INSECURE SOCIETIES

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Insecure Societies

Delinquency in Troubled Times

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Edited by Audrey Brown

Foreword by Lord Scarman

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In memory of Professor John Brown who, as he travelled in Western Europe, attempted to reach the root of the problems besetting Western European societies and to help in the search for solutions and in the dissemination of ideas and initiatives towards such solutions.

With my most grateful thanks for the help and support of Gerry Herrod, long-time friend of John Brown; for the continuing friendship and help of the many students and the very many colleagues and friends of Professor John Brown; for the unfailing courtesy and consideration afforded me by Police Officers of all ranks as I attempted to understand their problems and concerns; for the enormous support given me by our daughters, Janie and Tootie, to whom this work is dedicated.

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Statistics given should be regarded as illustrations of trends and not as numerical facts. Perceptions of delinquency and recording of offences varied greatly between countries and even within countries.

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Foreword

John Brown was one of the outstanding social scientists of his generation. He made the principles, the practice and the problems of policing his especial study; and in doing so he brought renown to the Cranfield Institute where he worked as a professor. The Cranfield conferences devoted to the problems of policing have established themselves as international gatherings of high quality where policing problems can be subjected to comparative study by experts and others. They have exposed the fundamental similarity of policing problems in civilised societies. Policing cannot be studied in isolation; the police have a specific task, the enforcement of the criminal law and the maintenance of public order, but that task cannot be successfully undertaken save in co-operation with the other public services operating in and for the benefit of society. Co-operation means co-ordination; and there's the rub. The police find themselves led under the banner of 'crime prevention' into social activities which appear at first sight to be far removed from their specific role in law enforcement and the maintenance of public order. Indeed there are some who argue with a degree of plausibility that by allowing the police into a co-ordinated team of social services we are opening the way to a police state. This is an exaggerated alarm; but the risk should not be forgotten.

John Brown was the inspired leader of the Cranfield conferences until he was struck down in his prime. This study of the elements of insecurity in highly developed western societies is not, however, only a posthumous publication of his work. His wife, Audrey, is editor but also part author. Ever his support in his energetic pursuit of truth and constructive solutions to the problems which he examined, she has undertaken both the task of editing his unfinished work and that of completing it as author in her own right. I am irresistibly reminded of 'Turandot', lovingly and excellently (pace Toscanini) completed after Puccini's death by one who really understood the work in hand.

The subject matter of this study is ugly and frightening. It is the threat to society of alienated young people who in their frustrations have fallen into a way of life based on drugs, alcohol, violence, petty crime, and disorderly defiance of society and the police. John Brown saw for himself this frightening scene at home and abroad. He learnt by personal observation and enquiry of the differing attempts at a solution in Berlin, Aalborg, Epinay-sur-Seine, Valence and Amster-

dam, as well as in the United Kingdom. The chapters devoted to Germany, Denmark, Holland and France are of immense importance to those concerned with the problems of our country. And it is significant that the lesson is the same: there has to be co-ordination of effort from the 'grass-roots' up to the very pinnacle of social authority, the police role being part of the effort but never the dominating factor. Our authors put the point succinctly when discussing crime prevention towards the end of the book:

Central Government plans are leading towards co-ordination and the creation of a Co-ordinating Organisation for Crime Prevention, but currently, in 1987, the police are still the only common factor in the many groupings . . . interested in the inner cities and the control of crime. It is a heavy task, and in the last analysis *the police service cannot be the moral guardian of society: finally it can only uphold the rule of law.*

The words which I have italicised remind us that we must not expect more of the police than they can or ought to offer in a free society. A society which leaves its disadvantaged youth, whatever the colour of their skin, their religion (or lack of it) or their social origin, to stew in the juice of drugs and alcohol for want of anything better to do must blame itself, not the police.

Scarman