From the Editor

As we embark on our second volume of the *Review*, some reflections are in order. Since assuming editorial intake responsibility in May, 1978, we have considered for publication more than 300 manuscripts. A precise figure is impossible to determine because of the large number of resubmissions after revision. Including those accepted for publication up to and including Volume 14, number 2, about 31 manuscripts have been or will be published, an acceptance rate of 10 percent. This rate is consistent with the figures reported last year and with the acceptance rates of other major social science journals. Items published in our special issue on plea bargaining, Volume 13, number 2, are not included in these totals.

Both submissions and acceptances reflect the diversity of our constituency as well as its limits. Political scientists and sociologists provide the most grist for our mill, but anthropologists, historians (increasingly), social psychologists, and law professors are also significant contributors. Economists continue to be elusive, although concepts and paradigms from that discipline are increasingly represented in the work of others. Jurisprudence and legal philosophy are, of course, issues of widespread concern. But insofar as the *Review* is concerned, they seem to be the province of law professors and social scientists. Few contributions come from those with formal training in philosophy. In terms of specific subject matter, "dispute resolution" in its many forms and arenas, jury studies (simulated and real life), and analyses of the criminal justice system are the ranking subjects of manuscripts submitted to us.

I am often asked whether it is difficult to decide what to publish and what not to publish, and my answer, unfailingly, is "yes and no." Some manuscripts are of such obvious quality that the decision to publish is easy enough. Theoretical elegance, richness of data, originality of analysis, and good writing are not hard to discern. Likewise, at the other end of the spectrum, there are manuscripts which are just as obviously not candidates for publication. Some deal with subjects not germane to our enterprise. Others are so poorly written, conceived, and executed that serious consideration is impossible. The greatest difficulty comes with manuscripts

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which have unrealized potential: good data poorly analyzed and presented, missed opportunities for theoretical statements, and—an all too widespread malady—decent work camouflaged by poor writing and organization. It is these manuscripts which consume the most editorial time and very definitely, the most reader time. All manuscripts (except those obviously not candidates for publication) are sent initially to two or three readers. But ambiguous or conflicting evaluations often require the assistance of additional readers. One manuscript recently resubmitted to us has been evaluated by nine readers (including the three editors), and we have still not made a final decision on it. While the number of readers was very unusual, the difficulty was not: a professionally executed piece of work, well written and analyzed, but missing what some readers (but not others) thought was a critical data component. The author has been asked to construct a theoretical rationale for proceeding without the missing data, and the manuscript may yet be published in the *Review*.

When I agreed to accept the editorship of the *Review* I was aware of the contrasting roles of the editors of law reviews and social science journals. To oversimplify a bit, the first was, I thought, marked by significant editorial involvement in the final draft of a manuscript to be published, the second by relatively light editing for style and grammar once the decision to publish had been made. My personal preference was for the more detached editorial role. But experience has pushed us quite a bit in the opposite direction. Only the authors can say for sure that their manuscripts have or have not been improved by our efforts.

We have made one obvious change in the format of the *Review*: a new cover design. The design commissioned by Marc Galanter (Volumes 8 through 13) was an abstractionist rendition of the interrelationship between the concepts of (gemeinschaft) and (gesellschaft). For the 1980s we decided on a cover with simple lines that is informative and attractive. Thus the new cover will include not only the name of the journal and the citation of the issue, but also the names of the authors published in that issue. We will, however, retain the color coding scheme. For those of you who couldn't tell immediately, the color of Volume 14 is "Process Blue." Our thanks to Mary Jonaitis of M & M Graphics in Madison for creating the new cover design.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to announce that Volume 14, number 3, will consist of a special issue, edited by Richard

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Abel, devoted to "Contemporary Issues in Law and Social Science." The review articles in this issue were selected competitively. They do not exhaust the subject matter of our enterprise, but among them one finds a good representation of the topics of most current concern. The tentative lineup will look something like this: Vernon K. Dibble, "A Synthesis of the Writings of Marx and Engels on Law"; Francis G. Snyder, "Law and Development in Light of Dependency Theory"; John Hagan, "The Legislation of Crime and Delinquency"; Martin S. Shapiro, "Appeal"; Harry N. Scheiber, "Federalism and the Legal Process: Historical and Contemporary Analysis of the United States"; Neil Vidmar, "Social Psychological Processes Underlying Attitudes Toward Legal Punishment"; David Bordua, "Police in American Society"; Brenda Danet, "Language and the Legal Process."

With nearly half of my editorial term completed, President Lawrence Friedman has appointed a committee to begin the search for a successor. Nominations (and self-nominations) for the position of Editor should be sent to me. Wherever possible include a full curriculum vita of the nominee. Keep in mind that the Editorship, and hence the *Review*, is dependent on a substantial subsidy from the host university. The funds budgeted by the Law and Society Association are not sufficient to cover all the expenses of the editorial office. The search committee expects to make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting in June, 1980. We hope that the new editor can assume manuscript intake responsibilities in March, 1981.

Speaking of the annual meeting, my colleagues and I are pleased to have the opportunity to host it. The meeting is scheduled for June 5th-8th, 1980, and will be held at The Concourse in downtown Madison (only a few blocks from the university campus). Information about accommodations has been provided in the most recent issue of the Newsletter. Those wishing to participate in the program should contact Professor Stewart Macaulay, University of Wisconsin Law School, Madison, Wisconsin 53706. A tentative list of panel topics and chairpersons appears elsewhere in this issue. This meeting of our association will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Research Committee on Sociology of Law of the International Sociological Association. Many scholars from other countries will be in attendance, and the proceedings will have a truly international flavor.

JBG

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