

The Community and the Delinquent, William C. Kvaraceus. Pp. 566. Yonkers-on-Hudson, World Book Company, 1954, \$4.50.

Among the current deluge of books which have flooded the market on the subject of juvenile delinquency, *The Community and the Delinquent* by William C. Kvaraceus (formerly a psychologist in the school system of Passaic, New Jersey, and presently teaching at Boston University) is outstanding for its practical value to all those who want a thorough and competent analysis of delinquency causation. It offers specific information on various communities and community agencies that are working on the problem of juvenile delinquency and tells what they are doing about it. Though this book has a scientific foundation, it is oriented to stimulate action among community leaders, agency executives, and parents. It gets down to cases.

For the practical man, the specific examples and descriptions of actual programs in the chapters on "Legal Definitions and Concepts," "Reinforcing Home and Family Life," "The Central Role of the Schools," and "The Influence of the Churches" will be especially valuable. Equally concrete are the chapters on "The Child Guidance Clinic," "Making the Most of Recreation," "The Functions of the Police," "The Juvenile Court and the Youth Authority," and the two chapters on training schools for delinquents.

For the reader interested in the problem of explaining delinquency scientifically, Kvaraceus' chapters on "Guiding Principles for Understanding Delinquency as a Form of Behavior" and "Observed Differences Between Delinquents and Non-Delinquents as a Basis for Early Identification and Prediction" summarize clearly most of the relevant evidence to date. The final chapter, "Increasing Our Information on Juvenile Delinquency," poses 113 specific research problems in seven fields. To this chapter is appended an annotated bibliography of 104 titles.

One typical problem suggested in the field of public relations is the development

of a program of community education aimed to combat criticism of the juvenile court for "mollycoddling" the young offenders brought before it.

Among the twenty-one tables is one which summarizes, for each of the forty-eight states, Alaska, and the District of Columbia, the age of exclusive juvenile court jurisdiction, age of jurisdiction concurrent with that of the criminal courts, and the conditions governing transfer of jurisdiction from the juvenile to the criminal court. On the characteristics of delinquents and nondelinquents, the book summarizes the findings of five major studies, including those by Healy and Bronner and the Gluecks. It also summarizes the results of outstanding applications of seven test instruments: the Personal Index Test, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, the Porteus Maze Test, the Washburne Social Adjustment Inventory, the Glueck Prediction Tables, Behavior Cards—Test-Interview for Delinquent Children, and the Kvaraceus Delinquency-Proneness Scale and Checklist. The author concludes, "Three reasons may account for the rather low forecasting accuracy of even the best of the available prediction tools and methods: the unreliability of the measures themselves; the multiplicity of variables that impinge upon individual behavior; and the human or volitional element." He is not too hopeful that prediction scales will improve with experience. "We can say that the best instruments of the future, by themselves, will increase the forecasting efficiency to only about 20 to 30 per cent above sheer guesswork."

Throughout the book, the need for community planning is emphasized. Professor Kvaraceus writes, "Existing facilities are seldom the result of any prior community planning and organization. Usually they represent an aggregate of services—the sum of single approaches arising out of special interests. . . . The result is an overlapping of services, agency rivalry for funds and clients, the preservation of agencies that have outlived their usefulness, and a lack of coordination of youth services."

This is a thoroughly worthwhile book, intended not to add to our knowledge of delinquency directly but to put to work more effectively what we already know and to stimulate further research. It does not attempt to examine the cultural presuppositions that underlie social problem-solving, nor does it quite cover the waterfront on what is actually being done now in the United States. The index, for example, fails to include the name of Clifford Shaw, and there is no mention of his remarkable Area Project Plan, which strives to change the culture of delinquency areas in Chicago—a project which many observers regard as one of the most promising techniques available for controlling delinquency in slums. Social workers will probably feel that the book also fails to do justice to their contribution, despite a chapter that deals with the individual approach through case study methods. Likewise, state and federal government contributions are not adequately explored.

But the book is written clearly in straightforward English; it provides the best scientific evidence available for understanding delinquency; it gives specific examples of what outstanding communities and community agencies are now doing to reduce delinquency; and it pounds home the message that community planning and community action offer the best hope for more effective control of juvenile behavior. This message is worthwhile.

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Are You Guilty?, *William Dienstern*. Pp. 184. Springfield, Illinois, Charles C Thomas, 1954, \$4.50.

Professor William Dienstern has planned his book in an intriguing manner. It begins with a brief description of events leading to the arrest, mass trial, and conviction of a youth gang, and the eventual reversal of that conviction by an appellate court. Against this setting, he develops a discussion of the components of the administration of criminal justice—the press,

legislation, police, jails, lawyers, judges, juries, probation, prisons, and parole. With chapter headings such as these, it is obvious his discussion is broad and far-reaching. Since the book consists of less than 200 pages, the subjects handled are not detailed.

Professor Dienstern constructs his book upon the thesis that all phases of administrative criminal justice depend upon man; therefore, it is as strong or as weak as the men involved. This concept is scarcely novel to those persons experienced in the administration of criminal justice; they are well aware that some mistakes are made, and that some personnel is apathetic, incompetent, and corrupt. They are also aware to what extent human weaknesses influence results. To people who have worked in the field, and thought seriously of its needs and faults, there is little value to be derived from the well-known and familiar ideas stated in Professor Dienstern's book.

However, this book was not written for the professional, but for the citizen in general who can gain from its pages considerable knowledge and insight concerning criminal law. There is little question that the average citizen does not take sufficient interest in criminal legislation—his police department, the local jail, the selection of judges, jury service, probation, prisons, and parole. If he did, all of these agencies could function more effectively in the administration of criminal justice and begin to effect the changes necessary for its improvement. For example, if the average person really understood probation and its purposes, he would insist that the courts be supplied with qualified, skilled, and well-paid staffs. He would insist upon doing his part to help rehabilitate the probationer, and thus save himself and society infinite cost in manpower and finances.

Most people have shunned anything connected with criminality. The author explains the unfortunate and destructive nature of this attitude. He believes that if the public were well enough informed and dynamically interested in the administration of criminal justice, great changes would be made to improve the present system.