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Current Notes

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CURRENT NOTES

V. A. Leonard, Editor

Hans Riemer — Correctionist — The following letter has been received from Professor Marshall B. Clinard of the University of Wisconsin. We are glad to act on his suggestion that it be published. "The people of Wisconsin and the nation have suffered virtually an irreplaceable loss in the recent tragic death of Hans Riemer, Supervisor of Correctional Services, State Youth Service Division. He was widely known and highly respected as one of the leaders in correctional work throughout the country. During his brief year in Wisconsin he had proposed far reaching changes to bring our system in line with modern twentieth century methods.

'Hans Riemer knew, as well as all of us have long known, that conventional methods of dealing with delinquency and crime do not work. Most of his knowledge was secured from actual experience in institutions, to which was added the insight of scientific training and research. He was a pioneer in the field, for almost from the beginning of his academic career he set out to be an expert in correctional work. Although he died at thirty-five he had had fifteen years of practical experience in connection with prisons. He graduated from the University of Chicago and later did graduate work at Columbia and Indiana University. In all three institutions his interest was in criminology. His experience included an internship at the Federal Penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, during 1930-33, and an internship with the New York City Department of Corrections in 1935. During 1937-38 he worked at the Indiana Reformatory and from 1939-43 he worked at the Indiana State Prison at Michigan City as Superintendent of Inmate Welfare. From 1943-45 he was attached, first as an enlisted man and later as a commissioned officer, in the Army Adjutant General's Office, Correction Branch. Here he had responsibility for paroling back to duty over 3,000 soldiers convicted of various offenses. In 1946 he went to the Federal Reformatory at Chillicothe, Ohio, as Supervisor of their educational system and in this work he introduced a new approach to the field. He was particularly enthusiastic about applying the principles of group work in the field of corrections.

'In June of 1948 Riemer came to Wisconsin as a key person in the new Youth Service Division. Many things he tried to accomplish were based on his intimate knowledge of the viewpoint of boys and men who are in correctional institutions. Part of this was derived from the fact that in 1936, as part of a scientific study, he served four months as an inmate at the Kansas State Penitentiary. This voluntary commitment was arranged with only the knowledge of Professor Sutherland of Indiana University, a chief of police who arranged the arrest, and the Governor of Kansas. After his release he wrote scientific articles on this experience as well as on other subjects which have helped us to gain insight into the problem of reformation. As a result of his practical experiences in dealing with inmates, Riemer was convinced that neither punishment, custodial care, nor improved facilities alone within the conventional framework of boys' schools or prisons would work. Rather what we needed was a complete change in philosophy and methods to bring

about voluntary changes in the attitudes and emotional development of offenders.

'Hans Riemer was not a theorist nor was he a do-gooder, and I suppose in some ways not even a reformer. Rather he was a practical person who knew what he was talking about and how absolutely impractical, as judged by results, are our present methods of dealing with crime. He had a great human warmth, and a curiosity about human behavior, which earned him the friendship of many boys and men he had helped rehabilitate. We can hire hundreds of men who are capable of running the conventional boys' school, so-called "reformatory", or prison. Unfortunately there are only a handful of trained men in corrections who have original and creative minds sufficient to invent a new system with a new philosophy that would work. Hans Riemer was one of these few brilliant men and the loss is Wisconsin's. Since he felt strongly that there should be a recreational fund for the boys at Waukesha, a fund has been started and those wishing to make a contribution for this purpose may send it to the Hans Riemer Memorial Fund, School for Boys, Waukesha, Wisconsin.' (*This JOURNAL is indebted to Professor Clinard for this deserved tribute to a man whose name will always be identified with the scientific trend in correctional method. In the spring of 1947, the editor of this column was a fellow student of Hans Riemer during a graduate seminar in institutional administration conducted by Professor Walter C. Reckless of the School of Social Administration at Ohio State University. We also met with Riemer and observed his program at the Federal Reformatory at Chillicothe. During this period the opportunity was presented to become acquainted with the philosophy of a professional worker who saw the full implications of the behavior sciences in the project of rehabilitation. Not only Wisconsin, but the nation, will experience the loss of contributions he was prepared to make in this area of social control.—Editor*)

Economic Dislocation and Crime—Does unemployment always bring increased crime? Is it a question of Jobs or Crime? Writing in *The Iowa Sheriff*, Dr. Walter A. Lunden of Iowa State College, states that the years 1847, 1848 and 1849 are significant years because just 100 years ago in 1847, 1848 and 1849, a serious widespread economic and political storm broke over Western Europe leaving in its wake deep disorders, unemployment, labor troubles, and social upheavals among all classes of people in every country. The year 1848 in history is known as the year of revolutions in Europe. It was in 1848 that Marx and Engels announced the "Communist Manifesto" and formulated the so-called economic explanation of history. With all these disorders, social, political and economic came a general increase in crime. This led a number of practical minded men and scholars to conclude that "Poverty causes crime", "hunger is a bad counsellor", "unemployment is a bad companion", and "as men lose jobs, crimes go up".

On the contrary, the French statistician Quetelet, revealed that although crime increased in France during years of economic disorders, there were some exceptions and Creuse, one of the poorest departments of France, had the lowest crime rates. In Switzerland, Meyer found that during 1852 to 1892, two of the poorest districts Hinwell and Pfaffkon, burdened with heavy mortgages, poor soil, bad cultivation and industrial decline, had lower crime rates than two wealthier districts of Horgan

and Dielsdorf. In Holland during the same years, evidence shows that crime was not highest in the poorer areas of the country but in those sections where political disturbances occurred. Crimes were highest where the social order had been dislocated by sudden breaks in the trade channels of the nation. A detailed examination of conditions in various districts revealed that criminals were not just those who were destitute and jobless; crimes were highest among those men who were isolated with no families, no homes, no occupations, and with no group to which they could attach themselves for stability. Crime was lowest among those with families, who were known to their fellow citizens, with ties of loyalty to places and to groups.

Nevertheless, the curves for unemployment and prison commitments in the United States from 1928 to 1948, almost parallel each other, both reaching a peak for this period in the early thirties. "However," states Lunden, "it was not just unemployment and poverty which caused crime, but the shattering of the well established bonds of human relationships which opened the door to criminal behavior." Poverty alone is not a "breeder" of crime, for poor people accustomed to poverty are honest, and wealthy people accustomed to wealth are honest, but it is the sudden shift to or from security that brings increased crime. Crimes increase during economic disorder only when the normal bonds which hold men together are shattered by sudden shifts in our value judgments. Because we can observe the negative, the criminal, we often overlook other things that are taking place. The increase of crime in periods of unemployment or a depression is not due entirely to the economic distress present, but also to the fact that some men forget or lose the normal value judgments which ordinarily bind men to their jobs, their communities and their families. It is true that economic factors play an important part, but these economic conditions need to be interpreted in the light of larger social conditions in society.

If we know that crimes tend to increase in time of social disorder, what object lessons are at hand? In military operations there is a term called "Logistics", which means literally "getting there first with the most". If a military commander reduces or "cuts" his fighting units where they are needed the most, men would say that the commander was a fool. If we are entering a period of economic readjustment which brings with it increased crime, it would be unwise to curtail the number of men who are in contact with the enemy—crime. In the depression of the thirties, many cities and counties made the mistake of "cutting" their police forces and deputy sheriffs in an attempt to save money. They saved money at one end, only to lose it with compound interest at the other. They "scuttled" the police force in the face of increased crime. They got there last with the least and not first with the most. They failed in "Logistics".—Dr. Walter A. Lunden, Iowa State College, *Jobs or Crime? The Iowa Sheriff*, Vol 21, No. 5, May, 1949.

Baltimore Criminal Justice Commission Makes Its 26th Annual Report—
In the foreword to its most recent annual report (for the year 1948), the Baltimore Criminal Justice Commission makes available some interesting information concerning the organization and program of this device for citizen participation in the affairs of local government. Organized in 1922, it was brought into being by a number of leading citizens and a group of civic, business and professional organi-

zations as the result of an aroused public opinion due to a daylight holdup and murder committed by an organized band of thugs. The Commission's avowed purpose was to promote and secure an intelligent and efficient administration of criminal justice in Baltimore City, through *constructive* and *helpful* cooperation with all the officers, departments and tribunals charged with the administration thereof. The Commission is not a vigilante organization. It does not undertake to supplant the constituted law enforcement agencies. It is non-partisan and non-political. It is an association of citizens and civic groups organized to combat crime. Many of the Commission's studies are made at the request of public agencies and officials. The services of its staff are also loaned to official bodies for special studies and assignments.

The Commission's files contain records of all major crimes and criminals in Baltimore since 1924. As a part of its routine work the Commission follows every serious crime from the time it is reported until the final disposition of the case. Every step in the procedure—arrest, preliminary hearing, indictment, trial, probation, parole, penal treatment—is carefully scrutinized. It is thus able to determine the increase or decrease in major crime in Baltimore and to measure the progress or retrogression made by the various agencies charged with the administration of justice. The Commission firmly believes that the certainty of apprehension of criminals, their prompt trial, speedy conviction of the guilty and the adequacy of the treatment of those dealt with are essential parts of any well conceived community program for combatting crime. The Commission also recognizes that its program is no cure-all. If crime is to be controlled and prevented it must be dealt with on every front—the home, the school, the neighborhood, the church, in better housing programs, greater opportunities for the less privileged and in more adequate recreational and leisure time activities. It is recognized too that the causes of crime are many and complex. For more than a quarter of a century, however, the Commission has tried to limit its work to its own particular sphere and cooperate with other groups and agencies specializing in some other phases of the problem. The body of the report contains very favorable comment concerning the work of the Criminal Courts, the State's Attorney, the Division for Juvenile Causes of the Circuit Court, the State Department of Welfare, Baltimore Youth Commission, Baltimore County Youth Commission, the Baltimore Police Department, and other agencies concerned with the control and prevention of crime and delinquency. The Baltimore Criminal Justice Commission believes that the public should be greatly concerned with the whole correctional system, including probation and parole as well as institutional treatment. During the year 1948 the efforts of four separate groups, including the Commission, were directed toward an appraisal of the system and the development of blueprints for a long range program. *Mimeographed report.*

From the Nation's Capital—The Annual Meeting of the National Commission on Children and Youth was held in Washington, February 3 and 4. The Commission, appointed by the U. S. Children's Bureau, succeeds a former wartime group and is made up of representatives of federal departments and national and state agencies interested in children and youth. Katharine Lenroot, chief of the Children's Bureau, outlined in her opening address nationwide issues affecting

children. Development of further cooperation between federal departments and national and state agencies was considered. Continued assistance will be given by the Children's Bureau to state commissions now working on improved child welfare laws and practices. Plans were advanced for the 1950 White House Conference on Children and Youth, the fourth such conference held at ten year intervals.

Particular attention was given to social welfare bills pending in Congress, especially those relating to children. Representatives of the administration and leading members of Congress discussed these measures with the delegates. Important pending bills include one for federal funds to assist the states in developing youth projects, including the prevention of juvenile delinquency; bills to extend the coverage and appropriations for social security; the Douglas bill (S. 904), to greatly extend research service and demonstrations relating to child welfare, including "the cause and prevention of juvenile delinquency," to be administered through grants-in-aid by the Children's Bureau; and the Doughton bill (H. R. 2892) to extend child welfare services including specific provisions of funds for foster homes and temporary boarding homes for delinquent as well as dependent children, and to the return of runaway and transient children to their communities. — *Focus*, May, 1949.

Current Crime Trends Not Encouraging—In releasing the annual bulletin, Uniform Crime Reports, for 1948, J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, pointed out the following pertinent facts: A serious crime occurred every 18.7 seconds in 1948; an estimated 1,686,670 major crimes of felonious homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and auto theft occurred last year, a 1.3 per cent increase over 1947. Crime in rural areas was up 4.3 per cent over 1947 and the raise in urban areas amounted to 0.3 per cent. Felonious killings average 36 a day, and there were 2,672 miscellaneous larcenies, 1,032 burglaries, 463 automobile thefts, 255 aggravated assaults or rapes and 150 robberies during each 24 hours of 1948. Long-term crime trend data, based on reports from 373 cities with populations in excess of 25,000, indicated that only negligent manslaughter and auto thefts have declined to points below the pre-war average of 1938-1941. Aggravated assaults and rapes in the larger communities reached peaks in 1948 of 68.7 per cent and 49.9 per cent respectively over the 1938-1941 average. Other crimes committed in 1948 which still exceed this pre-war level are: burglary, 16.7 per cent; murder, 14.1 per cent and robbery 8.9 per cent. Larceny, while declining during the war years, is on the increase and in 1948 was 4.6 per cent in excess of the pre-war averages. Crime has a tendency to fluctuate with the seasons. Murders, rapes and felonious assaults are more frequent in the summer months and these crimes reached high peaks in June and July, 1948. Crimes against property generally increase in the winter months. December was the peak month for robberies, and burglaries reached top heights in February and March, 1948. Automobile thefts were high in October and larcenies occurred more frequently in April. Tabulations of arrest data revealed that more persons were arrested and fingerprinted in 1948 (759,698) than in any other year on record. The predominant age among arrested persons was 21. More than 41 per cent (312,264) of the arrest records examined in 1948 rep-

resent arrests for major violations, persons charged with murder, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny and auto thefts numbering 212,823 or 28 per cent of the total arrest records examined. Of the total number of persons arrested, 58 per cent (440,872) had records of prior arrests. Of the 759,698 persons arrested, 557,125 were white; 191,921 were Negroes; 6,846 were Indians, 653 Chinese; 309 Japanese and others totaled 2,844. *Highlights of Uniform Crime Reports for 1948, California Police and Peace Officers' Journal*, May 1949.

International Fingerprint Exchange—Fingerprints are today operating on an international scale in the service of law enforcement. Day after day they assist materially in the identification and location of criminals who have fled across national boundaries in order to avoid apprehension. The nation's clearing house for criminal records and information, the Identification Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, maintained an international fingerprint exchange service in 1948 with 73 foreign countries and five United States territories and possessions. A total of 17,198 fingerprint records were exchanged. The Division succeeded in identifying, with previous records, 21 per cent of the fingerprint cards received from outside the country. Eleven per cent of those transmitted from this country were identified by the recipients with records previously on file. Illustrating the value of the service, a fingerprint card received from the International Criminal Police Commission, which maintains its headquarters in Paris, France, on September 9, 1948, bore the impression of one "John Smith" arrested in Bordeaux, France, as a confidence man. "Smith" was identified in the FBI files as Otto Wistuba, with aliases, whose record in this country began in 1917 and included embezzlement, bad checks, larceny, impersonation, conditional release violation, internment by United States authorities in 1942 as a dangerous enemy alien, and subsequent deportation to Germany in 1945. The Identification Division, which in July, 1949, will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary, has become, indeed, during these years, the indispensable ally of the nation's peace officers in their approach to the crime problem. *Police Chiefs News*, May 1949.

Celluloid and Crime Control—Crime, always headlined in the press, seems of late to have stepped up its popularity on the screen and the radio. Unfortunately the movies, more especially those from Hollywood, too often present an unreal, distorted and even viciously attractive picture of crime—harmful certainly to youngsters with delinquent tendencies who are sure to see them. Yet we all know that films, which almost everybody sees, could be of vast help in extending sane, constructive treatment of delinquency and an understanding of its causes. We all have a responsibility to do our bit to acquaint script writers, producers and theater owners with our reactions to their productions. *The Quiet One* is a film which not only promotes understanding of the causes of juvenile delinquency, but—a rare thing in the movies—it demonstrates good social treatment. This film was written by two young women and produced by Film Documents, a small company in New York City, as a documentary or educational venture. The locale is the Wiltwyck School near New York City. The picture has already attained commercial success and at this writing is running in a major

New York theater. It will soon appear in one of the principal movie houses in Philadelphia. *The Quiet One* presents the appealing story of a Harlem youngster who, because of deviation pressures becomes a child with problems. It shows the difficult steps in his adjustment through the effective work of an understanding counselor in a good private institution. The film has been called by one of the social work magazines, "a masterly blending of human interest, fine photography and skillful interpretation of casework and psychiatry." Most of the New York critics have praised the film in glowing terms, indicating that what is good from the professional viewpoint can also be made good drama, of interest to the general public. The film will be available in the 16 mm. size for educational use at the end of its current run in commercial theaters. *Focus*, May, 1949.

Italian Procedure with the Delinquent—Prevention of delinquency and dealing with offenders, both juvenile and adult, are subjects of renewed interest and attention in Italy since the close of the war. The effects of war broadened and deepened susceptibility to delinquent behavior and the need for care of delinquents. Events of that period removed buttresses offered by such basic institutions as the home, regular community schools, and special schools operated for study, care and treatment of offenders. Current legislation in use in dealing with offenders is based on the Criminal Code of 1930 with such modifications as present conditions demand. Over-all revision of the code to bring it into accord with the new constitution adopted January 1, 1948, is now under way. A committee of twenty, of which the Under Secretary of Justice is chairman, is charged with this responsibility. Special committees are at work in various subject areas. Revision of juvenile court legislation is under the chairmanship of a socially-minded young judge in the Department of Justice.

The words "probation" and "parole" are unknown in Italian legislation, nor is there an Italian equivalent of those words. The nearest approximations are *suspensione condizionale* and *liberazione condizionale*—which are "conditional suspension" and "conditional liberty." The first term applies to a condition which may be invoked immediately after court hearing and which could bear similarity to probation. The second term applies to release on the basis of demonstrated good conduct, following fulfilment of a portion of the sentence in an institution and could be similar to parole. Legislation for utilization of either of these provisions is detailed and specific, and appears to cover what are known in the United States as social factors. Similarly, legislative provisions are specific in requiring the judge to consider the capacity of the juvenile delinquent. Investigation as a basis for judicial decision is provided for in the law which specifies that a special investigation must be carried on to ascertain personal and familial characteristics of the offender from a physical, psychic, moral and social point of view. An expert in any one of these fields may be called personally before the court to give his opinion in the case. Private hearings are provided for with only the accused, the party offended, the witnesses, the defenders, relatives of the accused, and representatives of welfare agencies present. Dispositions include judicial pardon, as well as conditional suspension, referred to above, and confinement in an institution.

An outstanding difference from United States legal provision for courts for minors relates to their composition. Italian law calls for a judge of a specified judicial grade who acts as chairman, a second member, also a judge but of another judicial grade, and a third member, a citizen selected from among persons interested in "biology, psychiatry, criminal anthropology, and pedagogy." The philosophy of provision of care related to the needs of the particular individual, permeates the law. The extent to which these legal provisions are carried through, however, depends in large measure upon the availability of persons trained in methods of dealing with behavior problem cases, and of funds with which to employ such persons. This area of service is almost a void as to persons who are qualified and employed to devote full time to the work. Though there were in the past in a few of the universities some courses in social science, those faculties are not now reconstituted nor are the social sciences presently recognized by the Ministry of Education. The recently organized special schools for training of such workers offer considerable promise. Since the end of 1945, when the first such school was organized, ten have come into being and are in operation. Two of these schools, one in Milan and one in Rome have begun projects in which students work with probationers and those detained, investigating their cases for the court, recommending disposition and attempting to render to the individual some of the services indicated. A definite beginning has been made and with continuation of the current interest and support of the small nucleus of leaders in each instance, progress may well be anticipated.—Genevieve Gabower, Executive Secretary, Children's Protective Association, Washington, D. C., *Notes on Dealing with Delinquency in Italy. Focus*, January, 1949.

Editor's Note: From 1945 to 1948 Miss Gabower was child welfare consultant to the Italian Mission for UNRRA in Rome, and welfare advisor to the Italian government for the UN.
