

SOCIETY*Contrary Views
of Crime*

"Thinking About 'Thinking About Crime'" by James Q. Wilson; "Crime, Punishment, and Deterrence" by Ernest van den Haag; "The Conservative New Criminology" by Lynn A. Curtis; "Crime and Conventional Wisdom" by Isidore Silver—in *Society* (Mar.-Apr. 1977), Box A, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

Baffled by the steadily rising U.S. crime rate, many Americans have begun to heed the "new classicist" criminologists, who hold that "deterrence" is a workable approach to reducing crime.

Two of these "new classicists," Wilson, a Harvard professor of government, and van den Haag, an NYU social philosopher, contend that the liberal, "social scientific" approach is bankrupt; that the "root causes" of crime are too complex and controversial to serve as a basis for countermeasures; that crime stems from individual human weakness, not deficiencies in society; and that criminal justice agencies, especially the courts, should promptly remove convicted offenders from society. Above all, these two writers believe that the threat of punishment will influence criminal behavior. The United States has more crime than Britain, Japan, or Italy. "Is it coincidence," asks van den Haag, "that the severity of our punishment is lower?"

A contrary view comes from Curtis, director of the National Alternative Inner City Futures Project, who argues that "retributive justice" (punishment) should not be stressed at the expense of "distributive justice" (general political and social reform). Social and economic barriers, he says have greater influence on spawning crime than do innate personal qualities. He criticizes the federal belief that more money, men, and crime-fighting equipment will do the job. CUNY historian Silver worries that the new classicists ignore the potential danger of rigid "deterrence" used as a tool of oppression. Innocent citizens, he observes, could become victims of such harsh prescriptions as mandatory prison sentences and reduced discretionary powers for parole boards.

*Detecting
Ovulation*

"Birth Control Goes Back to Nature" by Melanie Marcus, in *Harvard* (May-June 1977), 1341 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Catholic welfare groups, among others, have become interested in a possible new alternative to the birth control pill, the IUD, and other contraceptive devices, reports *Harvard* staff writer Marcus.

Dr. Harold J. Kosasky, clinical instructor in obstetrics and gynecology at Harvard Medical School, working with M.I.T. biomedical engineer Louis E. Kopito, has developed an "Ovutimer," capable of pinpointing the ovulation period—the fertile time—in a women's men-