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Current Notes

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CURRENT NOTES

V. A. Leonard, *Editor*

The American Woman as a Criminal—The following is a digest of a recently completed study of criminal women by Professor J. Roy Leevy of Purdue University. This study deals with data concerning the female offenders who have been convicted of misdemeanors and felonies who are now incarcerated in state prisons in the United States.

A sample of 1800 inmates for a period of five years from 1946 to 1952 were investigated. The problem was undertaken in an attempt to answer or to attempt to answer the following questions:

What kinds of crime do women commit?

Is there a correlation between marital status of women criminals and the kind of crime she commits?

Does her occupation at the time of her conviction have any relationship with the crime she committed?

Is there a correlation between educational status and the crime committed?

Is there any relationship between the crime she commits and her community—size, social status, economic status, etc.?

Is age a factor in the criminality of women?

Is race a factor in the criminality of women?

The sources of data used in this study have been the published annual reports of women's prisons, the case-study files of the inmates, and some court records and files. A small sample (some 200) of the inmates were interviewed but time has not permitted using this method of interviewing all the 1800 inmates. However, the technique did not contribute any valuable information to this study, though it did give the writer some notions and facts concerning the attitude of women prisoners relative to the courts and prison personnel. It did not reveal data as to why the inmate committed a certain crime, but it did show that some of the women who committed crimes blamed the people of their communities, a husband and another woman, some policemen, and some blamed the judges of the courts that convicted them for their crimes.

Some of the observations and results of this study were: Age is a factor in the criminality of the American woman. Very few women beyond the age of 50 years commit crimes. The mean age for this study for all the inmates was 27.4. Public intoxication as a crime increased from 1946 to 1952, 26.4 percent for the women criminals. Marital status has a relationship in regard to such crimes as murder; that is, 82.4 percent of the inmates convicted for murder were married women as against 27.6 single, widowed, or divorced. Women criminals murder the opposite sex in 67.4 percent of the cases while 32.6 percent kill women and children. Educational status of women criminals has a close relationship, especially in such crimes as embezzlement and bad check writing; those with formal business educational training, 82.4 percent, committed such crimes. The urban community produced many more women criminals than did the rural community. Ninety-two percent of the women criminals listed the city as their home when they were convicted. The illiterate woman criminal represented 18 percent of the total inmates. Most of her crimes were vagrancy, petit larceny, stealing food, clothing, etc. Only five percent of the women criminals had completed college; however, 24.6 percent of them had completed high school. The median grade completion for all women offenders was about the 7th grade or 6.6th grade.—*From correspondence with the author.*

The Depression and Delinquency—In attempting to explain social conditions it often happens that individuals seek a simple explanation for a given problem. As an example most people maintain that "Poverty is the mother of delinquency" and that "Hunger is a bad counselor." This type of reasoning implies that poverty causes delinquency and that economic depressions, therefore, bring more juvenile problems. When this method of thinking has been reduced still further it simply means that poor people's children commit more delinquent acts than the children of people better situated. Actually there is no evidence to prove that poor children commit more offenses than other children. It is true that more poor children do come before the courts and do enter the training schools, but it should not be overlooked that children from better homes may have parents who have other means of taking care of their children, either to keep them out of trouble or to help them when they do become involved. Another point which has become apparent in the past few years is that a larger proportion of boys causing trouble in local communities are no longer the children of poor parents but in some cases from families which cannot be classified as "poor."

Prior to the Great Depression of the thirties it has been assumed that depressions always increase delinquency. Careful investigation during the years of 1930 through 1938 has shown that delinquency did not increase during the "hard time" of the Great Depression. Actually in some areas the amount of delinquency among young children decreased. It is true that petty crimes among boys 17 and 18 years of age did increase but not for all children. A recent investigation made by the Gluecks of the careers of 500 delinquent and 500 non-delinquent boys (*Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency*, 1951) showed that the main differences between the two groups was not that there was a difference in the economic standings of boys but that their home life differed significantly. All of this leads to the conclusion that poor surroundings may be a part of the social background of a boy but it cannot be said with any certainty that poverty is the cause of delinquency.—Excerpt from *A Summary of Social and Economic Bases of Delinquency and Dependency in Iowa* by Professor Walter A. Lunden, Iowa State College.

Changing Crime Patterns and Future Risk—The flood of crimes in the post-war years resulted in innumerable investigations in the United States and abroad in an effort to see how the situation could be improved. In the United States these inquiries—both secret and public—were initiated on national, state, and local levels. The hearings and investigations have shown the continued prevalence of many types of crime and the growth of crime in general. In some instances criminal activities were brought to light which were believed by many to exist but which had not been exposed. Local points where lawlessness was exposed included small communities, metropolitan areas, and even within the shadow of or beneath the domes of some state and national capitols. When the Kefauver Committee "*Report on Organized Crime*" appeared, no more shocking picture of conditions in the United States was ever made public. The newspapers had from time to time published some of the facts which the committee then presented, but the news releases were largely based on availability and in connection with current, spot news.

There is a bright spot in the horizon and that is concerned with the problem of the juvenile delinquent. A significant fact in the field of treatment of the child delinquent in 1951, for example, was the lowered population in correctional institutions for both boys and girls. Massachusetts

reported for girls a decrease of 40 percent. New Jersey closed two cottages in the Trenton State Home for girls. California's decrease in population of its institution for delinquent girls at Ventura was 17 percent. The New England states and New York showed similar decreases for boys. As the number appearing before juvenile courts in 1951 was approximately the same as for 1950, the rate of lowered commitments to state institutions must be explained by change of policy and the increased activity of community agencies in care of wayward youths.

An outstanding event of the year concerned with the treatment of juvenile delinquent was the Berkshire International forum held in Canaan, N. Y. Fifty specialists in child welfare met for a week in June. Twelve members of the United Nations secretariat took part. The conference represented the approaches of psychiatry, case work, sociology, education, juvenile courts, the law and institutional and government administration. A statement of policy and principles was formulated as "a progressive guide to the development of treatment practice by institutions for juvenile delinquents." Professionally skilled diagnostic study of the needs and nature of the individual child was declared essential. Research and public information were stressed.—Excerpts from a paper, *Changing Crime Patterns and Future Risk* delivered by Dr. Richard C. Steinmetz, Chief Special Agent of the Mutual Investigation Bureau, Chicago, Ill., before the Mutual Insurance 200th Anniversary Conference on Future Risk.

Editor's Note. Professional friends of Dr. Richard C. Steinmetz, Chief Special Agent of the Mutual Investigation Bureau and an official of the International Association of Arson Investigators may wish to note a change in his business address from 111 West Washington Street, to 20 North Wacker Drive, Room 1700, Chicago 6, Illinois.

More States Establish Alcoholism Programs—In an effort to rehabilitate their alcoholics as productive citizens, more states are setting up alcoholism programs, the American Public Welfare Association reports. Most recent state to take such action was Rhode Island, where legislation creating a new division of alcoholism within the Department of Social Welfare was passed by the legislature this year. In Minnesota, a legislative interim committee to study the problem of alcoholics was set up for the purpose of drafting bills on the subject for consideration by the 1953 legislature. California and Ohio currently have bills before their legislatures calling for establishment of alcoholic research centers or for providing state clinics for treatment of alcoholics. Alcoholics constitute more than 6 percent of the total employable male citizens in the U. S., it is estimated, and their rehabilitation is considered as an important source of manpower.

A companion measure to the Rhode Island law creating the alcoholism division provides that before a person accused of being a common drunkard is sentenced he shall be committed to jail for two weeks' examination by the newly-formed division. The division will then recommend to the court whether the defendant shall be entrusted to its care or be sent to jail. Objectives of the division of alcoholism as set forth under the law are to: (1) promote studies on alcoholism; (2) promote and conduct educational and preventive programs on alcoholism; (3) provide for the care and physical welfare of the inmates, prisoners, and patients of the state institutions who are subject to alcoholism; (4) promote and establish cooperative relationships with courts, hospitals, social agencies, public health

authorities, law enforcement agencies, educational and research organizations, and the public.

In California, the proposal before the legislature calls for an appropriation of \$4,800,000, of which \$4,400,000 would be for hospitals and research facilities. The balance would be for operation of an outpatient clinic. Ohio's bill provides \$150,000 for clinics for treatment of alcoholics under state health department supervision. The money for them would come out of fees collected under the state liquor monopoly system.—*Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association Bulletin*, Summer, 1952.

The Prison Population—A total of 164,896 sentenced prisoners were confined in State and Federal institutions for adult offenders at the end of 1951, fewer by 900 than the 165,796 confined a year earlier. Thus 109.2 per 100,000 of the estimated civilian population were confined at the end of 1951, as compared with 110.4 the year before. The decrease in year-end prison population in 1951 ended the series of annual increases which began in 1945. The decrease occurred entirely in State institutions, whose population dropped by 1,161 or 0.8 percent. Of the 164,896 prisoners confined in State and Federal institutions at the end of 1951, only 6,070, or 3.7 percent, were females. But even this small number was greater than at the beginning of the year. While male prisoners in State institutions decreased by 1.0 percent during the year, female prisoners increased by 4.2 percent.

Of the 73,937 prisoners discharged either conditionally or unconditionally from State and Federal institutions in 1951, more than half (56.7 percent) were discharged conditionally—largely by parole. For State institutions conditional discharges represented 58.3 percent of the two types, whereas for the Federal they represent 50.4 percent. The 0.8 percent decrease in State prison population at the end of 1951 is the result of decreases in 29 States and increases in 20 (including the District of Columbia). The greatest increases occurred in Nevada, with 18.8 percent; Michigan, 6.3; and Connecticut, with 6.0 percent. Decreases were greatest in Utah, 16.5 percent; and Rhode Island, 12.7; New Hampshire, 11.9; Wyoming, 10.2; and South Dakota, 8.9 percent. The decreases from 1950 to 1951 in court commitments to State institutions, already mentioned, aggregated 2,358 or 4.3 percent. Of the four major regions of the country only the Northeastern States showed an increase—**NATIONAL PRISONER STATISTICS, Prisoners in State and Federal Institutions—1951; Number 7, November, 1952, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Washington, D. C.**

University Training in Correctional Administration—An Institute of Correctional Administration has been established at the George Washington University and is now in its second session. Set up to meet growing demands for specialized instruction at the University level, the sessions have been attended mainly by military officers assigned to retraining and rehabilitation centers established by the Army and Navy and Air Force. In addition certain advanced students in sociology and officials of civic, Federal and State correctional institutions have been in attendance. Courses offered are in social pathology, clinical criminology and treatment of offenders. A workshop in correctional problems is held under the direction of Howard B. Gill, Institute director, who was formerly in charge of the Curriculum in Correctional Administration at the University of Wisconsin and who has had 25 years' experience in State and Federal prison work. He has edited

and authored numerous works in this field. Last summer he served as consultant to the government of Puerto Rico in setting up a correctional program.

University officials point out that successful restoration to honorable military service of nearly 50,000 offenders during the past 10 years demonstrates the value of a program to retrain offenders. In addition to courses offered for college credit during each seven week Institute program, inspection trips to nearby correctional institutions are held. This session the 75 members of the Institute are visiting the District of Columbia jail, the D.C. Reformatory, National Training School for Boys, guard houses at Fort Belvoir, Bolling Field, Fort Meade; the Army Rehabilitation Center at Cumberland, Pa., and the Navy Retraining Center at Norfolk, Va. Special sessions are held each week to permit military personnel to meet with officers of their respective services regarding policy and procedures of their respective groups in terms of general penal practices.

General sessions and receptions permit guest speakers who are specialists in prison work to address members of the Institute. These have included Brig. Gen. Frederic Kimble, secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council; Dr. George Killinger, chairman of the U.S. Board of Parole; Leo Rover, former U.S. District Attorney. Since the Institute is being held in the National Capital, it is possible to draw materials and speakers from this center of professional work in Federal law enforcement, prison administration, probation and parole practice, and in retraining and rehabilitation. Members of the Institute staff in addition to Director Gill are: Mr. Charles V. Morris, Secretary of the Corrections Division of United Community Service of Washington, D.C. who was associate editor of Volume V, "Prisons," of the Attorney General's Survey; and Mr. Edward J. Flynn, managing director of the Criminal Justice Association of Washington, D.C., as well as regular University instructors in sociology, psychology, law and counseling, and a group of specialists from Federal agencies. Further information about the program can be secured through the College of General Studies, The George Washington University, Washington 6, D.C.—*From a communication to the Editor.*

NOTES FROM PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Illinois Academy of Criminology

The first meeting of the Illinois Academy of Criminology for the year 1952-1953 was held on Monday, November 10, 1952, in the State of Illinois Building in Chicago.

The President of the Academy for the current year, Mr. Joseph D. Lohman, disposed of business matters of the Academy and then turned the meeting over to the moderator of the program for this first meeting, Judge Jacob M. Braude. Judge Braude introduced the principal speaker, Mr. Charles A. Bane, former Chief Counsel of the Emergency Crime Committee of the Chicago City Council.

Mr. Bane described the background, the objectives, and the work of the Emergency Crime Committee during his tenure as Chief Counsel. His remarks centered on the problem of organized crime in Chicago and described many of the facts concerning the operation of organized crime as revealed by the Committee investigation. He stressed the difficulties inherent in such an investigation by the Crime Committee of a legislative body and pointed to the need for information on the financial standing of members of the police

force, as a method for securing leads and evidence on crime, political, and law enforcement relationships.

The principal speaker was followed by two discussants—Mr. Rollin B. Posey, Chairman of the Department of Political Science of Northwestern University and Mr. Bernard B. Meltzer, Professor of Law, University of Chicago. Mr. Posey pointed to the need for reapportionment of voting districts in Illinois as a device for reducing the political strength of organized crime groups. Mr. Meltzer pointed to the need for detailed investigation and exposures by the crime investigating committee as a device for dramatizing the problem of organized crime and bringing about public support for combating it.

The comments of the speakers of the evening were followed by a lively general discussion in which distinctions were drawn as to the nature of organized crime, its functional relationship to the community, the methods of its control of political power, and effective ways of dealing with the problem. The consensus of opinion was that the nature of organized crime and its methods of operation had to be revealed to the public in such a dramatic way as to effectively mobilize political and public support against it. It appeared that this task of dramatization of the problem was one of the most important and feasible functions of the legislative investigating committee. It was further recognized that effective action must be preceded by extensive and detailed investigation over a long period of time in order that a secure body of evidence could be assembled for public presentation before an investigating committee. A serious question was raised as to the desirability of requiring complete financial returns from police officers, since this could become simply a fishing expedition, unless advance investigation had established strong evidence as to the existence of illegal and improper connections. It was further recognized that the success of legislative committees and the possibility of dealing with the problem of organized crime through legislative enactments depended on a clear understanding of the relation of such proposed legislation to other legislation of a short run or long term character which members of the legislature might feel bound to support.