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Current Notes

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CURRENT NOTES

V. A. Leonard, EDITOR

Criminal Justice and Minority Relations—an excellent survey of training projects in the field of minority relations has just been released by the Los Angeles County Conference on Community Relations under the title "A Study of Police Training Programs and Minority Relations." The author, Milton A. Senn, points out that during the last decade, important progress on several fronts has been recorded by many movements in the nation seeking to insure equality of opportunity and treatment to all, irrespective of national origin, race and religion. Among these efforts to buttress the American tradition and further vitalize democratic living, one of the most heartening has been the interest in the subject of preventive policing in the area of inter-group relations. Tremendous population shifts during and following World War II created such problems as competition for jobs, housing, recreation and transportation which, together with other factors, threatened or resulted in open antagonism between racial, religious and national groups. Recognizing that their responsibility to prevent overt violence necessitated immediate action to help improve relations between the various ethnic and racial groups composing their communities, officials in several important urban centers inaugurated police training programs in minority relations. Properly conceived, these programs serve two important functions: to make more efficient the law enforcement operation and, to make more professional the performance of law enforcement personnel.

Since the close of World War II several human relations agencies in the Los Angeles area have been alarmed by reports of increasing tension and antagonism between members of some minority groups and the police. Mindful of the New York, Detroit and Houston riots during the war, and of the so-called zoot-suit riots in Los Angeles, a special committee of the Los Angeles County Conference on Community Relations in August, 1949, considered this problem and discussed the desirability of a police training program in minority relations for the Los Angeles Police Department. It was the consensus that before any recommendations were submitted, it would be well to review the character and scope of similar programs in other parts of the nation. The present study represents perhaps the first attempt to bring together the experience of various police departments to professionalize the standards of police work with minority groups, and the techniques employed to substitute science and fact for that mixture of prejudice, myth and folklore which, according to Dr. Davis McEntire, "in all too many police departments are used as guides in relations with minority groups." In preparing this document for the Police Relations Committee of the Los Angeles County Conference on Community Relations, Mr. Senn was assisted by the American Council on Race Relations, numerous regional offices of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and the Jewish Community Relations Committees in several large cities, all of which furnished valuable data and information. Copies of the report may be obtained by addressing the Police Relations Committee of the Los Angeles County Conference on Community Relations, 3125 West Adams Boulevard, Los Angeles 18, California.

Juvenile Court Foundation Incorporated—A project of the National Council of Juvenile Court Judges is making progress. The recent issue of their *Journal* reports that a charter has been granted in Pennsylvania to the

National Juvenile Court Foundation, Inc. The purpose as expressed in the charter is: "to stimulate and conduct research, educational and instructive activities relating to the work of the juvenile courts throughout the United States and to further the betterment of the treatment and training of all children and juveniles coming under the jurisdiction of said courts." The incorporators are the officers and members of the executive committee of the National Council who in turn will act as officers and executive committee of the foundation until a permanent organization is effected. A grant of \$6,000 has already been made by the Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation of Pittsburgh for publication of the *Journal* and the Yearbook of the National Council, and a national directory of juvenile court judges. The directory will provide a much needed reference list, and will at the same time presumably serve to interest many judges who have not yet been drawn into the national organization.—*Focus*, May, 1951.

Correctional Treatment of Offenders—Believing that the prevention, control, and correction of delinquent and criminal behavior requires professionally trained workers supported by an informed public, Boston University has instituted training schedules in criminology and the correctional treatment of offenders. The programs is designed to provide both the perspective of a broad cultural background and the immediately applicable body of theory and knowledge essential to professional competency in the field. It is intended to provide pre-professional training for those considering a career in crime prevention and corrections, to supplement training programs for those already in the field, and to contribute to a better understanding of the nature and treatment of delinquents and criminals by the general public and especially on the part of workers in allied fields. The program is centered in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and is planned and supervised by Albert Morris, Professor of Sociology and Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Courses in this program are open to all qualified persons with the consent of the instructor. Opportunities for field experience and internships in correctional institutions are available to a limited number of properly qualified students who have had no such experience. Inquiries about individual courses or opportunities for field work and internships may be addressed to Professor Albert Morris, Room 320, Boston University College of Liberal Arts, 725 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston 15, Massachusetts.—*From a printed announcement*.

What Is Mental Health?—The following terse statement concerning mental health by Dr. Benjamin Spock, Director, Child Health Institute, of Rochester, Minnesota, merits repetition in every quarter: "Maybe you think that mental health is the business of a psychologist giving a test to a juvenile delinquent or a psychiatrist trying to cure a patient in a mental hospital. But these are only the last ditch battles for mental health. The real campaign begins with the security of a baby in his crib, his chance to grow in independence and friendliness, first at home, later in school and in a job. Whose business is this? Yours and mine, of course. Mental Health Week is to remind us that there are people in every state working for this cause. They need our help."—*The Welfare Bulletin*, March-April, 1951.

The New Family Courts of Japan.—Leaders of the family court movement in America have long advocated the idea of combining jurisdiction in all

children's and domestic relations cases in one family court. This idea was realized in Japan with the approval and encouragement of the Allied occupation, by the establishment on January 1, 1949, of a system of 49 main and 230 branch family courts located throughout Japan. Each Family Court is divided into a Domestic Relations Division and a Juvenile Division. The new court is dedicated to the maintenance of peace and happiness in the home. Its procedure is private, informal, and inexpensive. It emphasizes social investigations and physical and mental examinations rather than legal technicalities. Most of the cases are handled without the intervention of lawyers. The Domestic Relations Division of the Family Court has jurisdiction over such matters as marriage, divorce, marital property, custody of children, parental rights, legal incompetency, disappearance, insanity, management and disposition of absentees' property, adoption, support, resumption of cohabitation, inheritance, guardianship, disputes between relatives over leases of land or houses, and cases which pertain to personal status. Most of these problems were traditionally settled within the family in Japan without resort to litigation.

The Juvenile Division of the Family Court has jurisdiction over juveniles (persons under twenty years of age) who are alleged to have committed violations of law, or whose behavior is likely to endanger the health or welfare of themselves or others; and over adults who have contributed to juvenile delinquency by committing certain specified offenses against the welfare of juveniles. Some of these matters were previously handled by an administrative agency known as the Juvenile Protection Office; others were brought before the ordinary courts. The hearing is non-criminal and informal, the interested parties sitting around a table in closed session. When the judge (not the public prosecutor as formerly) finds that a youth of sixteen years or more should be given a criminal trial for an offense which is punishable by death, penal servitude or imprisonment, he refers the case to the public prosecutor. The judge may decide to drop the case, transfer it to another family court, to refer it to the chief of a child welfare station, or to render some type of "protective disposition." From an article by Richard B. Appleton, Attorney, Legal Section, GHQ, SCAP, appearing in *Focus*, May, 1951.

The Federal Youth Corrections Act—The following excerpts are from an illuminating discussion of the new Federal Youth Corrections Act, by the Hon. James V. Bennett: "Late in September, the President approved the Federal Youth Corrections Act and opened the way to a more intelligent approach toward the treatment of young persons who come into conflict with the laws of the United States. The new legislation," says Mr. Bennett, "rejects the basically punitive approach which has characterized much of the administration of justice for hundreds of years. It recognizes that the traditional methods of handling young men and women have fallen quite short of their objective and do not offer full protection to society. The Act applies to persons under the age of 22 who have committed federal offenses and places a completely new tool in the hands of the judges. They may, of course, continue to place more hopeful offenders on probation and they still may sentence under the provisions of adult laws. But there are three important new provisions: (1) the court may commit to the Youth Board a young offender for treatment for an indefinite period up to six years or, (2) if the court believes the youth requires treatment or supervision (e.g., a sex offender) for a period of more than six years it may commit him for an

indefinite period not to exceed the maximum penalty provided for the offense and (3) if the court is uncertain as to how he should proceed he may place the youth in the custody of the Attorney General for study, diagnosis, and recommendation prior to the imposition of sentence. A final provision of the Act looks beyond the problem of youth and crime and focuses attention on the fact that adequate care of youth offenders is but one segment, though a tremendously important one, of the vexing problem of crime. Recognizing this, the Act creates an Advisory Corrections Council, comprised of United States judges and administrative officers who will meet to study the prevention of crime and the treatment and correction of all offenders. The committee will also make recommendations to Congress for the improvement of the administration of criminal justice and bring about closer relations between the courts, the prisons and law enforcement agencies."—*The Prison Journal*, April 1951.

Testimonial Honoring Professor Arturo Rocco—The University of Rome will publish a testimonial volume within the next eighteen months in honor of the late Arturo Rocco, who was Professor of Criminal Law and Criminology in that University during many years. This information is from Dean Filippo Vassili of the Faculty of Law in Rome, and the Professor of Criminal Procedure, Giulio Battaglini, who contributed four articles to this Journal in earlier years, as follows:

- Functions of Private Defense in the Repression of Crime, 2, Pp. 350 ff.
- Some Fundamental Problems of Criminal Politics, 3, Pp. 347 ff.
- Eugenics and the Criminal Law, 5, Pp. 12 ff.
- Fascist Reform of the Penal Law in Italy, 24, Pp. 278 ff.

Among the authors of "essays" in the Testimonial volume will be: Professors Graven of Switzerland, Donnedieu de Vabres, Hugueney and Magnal of France, Schoenke, Mezger, Sauer and Hippel of Germany, Kimmel and Malaniuke of Austria, Cuello Calón, Del Rosal and Perez Vitoria of Spain, and the Argentinian Professors Fontan Balestra and Molinaria. Dr. Robert H. Gault will contribute an "essay" on some of the backgrounds of Criminology in the United States.