

a scheme to compensate victims of crimes of violence was grafted on to the administrative machinery of the Industrial Injuries scheme.

If the courts made greater use of their powers under Section 11(2) of the Criminal Justice Act, 1948, to order compensation or damages for personal injury, it would bring home to many offenders the justice of being required to compensate the person he had injured and

would act as the best first step to the offender's rehabilitation. Assuming that the courts made greater use of this Section, the persons exercising their right to claim under Criminal Injuries Tribunal procedure would be those people overlooked in previous legislation, and for whom recovery of damages under Common Law would not be equitable or were non-existent.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### Crime and the Social Structure \*

ONE IS IMMEDIATELY AWARE of something refreshingly different about this work; it lacks the usual introductory chapters of definitions whose purpose presumably is to warn the reader of the obtuseness of the promised argument which fill two-thirds of most of the post-war volumes of sociological thought. It is also well written and understood after the first reading.

Mr. Mays' aim is to place crime in its social perspective. He takes the Durkheim theme, that societies have within their vitals an element of crime, a stage further. Crime is endemic to Western societies, the psychological processes necessary to competitive living are essentially the same as those involved in criminal activity. Paraphrasing Taft he says "that a socio-economic system based on free enterprise, capitalist principles, is positively criminalistic both in the way it is organised and in the attitudes of mind it characteristically produces." Criminal acts are normal and permeate all sections of the community. "The lay image of the criminal in contemporary British society is not a Bill Sykes or a Fagin, not a professional dedicated to an anti-social way of life, but a school boy in the act of shoplifting or breaking and entering in his unregulated leisure hours." Or more acceptable, but equally illegitimate, the business man enjoying the benefits of his expense account with his family at the theatre. Mays proceeds to give the lie to the more comfortable theories of individual psychiatric disturbances, anomalies in upbringing, and criminal sub-groups as the causes of major crime, with a clarity, succinctness and charity so seldom found in sociological writing. These are not airily dismissed, they are placed in their true perspective within the total complex social spectrum. Mr. Mays draws together for the first time the great welter of modern criminological thinking and imprisonment into a unified social analysis.

Having drawn his picture with breadth and clarity and left the reader staggering from the implications of his analysis, Mr. Mays withdraws. Having made it obvious that the key to the problem is not to be found in a tinkering with criminal legislation, penal reform or more psychiatrists, but a wholesale revolution in social thinking, he evades the enormity of the issue and his recommendations are slight. But by then he has achieved his aim.

This book illustrates the generic link between unacceptable and acceptable illegality more potently than anything this decade. It is a scientific sermon which forces the reader to examine not only his attitude to offenders, but more important, to his order of social priorities.

B.E.

\* *Crime and the Social Structure*. JOHN BARRON MAYS. Faber. 30s. 0d.