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Crime in America edited by Herbert Block

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CRIME IN AMERICA. Edited by Herbert Bloch, Philosophical Library, New York, 1961. Name index. 351 pp. \$6.

The contributions to this compendium on crime, the bulk of them presented initially at the annual meetings of the American Society of Criminology, are noteworthy for a number of reasons, viz.:

- (1) they are for the most part clearly written, there being a minimum of reliance on the offensive jargon that frequently characterizes criminological writings.
- (2) the range of topics dealt with is truly impressive, so much so that except for lack of detailed treatment, the volume might well be regarded as a convenient reference to the salient controversies of twentieth century criminology.
- (3) there is a noticeable gap in the range of topics; criminal etiology, which is ordinarily the major concern of the scientific criminologists and which is belabored in conventional textbooks, is treated sparingly.
- (4) the editor has provided in his introduction and especially in the critical comments preceding each paper an astute clarification of the issues at hand. An impressive job of editing indeed. (Unfortunately in his own offering, "The Dilemma of American Gambling: Crime or Pastime?", chapter 23, he fails to measure up to his own obvious perspicacity.)

The volume consists of four parts: Part I, Crime and Punishment in Twentieth Century America, Part II, Some Special Aspects of Crime and Law Enforcement in America, Part III, Sex, Sanity, and Society, and Part IV, Controversial Approaches to Crime and Criminals. In these four parts are included such diverse topics as "Corrections Sacred Cows," "Capital Punishment Today—Why?," "Crime and Labor Movement," "The Child Murderer," "Psychiatry and the M'Naghten Rule," "A Critical Analysis of the Royal Commission Report on Homosexuality and Prostitution," and "Psychographology in Criminal Investigation."

For this reviewer the most compelling papers were Chapter 7, "Capital Punishment or Capital Gain?" by Jack Kevorkian and Chapter 12, "The High Cost of Justice" by Martin K. Tytell. In the former Dr. Kevorkian deplores the waste involved in capital punishment and recommends that condemned persons be permitted to voluntarily make themselves available for medical research. The resemblance of this proposal to the human experimentation of the Nazis is of course obvious although Kevorkian disclaims any real identification. As Bloch points out "Kevorkian's proposals will undoubtedly appear brutal and shocking." They do indeed. In "The High Cost of Justice," Martin K. Tytell, who was employed to construct a "specially built typewriter for the Alger Hiss defense," argues that for most people the costs of an adequate defense in a criminal action are prohibitive. The high cost

of competent lawyers, expert assistance, trial transcripts and bail makes justice "not only expensive but hard to come by." While this conclusion is by no means new Tytell reemphasizes a feature of our legal process that cries out for continual acknowledgment.

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