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## SOME CRIMINOLOGIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE RETURNING SOLDIER<sup>1</sup>

Perry V. Wagley<sup>2</sup>

One of the vital problems which will confront the American public more and more at this stage of the war will be the personal and social needs of the returning soldier. Those engaged in the prevention and treatment of delinquency and crime will be especially concerned with those socially, mentally, emotionally, and physically handicapped soldiers who will not be able to adapt themselves to civilian life after the disorganizing and disintegrating experiences which they encountered in the many phases of military activity. Some of these, because of their maladjustments, will come into conflict with the law. The readers of this Journal will be particularly interested in the latter group.

In discussing this problem we must not only concern ourselves with the soldier who is to return in the postwar period, but also those who already have returned, those who are rejected or discharged, and those military prisoners now in confinement in guardhouses, rehabilitation centers, United States disciplinary barracks, and Federal penal institutions. Any attempt to formulate a working hypothesis for dealing with this perplexing question would be presumptuous on my part. I can merely survey the problem in the light of my 20 years of work with the mentally ill and my present experience with the Army's rehabilitation program.

Most of us will recall the many social ills, particularly during the prohibition era and the depression, which were outgrowths of World War I. Today, as in World War I, our returning soldiers will have to make many new and difficult adjustments to their homes and communities, and also to the many socially disorganizing situations which will exist in the period of reconstruction following the present crisis. In speculating about the criminologic problems incident to post-war readjustment of returning soldiers the following social and psychiatric problems come to mind and seem to warrant our most thoughtful study and diligent effort.

Because of the vast number of men, women and youth directly or indirectly participating in the present war effort, the problems of postwar reconstruction will be large in scope, involved, and varied. With the return of seven to ten million soldiers to peacetime activity, it is obvious that countless readjustments will have to be made in order to control those situations and experiences

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which contribute to delinquency and criminal behavior. In the aftermath there must be either a carefully organized reconstruction or complete disorganization and chaos.

The problem of economic insecurity is of fundamental significance in dealing with the returning soldier. Many of our soldiers today live in better economic circumstances and maintain higher standards of living than they ever achieved in civilian life. Most of them will not be willing to return to their former economic level. Others have left good jobs but will not find them waiting for them upon their return. In those instances in which employment was assured, the jobs may no longer exist. We also must keep in mind the soldier who never had work experience in civilian life (including those who left high school or college before graduation) and the soldier who never demonstrated employment stability. I raise the question as to whether these groups of soldiers will find adequate employment and maintain a standard of living at least comparable to that offered in military service. To check postwar delinquency and crime, returning soldiers must be secure.

Emotional security is equally important. In returning home to his family, relatives, and friends the soldier will want a sense of social adequacy, a feeling that he is accepted and appreciated by those from whom he was separated and upon whom he, in prewar days, was socially reliant and dependent. During his military experience he made new friends and lived a completely different social life. In many instances he found emotional security through friendships and gratifying experiences in military life. He must have emotional security in civil life.

In the Army, moreover, most soldiers have acquired a new set of social values, attitudes, habits, interests, and needs. This is particularly true of the younger soldier who came to the Army from the sheltered environment of his home and school. Upon his return to civilian life he doubtless will be in conflict with many of the patterns of his home and his community. He will have either to resolve these conflicts or compensate in unsocial behavior.

There is a general relaxing of moral standards in wartime on the part of both the soldier and society in general. These standards will persist for some time into the postwar period, and are bound to affect the soldier's adjustment on return to civic life. His moral standards will be in conflict with those he will encounter in his home, work, school, and play relationships. There also is the question whether the organization and programs of our social institutions, which in some instances have been modified by the impact of the war, will be restored to their prewar standards.

Many women now employed will be unwilling to return to their traditional role in the home and the nursery as a result of their

new-found economic freedom and emancipation from the restraining and confining experiences involved in home management. This newly discovered freedom will create a vastly greater number of problems in family relationships than we may allow ourselves to believe. We should consider to what extent the changed status of women will result in unhappy family relations and homes broken through separation and divorce.

Family relationship may be expected to be threatened or disrupted by other circumstances that the war has brought to pass. Among them are hurried marriages that do not exclude incompatibility, and separation of soldiers from their wives, particularly if extramarital experiences have prevailed during the period of separation. We must be alert to the misdemeanors and more serious violations of the law which may emanate from unsatisfactory and discordant marriage relations. And it must not be forgotten that marital discord is a dominant contributing factor in juvenile delinquency and that today's delinquents may be tomorrow's criminals.

Many a soldier who has never had status or prestige in civilian life has acquired a position of leadership and a sense of importance in the military society. By the very nature of their military assignments, many soldiers have been elevated to positions of authority, leadership, and prestige that they never were able to achieve in their respective communities and they never can attain in civilian life. They will expect to return to their homes maintaining, to some extent their present status in the Army. No one knows better than the specialist in behaviour the effect of the loss of honor, prestige, and a feeling of worth on an individual's personal and social adjustment. Some of these soldiers will not be willing to accept their relatively insignificant prewar status and will compensate by engaging in socially disapproved activities. Some will become easy prey for the demagogues and pseudo-reformers, who, in the postwar period, will offer a panacea for all social ills.

Then there is the question whether the returning soldier will consider that he has made a greater sacrifice and contribution toward the war effort than the civilians who have been active on the home and industrial fronts. It may be true that many of those on the production lines are as essential to the war effort as the soldier, but will the soldier believe it? In his competition for employment and status in the postwar period, what will be his reaction when he finds that he is receiving no more consideration than those who produced guns and other materials for the fighting forces.

The aggressive primitive urges expressed in hate, violence, destruction, and the need to kill have been encouraged in the fighting soldier throughout the period of his conditioning, combat training, and fighting. All of these attitudes and conduct will have to

be reshaped and controlled. Our war psychology must be converted to a peace psychology immediately upon termination of the war. Failure to achieve this end will result in unrestrained patterns of belligerency, hate, violence, corruption, and plunder. Those who can't adjust may become involved in conflict with the law.

Adventure and excitement are the lot of the active soldier. Many will find it difficult to make the transition to the relatively monotonous and routine living which will confront them upon their return home. The craving for new experience — a change of scene — is a fundamental human need which must be satisfied. If the soldier is unable to find expression for his needs for excitement and adventure in normal outlets, he will become restless and disorganized and will seek expression in nomadic behavior and other activities which may bring him in conflict with the law.

The dangerous ideologies and patterns created and fostered by gangsters, racketeers and other public enemies since World War I, and more recently the activities of the blackmarket operators, are likely to find expression in the attitudes and behavior of the returning soldier who may adopt the doctrine of easy money or be unable to find satisfying work in socially accepted employment.

Large numbers of youth under draft age have left the protected environment of their homes and schools for the less-restrained atmosphere of the war industries. Some will have difficulty readjusting to peace-time earnings, and others, because of limited education and skills, will not be able to compete with the returning soldier who in all likelihood will be given first preference for jobs. Some provision must be made for the satisfaction of youth's economic, social, educational, and recreational needs if we hope to avert a postwar wave of delinquency.

The uprooted, evicted, and transplanted populations throughout the world will, of course, comprise a social problem of global magnitude. Specifically for us will be the task of arranging for the disposition, distribution, evacuation or reception of refugees. The prewar immigration quota system will have to be revived or revised when peace returns lest the assimilation process becomes clogged. Alien ideologies have been imported and will require scrutiny before being indiscriminately absorbed. Of necessity this will devolve upon the returning soldier, especially upon the professional man and the educator.

Finally many children of our returning soldiers, and others too, will become "orphans of the storm". We have the choice of allowing them to shift for themselves in their homes and communities or of providing them with intelligent direction and guidance. Make no mistake; they are thinking for themselves and also remember that they will shape the future course of our democracy.