

The Rebirth of Private Policing

Les Johnston . Routledge. 224pp. £11.99 Pb.

In recent years both public debate and academic study have been pre-occupied with the activities of the Police. Major issues involving policing tactics, strategies and accountability have been central to this discussion, and the service has at times, been quite rightly inspected through a 'public microscope'. Surprisingly, at a time of justified public interest in policing, the rapid growth and development of the private security industry appears to have gone unchecked, with little or no corresponding concern.

Les Johnston's book revives interest and concern about the private security phenomenon, continuing the debate prompted by others such as Hilary Draper (1978), and Nigel South (1988), and sustained by Labour MP Bruce George's attempts to persuade the government of the need for regulatory control of the industry.

A range of issues are addressed in the book, and the concept clearly developed that policing and public security is not, and will never be, the exclusive preserve of public personnel. The historical base of private security is examined, both before and after the development of the modern police in the early nineteenth century, and whilst debating the ideological base of public and private policing, Johnston establishes his belief in a complex, although unequal, partnership. He contends that there never has been a clear division between the two forms of control, and questions the normally accepted public and private distinction.

Mick Creenan

Censure, Politics & Criminal Justice

ed. Colin Sumner, Open University Press, 1990. 196 pp. Pb.

Part of a series on criminology edited by Colin Sumner, this book contains essays arising out of post-doctoral research at the Institute of Criminology, Cambridge and Sumner's contributions. The essays have their ideological roots in contemporary socialist criminology as Sumner forwards a scathing critique of the sociological theory of deviance and contemporary criminological methodology proposing 'a complete revolution' in crimi-

nology to come to terms with the political and cultural character of the censure of crime.

The book is comprised essentially of two parts; the first containing Sumner's essays propounding, revising and formulating the theory of social censures (negative morals categories) as a framework to the other essays, which provide the empirical background to the theory.

This book is fairly comprehensive, and includes articles by Richard Vogler, Richard Sparks, Alison Young and others and provides some direct examples of social censure theory. As revised and reformulated, Sumner's theory escapes the narrow confines of earlier socialist criminological doctrines, offering an understanding of levels of oppression. The book would be of interest to anyone concerned with criminal justice issues.

Sidharth Luthra

Dope and Trouble: Portraits of Delinquent Youth.

Elliott Currie. Pantheon. New York. \$22.00.

America is at once one of the most affluent and one of the most violent societies in the world. The recent riots in Los Angeles underlined this paradox and reminded us of the deep social and racial divisions which characterise this 'free' market society.

This book by Elliott Currie provides a timely examination of one section of the population who are becoming increasingly associated with urban crime - youth. Based upon a number of in-depth interviews with institutionalised delinquent youth Currie provides the reader with a disturbing picture of life amongst the poorer sections of American society. This book takes the reader beyond stereotypes and platitudes. Instead it shows a hazardous and complex world of American youth dominated by gangs, drug trading and hustling.

Every year in America over a million juveniles are admitted to institutions. Some of these youngsters are violent and predatory, some are just troubled and discarded. As the welfare provision for many of these people is withdrawn or reduced, 'dope and trouble' become the pivotal points of reference for many.

This book allows these youngsters to speak for themselves. In it, they are given

a chance to say something about their aspirations, their values and their fears. Their accounts are both moving and alarming.

Roger Matthews

Between Prison and Probation.

N Morris and M Tonry. Oxford University Press. £22.50

If we are to decrease our reliance upon imprisonment it is necessary, Morris and Tonry argue, to develop effective intermediate sanctions which can stand between prison on one side and probation on the other. Our system of punishment tends to oscillate between undue severity and leniency because it lacks effective middle range sanctions. According to Morris and Tonry, many people who are currently subject to a probation order require tighter controls in the community, while many of those who are in prison who do not constitute a threat to the community could be dealt with by a range of intermediate punishments.

By intermediate punishments Morris and Tonry mean forms of intensive probation including house arrest and electronic monitoring, together with enforced treatment programmes for drug users, alcoholics and the mentally ill. Other available intermediate sanctions include community service orders and fines.

It is in this direction that the authors see sanctioning policy developing. Such a process is critical, they feel, to the establishment of a rational sentencing policy. The authors believe that it is necessary to develop a national system of sentencing guidelines and that this requires the establishment of a full range of interchangeable sanctions. That is, there is a need to develop a range of non-custodial sanctions which 'can stand in place of', rather than act as 'alternatives to' custody.

Although this book focuses almost exclusively on the American situation it clearly has important implications for those in this country who want to develop non-custodial sanctions and are interested in sentencing policy. There are, however, as the authors clearly point out, a number of problems in implementing this 'just deserts' model of sentencing and establishing workable sentencing guidelines.

Roger Matthews