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Book Review

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Victoria Getis, *The Juvenile Court and the Progressives,* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000. Pp. x + 216. $34.95 (ISBN 0-252-02572-5).

This concise book explores the origins and early history of the Cook County Juvenile Court, the world's first such court. The court, which opened on July 3, 1899, in Chicago, reflected its founders' profound faith both in science to solve social problems and the power of the state to provide for the best interests of its children. Yet, as Getis argues, the juvenile court did not live up to its initial promise, and "instead of a place of experimentation and reform—which it could have been—or a place of individualized justice guided by science—perhaps an unattainable goal—the court became an institution without idealism" (106). *The Juvenile Court and the Progressives* seeks to discover not only what went wrong, but also what is fundamentally wrong with the progressive conception of a juvenile court.

The book's major contribution is its analysis of how in the early twentieth century different disciplines—sociology, psychology, psychiatry, and social work—all used the study of juvenile delinquency to further their own professional development. As Getis suggests, the more social and behavioral scientists studied juvenile delinquency, the less attention they paid to structural problems that resulted from the rise of industrial capitalism. Instead of trying to correct structural problems, these disciplines encouraged reformers and juvenile justice practitioners to focus their attention on treating the problems of individual children and their families. Thus, as Getis concludes, "the reformers' turn to science as a way of solving the problems presented by juvenile delinquency sidetracked their efforts to treat the problems themselves" (158). The historical lesson is clear: "it is these things—eradicating poverty, creating jobs, improving schools, denying access to weapons, and providing health care—that city, state, and federal governments should be working to achieve now, instead of looking for new ways of punishing children" (158).

Although Getis is certainly right to call for structural solutions to structural problems, she does not explain to the reader what the juvenile court actually did, how it changed over time, or why "a century after its creation, the juvenile court is the uniform major premise in policy toward youth crime in every advanced legal system [in the world]" (Franklin E. Zimring, "The Punitive Necessity of Waiver," in Jeffrey Fagan and Franklin E. Zimring, eds., *The Changing Borders of Juvenile Justice: Transfer of Adolescents to the Criminal Court* [Chicago, 2000], 207). By avoiding these issues, and focusing much of her analysis on assumptions about juvenile delinquency, Getis cannot answer her own excellent questions about Illinois's pioneering juvenile court legislation: "[D]id the law fulfill expectations? Would a child in trouble have a better experience in the juvenile court than he or she would have had before the court was established?"(52)

Getis's analysis of the law-in-action, for instance, relies upon a close reading of the juvenile court's annual reports, which she says reveal "an institutional mindset, a set of intimations, prejudices, and stereotypes" (122). These reports, which were written by the Chief Probation Officer, are certainly valuable sources that reveal how the court officially categorized cases. It is unclear, however, that these reports reflected the beliefs of all the court's probation workers. Studies of probation officers, such as Mark Jacob's *Screwing the System and Making It Work: Ju-*

venile Justice in a No-Fault Society (Chicago, 1990), have revealed how much agency these officers exercise in their daily work. Although it is problematic to project the findings of late twentieth-century practices into the past, it is equally problematic, given the extensive social historical work on the early twentieth century, to assume that individual state actors lacked agency. Moreover, Getis holds the probation officers, who were overworked and underpaid, responsible for the court's loss of idealism. By focusing on adjusting individual cases, she argues that these "functionary social workers" are deeply implicated in the juvenile court's failure to research and report upon the real roots of juvenile delinquency.

Readers of the *Law and History Review* might be frustrated by the fact that *The Juvenile Court and the Progressives* does not engage the recent outpouring of scholarship on American juvenile justice, including Mary Odem's *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920* (Chapel Hill, 1995), William Ayers's *A Kind and Just Parent: The Children of Juvenile Court* (Boston, 1997), Elizabeth J. Clapp's *Mothers of All Children: Women Reformers and the Rise of Juvenile Courts in Progressive Era America* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1998), Christopher P. Manfredi's *The Supreme Court and Juvenile Justice* (Lawrence, 1998), and Barry Feld's *Bad Kids: Race and the Transformation of the Juvenile Court* (New York, 1999). Although Getis makes a contribution to this body of scholarship, she does not address any of these works in her text or the accompanying bibliographic essay.

It would have been particularly instructive for Getis to explain how her findings either supported or refuted Barry Feld's impassioned pleas to abolish the juvenile court. Feld, much like Getis, argues that the juvenile court is conceptually flawed and that "the Progressives attempted to combine social welfare and criminal social control in the juvenile court but produced an inherently unstable organization that inevitably subordinated social welfare to penal concerns" (Feld, *Bad Kids,* 15). He believes, and has argued for many years, that abolishing the juvenile court would be an important step toward building a more robust system of social welfare for all of America's children. Unfortunately, *The Juvenile Court and the Progressives* does not weigh in on this controversial proposal.

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Richard C. Lindberg. *To Serve and Collect: Chicago Politics and Police Corruption from the Lager Beer Riot to the Summerdale Scandal, 1855–1960,* Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998. Pp. 388. $19.95 (ISBN 0-8093-2223-4).

For decades, historians like Lawrence Friedman have called for scholars to analyze the law "on the ground," asking their peers to transcend doctrinal history to describe how American public officials have enforced the provisions encoded in statutes and precedents. Those who agree with Friedman may or may not welcome Richard C. Lindberg's *To Serve and Collect,* a comprehensive popular history of