

federal bureaucracy. Education was seen as the way for Indians to take control of their own lives. For their times, these writers were activists for the Indian cause, many of them members of the Society of American Indians, a reform organization run by Indians rather than whites. Many (Bonnin, Eastman, LaFlesche, Montezuma, Oskison, and Parker) were also contributors to the publications of the Society.

What may be most surprising to some readers is the educational level achieved by these writers. Many, who had been trained by missionaries, became ministers or priests. Other, such as Eastman and Montezuma, were physicians; Francis LaFlesche received a law degree in 1893; and Gertrude Bonnin was a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly* early in this century. Luther Standing Bear and Sarah Winnemucca were authors of novels or autobiographical works which reflected their concern for their people.

These are voices which need to be heard, voices which should have been heard in earlier times, although it is impossible to ascertain how much influence these writers may have had during their lifetimes. By providing this collection, Peyer has given us the opportunity to at least speculate on what the responses of their own people and the government to these statements of belief might have been.

In 1939, Luther Standing Bear wrote, "It is this loss of faith that has left a void in Indian life — a void that civilization cannot fill." In spite of the accumulated years of education in the ways of "civilization," most of these writers did not lose touch with the ways of their "elders."

— Gretchen M. Bataille
Iowa State University

Henry N. Pontell. *A Capacity to Punish: The Ecology of Crime and Punishment*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) xx, 140 pp., \$17.50 paper.

Given the extraordinary costs of prisons, the current political climate which pushes for less government and lowered public spending, and the incapacity of the legal system to carry the entire burden of social control, Pontell argues for reexamination of the criminal justice system from a sociological perspective. Drawing upon data from the 1966-1974 period, Pontell's doctoral study, the basis for the book, searched for ecological relationships among crime rates, expenditures, conviction rates, and demographic features in the California counties under review. Positive

correlations were found between urban density and crime rates, but no association was found between crime and allocation of resources to prosecution. While police resources may increase with crime rate, leading to larger numbers of arrests, the absence of support for courts and prisons in fact diminishes the capability of the state to convict and punish. Pontell offers a strong argument to the effect that criminal elements are less deterred by fear of punishment as case overload develops, since punishment is likely to be uncertain, even arbitrary. Deterrence requires a reliable, acknowledged relationship between crime and punishment and that element appears to be increasingly absent from the criminal justice system.

Among the most significant of the study's findings is that of the key role played by social and economic inequality on the production and punishment of crime. While acknowledging the importance of several facets of inequality such as segregation and income disparity, the author chooses the proportion of blacks in the population as the critical variable. This proportion is strongly correlated with police resources, and influences court caseload independent of other demographic factors. Inequality (percent of blacks) is also correlated with the rapid processing of cases, usually through early guilty pleas, bargained for reduced charges.

The strong racial association with crime rates is an indication of the predominantly social nature of the problem, currently addressed ineffectively through programs that are political, rather than social, in nature. To be effective, punishment must create deprivation greater than that experienced by the lowest free class. Creation of employment opportunities, provision of training opportunities, and reduction in discrimination would all act to increase the value of punishment by creating a more desirable alternative for the law-abiding. A positive approach to crime control would address social inequality directly, rather than continuing to fund responses to its symptoms.

These inherent contradictions in the expansion of criminal justice resources as a solution to crime are mentioned but not stressed by Pontell. By selecting racial composition as a measure of inequality, Pontell indicates an awareness of the critical role of larger social problems to the issue of crime control. The author's recommendations for societal responses to these substantive issues, however, are left to the reader's hopeful imagining.

— Linda M.C. Abbott
California School of Professional Psychology, Fresno