

# BOOK REVIEWS

## SOCIAL DEVIANCE

By *Leslie T. Wilkins*. (Tavistock Publications, 45s.)

This book is one of a series now being placed upon the market, dealing with both psychiatric ill health and delinquent behaviour as part of a general social disorder. The author, Mr. Wilkins, from his recent position in the Home Office Research Unit was in a unique position to survey both fields. This book contains the product of a fertile brain, whilst visiting the United States recently as a visiting professor.

The first few chapters sketch in the general social background to a statement in chapter four, of a general theory of deviation applicable to Western states. Mr. Wilkins makes it clear that different societies require different patterns of behaviour and that he is talking in general of Western societies, and of certain variations within them. With a wealth of interesting anecdotes, he describes applications of his general theory of practice in the community, and carries this forward to a consideration of targets at which a society might aim, whilst allowing the individual a certain amount of freedom, and yet requiring group standards as a whole. In the final chapters he discusses the implications of his theory, and society targets for administrators in particular. He does not make it clear how far the logical corollary of his work led him to leave Whitehall for the University of Strathclyde, but one must hope that the requirements left behind with the Official Secrets Act will now allow his energies yet free scope.

This is an exciting book, full of stimulating ideas and hypotheses, which makes very interesting reading. The author uses a wealth of background information from the fields of criminology and mental health of the United Kingdom and different American States to support his arguments, which are a great stimulation to all students in the field of behaviour disorder. The book is well-printed, is of convenient size, and contains 276 pages, four appendices, an author and subject index.

Michael Craft

## DIRECTORY OF PRISON AFTER-CARE PROJECTS

(*The National Association of Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies*, 5s.)

This Directory is a sequel to the 1962 "Provisional Directory of Halfway Houses" also published by the N.A.D.P.A.S.

It consists of a comprehensive list of "projects" for the help and rehabilitation of ex-prisoners and homeless men and women, which are listed under various headings. It may well come as a surprise to discover how many voluntary societies and small groups of people are striving to provide homes for discharged prisoners, though many more are needed.

This little booklet gives a short and useful description of each type of home or association, and should prove extremely useful to anyone who is responsible for, or interested in, the after-care of prisoners.

M. O. May

## HOLLAND—A NEW LOOK AT CRIME

By *Keith Wardrop*. (*Inst. for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency*, 3s.)

This is a brief factual survey with little comment. There being no juries nor magistrates in Holland, trials are always conducted by qualified lawyers, who are provided with reports on the background, personality and criminal record of the accused. Since the Public Prosecutor decides if there is a *prima facie* case to try, one court appearance suffices for finding of guilt or acquittal. Solitary confinement, which used to be routinely applied at the beginning of imprisonment, has recently been abolished. Mentally disturbed or psychopathic offenders who are not frankly insane may be classed as partially responsible, which means they are given a term

imprisonment followed by an indefinite period of compulsory treatment. A psychiatric observation centre at Utrecht receives offenders prior to trial and makes detailed recommendations on disposal. The Van der Hoeven Clinic is a private organisation which provides social and community therapy, combined with individual psychotherapy, for "partially responsible" criminals.

Juvenile courts, which are now going to deal with criminal charges against persons from 12 to 21 years of age, are conducted by trained professional judges who are also trained in child welfare. Delinquent children may also be dealt with under civil law, which provides for placing under supervision or removal from parents. A Department of Juvenile Affairs controls the institutions to which young persons are sent after either civil or criminal process. Wide use is made in Holland of voluntary assistants and voluntary societies in the supervision and placement of juvenile delinquents, as well as in the probation and after-care services for adults. The Calvinist tradition in Holland seems to combine an uncompromisingly punitive attitude towards offenders with a sense of personal responsibility for the social welfare of deviant individuals.

**D. J. West**

### STREET-CORNER RESEARCH: AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TO THE JUVENILE DELINQUENT

By *Ralph Schwitzbebel*. (Harvard University Press, 32s.)

This short book describes and evaluates a most interesting and stimulating piece of work in what is now a much-investigated field. Set up in the shop front of a former motor-car sales-room, the laboratory invited the collaboration of delinquents in a project to extend understanding, and paid them for the work they did. The boys therefore enjoyed the status of experimental subject or research assistant, as opposed to being labelled as patient, inmate or criminal. Their experimental activities included not only participation in tape-recorded interviews, but also group discussions, building electronic equipment, making a film, and re-writing a driver's handbook.

Although this study aimed to make an effective and objective assessment of its results, and has, in my view, succeeded in this, there is also a refreshing and vigorous account of subjective experience, and attention is drawn to the way in which the attitudes of the various interviewers affected the responses of those being interviewed. Some of the subjective material is deeply moving, and expresses the personal strivings of these young men for a meaningful experience of being and of relationship. Existentialism in psychiatry may be more an emphasis, rather than a school of thought, but it is clearly able to evoke dignity and responsibility, in a way which contrasts sharply with other procedures.

The open and honest approach of the experimenters is good, and was partly forced on them by the tough, suspicious and sophisticated attitudes of the offenders. In my view, such an approach is greatly to be preferred to that described by Mary Morse in *The Unattached* (Pelican, 1965), where the workers were under concealed identities.

The results of intensive interviews and the development of relationships and transferences are familiar ground to the psychotherapist and analyst; what is not common is for this group of people to have such personal attention. A general point from the book suggests that this whole approach may be much more effective than residential treatment of any kind. Not only is it also cheaper, but highly qualified and varied people could be associated with such a project. Full-time residential work is able to draw on a much more limited choice of personnel. I hope that this book will be widely read, and will do something towards stimulating more positive and hopeful attitudes towards the personal and psychological treatment of young offenders.

**W. H. Allchin**

### THE DIFFICULT CHILD

Edited by *Joseph Rousek*. (Peter Owen, 35s.)

This book is a symposium intended for teachers, social workers and parents. Each chapter, written by a separate specialist, takes some descriptive category, which is considered to justify inclusion under the more general label of "The Difficult Child".