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978-1-107-66952-9 - Young Offenders: An Enquiry into Juvenile Delinquency

A. M. Carr-Saunders, Hermann Mannheim and E. C. Rhodes

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An Enquiry into Juvenile Delinquency

BY

A. M. CARR-SAUNDERS

HERMANN MANNHEIM

E. C. RHODES

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INTRODUCTION

ON 28 JANUARY 1938 a meeting was held at the Home Office which was attended by Directors of Education, Chief Constables, Magistrates, Probation Officers and others interested in the problem of Juvenile Delinquency. The Chair was taken by Mr S. W. Harris, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Home Office, who explained that the Home Secretary had decided to institute an investigation into the problem of juvenile crime and that the planning and general supervision of the work had been entrusted to Mr A. M. Carr-Saunders, Director of the London School of Economics, with whom would be associated Dr E. C. Rhodes, Reader in Statistics, and Dr Hermann Mannheim, Lecturer in Criminology, both of whom were on the staff of the London School of Economics. The decision to make an enquiry was welcomed by those present at the Conference, who were in general of opinion that whether or not there was a real increase in the frequency of juvenile offences, the subject attracted so much attention and was of such intrinsic importance that it was well worth while to attempt to probe the matter further. During the discussion many suggestions were made as to points which might receive special attention in the course of the enquiry and as to the procedure which it might be useful to adopt.

As a result of the discussion at this meeting, it was decided to plan, in the first place, an investigation in the London area. A feature of the investigation was to be the collection of information concerning a control group of juveniles; for the purpose of assembling information concerning the controls, which was to be taken at the same time as that relating to the delinquents, it was decided to ask for the co-operation of the

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London County Council. The London County Council readily accepted the invitation and gave the utmost help in their power in the planning of the London enquiry and during its subsequent prosecution. Conferences were then held at the London School of Economics, at which were present representatives of the Home Office, the London Probation Service, the London County Council, in addition to the three authors of this book; at these conferences the procedure which is described at the beginning of Chapter III was worked out. When the procedure for London had been settled, a decision was taken to extend the investigation to the provinces. Representatives from a number of provincial cities were invited to attend a meeting at the Home Office on 11 July 1938. It was agreed to ask the authorities at Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Hull, Nottingham and Cardiff to conduct enquiries in their areas; modifications of the methods of assembling the data for London, necessitated by the different situation in the provinces, were considered, and plans were made under which similar data to those for London would be recorded for the provinces, though the methods of collection would vary slightly according to local conditions. The authorities at all the six provincial cities accepted the invitation extended to them.

The collection of data began in London on 1 October 1938, and was completed in rather more than six months; the assembly of data from provincial cities began later, but was completed about the same time. When all the material had come in, it was sent to the London School of Economics, where analysis began. The work was delayed by the outbreak of war, and the School moved its headquarters to Cambridge. It seemed at one period as though the calls upon the time of those who had planned the enquiry would prevent them from completing the analysis of the results. Later, however, the work was resumed, the analysis was completed and the

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report drawn up. The first two chapters are the work of Dr Hermann Mannheim, and the third chapter, which is concerned with the results of the present enquiry, is the work of Dr E. C. Rhodes.

A parallel enquiry into the psychological aspect of juvenile crime was considered at much length during the early months of 1939. The difficulties in the way of carrying out any such investigation were formidable; nearly all these difficulties, however, had been cleared away by the summer of 1939, and it was intended to carry out this investigation, beginning in the autumn of that year. Unfortunately, however, war made it impossible to realise this side of the project.

Mention has already been made of the valuable help given by officials of the London County Council, and it only remains to say that without the help of the Probation Service in London, the Probation Officers and officials of the Education service in the provincial cities, the necessary facts could never have been collected. This help was ungrudgingly given; and those who planned the enquiry and undertook the tabulation of the results were greatly impressed with the care expended in obtaining the information upon which the report is based.

When the investigation was set on foot, it was expected that the report submitted to the Home Office would be published by the Stationery Office; but, by the time the work was completed, it had been decided to suspend official publications of this nature during wartime. Since delay would reduce such interest as attaches to the facts collected and their analysis, we asked for and obtained the permission of the Home Office to publish the report in the form of a book under our own names. When publication had been arranged, the Home Office issued a circular to magistrates sitting in juvenile courts, which gave a brief account of the methods used in the enquiry, and the results obtained, and announced

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the forthcoming appearance of the report under the auspices of the Cambridge University Press.

The Conferences held at the London School of Economics were attended by Mr S. W. Harris and Mr A. J. Edmunds of the Home Office, Mr A. G. Clutton Brock, Mr W. G. Minn, Miss A. E. Beasley, Miss B. Bromley and Miss M. L. Tabor of the London Probation Service, Mr W. J. O. Newton, Mr J. Gee and Mr H. Grigs of the London County Council, Miss S. Clement Brown and the three authors of this book.

June 1942

A. M. C.-S.

H. M.

E. C. R.