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A STUDY OF ONE HUNDRED JUVENILE-ADULT OFFENDERS  
IN THE COOK COUNTY JAIL, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

A. P. DRUCKER.<sup>½</sup>

*Home Conditions.*—The Illinois Juvenile Laws are so formulated as to relate only to minors (males) under 17 years of age; those above this age are left unprotected. If a juvenile-adult, that is, one between the ages of 17 and 21 happens to commit an offense, he is at the mercy of the police magistrates, just as any adult delinquent.

The Juvenile Protective Association for some time had its attention fixed on this peculiarity of the law, and eventually decided to make an investigation of the juvenile-adult offenders, to learn if possible how they fared under the present system. In the course of the investigation, the Association found that in 1911, 1,328 boys and 61 girls under the age of 21 were confined in the county jail for various offenses. Out of this number, 100 boys' cases were taken at random for study and investigation. Several Juvenile Protective Association officers were put on the trail of these lads to study their careers through the home, the school, the courts, the police stations, and lastly, the county jail. In all these places there was evident one need—the need for defense and protection of the youthful delinquent.

CONTRIBUTORY CAUSES.  
TABLE I.

	Bad home	Bad company	Boy drinks	Sub- normal	For- eigner	Bad neigh- borhood	Total
Bastardy .....	2	1	..	..	..	*3	3
Rape .....	2	3	..	..	5	*10	10
Highway robbery.....	9	6	10	..	..	*18	25
Assault and battery.....	..	..	1	2	..	*2	3
Attempted murder.....	..	1	..	..	..	*1	1
Murder .....	3	..	2	2	..	*5	7
Burglary .....	12	13	2	..	..	*26	27
Stealing .....	..	2	..	3	..	*5	5
Petty larceny .....	2	..	..	..	..	2	2
Grand larceny .....	4	2	..	2	..	*8	8
Confidence game .....	..	2	..	..	..	..	2
Disorderly conduct.....	2	2	..	1	..	*4	5
Arson .....	..	1	..	1	..	*2	2
Totals .....	37	37	15	11	5	*91	100

\*Included in other counts.

In the first place, the home conditions under which the boys lived in nearly all cases showed the lads more sinned against than sinning; the boy in nearly every instance had no guidance, no adviser, to warn

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him against the consequences of his ways, and in addition, he was often confronted by the vicious example of a drunken father or a dissolute mother.

Out of 100 offenses, 73 were violations of property rights; 13 were sexual crimes; 9 were personal injuries, and the remainder were cases of disorderly conduct. Of the 9 personal injuries, 6 were attempts to commit robbery—hence actually crimes against property rights. The remarkable predominance of this last class of offenses suggests that poverty is the prime cause of much delinquency. It is an acknowledged fact that property offenses are induced by poverty mainly.<sup>1</sup>

In order to obtain every possible light on the delinquency cases in hand, the officer who went out to investigate was asked to give his or her personal opinion as to the contributory cause in each case. From the officers' answers we have these facts: in 37 cases, the cause was ascribed to a bad home. In 37, the boys were misled by bad company, and 15 were badly intoxicated when they committed their crime. The rest were abnormals.

FAMILY RECORD.  
TABLE II.

	Both parents living	Father dead	Mother dead	Both parents dead	Family separated	Foreign born	Father deserted	Total
Mixed marriage ...	3	3	1	..	6	..	*3	13
Only son .....	1	5	1	..	..	..	..	7
Home conditions bad	8	11	6	6	..	5	*2	36
Home conditions good	8	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
Father insane .....	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Mother insane .....	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Disease in family..	2	1	3	..	..	..	..	5
Bad blood in family	2	..	..	..	3	..	*2	4
Mother working....	16	7	..	..	..	..	*5	23
Total .....	42	27	11	6	9	5	..	100

\*Included in other counts.

Moreover, of the 100 cases studied, 91 came from bad neighborhoods, where there were no playgrounds or recreation centers. Most of the streets from which the boys came had one or more saloons and pool-rooms to the block, while the back doors of the homes looked out upon the railroad tracks or the dumping-grounds. The home conditions of our cases were as a rule even below the average for such neighborhoods. Of the 100 boys, only 42 had both parents living; 28 were fatherless, 11

<sup>1</sup>The statistics set forth in the appended tables are corroborated by the statistics of other agencies interested in the question of the contributing causes of juvenile crime. All agree that between 80 and 90 per cent of this crime relates to property violation and is induced by poverty.

The statistics accumulated by the authorities of the state reformatory at Elmira, N. Y., show that 83 per cent of the New York Juvenile Court children never had a childhood. In other words they had to work for a living since they were 10 years old.

Only 13 per cent of all the young offenders examined by Raux of Paris, had had even ordinary supervision by their parents.

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were motherless, and of 6 both parents were dead. In the other instances the parents had separated or the father had deserted. Of the 42 who had both parents living, 37 came from very bad homes, where either one or both parents were addicted to drink or the drug habit, or where the mother was obliged to go out to work, and there was neither surveillance nor physical care.

One would naturally look for an abundance of evil habits among boys such as these, and it was ascertained that fully 86 per cent drank and smoked, and a large number were sexual perverts.<sup>1</sup>

Most of these habits were acquired from the example of the parents or from bad company.

Twenty-eight of the boys were in prison for the first time; 35 others already had Juvenile Court records; while 37 had managed to be on the police records at various times without going to the Juvenile Court.

TABLE III.

Age of offenders—										
15 years	.....	2								
16 years	.....	5								
17 years	.....	29								
18 years	.....	23								
19 years	.....	18								
20 years	.....	17								
21 years	.....	5								
22 years	.....	2								
Jail records—										
Juvenile Court record	.....	35								
Arrested once before	.....	19								
Arrested twice before	.....	8								
Arrested three times before	.....	8								
Never arrested before	.....	28								
John Worthy School	.....	*14								
Pontiac	.....	*3								
St. Charles	.....	*3								
Parental	.....	*1								
*Included in the other counts.										
SCHOOL RECORD.										
Left school at	.....	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
No education	.....	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Grade—										
Second	.....	..	1	1	..	1	..	1	..	..
Third	.....	..	..	..	..	1	4	1	1	..
Fourth	.....	..	..	1	..	4	2	1	..	..
Fifth	.....	..	1	..	..	8	2	..	..	..
Sixth	.....	..	..	1	..	14	2	2	..	..
Seventh	.....	..	..	..	2	10	2	5	..	..
Eighth	.....	..	..	..	1	10	5	3	1	..
High School	.....	..	..	..	1	..	4	1	1	..
College	.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Totals	.....	3	2	1	2	6	50	19	13	4

A study of the mental equipment of the lads gave rather interesting results. All the boys were found to be somewhat below the average in ordinary intelligence. From their own statements it appeared that four of them had no education whatever, while the greater number (69)

<sup>1</sup>While it is extremely difficult to obtain direct evidence in regard to this vice, nevertheless from the testimony of the jailers, guards, and other officers, it is safe to state that 50 per cent of the boys in the county jail are sexual perverts of one kind or another.

had left school at or before 14 years. When subjected to an educational test, it became evident that the boys had little to show even for the time they alleged they had attended school. Of course this delinquent class are the same boys who make up the truant population of the schools. And in the bad home especially there is always an excuse for a boy to play truant. That truancy itself is not a disease but rather a symptom of certain social disturbances will be conceded by anyone who looks over the inquiry made into this truancy question by Gertrude Howe Britton, in her *Intensive Study of the Causes of Truancy*. Here Mrs. Britton suggests numerous remedies, which, if taken up and perseveringly carried out, would do much to solve this important factor in juvenile, and especially juvenile-adult delinquency.

TABLE IV.  
TRUANCY RECORD FOR 1912.\*

Illness (child or in family).....	22,963
Kept home for cause.....	11,770
Lack of shoes or clothing.....	3,405
Home conditions .....	376
Other causes .....	2,390
<b>Total, poverty as cause.....</b>	<b>40,898</b>
Parental inefficiency .....	4,695
Truancy absences .....	5,153
Excluded by medical inspection.....	1,082
Suspended by school authorities.....	1,011
Cold weather or distance.....	611
Repeaters .....	1,352
Incorrigibles .....	244
Subnormals .....	105

Total, other causes than poverty..... 14,273

\*These figures were obtained through the courtesy of Mr. W. L. Bodine, superintendent of compulsory education.

Inasmuch as the number of cases was not large enough to warrant dependable results with respect to the influence of race and nationality on criminality, the writer made use of the county jail records, together with the statistics of the police department on this subject. Thus, in a table of criminal statistics of Chicago, were found the means for a comparison of the number of arrests of persons of various nationalities. This table was then studied in conjunction with the nationality statistics of the Chicago board of education and the similar records of the county jail. From these figures it was learned that the Greeks,\* the Polish, and the colored stand at the head of the criminal records. Further analysis reveals the fact that the Polish and the colored lead in sexual crimes, burglary, and murder. It should be added here that if more reliable data could be gathered on this nationality phase of criminality, we might have a valuable key to the psychology of the criminal. Unfortunately the records we now have are neither altogether dependable nor adequate. But this question of the racial tendency to crime would be well worth investigation, and next to New York, Chicago would offer the best field for this study.

Taking the offenses of our juvenile-adults by nationality, we have:

\*See Table V.

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6 American white; 7 colored; 5 English; 14 Germans; 2 French; 9  
Italians; 19 Polish; 6 Bohemians; 2 Greeks; 20 Irish; 10 Scotch.

TABLE V.  
STATISTICS OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO.

	Americans White	Black	Bohem.	English	French	German	Greek	Irish	Italian	Norw.	Polish	Russians	Scotch
Population of Chi- cago (1909) ..	699,554	45,024	116,549	70,753	97,777	563,708	5,660	240,560	70,750	57,117	173,409	123,238	27,787
Number of school children of Chi- cago in 1911...	267,270	11,191	46,411	12,266	1,928	140,145	1,448	50,522	43,280	15,284	97,977	68,912	
Persons arrested by police de- partment 1911..	42,729	5,949	1,050	667	236	4,645	1,793	2,479	2,768	598	6,728	3,655	335
Persons in County Jail 1911.....			46	57	15	274	82	169	200	59	not given	393	31
Juvenile-adults in County Jail 1911 .....			5	4	0	23	20	4	34	4	not given	40	1
Proportion of the nationalities in the hundred cases selected..	6	7	6	5	0	17	6	21	10	1	20	11	10

TABLE VI.  
WHAT THE BOY WOULD LIKE TO DO.

What the Boy really does.	Machinist	Mechanic	Teamster	Baker	Farmer	Pumber	Blacksmith	Carpenter	Printer	Tailor	Painter	Cigar-maker	Boiler-maker	Tool-maker	Cook	Laborer	Engraver	Musical Insts.	Drawing	Electrician	Electric. Engin.	Auto Mfr.	Engineer	Lawyer	Priest	Clerk	Milk Bus.	Architect	No Ambition	Total
Machinist	1																													1
Mechanic		4	1	4	1	1	1	1	1																					1
Wagon boy																														1
Baker																														1
Plumber																														1
Electrician																														1
Errand boy																														1
Office boy																														1
Laborer																														1
Newsboy																														1
Bootblack																														1
Waiter in restaurant																														1
Dishwasher																														1
Porter, saloon																														1
Clerk																														1
Cook																														1
Painter																														1
Printer																														1
Tailor																														1
Toolmaker																														1
Tanitor																														1
Store boy																														1
Chauffeur																														1

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*Occupation.*—From the information brought in by the officers, we derived the following facts in regard to the occupations of juvenile-adult delinquents. Forced to enter the industrial world early, without any trade, these boys work at any odd job they can get. Such jobs they “hold down” on the average three months; then they change, not only to another employer, but in many cases to an entirely different kind of work. One of the boys went from a job as messenger boy to another as dishwasher in a restaurant, thence as a wagon boy in a grocery. Naturally, such a boy grows up without a steady trade or skill in any one occupation. From the statistics gathered by the Juvenile Protective Association it was learned that only three per cent of the jail boys had a trade, the rest being wholly unprepared to earn a living. Furthermore, only six per cent worked at an occupation they liked, all the others being obliged to take what came their way. To illustrate: 19 of the boys had ambition to become machinists. Of these, 4 worked as wagon boys; 1 as a farmer; 3 as errand boys; 1 as an office boy; 4 as plain laborers; 2 as grocery clerks; 3 as store boys; and 1 as a chauffeur.

*Police Lockups.*—In the course of following the trail of the juvenile-adult offender, the writer had occasion to investigate the police stations and lockups where these young offenders were temporarily confined by the police officers. To his amazement, the investigator found only 4 tolerably decent lockups in the city, the other 41 being unbelievably filthy and unsanitary, a menace not only to the little decency of those locked up there, but to the health of the city as well. The cells are usually in the basements, which are damp, vermin-ridden, and wholly unfit for human habitation. The walls of the cells are positively wet, and the floors are slimy. Very few of the cells have any sanitary conveniences, and the question of sewage in most of the stations is a mere tradition. The Board of Health has the right to quarantine a private house where there is a contagious disease. Yet many of the station lockups in the midst of the city are veritable breeding-places for all manners of diseases; and the fact that many of the inmates are physically rundown when they come to the lockup, easily makes them carriers in cases of epidemic. Another evil related to this horrible condition of the station cells is the fact that the dishes and utensils are never sterilized, indeed, do not even always undergo a perfunctory cleansing between use by one person and another. As many of the persons locked up are victims of skin and venereal diseases, the imminent danger of such negligence may well be imagined. It seems that the law condemning and forbidding the public drinking cup might easily be extended to make impossible this primitive lack of sanitation in the station régime.



Alongside the unhygienic and unsanitary condition of these breeding-places for contagions, there is always the moral evil of the promiscuity in the system of incarceration in these stations. The women's cells, for instance, are in the same row as those of the men, and not only are delinquents of both sexes able to see each other and to converse, but the relatively harmless offender may readily overhear the conversation of the worst miscreant and his pal. Very few stations have even special provisions for young girls. It is no uncommon thing to find old prostitutes and comparatively decent girls herded together.

It is clear that this lack of proper provision for prisoners is not only a public nuisance, according to the Chicago code, and a crime against those incarcerated, but it is a menace to the community at large. For according to the Police Report for the year 1911, 81,648 persons were locked up by the police in the stations during that year. The greater portion of this number were kept in the cells over Saturday and Sunday nights—"the busiest evenings of the week." Some persons are kept in the cells for several days, while the police are out trying to collect evidence in a case in which such prisoners may be involved as witnesses merely. It is acknowledged that on Saturday and Sunday nights the cells are often so crowded that the prisoners cannot sit down, but on account of the crowded condition are kept standing all night. Now there are federal laws making punishable similar overcrowding of cattle; yet nothing is done to make this herding together of human beings impossible.

While the police do not give the statistics of those who are held as witnesses only, the report of the matron, in this case throws light on this question. Of the 9,840 women locked up, 1,920 were arrested only to be held as witnesses. Thus almost 20 per cent of the persons incarcerated were absolutely innocent. Yet they are forced to stay in these filthy police station cells in proximity with all sorts of criminals and low characters. Besides, we should remember that even of those arrested for some offense, all are not guilty. Of the 81,648 persons arrested, 49,934 were discharged by the Municipal Court as not guilty when their cases came up for trial.

TABLE VII.	
POLICE RECORD FOR 1911.	
Persons arrested .....	81,649
Arraigned in Municipal Court.....	80,649
Persons arrested under 16 years.....	47
From 16 to 20 years of age.....	8,423
Held to Grand Jury.....	2,783
Held to Juvenile Court.....	64
Fined .....	30,612
Discharged .....	49,034
Sent to House of Correction.....	1,116
OCCUPATIONS.	
Unskilled laborers .....	34,536
No occupation .....	9,610

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But these negative evils are not the only ones. There is additional evidence of actual abuse of prisoners by the police which is a disgrace to the city. In the first place, it was learned that the police sometimes arrest boys without taking the trouble to notify the parents; and more than once the poor mother has learned of her boy's arrest after a night of anxious waiting only by seeing the account of his arrest in the paper. More than this—the boys complained of terrible beatings received at the hands of the police. Some were kicked, sand-bagged, bullied; and one had a tooth knocked out. One had cold water poured over him and was threatened with hot water if he would not turn state's evidence against someone the police were desirous of "sending up the road."

Another grave form of police abuse is that known as the "mugging system." It is the custom of the Police Department to photograph all prisoners held to the grand jury by the municipal judge, before they are sent to the county jail. But only those unable to furnish bail are sent to the jail before their trial. It follows that only impecunious prisoners are photographed. Yet most of the juvenile-adults photographed last year by the Identification Bureau were innocent boys, inasmuch as 55 per cent of the cases brought to the Bureau to be photographed and described were later discharged as not guilty.

*Municipal Judges.*—It may be presumptuous for a layman to suggest that there are shortcomings in our municipal judiciary. But, hoping that the best of intentions may pass as an extenuating circumstance, the writer pleads guilty to such presumption, and thereupon submits the following charges. First: there is manifest in several cases a lack of insight on the part of several judges. One magistrate usually does what the city or state attorney advises. Another has the habit of holding a large number of those arraigned before him to the grand jury (especially if they have no attorney), preferring to let that body bear the burden of responsibility and decide who is guilty and who is not—notwithstanding the judge has considerably more opportunity for ascertaining the actual merits of the case, since both sides are presented before him, whereas the grand jury usually hears only the prosecution. The records of one judge bear testimony that in two-thirds of the cases which he held to the grand jury, that body found no bill. We have evidence that another judge held a number of boys for stealing jewelry, but allowed the adults who knowingly purchased the stolen goods to go free.

One point chiefly should be brought to the attention of the municipal judges—and this is the evil consequence of the short sentence. Every social worker and penologist knows that not only is such a sentence useless as a reformatory measure, but it has a pernicious influence

upon the culprit. In the first place, it familiarizes him with the milder aspect of the jail, and thus robs that institution of its terrors. Second, it brings the first—perhaps accidental—offender into contact with the hardened criminal, thus starting many a one on the downward path. This is especially the case with the juvenile-adult. For many a habitual criminal feels that he is taking a clever revenge upon society by enticing some unsophisticated youth into crime. Third, once in jail, the little self-respect of the youth or man vanishes, and in its place he acquires a bravado and devil-may-care attitude toward the law which invariably ends in a criminal record.

TABLE VIII.  
COUNTY JAIL STATISTICS FOR 1911.

Number of offenders received.....	8,333
Adults .....	6,944
Juvenile-Adults .....	1,389
Number of times arrested (Juvenile-Adults).	
First .....	599
Second .....	464
Third .....	141
Fourth .....	41
Fifth .....	26
Innumerable .....	27
	1,389
Total .....	1,389
Number persons sent to House of Correction.....	1,203
Transferred to a reformatory.....	61
Held to Juvenile Court.....	8
Discharged .....	1,118

*The County Jail.*—The County Jail of Cook County is a great improvement on the majority of county jails, and the present jailer is striving earnestly to do his duty by his unfortunate charges. But here again there are certain deficiencies which chiefly affect the juvenile-adults detained there. The first of these is the poor classification of the prisoners. In fact the juvenile-adults are placed without any classification at all. This makes it possible for one accused of murder to become cell-mate to another held for disorderly conduct merely.

Second, the prisoners are kept two in a cell, a practice objectionable on sanitary as well as moral grounds.

Third, the tier for the juvenile-adults is too near those of the adults, thus making it feasible for them to converse with habitual criminals.

Fourth, the boys can get all kinds of tobacco, and cigarettes from the jail store (either through a “trustee” or a guard).

Fifth, the prisoners as a whole and especially the juvenile-adults are kept altogether too long in the County Jail, some being held as long as six months, though this is against the law. This circumstance is due to the following reasons: 1. The attitude of unscrupulous lawyers, who have learned by experience that they can extract more money from their clients by delaying the case. 2. The lack of influence or friends on the

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part of many young persons. 3. The fact that the grand jury is often unable to complete its work in one month. 4. A paucity of criminal judges.

The sixth deficiency of the County Jail which concerns the youthful prisoners is the fact that these are forced into a life of inactivity while in the County Jail which habituates them to a life of idleness when they leave the jail. Many a boy has left the jail a confirmed criminal and tramp on this account.

*Résumé and Retrospect.*—In following on the trail of the juvenile-adult offender, we saw the neighborhood conditions under which he grows up. We saw what his home conditions are and concluded that his neglected, untidy and loveless home is anything but an uplifting influence in his life, anything but a functional, inspiring home. We also observed that, no matter how hard the lad tried—and a few of the boys actually made heroic efforts to be “straight”—he was powerless against the heavy odds in his disfavor:

First, there was the bad example of vicious parents; second, the lack of someone to advise and encourage; third, lack of self-respect or the inspiring example of decent companionship. (In school, where one might expect the evil influence of the non-functional home to be offset, the boy is forced to consort with those of his class, since the better sort of boy is not prompted by altruistic motives to seek the companionship of the other class). Fourth, through his poverty, he is often forced to play truant; later truancy becomes one of his habits and ends in ruining him. To make his plight worse, he is given no time in which to learn a trade, but is prematurely forced into any employment that offers itself, with the result that he is often still further degraded and brutalized. When the lad is finally caught it is as a rule too late to save him; he is already a hardened criminal. Or, if anything were lacking to make him such, it is contributed by his treatment at the hands of the police, his experience with the courts, and his county jail associations.

This, then, is what the investigation of the Juvenile Protective Association has brought to light. It remains now for the public to decide whether the Association's appeal is to be as a voice crying in the wilderness, or whether something shall be done to remedy matters.