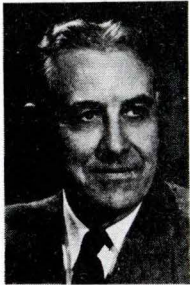


Crime and Affluence

By Walter A. Lunden



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Minnesota in 1928, and his PhD from Harvard in 1934.

During World War II (1943-47), Doctor Lunden was prison officer for the Twenty-first British Army, and served with the United States Seventh and Third Armies in England, France, and Germany. He was Chief of the Prison Branch of the Office of Military Government for Bavaria.

Doctor Lunden was on an assignment in 1967 where he studied the recruitment, education, and turnover of police officers in England, Scotland, Denmark, and Sweden. His findings on the British Police system were reported in POLICE.¹

A prolific researcher in the social sciences, Doctor Lunden is a regular contributor to POLICE and other professional journals.

Rising criminality, civil disorders, and riots within the nation present serious issues to the American people. Citizens have become trou-

¹Lunden, Walter A.: Men of New Scotland Yard. POLICE, Vol. 13, 2:6, November-December, 1968.

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bled about the increase in violence and efforts to deal with the general breakdown of law and order in almost every city of the nation. Various explanations have been advanced by officials and private persons, but as yet there appears to be no generally accepted clarification of the causes or the solution to the problems.

These conditions have arisen in a time when the Gross National Product, a method of measuring prosperity, has been rising; when bank deposits and savings have been increasing; income tax collections have been mounting; car and appliance sales have been rising, and hotels and resort establishments have been doing a booming business. The nation has become the most affluent country in the world. Today, people read books on "How to Make a Million Dollars without Trying."

In view of these changes, earlier explanations of criminality appear no longer relevant. The earlier clichés of "Poverty is the Mother of Crime," "Unemployment Breeds Crime," "Community Disorganization Spawns Criminals," "Irreligion Leads to Crime," "Lack of Educational Opportunities Fosters Crime," and many others, can no longer be taken as serious elements in criminality.

In spite of low unemployment, the expansion of social security and countless plans for welfare improve-

ment, crimes show very little signs of decreasing. Sir Ronald Jackson of Scotland Yard summarized the matter as follows: "The relief of poverty and drastic reduction of economic inequality have brought no comparable lessening of crime. On the contrary, booming crime rates seem to be characteristics of an affluent society."

Confronted with this seeming inability to deal with mounting crimes in the midst of affluence, it appears that the American public is relearning a bit of European folk wisdom:

Justice which does not bear a sword beside its scales soon falls into ridicule

Just recently the Gallop Poll reported significant results from interviews in the United States. Citizens were asked if the courts were dealing too harshly with criminals. The results were as follows:

75 per cent—Not harshly enough
13 per cent—About right
2 per cent—Too harshly
10 per cent—No views

Another question dealt with paroled offenders: If a paroled offender commits a crime, should he be denied a second parole?

71 per cent—A good plan
21 per cent—Not a good plan
8 per cent—No views

From these and other findings, it appears that the public has begun to

Justice which does not bear a sword beside its scales soon falls into ridicule.

return to harsher treatment of criminals with the increase in crimes in the nation. In order to determine what changes, if any, have taken place in the amount of crime and penalties in a given area, the records of one middle-sized city and county have been examined over a period of years. Des Moines, Iowa, the capitol city in Polk County with a population of less than a quarter of a million is located in the heartland of the agricultural region of the nation.

MAJOR CRIMES IN DES MOINES, IOWA 1955-68

Crimes have been increasing faster than the population explosion. In fourteen years, from 1955 to 1968, major crimes in the city of Des Moines, Iowa, have risen from 3,875 to 8,595 or an increase of 121.8 per cent. In this decade a total of 78,131 serious crimes occurred in the city, or an average of 5,581 crimes each year. (See Table 1 and Chart 1 for annual figures.) From 1960 to 1967, the number of inhabitants in the city proper declined from 209,757 to 206,490, or a drop of 1.7 per cent. In the

TABLE 1

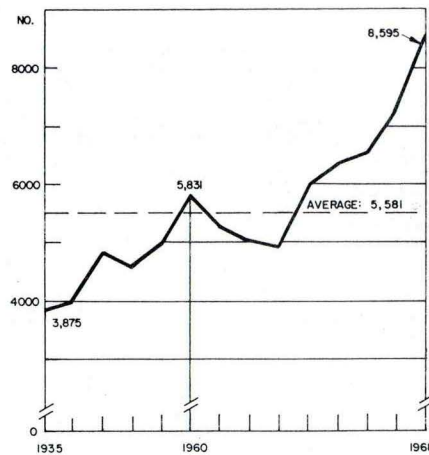
MAJOR CRIMES IN DES MOINES, IOWA, 1955-68

(Includes Murder, Manslaughter, Rape, Robbery, Breaking and Entering, Aggravated Assault, Larceny and Auto Theft.)

Year	Crimes
1955	3,875
1956	3,945
1957	4,829
1958	4,661
1959	4,989
1960	5,831
1961	5,292
1962	5,067
1963	4,982
1964	5,988
1965	6,306
1966	6,503
1967	7,268
1968	8,595
Total	78,131
Average	5,581

Source: Annual Reports of the Police Department, Des Moines, Iowa

CHART 1
MAJOR CRIMES IN DES MOINES, 1935-68



same years, there has been a very little change in the total number of persons in the state of Iowa (2,760,900 in 1960 and 2,752,000 in 1967).

This increase in crime has taken place during the time incomes have been rising, unemployment has been low, increased number of mental health centers, and wider use of general welfare programs. In addition, urban renewal projects have been under way and certain areas in the city have been cleared to make way for modern buildings and more highways. Despite these conditions crimes have more than doubled in 14 years.

INCREASE BY TYPES OF MAJOR CRIMES, 1960 TO 1968

From 1960 to 1968, homicides increased from 12 to 14; rape cases,

TABLE 2

MAJOR CRIMES IN DES MOINES, IOWA, 1960 AND 1968

Crimes	1960	1968	Increase
Homicide ^a	12	14	+2
Rape	20	42	+22
Robbery	104	247	+143
Aggravated Assault	55	81	+26
Breaking and Entering	1308	1687	+379
Larceny ^b	3833	5645	+1812
Auto Theft	499	879	+380
Total	5831	8595	+2764

Source: Des Moines Police Department

^aIncludes murders and manslaughters

^bAll types above and below \$50

from 20 to 42; robberies, from 104 to 247; aggravated assaults, from 55 to 81; breaking and entering, from 1,308 to 1,687; larcenies, from 3,833 to 5,645; and auto thefts rose from 499 to 879 cases.

CRIMINAL CASES DISPOSED OF IN POLK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, 1935-68

Criminal cases are adjudicated in the District Court of Polk County, in which the City of Des Moines is located, and in the Municipal Court. The information on criminal cases has been tabulated from the Polk County District Court because these

TABLE 3

CRIMINAL CASES DISPOSED OF IN POLK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, 1935-68 (Year's ending June 30th)

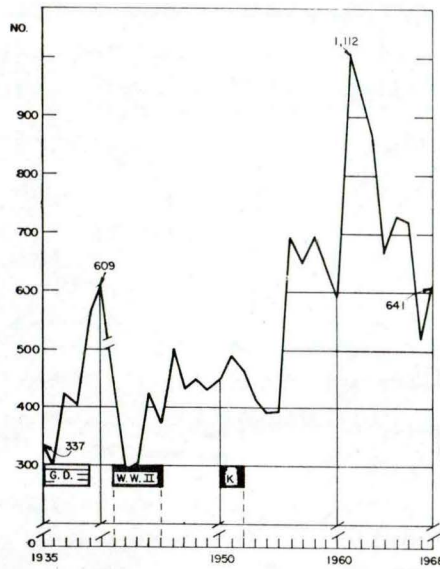
Biennium	Cases
1935-36	642
1937-38	822
1934-40	1,165
Total	2,629
1941-42	293*
1943-44	728
1945-46	869
Total	1,890
1947-48	881
1949-50	876
1951-52	949
Total	2,706
1953-54	807
1955-56	1,189
1957-58	1,345
Total	3,341
1959-60	1,243
1961-62	1,957
1963-64	1,529
Total	4,729
1965-66	1,460
1967-68	1,162
Total	2,622
Grand Total	17,917

*Data available for 1942 only.

Source: Biennial Reports, Iowa Board of Parole.

CHART 2

CRIMINAL CASES DISPOSED OF IN POLK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, 1935-68



involve more serious offenses.

In the thirty-four years from 1935 to 1968, the Polk County District Court disposed of 17,917 defendants, or an average of 500 each year. These years include the last few years of the Great Depression of the 1930's, World War II, the Korean War, and part of the Vietnam conflict.

From 1935 to 1940, during the Great Depression and just prior to World War II, criminal cases rose from 337 to 609 cases. During the war, dispositions fell to 293 in 1942, and 360 in 1945, the last year of the war. By 1946, the first full year after the war, cases rose to five hundred and then remained above the four hundred level until 1956 when the number increased to 690 cases. In 1961, dispositions mounted sharply to 1,112 and then decreased to 641 in the final year. Table 3 shows the biennial dispositions and Chart 2 displays the annual variations.

CHANGES IN TYPES OF SENTENCES IN CRIMINAL CASES IN POLK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, 1955-68

In order to demonstrate how dispositions in criminal cases have changed in the past fourteen years, the sentences have been grouped into

TABLE 4

DISPOSITION OF CRIMINAL CASES IN POLK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT BY FIVE YEAR PERIODS, 1955-59 AND 1964-68

Disposition	1955-59		1964-68		Difference	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Jail/fine	1149	36.0	1089	33.1	-60	-5.2
Dismissed	1058	33.2	595	18.1	-463	-43.7
Prison or Reformatory	573	18.0	939	28.5	+366	+62.0
Probation	183	5.7	427	13.0	+244	+133.3
Suspended Sentence	154	4.8	125	3.8	-29	-18.8
Acquitted	75	2.3	116	3.5	+41	+54.6
Total	3192	100.0	3291	100.0	+99	+3.7

two 5-year periods, 1955 to 1959, and 1964 to 1968, with the four intervening years omitted. (See Table 4).

In the first five years, 36 per cent of the cases terminated in jail and/or fines, but in the second five years, the same decreased to 33.1 per cent, a drop of 60, or 5.2 per cent. Imprisonments increased from 18 per cent (573) in the first period to 28.5 per cent (939) in the second, or by 366 or a 62 per cent rise. Probation rose from 5.7 to 13 per cent in the same periods, or by 244, making an increase of 133.3 per cent. The percentage of suspended sentences fell from 4.8 to 3.8 per cent, or a drop of 29 or 18.8 per cent. Dismissals decreased from 33.2 to 18.1 per cent, or by 463 or a decline of 43.7 per cent. Acquittals expanded from 2.3 to 3.5 per cent, or a rise of 41 or 54.6 per cent.

From the first to the second period, prison sentences, probation and acquittals increased, but jail and/or fines, dismissals, and suspended sentences decreased in numbers and percentages.

CHANGES IN PRISON COMMITMENTS, 1935 TO 1968

In order to show how commitments to the penitentiary and the two reformatories have changed in the past 34 years, the number and the percentages of defendants sentenced to the three correctional institutions in Iowa have been tabulated. Table 5 shows the numbers and Table 6 the percentages of defendants committed

of the total number tried. Charts 3 and 4 display the variations graphically.

In these years the Polk County District Court committed a total of

TABLE 5

OFFENDERS COMMITTED TO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN IOWA BY POLK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, 1936-68

Biennium	To Prison or Reformatory
1935-36	112
1937-38	155
1939-40	225
Total	492
1941-42	62*
1943-44	131
1945-46	231
Total	424
1947-48	107
1949-50	117
1951-52	92
Total	316
1953-54	122
1955-56	205
1957-58	272
Total	599
1959-60	240
1961-62	390
1963-64	330
Total	960
1965-66	341
1967-68	463
Total	804
Grand Total	3,595
Annual Average	109

*1942 only, no data for 1941 available.
Source: Biennial Reports of Iowa Board of Parole.

TABLE 6

PER CENT OF DEFENDANTS SENTENCED TO PENITENTIARY AND REFORMATORY IN IOWA BY POLK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, 1935-68

Year	Per Cent	Year	Per Cent
1935	21.4	1955	17.4
1936	13.1	1956	17.1
1937	15.4	1957	17.8
1938	22.4	1958	22.5
1939	22.5	1959	14.6
1940	16.4	1960	24.6
1941	(a)	1961	19.1
1942	21.2	1962	20.8
1943	21.5	1963	22.7
1944	15.5	1964	20.2
1945	24.9	1965	20.5
1946	27.8	1966	26.2
1947	11.1	1967	41.7
1948	13.1	1968	38.4
1949	13.7		
1950	13.0		
1951	9.0		
1952	10.4		
1953	13.2		
1954	17.1		

(a) No data available for 1941

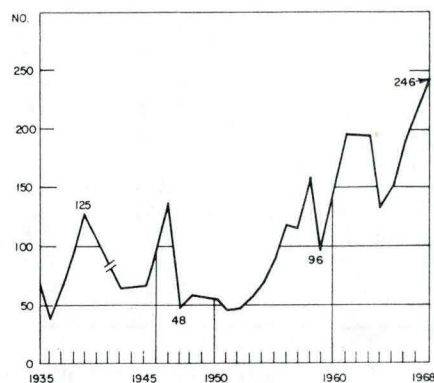
3,595 offenders to prison, or an average of 109 a year. Annual commitments ranged from the lowest of 40 in 1936 to the highest of 246 in the final year. At the end of the Great Depression, the court committed 125 offenders, but subsequent to this, during World War II, the number decreased to 62 and 66 only to rise to 92 in 1945, the last year of the war. In 1946, the first full year after the war, imprisonments increased to 139 and then fell to 48 the next year. Except for one year, 1959, prison terms have remained above one hundred since 1956, and then rose to over two hundred in the last two years.

The chart showing the annual percentages presents a clearer picture of the increasing use of imprisonments. From the 13.1 per cent low in 1936 the percentages rose to 27.8 per cent in 1946, and then decreased to only 9 per cent in 1951. Subsequently the percentages increased to 24.6 per cent in 1960 and advanced to the highest of 41.7 per cent in 1967, decreasing slightly to 38.4 per cent in the last year.

In the year when imprisonments were low, 44 or 9 per cent of the 488

CHART 3

OFFENDERS COMMITTED TO IOWA PENITENTIARY AND REFORMATORIES BY POLK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT 1935-68



defendants were committed, but in 1967 when the number of defendants increased to 521, a total of 217 or 41.7 per cent were sent to prison by the court. Prison terms rose from 9 per cent in 1951 to 41.7 per cent in 1967, indicating a sharp rise.

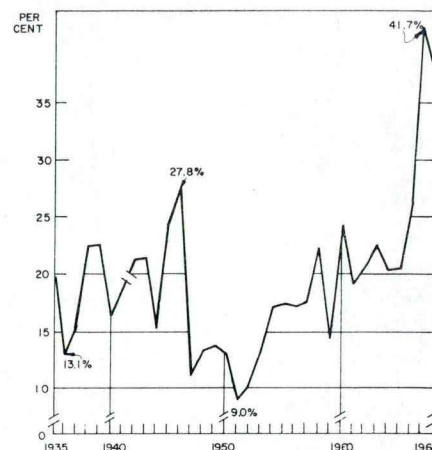
From the data and the chart showing the annual percentages, it is clearly evident that the court has been sentencing more offenders to prison in recent years than in the earlier periods. Whether the increase in prison terms has been due to changes in the types of crimes or the characters of the offenders cannot be stated with certainty, but it is known that violent crimes, rape, robbery, and assaults, have increased in the past decade which may account for the rise in prison commitments. In addition, it is possible that county prosecutors may have been more effective in court in bringing about more convictions and, as a result, more prison terms.

CRIMES IN DES MOINES, IOWA, AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, 1960 TO 1968

Because criminality has often been linked to unemployment and low incomes, the information on unemployment and per capita income in the nation has been tabulated and related to the number of crimes in Des Moines, Iowa. The data have been

CHART 4

PRISONERS COMMITTED FROM POLK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, 1935-68



reduced to Index Numbers for crimes and unemployment based on the percentage of males unemployed in the male labor force in the nation. The data for males have been used because most of the crimes have been committed by men.

In the nine years during which crimes have been increasing in Des Moines, the annual number of men unemployed in the nation has been decreasing. In other words, as employment has been increasing, crimes have been rising. In 1961 when crimes in the city decreased to an Index of 90.8, or by 9.2 per cent below 1960, unemployment rose by 20.3 per cent (Index Number of 120.3). In 1965 when crimes advanced 8.1 per cent (Index Number of 108.1) above 1960, unemployment fell to an Index Number of 74 or 36 per cent below the 1960 number. In 1968 when crimes rose to an Index Number of 147.4 or 47.4 per cent above the base year, unemployment fell to an Index Number of 61.1 or 37.9 per cent below the base year. (See Table 7 and Chart 5 for annual changes).

From the data and the chart, it is clear that as unemployment has been decreasing in the nation, crimes have been increasing in the city. Stated in another way, it can be said that crimes have been increasing at a time when full employment has been rising. From this it is evident that criminality cannot be related to unemployment.

TABLE 7

MAJOR CRIMES IN DES MOINES, IOWA AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, 1960 TO 1968 (Index Numbers, 1960 = 100)

Year	Index Numbers	
	Crimes	Unemployment*
1960	100.0	100.0
1961	90.8	120.3
1962	86.9	99.1
1963	85.4	99.1
1964	102.7	118.5
1965	108.1	74.0
1966	111.5	59.8
1967	124.6	62.9
1968	147.4	61.1 (a)

(a) As of March 1968

Unemployment Index Numbers Calculated in percentage of males unemployed in male labor force.

*Sources: Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1968, p. 215

TABLE 8

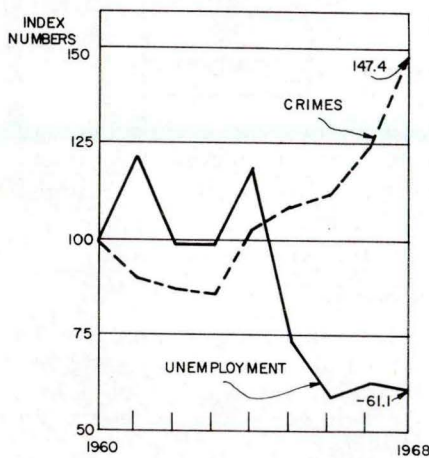
MAJOR CRIMES IN DES MOINES, IOWA AND PER CAPITA INCOME IN THE UNITED STATES 1958 TO 1968 (Index numbers, 1958 = 100)

Year	Crimes		Current Dollars*	1958* Dollars	
	Numbers	Index Numbers	Dollars	Index Numbers	Index Numbers
1958	4,661	100.0	1831	100.0	100.0
1959	4,989	107.0	1905	104.0	102.7
1960	5,831	125.1	1937	105.8	102.8
1961	5,292	113.5	1983	108.3	104.3
1962	5,067	108.7	2064	112.7	107.5
1963	4,982	106.9	2136	116.7	109.9
1964	5,988	128.5	2280	124.5	115.9
1965	6,306	135.3	2427	132.6	121.9
1966	6,503	139.5	2584	141.1	126.5
1967	7,268	155.9	2744	149.9	131.1
1968	8,595	184.4	2922	159.6	135.0

*Source: Special Report from Statistical Division of the Cleveland Trust Company, Cleveland, Ohio, 1969.

CHART 5

CRIMES IN DES MOINES AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, 1960-68. (Index Numbers, 1960 = 100)

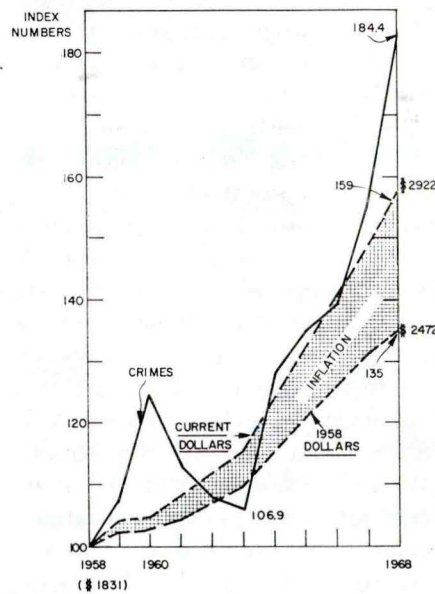


CRIMES IN DES MOINES, IOWA, AND PER CAPITA INCOME IN THE UNITED STATES, 1958 TO 1968

Poverty cannot be completely evaluated in terms of per capita income but income does measure the general economy of a nation. In order to demonstrate how crimes in Des Moines have changed with variations in per capita income, the figures for crimes in the city have been tabulated in Table 8 and displayed on the Chart 6 together with the per capita income for the nation in terms of the "Current Dollars Income" and

CHART 6

CRIMES IN DES MOINES AND CURRENT AND 1958 PER CAPITA INCOMES, 1958-68 (Index Numbers, 1958 = 100)



the "1958 Dollars Income" in terms of Index Number using 1958 as the base. The two types of per capita incomes have been used to make allowance for the "price inflation" that has been taking place in recent years.

From 1958 to 1968, major crimes in Des Moines rose from 4,661 to 8,595 or by 84.4 per cent, making an Index Number of 184.4. In the same years, the "Current Dollars" per capita income advanced from \$1,831 to \$2,922 or by 59.6 per cent, making an Index

Number of 159.6 above the base year. In the same years, the "1958 Dollars" per capita income increased from \$1,831 to \$2,472, making an Index Number of 135 or an increase of 35 per cent.

Regardless of whether the "Current Dollars Income" or the "1958 Dollars Income" is used, it is clear that crimes in the city have been rising faster than the income in the nation.

THE SMASHED IMAGES

Why this upsurge of crime and lawlessness in the midst of affluence? Without being aware of it, far-reaching transformations have occurred in the nation which have a direct bearing on the current anti-social conduct.

Once people desert the land and establish great cities the form and character of urban life reacts upon the people and their mode of conduct. The 19th Century architect E. E. Viollet-le-Duc described events in the France of his day when he wrote in his *Memoirs sur la Defence de Paris* in 1871 as follows:

The whole civilized world empties its scum, making a cosmopolitan city where a mob without country, principles, or tradition presumptuously directs the elections, and takes advantage of the misfortune of the country

to overturn the government and puts itself in power.

Twenty years later another French observer, A. Corre, in his *Crime et Suicide* wrote about Paris in 1891 in like manner.

Too great wealth and too great poverty are both causes of crime. The first corrupts and the second degrades: both lead to crime.

Latent within the statements of these two men are factors which have a direct bearing on current conditions in the nation: (1) the growth of unrelated discordant groups of people living in proximity devoid of common beliefs and standards, and (2) the increased mobility of the total population.

DISCORDANT GROUPS IN URBAN CENTERS

Cities are composed of unrelated masses of migrants who have left rural sections or come from other lands. Urban dwellers constitute a mosaic of variegated persons with different backgrounds and basic principles. This composite of people creates wide social distances with huge gaps between them, leaving no common set of standards. This segmentation and the differences, fractures moral values and conduct norms causing the pressure for social controls to fade. In this vacuum, earlier loyalties to place, to groups, to nation and basic principles no longer exist. The tall buildings of cities cast deep shadows in the streets where people become indifferent to others. Sentiments and emotions become as hard as the pavement upon which they walk. Antagonisms arise in the rootless grey existence, rationalized by a situational psychology. Previous bonds of sympathetic understanding give way to cynicism, nihilism, radicalism, and revolutionary mentality. As a result, speech habits and slogans arise, such as, "Down with the old Order," "Destroy the establishment," "Get rid of the scoundrels," "Property is stolen from the masses," "Steal what has been stolen," "The people will overcome," and many others. Recent developments in the riots and the looting in cities

give evidence to such concepts. In turn each person becomes his own interpreter of "the law" giving rise to numerous "anti" groups devoid of restraint. "Yesterday" is something "for the birds." Yesterday's tools, material, ideas, and principles are discarded for an idea of "first destroy and from the destruction create a New Order." Urban life, therefore, develops the iconoclasts, the *image smashers* who have no understanding of human society. Under these conditions, order disintegrates and people turn to violence as a natural result.

INCREASED MOBILITY OF PEOPLE

In every society where mobility has increased with the density of population, crimes have always risen. Moving from place to place, from city to city, from country to country, from job to job causes social isolation to the point where people have no time or interest to relate or identify themselves with anything. Each lives within a protective shell in order to keep from involvement in events or conditions. In such an anonymous condition nobody feels responsible to any man, to any group, to any country, or to any deity. The popular songs of the day explain more about shattered life in great cities than countless scientific findings or reports of special committees. "Strangers in the Night," "We Are Little Lost Sheep Who Have Gone Astray," "Ships That Pass in the Night," "Why Was I Born," "Those Were the Days, My Friend," and other ballads reveal the emptiness of human relationships. They are but lyrical expressions of the vast isolation of people who maintain that, "If there is a goal, it lies somewhere beyond nowhere." With no ties, no loyalties, no obligations, no sense of belonging, people turn to disorder and to crime.

These are the conditions which foster criminality; a vast urban population, segmented, fractured and devoid of what Lord Devlin once called "the invisible bonds of common thought" and isolated in the empty boredom of non-involvement. The primary elements today are not the

lack of material goods but the absence of those "invisible bonds" that are at the heart of our problem.

This is what Aristotle pointed out when he stated in his *Politics*:

For man when perfected, is the best of animals, but when separated (isolated), he is the worst of all, . . . he is the most unholy and the most savage of animals.

There are two elements which man cannot tolerate—isolation and boredom. Where these exist people divest themselves of normal patterns of conduct and regress to primitive violence.

It may be that it is time to take a more careful look at the figure of Justice. The Lady holds the Scales of Justice in one hand and at her side is the sword. It is possible that if men cannot live by the scales, then there is left only the sword. Or is it possible that justice, the scales and the sword are parts of the same element and cannot be separated, lest justice be ridiculed. ★★★



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