly demonstrate what a difficult and complex subject causation becomes when applied to social behaviour and how dangerous it is to seek for a simple and general explanation to account for that diverse range of human misconduct which society places under the rubric of criminal.

<sup>4</sup> *Pioneers in Criminology* (1960). Ed. by H. Mannheim, The Library of Criminology, Vol. 1.

The results of small-scale research carried out in this country have recently been published in two books, the one primarily psychological,<sup>5</sup> the other sociological.<sup>6</sup> Dr Andry's point of departure is to question the emphasis which has been placed upon the disturbed child-mother relationship as predisposing a child towards delinquency. He suggests that the importance of the father, especially as the earliest personal symbol of authority, has been ignored and he therefore sets out to see to what extent a defective child-father relationship may be indicative of proneness to delinquency. His research was based upon eighty delinquent boys and an equal number in a control group. He utilized various research techniques, interviewed the boys and their parents, filled in questionnaires, and altogether made an impeccable statistical analysis of the data he collected. At any rate, he discovered what he was looking for: that, although mothers are very important, fathers also matter. He found that in the delinquent group the fathers gave less time to their children than in the non-delinquent group; that in the former group less praise was given by the fathers than in the latter group; and that there appeared to be less effective communication between fathers and their delinquent sons than was found in the other group. The results therefore seem to help to re-establish the importance of the family trio for the psychologists; but do they in fact contribute basically anything fresh to the psychological causes of crime?

There are two points which are worth making. Firstly, Dr Andry states that two-thirds of the boys in the control group, i.e. the 'non-delinquents', admitted during interview that they had sometimes stolen. This suggests that the differences between the two groups may be as much a contrast between 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' delinquents as between 'delinquents' and 'non-delinquents'. Secondly, the presentation of some of the findings on family characteristics indicates, to say the least, a lack of knowledge about working-class homes in this country. He claims that seventy-seven per cent of the boys in the non-delinquent group did not feel that their fathers would be embarrassed to show openly their affection towards them; seventy-eight per cent of delinquent boys shared hobbies with their fathers; and finally eighty-five per cent claimed that they did not quarrel with their brothers and sisters! Perhaps Dr Andry is unaware that in such families the *demonstration* of affection between parents and children is unusual and that 'hobbies' are not a characteristic leisure pursuit of working-class adults! The importance of the parents is emphasized by Dr Andry in his own particular style of expression: 'sound parent-child love relationships are a basic pre-condition and active determinant of the adequacy of parental role-playing'.

The second piece of research was carried out by J. B. Mays of Liverpool University and appeared in its Social Research Series, with a preface by Professor Simey. It is primarily a contribution to the study of crime in a 'substandard social environment'. His research is related to the everyday problems of social work and seeks to demonstrate that if a new direction be

<sup>5</sup> *Delinquency and Parental Pathology* (1960), by Robert G. Andry.

<sup>6</sup> *On the Threshold of Delinquency* (1960), by John Barron Mays.

given to the aims of boys' clubs in these areas a great deal could be done during the transitional period of adolescence. The conception of a youth club as a 'transitional community' and its practical bearings are of considerable value. The milieu is seen not only as transitional between the childhood world, characterized by social irresponsibility and emotional immaturity, and the adult world of co-operation and self-reliance; but also as transitional between the substandards prevailing in the decaying and disreputable centre of a large city and the norms set for decent conduct by the nation as a whole.

Mr Mays' theory is that the lawless behaviour of the majority of boys in such neighbourhoods is brought about more through the conscious process of learning which continues up to and throughout adolescence than from the unconscious psychological disturbances resulting from defective relationships in early childhood. He attempts to demonstrate this by conducting a piece of 'operational research' which involved organizing a youth club so that it could help in the process of social instruction and maturation of its members. His methods consist in social techniques, rather than the use of child guidance clinics, in dealing with problems of delinquency. In the course of the experiment which proceeded over a period of four years, he divided the boys into three groups: known delinquents with court records; boys considered by parents or social workers to be delinquency-prone; and boys assessed as non-delinquent and apparently 'normal'. An important aspect of the work was the close contact required between the club officers and case workers and the parents of the boys. Guidance was given not only to the boys but also to their parents throughout the experimental period. The author found that in sixty-three per cent of the households there was 'some kind of relationship problem measured in terms of absence or incapacity of one or both parents'. Lapsed membership, which was one of the main factors used in determining 'failure', was found to be closely connected with 'lack of parental control and co-operation'. Mr Mays' study also indicated the importance of both parents in the family situation and may be taken as confirming Dr Andry's main conclusion. The final chapter of the book is an attempt to assess the results of this experiment and one of the most interesting conclusions is that 'the club seemed to be most successful with those boys whose delinquency was in its early stages'. The failure rate in the 'delinquent group' was high and the author's conclusion is that 'the best hope of control in the field of delinquency . . . lies in diagnosis and treatment at the earliest possible moment'.

The Home Office Research Unit, under the directorship of Mr T. S. Lodge, has recently published three statistical assessments based on research. The first is contained in the Appendices to the Report of the Advisory Council on the Treatment of Offenders dealing with corporal punishment,<sup>7</sup> where it is shown that the results of the use of corporal punishment between 1941 and 1948 were similar to those reported by the Cadogan Committee in 1938, namely, that judicial corporal punishment could not be shown to have any special merit as an individual deterrent. The Home Secretary

<sup>7</sup> *Corporal Punishment* (1960) Cmnd. 1213.

must undoubtedly have taken these findings into careful consideration when he refused to reintroduce this measure last autumn. The second is a report on *Time Spent Awaiting Trial* (1960) by Evelyn Gibson, a good factual survey of the use different courts make of their powers to remand on bail and in custody; in it the lengthy periods which often elapse between the committal stage and the final process of trial are clearly demonstrated. Now that these important findings have been laid before the Interdepartmental Committee on the Business of the Criminal Courts, it is hoped that it may have some practical effect. The third publication is a report prepared by Leslie T. Wilkins on *Delinquent Generations* (1960). This study shows that the 'greatest "crime-proneness" is . . . found to be associated with that birth group who passed through their fifth year during the war', and one of the suggestions is that there 'appears to be something particularly significant in social disturbances occurring in the fourth and fifth year of a child's life'. This may suggest a number of theories, but one which is of particular interest is that this is the age when a child is developing its powers of communication with its parents and others and that any marked disturbance during the *dawn of reason* is likely to have long-standing effects. Such a suggestion, coupled with the implications of the findings of Andry, Mays and others, may lead to a modification of the great emphasis placed by the psychoanalytic school on the first five years of childhood and may lead to more attention being given to the study of the development of the powers of reasoning and the process of social learning in later childhood.

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## HEARD AND SEEN

### Stained Glass

THE monumental tradition of stained glass has so closely tied its creator to the architect that as an art of its own, with a unique territory for the imagination to explore, it is as yet scarcely known. But things are changing, and the Arts Council's travelling exhibition of modern stained glass (which will visit most of the principal cities of England and Wales during 1961) is an encouraging sign of the emergence of an independent art, freed from the near-monopoly of the commercial firms who up to now alone had the resources for its complex and expensive manufacture. And the recent exhibition at the Arthur Jeffress Gallery in London of the work of Patrick Reyntiens revealed an artist who combines a superb mastery of the technical problems of this most exacting of crafts with a rich and original imagination.

The stained glass artist can rarely know the freedom the painter or the sculptor enjoys. His work is almost always commissioned, usually by clergy, and he is often expected to conform to structural patterns as well as to