

conservatives, and most Republican leaders, equate conservatism with a desperate, defensive commitment to the status quo, not with staking a claim on the world's future. They are risk-averse, in both temperament and policy. And in an era of ideological politics, the risk-averse most emphatically do not inherit the earth."

No book with writings that span more than 30 years can be an even product. Although his essays on culture, political philosophy, and foreign policy are sharp and decisive and make entertaining reading, the section entitled "The Political Economy of Neoconservatism" drags on and on.

The "Adam Smith and the Spirit of Capitalism" chapter no doubt is useful in those forums that debate such things, but it is hardly of great moment to the general reader. Some subjects are hard to make interesting, and although certain of Mr. Kristol's interpretations put great economic questions in proper perspective, the overall effect of the economic section of the book is not crystal (no pun intended) clear.

Neoconservatism, as Mr. Kristol readily admits, is much harder to define than other types of conservatism, and this book is more a reflection of the man than of the movement. It is most interesting for the glimpses it provides into the character of Irving Kristol, a man whose incisive commentaries are respected by ally and adversary alike. Serious students of contemporary politics require it to deepen their understanding of a vital moral force in America.

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Lock Them Up and Other Thuggery Stoppers

Crime and Public Policy, edited by James Q. Wilson (San Francisco: ICS Press).

Digesting the voluminous data on crime in America is the task that Harvard political scientist James Q. Wilson assigned himself and 14 other experts. Their evaluations and summations of recent research cover crime rate trends, criminals' characteristics, unemployment and crime, the role of the family and community, crime in the schools, "criminogenic commodities" (alcohol, guns, and drugs), police patrol strategies, prosecution practices, court procedures, and the prison system.

A clear note of optimism is sounded: The era of ever-increasing crime rates may be at an end. According to mathematician Jan Chaiken and sociologist Marcia Chaiken, FBI statistics and independent "victimization" studies suggest that crime has been generally steady since 1973; some data show small declines, and others indicate slight increases. After rising more than 250 percent since

1962, serious crimes peaked in 1980, held steady in 1981, and dropped by 4 percent in 1982.

Two reasons for this apparent stabilization emerge from *Crime and Public Policy*: demographics and policy initiatives. Males in their late teens and early 20s make up the most crime-prone segment of society. As the post-World War II baby-boom generation grew up, crime began to skyrocket. Demographics alone will not explain the crime rates experienced in the sixties and seventies; crime rose at a much sharper rate than could be predicted by age factors. But with the general aging of the population, a drop in crime can be expected and may indeed have already begun. Each year a substantial portion of the criminal population spontaneously gives up criminal activity. As aging criminals "retire," fewer teenagers replace them. Consequently, crime rates should remain stable well into the 1990s.

Discredited Ideas

Accompanying this demographic phenomenon has been a tougher, more intelligent approach to controlling crime. Rehabilitation, once the unchallenged guiding philosophy of the justice system, has been discredited. We quite simply do not know how to rehabilitate criminals. Accordingly, the concepts of "selective incapacitation" and "just deserts" (punishment) are replacing rehabilitation.

Over 50 percent of our crime is caused by less than 10 percent of the criminal population. To identify these career criminals, special teams of prosecutors, usually with federal assistance, have been created in some 100 local jurisdictions. Ensuring that habitual miscreants are swiftly incapacitated by stiff prison sentences is most effective in dealing with robbery and burglary. As for other types of serious crime, Paul Greenwood of the Rand Corporation observes, "For certain violent crimes—homicide, rape, and assault—selective incapacitation may have little effect . . . arrest rates suggest that the commission of violent crime is so infrequent for any one offender that the overall rate cannot be influenced much by incapacitation policies. For these offenses, sentences will continue to be based primarily on the concept of just deserts . . ."

Among the intellectually chic, it was axiomatic for many years that poverty was the root cause of crime. This assumption did not stand up to rigorous analysis and was laid to rest long ago by Mr. Wilson and others. Unemployment has recently replaced poverty as a fashionable explanation for crime. But this has also proven to be too simple and tenuous a notion.

A Harvard economist, Richard Freeman, examines the statistical studies that have been made of crime and unemployment since World War II and concludes, "if one were anticipating an overwhelmingly strong relation" between crime and unemployment, "one would be severely disappointed." Cutting unemployment from 10 to 5 percent would probably reduce the crime rate by a mere 5 percent, according to Mr. Freeman. The connection between crime and unemployment may be at a much more fundamental level than is generally supposed; that is, the same constellation of personality traits and habits



It has been ever thus: On February 21, 1861, Congressman Van Wyck, a representative from New York, was attacked on the street near the U.S. Capitol.

that makes one a criminal may also make one unemployable.

Though there are no easy answers to what causes crime, the role of the family, society's basic unit, must be critical. Yet social scientists have paid relatively little attention to the relationship between crime and the family. In the finest chapter of the book Travis Hirschi, a University of Arizona sociology professor, tells us, "explanations of crime that focus on the family are directly contrary to the metaphysics of our age. 'Modern' theories of crime . . . assume that the individual would be noncriminal were it not for the operation of unjust and misguided institutions."

Mr. Hirschi outlines research documenting that delinquency is often transmitted from one generation to the next and that 5 percent of the families in a particular study "accounted for almost half of the criminal convictions in the entire sample." And we know that single-parent households are more likely to produce delinquents than two-parent families. Mr. Hirschi also proposes a child-rearing model similar to that of child psychologist James Dobson. The system has four components: affection, close monitoring, recognition of deviant behavior, and immediate punishment. The absence of one or more components may lead to behavior problems that can end in delinquency. The parents of delinquents, for example, often do not recognize the early signs of

deviancy, such as lying and disrespect for adults. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately, depending on one's perspective), there is little that public policy makers can do to influence family child-rearing practices.

Courtroom procedure, however, can be influenced by political leaders. When citizens and the police complain that obviously guilty criminals go free on "legal technicalities," the technicality is invariably the exclusionary rule. The rule, established by the Warren Court decision *Mapp v. Ohio* in 1961, often comes into play as a result of police searches, later deemed improper or illegal, that uncover incriminating evidence. In legal parlance, ill-gotten evidence becomes the fruit of the poisoned tree and is not admissible at trial. Because critical items of evidence have been suppressed, the accused may be released.

The purpose of the rule is to protect citizens from unwarranted police intrusions. Presumably, if the police know that their evidence is going to be thrown out of court, they will refrain from engaging in illegal searches and seizures. But Steven Schlesinger, director of the Bureau of Criminal Statistics, demurs: "Empirical studies of the deterrent effectiveness of the rule conclude that it does not deter" police misconduct. Other studies reveal that the rule protects career criminals but not law-abiding citizens. Mr. Schlesinger argues that "criminal activity is predominantly a public concern" and that "a person

who uses his home to store bodies or as a drug factory forfeits his right to privacy.”

In the sixties and seventies the focus of attention within the justice system was on law enforcement: raising the level of police professionalism, testing the validity of various patrol strategies, and so forth. Now the focus has changed to the prison system with its severe, often inhumane, and dangerous overcrowding. In a sense, the crime crisis has shifted off the streets and into the prisons for the same reasons that the crime rate has stabilized—demographics and policy.

The baby boomers who helped create the crime epidemic of the sixties and seventies are now jammed into the prisons of the eighties. “The shifting age mix that should generate a lower crime rate over the 1980s can be expected to generate larger prison populations,” writes Alfred Blumstein of Carnegie-Mellon University. This paradox emerges from the difference between peak crime and peak imprisonment ages. A criminal typically begins his career as a teenager but does not accumulate a serious enough conviction record to warrant prison (at least in the eyes of the courts) until he reaches his mid-20s.

Tougher criminal sanctions over the last eight years have also played a role in increasing prison populations. The sixties and early seventies were characterized by a relatively soft, sympathetic attitude toward criminal behavior; between 1960 and 1970 the prison population actually fell from 213,000 to 196,000. During the 1970s, however, it became apparent to even the most ardent liberal that the crime rate was of frightening proportions. Public outrage led to longer prison terms for more criminals. The prison population rose 40 percent between 1975 and 1979. At this writing it stands at around 400,000—approximately 25 percent above capacity. Another 100,000 or so people are languishing in local jails. Altogether, there are more inmates than police officers in America. A delicate balance always exists in correctional institutions between the staff and the inmates. Overcrowding shifts the balance in favor of the inmates—usually the most brutal and ruthless among them. A severely overcrowded institution is a managerial nightmare that can end in rioting, death, and destruction.

No Choice

Mr. Blumstein examines the options available to decision makers for resolving the overcrowding crisis. The obvious solution—building new facilities—is a costly proposition. Maximum security cells run between \$50,000 and \$75,000 a piece; and the annual upkeep for a single inmate is between \$10,000 and \$15,000. Mr. Blumstein favors various measures short of new construction, including alternatives to conventional incarceration, shorter sentences, the early release of prisoners, and rationing among magistrates the number of people who can be sent to prison. He argues that in much of the country the problem will resolve itself as prison populations stabilize in the 1990s.

But contrary to what Mr. Blumstein seems to believe, growth areas, such as the Sun Belt, that already have antiquated, deteriorating, overcrowded institutions really have no choice. Policy makers will need to persuade

their constituents to cough up the money needed for new construction. This is a difficult but not impossible task; the voters of California (where prisons are 40 percent above capacity) recently approved funding for a prison-building program.

Although *Crime and Public Policy* is directed explicitly at state and local officials, anyone having an interest in crime, criminals, and the justice system would benefit immensely from this readable volume. The 15 chapters, each of which can be read independently of the others, are concise (approximately 20 pages), usually lucid, and, for a book written by a group of academicians, remarkably free of social science jargon and obfuscation. And the index and footnotes are valuable guides to further research.

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Reich's Mark

The Next American Frontier, by Robert B. Reich (New York: Times Books).

Robert B. Reich is one of the leading intellectual spokesmen for the Democratic party these days. Indeed, two of its presidential candidates, Gary Hart and Walter Mondale, have appended their generous compliments to the book's jacket. So Mr. Reich must be taken seriously, if for no other reason than the strong possibility that his ideas could find their way into the speeches of the Democratic presidential nominee.

Mr. Reich, who teaches business and public policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, argues throughout his 12-chapter study that the United States must promote an integration of its “civic culture,” which embodies social welfare and participatory values, and its “business culture,” characterized by individual responsibility and freedom. He maintains that our traditions of economic individualism and distrust of government have for too long prevented us from recognizing that our civic and business cultures are integrally tied in with each other. In his words:

In countless ways Americans are called upon to choose between these two sets of central values—social justice or prosperity; government or free market; community or freedom . . . [But] this choice is falsely posed. In advanced industrial nations like the United States, drawing such sharp distinctions between government and market has long ceased to be useful. Government creates the market by defining the terms and boundaries for business activity, guided by public perceptions of governmental responsibility for the overall health of the economy. Business, meanwhile, is taking on tasks that once were the exclusive province of government, involving responsibility for the work communities that are coming to be many Ameri-