

By and large there was little in the way of psychiatric or characterological difference between the members of the two series; in each case the preponderant personality type was that of a socially inept and isolated individual, with a history of numerous psychiatric complaints or breakdowns. The offences were mostly petty, the men being as inefficient in crime as in other walks of life. Ten of the hundred men were or had been psychotic; and a further 9 had been at some time in a psychiatric hospital. Ignoring manifestations of personality deviation and social maladaptation, at least a third of the prisoners were suffering from, or had not fully recovered from, mental illnesses of considerable severity. The commonest form of psychosis was paranoid schizophrenia. These cases do not appear to have been dealt with on their psychiatric merits by the prison authorities.

Dr. West's analysis of family background and past history, and of the personalities of his subjects, is thorough and very illuminating. He classifies 12 per cent. as "non-deviants", the "socialized delinquents" who are psychiatrically normal and are adjusted to a criminal life; 36 per cent. are "active-aggressive deviants", psychopaths of the emotionally indifferent type with an actively predatory attitude to their fellow-men; 52 per cent. are "passive inadequate deviants". The men from the worst homes often started their criminal careers as juveniles; those with criminal siblings—"a fair indication of environmental pressures"—were on the whole the least peculiar psychologically. The black sheep of good families included some of the most seriously pathological cases.

The prospects for psychiatric treatment are best, Dr. West thinks, with the inadequate group. At least some of them are capable of giving up criminal ways for long periods, and even doing a reasonable job of work, given the sheltered circumstances and the personal protection they require. Practical experience, e.g. at Norman House, has shown as much. The high-security prison is no rational place of disposal for these social cripples.

Dr. West's book is richly illustrated with vivid case material, and will be enjoyed and valued by the clinical psychiatrist. How it will be received in

other circles is not easily guessed. Our ways of dealing with the criminal are trammelled with ancient rituals and traditions, and there is no sense in them. In such circumstances the professors of age-hallowed views are likely to take a defensive attitude. It may be, for instance, that the criminal bench and bar will long continue in blissful ignorance of this and all the other accumulating evidence of the futility of our present approach to the prevention and social control of crime.

ELIOT SLATER.

Inside Story. Prison Reform Council. London: Housemans. Pp. 24. 1962. Price 1s.

This is a list of proposals drawn up by a working group of people who have been imprisoned for offences in connection with demonstrations against nuclear weapons. They are based on observations made in twelve prisons. The proposals concern: Medical, Social and Mental Welfare; Hygiene; Clothing; Food; Exercise; Letters, Visits, etc.; Libraries; Discipline; Education; Work and Pay; Supplies; Information to Prisoners; Other matters.

All the proposals are realistic, practicable and humane—with one exception. This is the suggestion that sex offenders should be put on their own so as not to be victimized by other prisoners. The problem of the sex offender is an unhappy one altogether, and that of the sex offender in prison particularly so. He will most certainly not benefit from a stay, even in the best prison, and we should at least try to protect him against unnecessary hurts. However, difficult as the situation is when he is put with non-sexual offenders, the creation of exclusive groups of sex offenders would inevitably lead to "homosexual paradise" situations, which are bad in themselves and which are also bound to give prison reform a bad name.

The committee rightly emphasizes the discrepancy between enlightened official statements and the very unsatisfactory actual practice. British social services and probation are amongst the best in the world, if not the best; but prison conditions are in sad contrast to what we might rightly be proud of.

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Correction

The price of *Pathogenesis of War*, published by H. K. Lewis & Co. and reviewed in our last issue is 10s. 6d., not 2s. 6d. as stated.