

IN SEARCH OF CRIMINOLOGY. By Leon Radzinowicz. [London: Heinemann. 1961. vii + 254. 25s.].

THE NEED FOR CRIMINOLOGY. By Leon Radzinowicz. [London: Heinemann. 1965. xix + 123. 18s.].

The book, "In Search of Criminology" was written by Professor Leon Radzinowicz after an extensive trip through Western Europe and the United States of America to discover what was being done in those countries in the teaching of, and research in, criminology. The book is not, however, a mere report of the current activities of those countries in the field of criminology. The book also contains a lucid and informative account of the history of criminological study and research in each of those countries.

Summarising his view, the professor says: "Criminology was born in Europe, but in Europe the original impetus of criminological research seems later to have been lost. Since the 1920's there has been marked scarcity of empirical investigations in Italy, France, Germany and Belgium. In the last ten years or so it has been in the Scandinavian countries, especially Denmark, Norway and Finland, that this kind of work has been taken up in a more systematic way". Turning to the United States — which he describes as a vast laboratory — Professor Radzinowicz remarks that, "It may be that the social approach has been pushed too far at the expense of individual factors; it may be that too much is being expected of predictive studies. But although the output is naturally uneven a thorough knowledge and constant review of American methods and results is today essential to those seeking to advance criminology in any part of the world".

The author laments the continuing neglect of the teaching of criminology at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. "A systematic study of criminology" he informs us "hardly ever figures in the curricula of the leading faculties of social science in, for example, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland or Western Germany". The position in the law schools is even worse, says the professor.

The survey of the current scene and the historical review are intended to assist Professor Radzinowicz to answer a quartet of questions. What is criminology? What is it for?

Criminology is concerned with the study of the phenomenon of crime and of the factors or circumstances — individual and environmental — Which may have an influence on, or be associated with, criminal behaviour and the state of crime in general. It is also concerned with the combat of crime — with the systematic study of all measures to be taken in the spheres of prevention, of legislation, of the enforcement of the criminal law, of punishments and other methods of treatment.

How should criminology be explored and how should it be studied?

Professor Radzinowicz gives his answer in the form of eleven propositions. His first proposition is that criminology is not a primary and self-contained discipline

but enters into the provinces of many other sciences which treat of human nature and society. This seems plain enough.

Secondly, the professor says that the unilateral approach which works upon the assumption that crime is the outcome of one single cause must be abandoned. This is again unassailable. The theories of criminality grounded on a single cause e.g. economic conditions, sub-culture, have been discredited.

In the present state of knowledge, Professor Radzinowicz thinks that the very attempt to elucidate the causes of crime would be better put aside. He thinks that the most that can be done is to throw light upon the combination of factors or circumstances associated with crime. He adds the further qualification that these very factors or circumstances can also be associated with other forms of social maladjustment or even with normal behaviour. This may be viewed by some as counsel of despair. If criminological research, at the present, is unlikely to elucidate the causes of crime or even reveal the factors or circumstances that would differentiate criminal from normal behaviour, what is the point in the study of criminology or in supporting criminological research.

The answer is that while the ultimate question cannot be unlocked yet, there are other questions of a lesser order which also need unlocking. Benefits, Professor Radzinowicz would maintain, would result from the analysis of the state of crime, from studies of the various classes of offenders, of the enforcement of the criminal law, of the effectiveness of various measures of treatment and of the working of the penal system.

The seventh proposition is significant. The author says, “. . . one of the conclusions which is being drawn from the complexity of the phenomenon of crime and from the need to utilize the resources of several branches of knowledge, is that progress can be made only by means of what is currently described as the ‘inter-disciplinary’ approach: a psychiatrist, a social psychologist, a penologist, a lawyer, a statistician, joining together in a combined research operation . . . . That there should be closer liaison, and a more intimate exchange of views concerning methods of objectives, there can be no doubt; that a particular project of research undertaken by a penologist, for instance, could gain in richness and depth if some parts of it could be reviewed by a social psychologist there can be no doubt. But I cannot help thinking that, except in very rare instances indeed, an inquiry embracing several disciplines from the start, and depending on the co-ordination of their individual methods and distinct terminologies, may well carry the seeds of its own failure and inevitably fall apart into as many undertakings.”

There seems to be some confusion between the desirability of an inter-disciplinary approach to research in criminology and the practical difficulties which such an approach may create. That such an approach is desirable seems undeniable to me. That it will create problems and difficulties is also undeniable. But the implication is that it is an urgent task to educate psychiatrists, social psychologists, penologists, lawyers, and statisticians to understand one another's terminology and methodology and to be able to collaborate together without their co-adventure disintegrating into many separate undertakings. It was one of the reviewer's disappointments with the Cambridge Institute of Criminology that although its staff come from various disciplines they were not collaborating in their teaching and research.

The Institute of Criminology at Cambridge University is the first of its kind in the English-speaking world. It has, since its establishment, gained an enviable reputation for itself through the course it conducts and the publications and research of its staff. Such is the eminence of the Institute and of its director, Professor Leon Radzinowicz, that when the Bar Association of the City of New York decided to undertake a study to suggest how the city of New York “could marshal its resources to provide needed knowledge and a better mechanism for continuing improvements in criminal justice”, Professor Radzinowicz was invited to conduct the investigation. The book, “The Need For Criminology” contains the report submitted by the professor.

Professor Radzinowicz finds a real need for the establishment of an Institute of Criminology and the Administration of Criminal Justice to serve the New York area. Such a centre could take various forms. It could be attached to a law school. It could, alternatively, be an independent institute attached to an existing university. Or it could be an inter-university institute. It could, fourthly, be set up as a regional

institute, covering not only the City of New York but also the whole of the eastern seaboard of the United States.

Professor Radzinowicz envisages that the institute should undertake research of its own in some of the major fields and encourage and even sponsor research elsewhere. It should maintain a continuous review of central issues in the administration of criminal justice at all stages — the state of crime, the courts, the police and correctional services, and preventive measures. It should single out areas in special need of investigation, advise on priorities and methods. It should act as a centre in drawing closer together the research units which have been set up in several of the city departments. It should review and comment on pending legislation and follow up its results. It should also undertake the teaching of criminology at the post-graduate level, leading to a diploma in criminology or to a Ph.D. degree.

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