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Adolescent Court and Crime Prevention

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Recommended Citation

Ernst W. Puttkammer, "Adolescent Court and Crime Prevention," 27 *Georgetown Law Journal* 246 (1938).

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the responsibility of the party in control for the work of each session and the value of criticism by the minority party especially in financial and important social questions is minimized. A campaign on the basis of the council's proposals, may be an excellent substitute for a campaign on the basis of a party platform.

Professor Johnson has packed into a short volume a surprisingly large and well arranged amount of material. He has brought out clearly the worst defects in our American legislative system; his book provides an exceptional basis for discussion, and his thoughtful guidance through the mazes of various legislative difficulties is most helpful.

JOSEPH P. CHAMBERLAIN*

THE ADOLESCENT COURT AND CRIME PREVENTION—by Jeannette G. Brill† and E. George Payne.‡ Pitman Publishing Co., New York, 1938. Pp. xiii, 230.

In the reviewer's opinion the authors have selected too narrow a title for this informing, though brief, book. A broader one, such as, perhaps, "The Adolescent Offender," would have been more suggestive of the range of the contents. Their initial premise is that adolescence represents a particularly difficult period of adjustment, with problems of rapidly increasing complexity, yet that this period is given little or no special attention by our common law criminal procedure. This inattention is the more surprising in view of the fact that the civil law still regards the adolescent as incapable of mature and ripe handling of his own affairs, when the criminal law proclaims him an adult merely by passing beyond the juvenile court age. Such inattention, they continue, is all the more short-sighted because of the fact that today the largest proportion of crimes is committed by this "forgotten group" of offenders between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one.¹ From this starting point the authors proceed to examine the factors making for adolescent delinquency.

As is to be expected, they reject the one-time, but now outworn, notion that there is any single explanation of delinquent or criminal conduct, whether inherited criminal tendency, mental defect, or what have you. Instead it is the effect of many factors, a large number of which are summed up in the word, "environment." There is nothing

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¹The maximum age for the Borstal institution (*viz.*, places for adolescent incarceration) in England has been raised recently from twenty-one to twenty-three.

startling in their conclusion that "slums and blighted areas are an expensive luxury." This preliminary material, showing what the problem of the adolescent is and how serious is our present failure to solve it, takes up the first two-thirds of the book.

The remainder deals with the setting up of a specialized adolescents' court. The authors are strongly opposed to meeting the situation merely by raising the juvenile court age limit. This would not only be harmful to the juveniles, so brought into contact with older offenders, but would also result in lessened emphasis on the separate and largely different problems of the latter group. A separate court is needed, in these writers' opinion, with its own machinery for the proper socialized treatment of its human material, such as segregation from other age groups, supervision from contaminating contacts inside their own group while awaiting court action, mental examination where needed, proper case investigation prior to trial, etc. The adolescents' courts as they are now functioning in Chicago, Philadelphia and (most recently) Brooklyn are then examined and compared, to the advantage, incidentally, of each in one respect or another. As is to be expected, that in Brooklyn, which is so largely a result of Chicago and Philadelphia experience, makes the best overall showing, although one innovation in it is hard to understand, *viz.*, the rotation of judges after service of two weeks in the court. With many cases kept active for a long time for the admitted purpose of continuing supervision by a judge informed of all its developments, the purpose of such rotation is hard to see. The authors offer no comment on this point. A typical day in the Brooklyn court forms part of the concluding chapter.

The book is almost free from printer's errors. The English used is of a clarity and excellence that deserves special mention. In only two matters did the reviewer find evidence of possible haste which, presumably, greater care would have discovered and corrected. There is not, and, so far as the reviewer knows, there never has been a Judge John Gutnick in Chicago.² Presumably the reference is to Judge John Gutknecht, who has been active in boys' court matters in that city. Particularly to be regretted is the complete absence of an index. This work deserved better treatment than that.

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²P. 181.

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