

1947

Current Notes

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CURRENT NOTES

Austin L. Porterfield, Guest Editor

An Index of Crime by States: Changes from 1937-1939 to 1946—Dependable statistics of crime are difficult to obtain. As a result the variations in crime rates from time to time and place to place are very hard to observe by methods scientifically controlled. However, by taking the number of murders, cases of aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny, and auto thefts known to the police in the cities by states, as reported in *Uniform Crime Reports*, and comparing the number of each of these offenses in the various states with the number of each per 100,000 in the United States as a whole, it is possible to construct an index based on the percentage which the rate in each state is of the rate for the nation as a whole. Thus the index score for the United States would be 100 for each of the designated offenses, while the individual states could range with fairly wide limits in nearly equal numbers above and below this score, or norm.

Then, by taking a summation of the "logs" of the six index scores for each state and determining the geometric mean of these six items, it is possible to obtain a fairly dependable basis of comparison for places and times at a glance by means of a composite index. The composite index needs to be the geometric mean instead of the

State or Area	Year			State or Area	Year		
	1937-1939	1943	1946		1937-1939	1943	1946
U. S. A.	100	100	100	Mich.	83	114	104
N. H.	26	29	24	Idaho	83	52	67
R. I.	30	36	48	Mo.	85	83	111
Vt.	31	29	30	Utah	85	127	108
Wis.	33	34	30	Ill.	88	78	75
S. D.	40	46	30	Ohio	97	88	90
Mass.	41	39	35	Wash.	100	114	133
Me.	43	54	40	Oreg.	102	145	131
Nebr.	47	52	65	Del.	102	104	105
Conn.	48	57	46	Nev.	103	120	122
Iowa	52	35	49	Ind.	105	102	95
Minn.	53	37	35	La.	108	111	108
N. Y.	53	49	53	Miss.	114	172	145
N. D.	63	33	33	Md.	114	127	109
Pa.	66	55	55	Calif.	116	164	164
Wyo.	67	58	68	W. Va.	125	100	100
N. J.	72	65	60	Okla.	130	123	120
Mont.	79	60	72	N. M.	139	118	118
Kans.	80	63	72	S. C.	154	147	161
Colo.	80	108	91	Ala.	160	161	179
Texas	160	159	167	Va.	218	233	192
Ark.	173	137	172	Ky.	222	175	200
Ariz.	179	208	175	Fla.	227	187	204
N. C.	204	189	185	Ga.	233	147	161
Tenn.	218	159	170				

arithmetic mean of the six separate indices to prevent one greatly varying item from taking up too much of the picture.

When this process is applied to the data appearing in *Uniform Crime Reports* for 1937-1939, inclusive, for 1943, and for the first half of 1946, the results may be observed in the arrays which follow. Of course the smaller scores show the better records, that is less crime, and the larger scores the poorer.

Of course the index scores do not represent absolute changes in rates from period to period for each state, but rather how the state stands in each designated year with relation to other states in the entire nation as compared with other years. Lack of space makes impossible the elaboration necessary to answer questions which the observation of these arrays is sure to suggest. But the writer aims to expand upon the method of obtaining this index and of applying it in an article to be written later on the basis of a research now going forward on "Crime and the Social Order." It goes without saying that such data take no account of much "white collar criminality."

Can You Trust the Statements of Those Who Violate Parole?—Rudolph Schwarz has made a study at Sing Sing Prison of the degree of reliability of the statements of parole violators, and he has come up with the conclusion that these statements, given to account for their failures to live up to the terms of the parole, are lacking in credibility. He reached this conclusion by studying 100 parole violators taken at random after they were returned to prison. In each instance the prisoner did not know that the examiner had a detailed report on his case as he made what Schwarz has called a spontaneous answer to the question, "Why and how did you do it?"

The report on I. F. showed that he had remained away from his approved residence for one week, stayed at a paramour's home, failed to maintain regular employment, imbibed to intoxication, and associated with a criminal. He said, "I neglected my job, and they could not find me in my room for a couple of nights."

J. M. was returned from parole as a violator for excessive use of intoxicants and refusing to "go to work." He said that the doctor told him he was unable to work and that he was only drinking a few bottles of beer at home. . . . R. F. was sent back to prison for drinking, sleeping away from home with paramour, and skipping gainful employment. He said that he stayed "late on Christmas Eve and stayed overnight at a friend's home." . . . R. J. was returned from parole for keeping late hours, failing to do the work assigned, possessing strange keys, and "preying on women." He said he had had trouble with the boss and had broken his back on the job. . . . F. B. had "absconded," imbibed deeply, and failed to support his children. His reply was, "I left my job, that is about all." . . . J. K., upon being returned for assaulting his wife, leaving employment, falsifying his residence, failing to report according to plan, and associating with a criminal, excused himself by saying that he left the state of New York because he had trouble with his wife. . . . J. W. had to re-enter prison as a parole violator for "absconding," lying about his employment and leaving it, frequenting bars, and showing the results thereof in intoxication. He replied that the parole officer "scared" him, so he did not report for seven months.

As the parade of reports continues, S. L. enters the picture. He was returned to prison because he had an aversion to reporting either to employment or to the parole officer. He liked to move without

permission, visit his paramour, abscond, and sell marihuana. Since he was scared, he "went for a walk with the children" instead of seeing the parole officer, he explained. . . . J. G., who had attempted to burglarize an apartment, reported: "I made a mistake in the address; I wanted to say 'good-bye' to a lady before going into the army. I rang the bell and thought somebody said, 'Come in!' Then I entered the apartment." . . . C. V., another violator, drank to excess, "abused his employer's wife," and changed his residence without permission. His view of the situation was, "I had a few words with my boss, and he called up the parole board."

Then Schwarz tells us that the report of the parole officer was taken as a basis for determining the degree of truthfulness of the statements of the violators of parole. If the official report enumerated four violations and the violator denied three of them, he was considered seventy-five per cent untruthful. Considered mathematically, 22 of the returnees told "the full truth," 20 denied everything, and the whole group of 100 proved only half honest. Then Schwarz concludes:

"When asked about parole violations, the inmate will give spontaneous answers. He is reasonably sure that the examiner does not know about him, and he may use all his cunning and insincerity to give information which will help himself. . . . On seeing that the examiner has ample and correct information about his violation, he seemingly gives up some of his hostile attitude. Even then more than half of his answers are untrue. Before evaluating information given by a criminal, we have to consider what advantage the criminal expects from giving any information. In judging mathematically the degree of truthfulness in the answers of the parole violator, a good deal depended upon the personal equation of the examiner; but I feel that long experience with questioning criminals guarantees good judgment.

"The questionnaire method with criminals cannot be used with safety. Of all statements of 100 parole violators, 50.39 per cent were untrue. Information given by the criminal should not be used as a basis for scientific investigation."

It may be remarked, incidentally, that Schwarz has at least found the replies of criminals useful in proving that they are *not useful*. No doubt Clifford Shaw would say that the value of "information given by criminals" in scientific research would depend upon the use made of that "information."

Parolees in the Armed Forces During World War II—David Dressler, who is the Executive Director of the New York State Division of Parole, has given us some valuable information about the records of parolees in the armed forces during World War II. (See *Parolees in the Armed Forces*. Albany: New York State Division of Parole, 1946.) He tells us that a new attitude was taken by the armed forces toward ex-offenders, and that ex-offenders were admitted more readily, if more selectively, than during World War I. As a result, "from the inception of Selective Service to February 1, 1946, adequate records are available for a grand total of 3,565 parolees under the jurisdiction of the New York State Division of Parole who were known to have served in the armed forces of the nation. Of this number, 1,473 had originally been paroled from prisons of the state, 2,057 from reformatories, and 35 from institutions for defective delinquents."

The length of service by these men is given below: .

TABLE I

LENGTH OF MILITARY SERVICE OF PAROLEES IN THE ARMED FORCES FROM THE INCEPTION OF SELECTIVE SERVICE TO FEBRUARY 1, 1946

<i>Service</i>	<i>Number of Parolees</i>
Under 6 months.....	255
Six months to less than one year.....	459
From 1 year to less than 18 months.....	364
From 1½ years to less than 2 years.....	365
From 2 years to less than 2½.....	417
From 2½ years to less than 3 years.....	445
From 3 years to less than 3½ years.....	544
From 3½ years to less than 4 years.....	342
From 4 years to less than 4½ years.....	38
From 4½ years to less than 5 years.....	11
Five years and over.....	5
Not given*.....	320
Total.....	3,565

Up to February 1, 1946, 1,113 of these ex-offenders had been discharged, 930 of them with honor, 75 with blue discharges, 11 with dishonor. For the remainder, the type of discharge had not been determined by the investigator. The parole group, thus, is seen to have 91.5 per cent honorable discharges as against a percentage of 98.6 per cent for the non-offender group.

TABLE II

DECORATIONS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN AWARDED PAROLEES IN THE ARMED FORCES, AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 1946

<i>Decoration</i>	<i>Number</i>
Distinguished Service Cross.....	1
Silver Star Medal.....	9
Distinguished Flying Cross.....	6
Soldiers Medal.....	2
Bronze Star Medal.....	36
Air Medal.....	13
Purple Heart.....	96
Arrowhead.....	25
Distinguished Unit Badge.....	50
Good Conduct Medal.....	512
Total.....	750

The rank of 795 of these men was ascertained at the time of their separation from the military. Of these, 348 had achieved some rank above that of private, first class, and 155 had attained the rank of sergeant. Above these rose one first and one second lieutenant. Table II gives the picture for distinguished service among these ex-offenders.

There is, however, another side to the picture which Dressler gives. "A total of 211 parolees were declared delinquent *while* they were

in the military service." These "represent 5.9 per cent of the 3,565 parolees in the armed forces all or a part of the time from the inception of Selective Service to February 1, 1946." This picture of delinquency is given in Table III.

TABLE III
NUMBER OF PAROLEES DECLARED DELINQUENT WHILE THEY WERE
IN THE ARMED FORCES AND STATUS ON FEBRUARY 1, 1946

<i>Status</i>	
Delinquencies cancelled	42
Delinquent parolees returned to penal institutions in this State for delinquencies established while in the armed forces....	23
Parolees carried as delinquents and serving sentences in insti- tutions outside of this State.....	12
Parolees carried as delinquents and still in the military service	134
<hr/>	
Total delinquencies established.....	211

In spite of the misdoings of a relatively small minority, the records of parolees taken as a whole seem very good. When Dressler "gets away from the figures," he tells some interesting stories of the courage and patriotic services of these men. Then he asks, "What will happen now?" At this point, it is difficult to refrain from letting him speak at length for himself.

"What will happen now? Judging by our experience of the Twenties and Thirties, the returned soldier will be a hero, then a job seeker, then a person indistinguishable from the rest of the population.

"The returning ex-offender will find, at first, that he is treated like all other ex-soldiers. His past will be forgiven and his contribution to society will be appreciated. He will have incentives and opportunities for a decent life as a citizen in a democracy.

"But then what happens may well be this. As the labor market becomes normally, then abnormally over-supplied, our attitude toward the former offender may change—whether or not his military experience has brought alterations in his personality. It is true to an extent, though not to be attributed exclusively to the one reason, that an abundance of labor brings harsher treatment of the offender, while a labor scarcity, as now, produces lenient attitudes. Now if the parolee ex-soldier, for example, begins to compete in an over-provided labor market, as he has earned every right to do, will he be accorded exactly the same status and treatment as the non-offender, as he has every right to expect? And if not, will he lose that morale that we think has been beneficial to us in war and that will, we hope, serve to continue him in the ranks of the law-abiding in civil life? In short, having proven he is a man, will G. I. Joe Parolee be allowed to remain a man?

"To the Division of Parole the parolee returning as a veteran will pose new or at least newly acquired problems.

"Some will need psychiatric care as a result of the trauma of battle. Others will be permanently handicapped physically and require special placement efforts. It is to be hoped that adequate facilities will become available for such persons.

"Some parolees will need jobs, and they will want better jobs than they had. A great deal will depend not only on the employment situation, but on the degree to which employers will accept men with records when the manpower situation is no longer critical.

"A number of parolees will want schooling and further vocational training. The G. I. Bill of Rights should be a boon to them.

"A few will find their family situations upsetting. Wives may have drifted away or established extra-marital relationships. Some parolees may have met girls elsewhere and no longer feel compatible with their wives. The skill of parole officers in helping in the solution of such problems will need to be great.

"There will be parolees who believe that because of military service, they should be discharged from supervision. This will be done where it seems in the best interests of society.

"And practically all who do any thinking on the subject—which means most of them—will want to be accepted into society once more with no strings attached; they will want no civil impediment to work and community life because of their records; they will want to be recognized as persons who have given to the country and now want to receive the blessings of citizenship in a democracy. Everything will depend upon the crystallization of thought in society on this score. If a man risks his life for his country, and performs as well as his non-offender colleague, is he entitled to be received now as a citizen unless and until he proves himself unworthy? Upon how society answers this question will depend, in some measure at least, the degree to which veteran parolees return to civilian life with security and stability."

Lynching in 1946—Tuskegee Institute has listed six definite lynching deaths for 1946 in the United States. States in which the listed lynching deaths occurred were: Georgia, 4; Louisiana, 1; and Mississippi, 1. Four borderline cases are not included in President F. D. Patterson's report. (See the *New South* for January, 1946, which is a publication of the excellent organization, the *Southern Regional Council*.)

What Churches Can Do for Juvenile Delinquency—"More Action and Less Talk" is the subheading for an article by the above title which is reprinted from a book by Travis Freeman Epis (privately printed in Richmond, Virginia), which he calls a *Manual for Work and Worship*. A number of churches, including the Chevy Chase Circle Presbyterian Church of Washington, D. C., are considering his suggestions and taking steps to apply them. Affirming that the major emphasis should be placed upon prevention, he suggests that churches ought to have committees interested in teaching parents that youth are not at fault, in stressing the need for better housing and less poverty, in cooperating with all community agencies in an intelligent way, in learning from these agencies, in encouraging church members to serve intelligently as volunteers for helping various agencies and the courts with individual children, and in teaching parents what is the meaning of parental responsibility.

An Organized Attempt to Improve Conditions in Jails—Mr. William W. T. Squire, President of the National Jail Association, writes the Editor of this Section the following letter:

Sir: May I offer my compliments on your observations concerning the plight of jails in the United States which I have just read under the Current Notes in the November-December issue of *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*. However, I would like to tell you that the National Jail Association is trying hard to awaken the public to existing conditions through the medium of *The Prison World* and through the distribution of a folder "Basic Principles of a Jail System," a copy of which I have enclosed.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM W. T. SQUIRE.

The "Basic Principles" call for the elimination of the practice of appointing personnel "from the ranks of the politically faithful," dilapidated buildings, the failure to segregate, filthy conditions in jails, abuses of the fee system, outdated methods of jail operation, the lack of constructive work or recreation, and the lack of inspection service with the authority to enforce good standards.

On the positive side these "Basic Principles" call for safe custody, segregation and classification, discipline, cleanliness, wholesome food, medical service, good management, economy, a trained staff, individual treatment of prisoners, work and recreation, non-political control, indeterminate sentences, chaplain service, adaption of architecture to best use, probation, parole, installment payment of fines, and greater use of bail and recognizance.

The Committee responsible for the "Basic Principles" as outlined and published in the *Prison World* for July-August, 1945 were the President, W. W. T. Squire; Warden Charles P. Price, Maryland; Warden Paul R. Brown, New York; F. Spencer Smith, New Jersey; Warden Paul J. Gernert, Pennsylvania; Warden Joseph Schwark, New Jersey; and Samuel M. Badian, New York.

We are glad to call the attention of those who may have overlooked it the excellent program of education being carried out by the Association's Journal, *The Prison World*.

National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty—The National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty is an English organization with headquarters at 34 Victoria Street in London. Their "Bulletin No. 22" reports a meeting of October, 1946 attended by 400 delegates, who, with the dissent of one delegate, passed and sent a resolution to the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, asking the "Labour Government" to outlaw the death penalty. The resolution contained the arguments that capital punishment is "unnecessary for personal and social security"; it is "a source of demoralization that tends to increase crime"; and "it is an expression of a conception of legal vengeance incompatible with modern British standards of social conduct."

The same "Bulletin" takes exception to a proposal that "films of the Nuremberg executions should be exhibited." To this, however, Mr. Attlee also had objected.

Meetings of the American Sociological Society—The *Sections on Criminology* at the Meetings of The American Sociological Society in Chicago, December 28-30, 1946 were well attended, informative, and provocative. Professor Elio D. Monachesi was the Chairman of both sessions of the criminologists. Papers were given by Martin H. Neumeyer, Bernard Lander, Michael Hakeem, Alfred C. Schnur, James E. Morelock, and Frank E. Hartung. Alfred R. Lindesmith, Saul D. Alinsky, Nathaniel Cantor, Gunnar Dybwad, Marshall B. Clinard, and Paul W. Tappan led the discussions of these papers.

There were a number of strong papers. But the paper no one forgets was given by Michael Hakeem of the University of Iowa on "An Evaluation of Case Reports Prepared by Psychiatrists in Penal and Correctional Institutions." His research report was packed with passages from the case interpretations of prison psychiatrists that were more than slightly amateurish. Some of them exercised considerable poetic license. Many interpretations were highly particularistic and quite irrelevant to any understanding of the case.

Professor Cantor rightly called attention to the fact that the psychiatric staff of prisons has an impossible task to perform. Its members are swamped by the great numbers of prisoners they interview in classification setups. They can do very little real diagnostic work, let alone the application of therapy. Hakeem's paper, however, made it quite clear that some of the weaknesses must be in many prison psychiatrists themselves.