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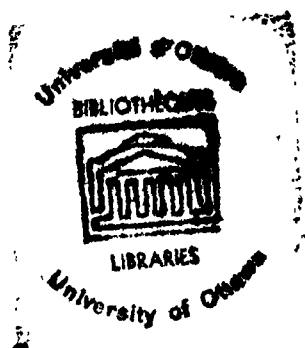
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THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN CEYLON

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Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts  
of the University of Ottawa through the  
Institute of Psychology, and in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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A handwritten signature, possibly 'R. H. Shevenell', is written in the bottom right corner of the page. The signature is followed by a large, dark, diagonal scribble that obscures some of the text.

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to enquire what specific measures should be adopted to stem the tide of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon. The present enquiry will be limited to delinquency among boys. Although Ceylon is reputedly a peaceful country, where society is not so complex as in highly industrialized cities like Bombay, Chicago and New York, the crime figures both among adults and juveniles during the last decade have shown no signs of decrease. The Government took a serious view of the situation in 1947, by appointing a Special Commission to report on the Prisons and Probation Services in Ceylon. This Commission issued what is popularly known as the Gratien Report, so named after the Chairman, Justice Gratien. After that, it looked as if the country was making great progress in the treatment and prevention of crime. In fact the boom period after Great War II was a windfall in the improvement of Social Services in general. Ceylon planned great schemes in 1949 and 1950. Both the State and the Philanthropists of the land were prepared to throw in a lot of newly-earned money to create a new Utopia.

Before long, money became scarce. The inevitable financial crisis came towards the middle of 1952, and it

became acute in 1953. Blue-prints for Health, Education and Social Security were shelved. The solution of the problem of juvenile delinquency is but one of the many schemes that were thus called off. But a problem of this nature will not automatically ease off as it were out of sympathy for the lack of funds. The country therefore needs a practical scheme which would not cost the government so much. The purpose of this thesis is to size up the actual situation and to recommend remedies which are both practical and inexpensive.

Chapter I of this thesis will deal with the existence and extent of this problem of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon. After giving a bird's eye view of the legal position, it will survey the crime figures and describe the organization of Correctional Schools in Ceylon.

Chapter II will include a closer study of the crime figures, and a scrutiny of personal files of lads in these institutions, to clarify the general trends and to hit upon the specific factors which obtain in Ceylon.

The purpose of Chapter III will be to describe in greater detail the factors mentioned in the second chapter. These will be the five main factors: poverty and its concomitants, the evil effects of certain social customs, the absence of voluntary agencies to undertake the re-education

of delinquent boys, the quasi-prison character of certain Correctional Schools and the dearth of ancilliary services to deal with After-care.

Chapter IV will contain the remedial measures recommended in this thesis. The remedies proposed are not drastic. They have the principle of inculcating a new attitude and a new spirit to existing organizations. In every sphere of activity in the Free Dominion of Ceylon, there is the need of a new orientation of existing agencies. In brief the remedies proposed are five: Agricultural bias in education as well as in re-education, a strong public opinion against the adoption of children as servants, the encouragement of local units like the Boys' Clubs and Boys' Towns, the emphasis on the teaching of Cottage Industries, and the appeal to Welfare Agencies to help the State in solving a problem which is intimately connected with the building up of a healthy and a law-abiding citizenry in Ceylon.

In the preparation of this thesis, the primary sources have been the various Departmental Publications: Year Books, Census, Administration Reports, and Reports of Commissions. The Methods of Study have been inspired by three outstanding books on Juvenile Delinquency: The Young Delinquent by Cyril Burt, The Delinquent Boy and the Correctional School by

Norman Fenton and Unravelling Juvenile Delinquency by Sheldon and Eleanor Gluack. After a study of these and similar books the author feels how far the Ceylon student is handicapped by the absence of resources and tools that are abundant in Europe and America. In the field of Educational Psychology, Psychiatry and Child Guidance, Ceylon has made very little progress. There is only one child Guidance Clinic in Colombo. The Faculty of Education of the new University of Ceylon was started only three years ago. No leading psychologists, no professional psychiatrists, no social investigators flourish in Ceylon, to help a research student to probe deeper into this very mysterious but interesting problem. Group Intelligence Tests are used occasionally, by the Education Department. A fortiori, no tests of will, of personality, no psychiatric examination, no medical tests for special disabilities, no statistical investigations by volunteers are readily available.

However, it is heartening to note that in the last few years, some pioneer attempts have been made chiefly by university professors and students who will probably pursue the matter further and with more scientific precision. In the present thesis, a sincere attempt is made to survey the actual situation, to probe into the probable causes and to recommend certain definite measures, which will be sound as well as practical.

## CHAPTER I

### SURVEY OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN CEYLON

In this chapter, a general survey of the present situation of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon will be attempted. It will consist of three sections: first, a summary of the trend of legislation regarding juvenile delinquency in Ceylon; secondly, a survey of the crime figures in recent years, and thirdly, a description of the Correctional Schools. These three sections will make an assessment of the situation, before any criticism is offered.

#### 1.- General Trend of Legislation.

For the purpose of clarity, it is proposed to state here what are the Departments in Ceylon dealing with the subject of juvenile delinquency. This subject comes within the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs<sup>1</sup>, and directly under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services. The Ministry of Education was formerly in charge of the Correctional Schools, but now its participation is limited to the recommendation of teachers and the

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Department of Social Affairs, Comparative Survey on Juvenile Delinquency, Part IV, Asia and the Far East, New York, 1953, p. 6.

annual examination of the academic work. The Ministry of Justice is also concerned in this problem as the Supreme Court, the District Courts, the Magistrates' Courts and the Village Tribunals have jurisdiction over juveniles as well as adults<sup>2</sup>. The Ministry of Social Services gives a block grant annually in respect of abandoned lads. The Ministry of Health is chiefly responsible for the sanitary and medical services in these Institutions. Lastly, the Ministry of Finance has the master key, as the reorganization of existing institutions and the formation of new Borstals depend on whether public funds are made available.

Definitions.- In Ceylon there is no legal definition of juvenile delinquency, except the general notion of a non-adult offender. Under this general heading may be considered three divisions according to age. Child Offenders range between 7 and 12 years. Young Delinquents range between 12 and 16, while Youthful Offenders range between 16 and 21. For the lower limit, however, a Magistrate is empowered to use his discretion as to whether a boy above 7 and below 12 "has not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge of the nature and consequences of his conduct" (Section 76 of the Penal Code of Ceylon). It should be noted

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2 Op. cit., p. 54 and 55.

that in Ceylon it is the age of the juvenile at the time of conviction that is taken into account, and not the age at the time of the commission of the crime<sup>3</sup>. Moreover in Ceylon the use of Government certificates of Birth for all school children was started only three years ago. In Courts there is no demand for Birth certificates of delinquent children. It is therefore possible that a young man of 22 declares himself a youthful offender of 19. Sometimes it has happened that a so-called lad is a married man.

Evolution of legislation.- In Ceylon which was a British Colony, and gained independence only in 1948, the treatment of crime has followed the British pattern, progressing gradually from the punitive and retaliatory approach to the humanitarian concept of re-education of a boy in need. The first piece of legislation was the Reformatory Schools Act of 1870. The only Reformatory School dating from that time is the Reformatory attached to St. Vincent's Home, an Institution organized by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, for the training of orphans and delinquents<sup>4</sup>. On the basis of this Act the Youthful Offenders' Ordinance was enacted in 1886 and amended several times, namely in 1909, 1913, 1928

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3 Op. cit., p. 1.

4 Op. cit., p. 78.

and 1938. This Act is in force at the present time, together with the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code of Ceylon. The Youthful Offenders' Ordinance provides for the establishment of Reformatory Schools, the certification of Industrial Schools, and for various forms of punishment. Other significant laws are the Youthful Offenders' (Training Schools) Ordinance of 1939 and the Probation of Offenders' Ordinance of 1944 as amended in 1947. The first State Institution for juvenile delinquents was started in 1940 at Watupitiwela, while the Probation system started in 1944<sup>5</sup> has expanded fast, year by year. It has 31 judicial divisions, served by 75 full-time Probation Officers and 15 volunteers. About 2000 lads per year have been supervised under this system.

The Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1939, as amended in 1944, made provision for the creation of Juvenile Courts but it was only in the beginning of 1954, that the first Juvenile Court was opened in Colombo, while in all other places, Magistrates have set aside one day in the week to hear Juvenile cases, in the local Magistrates' Courts<sup>6</sup>. Two Remand Homes were opened in 1952, one at

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5 Ceylon, Department of Prison and Probation Services, Administration Report of the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services for the year 1945, Colombo, Government Publications Bureau, 1946, p. B7.

6 Ceylon, Department of Prison and Probation Services, Ibid., 1953, p. B25.

Pannipitiya, near Colombo, and the other at Koggala, near Galle. In all other areas of the Island, segregated parts of ordinary prisons are utilized for the purpose. In most places, the Probation Officers have to depend on the cooperation of the Policemen and the Village Headmen. There is only one Child Guidance Clinic, and that in Colombo, attached to the Civil Hospital. The Arresting procedure is often done by the Police, but the law provides "that the person arrested shall not be subjected to more restraint than is necessary to prevent his escape"<sup>7</sup>. Mild treatment therefore depends on the discretion of the Officer. There are a few approved Homes, but in most places juvenile delinquents have to be detained sometime in Police-lockups. There is no Observation Home or Receiving Centre at which lads could be studied individually before being sent to a particular Institution.

Treatment.- Juvenile Delinquents may be handled in one of the following way, according to the circumstances<sup>8</sup>:

(1) A lad may be sent on Probation, under Section 3 of the Probation of Offenders Ordinance. One of the major problems of the Probation Service seems to be the recruitment and training of suitable persons for this responsible undertaking.

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations, Department of Social Affairs, Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Op. cit., p. 70.

(2) Sometimes a delinquent lad may be released "on probation of good conduct" guaranteed by the parent or Guardian. This really amounts to a mere warning.

(3) In 1941, another step was taken by the Adoption of Children's Ordinance, by which the Court is empowered to order the adoption of a juvenile by a suitable person.

(4) At times the Court may order a fine to be paid either at once or by instalments. For default of payment, the Court may order the lad to undergo imprisonment.

(5) In certain cases of probation, restitution may be ordered and the responsibility may rest on the juvenile, his parent or on both.

(6) Provisions for corporal punishments are made in Subsection 17 of the Youthful Offenders' Ordinance, which states that a Court "may order the offender, if a male, to be whipped, with not more than 6 strokes of a light cane or rattan, in the case of a boy under the age of 12, or in the case of a boy above the age of 12, and below the age of 16, with not more than 10 strokes". Usually such caning is carried out in the presence of the parent or guardian.

(7) Institutional Treatment.- Long before the State could have thought of the problem, the Oblate Fathers in Ceylon had started a Reformatory in Maggona. It was aided by Government on a "pro rata" basis; but during the years

of the Great War II, as the Government persisted in paying the same rate, without any allowance for the enhanced standards of living, there arose an acrimonious discussion. A final settlement was made in 1946, but by this time the Government had planned to have its own Borstal Institutions. Several Officers were trained abroad, and their services were utilized to formulate a new scheme. The first Borstal was built in 1940, the second was started in 1949, the third in 1952 and the fourth in 1953. In all, therefore, there are four Government Institutions and one Catholic. The Catholic Institution being over 70 years old is well organized while only one of the Government Borstals is even complete as regards buildings. Some of them are renovated bungalows, or Military Barracks which had served other purposes in years gone by. In most of the Borstals, the Superintendent has to contend with the problem of finding trained personnel. For the present he has to be contented with a former Prison Guard, or a fresh Matriculate, with some goodwill and sufficient interest in the welfare of boys. Psychologists, psychiatrists or trained social workers are out of the question, owing to the lack of funds.

Release and After-care.- In Ceylon it is the Ministry of Justice that officially releases a juvenile delinquent<sup>9</sup>.

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9 Op. cit., p. 94.

The ordinary time limit is three years, and the release depends on the boy's conduct during this period. In the Maggona Reformatory, after-care is not organized but the Manager usually arranges to get the boy employment in the Industrial School itself, in a private company, home or estate; otherwise he sees that the boy is duly restored to his parent or guardian. There are newly organized After-care Associations for all the Government Borstals.

Prevention.- There is hardly any organized scheme in Ceylon for the prevention of juvenile delinquency. There are, however, two laws which contain specific provisions that might be interpreted as deterrent of juvenile delinquency. The Vagrants' Ordinance provides that lads between the ages of 12 and 21, found vagrant, may be bound over to be of good behaviour, and lads under 16 may be sent over to an Industrial School for three years if found vagrant. The Prevention of Juvenile Smoking Ordinance makes the sale of tobacco to juveniles under 16, illegal. The Police Department is having a scheme of starting Boys' Clubs in certain towns<sup>10</sup> but so far only a few have been started. The Legion of Mary is also interested in helping the establishment of these Boys' Clubs.

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<sup>10</sup> Ceylon, Part III, Judicial (A), Administration Report of the Inspector General of Police for 1953, Colombo, Government Publications Bureau, 1954, p. A52.

The above is a general survey of the existing legislation in Ceylon with reference to the treatment and prevention of Juvenile Delinquency. It is now proposed to assess the extent and urgency of this problem by analyzing the crime figures and studying the conditions prevailing in the Correctional Schools.

## 2.- Analysis of Crime Figures.

One of the usual methods of assessing the trend of crime in a country is to compare the figures indicating the convictions from year to year. In Ceylon these records are kept by the Police Department. The following Table I needs no comment besides the observation that convictions have steadily increased since 1947, from 30% to 44%.

It will be noticed that these figures include adult and juvenile crime, but do not separate them. For this purpose, therefore, a better method would be to compare the number of admissions to the houses of detention. These are kept by the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services. Moreover there are other points of interest in these latter Reports. The writer has gathered these Reports for the years 1945 to 1953, inclusively. The year 1945 was taken for a starting point since the years 1939 to 1945 were the years of the Great War II. Conditions were abnormal then.

TABLE I.-  
The Trend of Crime in Ceylon.

Years	Population	Total Arrested or Charged	Total Charged	Convictions No.	%
1947	6,879,000	28,286	20,090	6,021	30%
1948	7,086,000	24,648	17,863	6,121	34%
1949	7,297,000	21,549	15,003	5,672	37.8%
1950	7,544,000	20,129	13,632	5,134	37.6%
1951	7,742,000	18,090	12,110	5,007	41%
1952	7,942,000	17,911	11,940	5,135	43%
1953	8,248,000	18,016	11,690	5,152	44%

Ceylon, Part III, Judicial (A), Administration  
Report of the Inspector General of Police for 1953, Colombo,  
Government Publications Bureau, 1954, p. A52.

Ceylon did not suffer much by that war. Rather she profited economically, as jobs became easily available and lucrative, commodities were sold at high prices, and the people came in direct contact with other nations. The years of the period after the war brought the country back to normal, and are therefore worth studying for the purpose of this thesis. In Table II are the comparative figures for adults and juveniles.

The following figures need certain comments, which may be summarized in three points:

First: From 1946 there is a sharp rise in crime. This was due to two reasons. The Great War II had taught the Ceylonese the wanton use of lethal weapons. Ammunition, hand-bombs, hand-grenades, gas masks, military uniforms for disguise, were common among the Ceylonese youths, who had returned to the island after witnessing gruelling scenes abroad. Their consciences had become blunt with the impact of modern warfare. In addition to this, unemployment brought in its wake poverty and misery. Men were not suited for peacetime employment and still they would not condescend to work in the fields. Thefts of all kinds, gang robberies, and juvenile delinquencies swelled the crime figures.

TABLE II.-

Trend of Juvenile Crime. Number Yearly Admissions to Houses of Detention, from 1945 to 1953 inclusively.

Years	Total Admissions	Convictions	Over 20 Years	Below 20 Years
1945	24,904	9,847	8,315	1,532
1946	27,722	11,809	10,022	1,787
1947	32,180	14,310	12,611	1,709
1948	34,863	16,312	14,532	1,780
1949	31,503	14,154	12,639	1,515
1950	27,664	12,248	10,769	1,479
1951	23,094	8,842	7,524	1,318
1952	25,337	7,924	7,081	1,199 <sup>a</sup>
1953	26,506	8,764	7,060	1,829 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> In 1952 and 1953, the Remand Homes admitted some delinquents as there was no room in the Hikkaduwa Certified School. The numbers of these admissions have been added to the numbers at the other Correctional Schools. Those detained but not charged have not been included.

Secondly: In June 1949, the Government was roused to a sense of danger, to appoint a Special Commission, which did very expeditious work, and issued a worthy Report in December of the same year. One of the recommendations of this Report was that Magistrates should be circularized not to send persons to prison in default of payment of fines. The Commission had discovered that in 1948, from the total of 14,532, as many as 7,261 were sent to prison in default of the payment of fines<sup>11</sup>. By the time that the Report was approved, and the new procedure adopted, i.e. in the year 1950 and after, the number of admissions to houses of detention have gone down appreciably. This is no indication that the years after 1950 compare better than the years before it. This statement is borne out by the Commissioner himself, on page B4 of his Administration Report for the year 1951.

Thirdly: In the years following the Gratien Report, several measures were taken to solve the problem of juvenile delinquency. The buildings at Watupitiwela were extended, new Borstals were started in Hikkaduwa and Negombo and two new Remand Homes were started in Pannipitiya and Koggala.

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations, Department of Social Affairs, Comparative Survey on Juvenile Delinquency, Part IV, Asia and the Far East, New York, 1953, p. 9, Sec. 13.

The Probation system was extended, and everything looked rosy when, lo and behold, this progress received a sudden brake from the financial crisis of 1953. The figures for 1954 are not available but visits to the Borstals gave the writer the chance to note that there were over 1500 lads in May 1954.

There is no room therefore for complacency. The Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services who wrote optimistically in April 1953: "The old Order has changed . . . The recommendations of the Gratien Committee has set the standard . . . and we have achieved the greatest measure of success"<sup>12</sup> writes in a sadder note, in February 1954: "This year has been a year of sensational events. Tragedy leaves scars difficult to heal. It has proved beyond anything else that the substance of a new spirit cannot hope to thrive on the decrepit structure of an old building . . . Restrictures on capital expenditure have, however, precluded any provision of accommodation, and all proposals for expansion are held up"<sup>13</sup>.

The Superintendent of the Borstal at Hikkaduwa reports as follows: "Without sufficient and suitable staff, adequate

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<sup>12</sup> Ceylon, Department of Prison and Probation Services, Administration Report of the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services for the Year 1952, Colombo, Government Publications Bureau, 1953, p. B26.

<sup>13</sup> Ceylon, Ibid., 1954, p. 23.

buildings and equipment, even with the best will in the world, the work of reformation cannot be satisfactorily achieved".

The above figures, their interpretation and the authority quoted will suffice to show that the problem of juvenile delinquency not only does exist in Ceylon, but is urgently in need of solution. It is now time to examine how this problem is tackled by the Correctional School.

### 3.- Correctional Schools in Ceylon.

Under the above heading will be surveyed the Maggona Reformatory, which is also called the Certified Industrial School, the Watupitiwela H.M.S. Training School, the Hikkaduwa Training School, its branch at Koggala, and the Negombo Training School, and the Remand Home at Pannipitiya.

#### A. The Maggona Reformatory, or Certified Industrial School.

History.- The above-named Institution has an interesting history. As early as 1880, the Government started a small Reformatory at Haputale in the Hill Country of Ceylon, under the direction of an English Clergyman. At the same time a large Industrial School was organized by the first Archbishop of Colombo, Mons. Christopher Bonjean, O.M.I., on

the outskirts of Maggona. Considerations of a salubrious climate, plenty of good water, and fertile soil, decided the choice of this site. Hearing that there were a few Catholic lads at the Reformatory in Haputale, Archbishop Bonjean applied for permission to take over those lads, and place them under the care of the Oblate Brothers at Maggona. Not only was this request granted but in a few years the Haputale project was abandoned, and Government in its turn requested the Archbishop to throw open the Maggona Reformatory to all young delinquents, Catholic as well as Non-Catholics. The Government gave the necessary lands and the building funds, and agreed to pay a "pro rata" grant per annum. The personnel of the Reformatory was to be supplied by the Archbishop. Stalwarts of the regime died only eight years ago. The Institute is yet under the Oblate Fathers and Brothers.

Conditions of admission.- Boys of every age are admitted here. There are three sections of large buildings, amply set out on three picturesque terraces, rising above the Administration Block, which is at the foot of a hill. On the lowest terrace are boys between 18 and 21, on the middle terrace are boys between 15 and 18, and on the highest are the Benjamins, between 8 and 15. Some of the inmates are more men than youths, while the younger folk are more

striplings and street waifs than juveniles. There is no Board of selection, and the Manager usually accepts every one that is sent by the Magistrates. This Institution is always crowded, the peak being in 1948 when there were 463 on roll. No private admissions are made. The boys are escorted by Government Fiscals or Police Officers in civil dress.

Organization.- The Manager of St. Vincent's Home is also Manager of the Reformatory, but his Assistant lives on the spot. He is assisted by four Brothers who may be considered as House Officers, the Superintendent, the Prefect of Discipline, the Bursar, and the Infirmarian. The lads go daily for work under the direction of another set of Brothers whose domain are the various workshops. The Academic School is under the Franciscan Brothers, a native Order, begun by the pioneer Oblate Fathers, but owing to the shortage of Religious, several lay men have to be employed as teachers and guards. The media of instruction are Sinhalese and Tamil.

Time-table.- In the morning, all the cleaning up of the houses, the sweeping of the garden, and the supply of water, are carried out by the boys before they march to the various workshops. The policy of the authorities is to keep

the lads busy from sunrise to sunset, and to teach every lad a suitable trade before he leaves the Reformatory. This selection of trade is done by personal preference. There is a wide selection: carpentry, smithy, tailoring, printing, book-binding, weaving and agriculture. The manual work is over at 11.30 a.m., to be followed by academic studies at 2 p.m. and recreation at 6 p.m. The games played by the lads include cricket, volley ball and national games like chak-gudu. The Brother Infirmarian is an excellent master in physical drill, and train a few of the older lads to perform military exercises, to the accompaniment of music.

Medical attention.- Regular and adequate medical attention is provided in this Institution. One of the distinct features of this place is the privacy of Brother Infirmarian's Room. There the newcomers open their hearts, unburden long histories of waywardness, and listen willingly to advice of a personal nature. Anxieties and fears are discovered, complexes are dug up. In the course of attending to sores and festering ulcers, the Infirmarian is able to convince the young delinquent of the consequences of sin. While cleaning up the body, he soothes the sickly soul. Half the work of restoration is the reclamation of a pure and healthy body.

Spiritual Conferences.- Chiefly with the idea of giving a strict tone to the Institution the Superintendent holds a general assembly and gives moral instruction twice a week. General remarks on matters of discipline, public warnings as well as public commendations are made.

Family Atmosphere.- On account of the variety of a floating population, no House System has been attempted. The authorities fear that in a place with Sinhalese and Tamils, the choice of group leaders might lead to complications. The Reformatory is like a General Hospital for delinquency, and the attitude of the Brothers is that they should be sympathetic and vigilant nurses. From the first they have maintained an atmosphere of home life. All of them speak the two Ceylonese languages with remarkable fluency. The younger lads find in them the mother's affection and the father's solicitous care. In this spirit the Reformatory has continued for nearly 75 years.

B. The H.M.S. Training School, Watupitiwela.

This is situated about three miles from Nittambuwa, which is twenty miles from Colombo along the road to Kandy. The site is well suited for this type of projects and Government has set apart 250 acres of Crown land for this first experiment on Borstal lines. It is in typically rural

surroundings. The buildings have been so designed that as one approaches it, one gets the impression that it is a High School and not a prison house. If a lad has gone astray on account of unfavourable environment he has now the chance to make good in more inspiring surroundings. Behind the Administration Block are four houses named after four famous kings of Ceylon. These halls of residence can accommodate about 250 lads. Wide apart from this section are the workshops for tailoring, carpentry and iron works. In addition to these there are class rooms where instruction is given in Sinhalese, Tamil and English. One of the specialties of this Borstal is the Wrestling ring, as the Superintendent is a firm believer that the art of wrestling is a safety valve for exuberant spirits. The premises are very spacious and the playground ample.

Admission.- Only youthful offenders between the ages of 16 and 21, who have been convicted and sentenced by the Magistrates, can be admitted into this Borstal. In fact the superintendent is previously consulted to make sure that the lad is fit physically and mentally to profit by the specialized training.

House System.- The whole school is divided into four houses and these are subdivided into groups under senior lads called group leaders. These leaders form the Leaders' Court

which has power to try petty offences against the coutumier of the house. The lads are given an incentive to cultivate good habits by the system of inter group competitions, in cleanliness, good conduct, study, games and sports.

Graces and privileges.- The lads are encouraged to turn a new leaf by the prospect of promotion to the special grade after twelve months. This special grade carries with it extra privileges like smoking, hiking, supervising a small group of younger lads, etc. After a stay of eighteen months, a lad may be granted fourteen days leave of absence a year. In very rare cases of consistent good conduct, a lad may be discharged after eighteen months. Special grade lads have the privilege of buying from the School Canteen which is open twice a week.

Time Table.- The day is divided into periods of manual work, study, physical training and play. They are responsible for most of the work in the house and on the farm. In fact some of the school rooms have been put up by them. They plough, they dig, they plant and they cook. All the levelling of the playground and the maintenance of the roads are done by the freshers. The Borstal being a Government school does not directly supply religious instruction but it has a shrine room for the Buddhists, a Chapel room for the Catholics and shrine room for the Hindus. The Ministers of various

denominations are allowed to hold services by arrangement with the Superintendent. Plenty of foodstuffs are grown by the lads, but it is strange they are bound by the ordinary regulations of State farms to sell the produce to the highest bidder.

Games.- In addition to cricket, football, volley-ball and basket ball, native games like "taachchi" and "chakgodu" are favourite games with the brawny lads. They also have plenty of chance to take part in swimming, boxing, wrestling, athletics, indoor games and Scouting.

#### C. Certified School, Hikkaduwa.

The next in order of importance is the Government Certified School at Hikkaduwa. It was during the regime of the former Minister of Education that the Government began this very ambitious scheme of putting up a first grade Borstal to serve the south of Ceylon. The Department of Education reclaimed a little island off Hikkaduwa, and planned a very grandiose scheme. For a start, an old manor was occupied and a long hall built. But the elections came and the Minister lost his seat and the Gratien Committee recommended that the School should be transferred to the Home Ministry. Until the departmental formalities were fulfilled, the building schemes were held up, but when the transactions

were smoothed out, the financial crisis came and the whole project is now only a half realized dream. A very efficient and enthusiastic Superintendent, trained in England, is at the head of this Borstal, but his efforts are paralyzed by the demands of red tape. He deserves sympathy for putting up with a frustrating situation.

Admission.- Only boys between 14 and 16 are admitted here. There were 117 at the end of 1952, and 286 at the end of 1953. Over-crowding is estimated at 432%. There is a lack of dormitories, class-rooms and workshops. As a last resort the Superintendent has got the boys to build their own dormitories of mud and wattle walls, and cadjan roofs<sup>14</sup>.

Time-table.- The daily program is more or less like that of Watupitiwela. More than 41% of the boys come illiterate and the Superintendent has tried to give them an elementary education. For religious worship they go to the temples, mosques and churches of Baddegama and Galle. The authorities place much emphasis on leisure-time activities: P.T., Games, Wrestling, Radio Music, Film-shows and Concerts. The boys are taken often on picnics.

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<sup>14</sup> Op. cit., p. B22.

Discipline.- This has been handicapped by overcrowding and lack of staff. There are no security measures such as bars, gates, guards, fences and walls. Consequently escapes have been pretty common. One of the few things that keep up the morale is the Boys Scout Troup.

D. The H.M.S. Training School, Negombo.

What may be called a branch of the Borstal at Wathupitiwela was started at Negombo, 22 miles from Colombo along the Northwest coast. To be exact the former adult prison of Negombo was converted into a Borstal on December 12th, 1952. Almost every month there is an Allocation Meeting, at which the more mature and hardened youths of Wathupitiwela Borstal are screened off and sent to Negombo, where the regime is more rigorous. Here too the routine is that of work, study and recreation. Scouting, Wrestling and P.T. have been introduced with remarkable success. There is very little resemblance of a Borstal in this drab place, and there is little chance of reorganization unless the old buildings are demolished and a modern one raised in its place. However, the premises do not admit of any space for gardening or agriculture. Some of the Officers are not trained, but they do their best to look after their charges.

E. The Remand Homes in Pannipitiya,  
Koggala and Kandy.

This project is one of the creations of the Gratien Report. The first Remand Home was opened at Pannipitiya on the 26th April, 1952. In the same year, but in October, a similar Home was started in Koggala, ten miles from Galle on the Matara road. Trained staff consisting of a Warden, his Assistant, a Matron, her Assistant and a Vocational Teacher, are in charge in each of these Homes which are run on the English system, modified to suit local conditions. Every lad is given the normal physical, mental and moral requirement of a child and he is encouraged to engage himself in useful vocational and recreational interests. He is observed by the staff with a view to reporting to court the most suitable method of treatment. Good work has been done by these Homes, and in 1953, the Government started a third at Kandy<sup>15</sup> to serve the Central Province.

In 1953 however, on representations by the Superintendent at the crowded Borstal at Hikkaduwa, the boys between 12 and 14 were packed off to the Remand Home at Koggala. These recent shuntings between Nogombo and Wathupitiwela, Hikkaduwa and Koggala are indications that the

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15 Op. cit., p. B19.

Government is hopelessly temporizing with a difficult situation. Some of the Borstals are military barracks restored and scantily adopted for a different purpose.

In conclusion, a resume of the situation can be gathered from the Table III.

TABLE III.-  
Correctional Schools in Ceylon.

Name	When Started	Place	Type	Management	Inmates
Reformatory	1880	Maggona	Certified Ind.School	Oblates	325 <sup>a</sup>
Training School	1940	Wathupitiwela	Borstal for lads 16-18 yrs.	Govt.	191 <sup>b</sup>
Certified School	1949	Hikkaduwa	Borstal for lads 14-16 yrs.	Govt.	286 <sup>c</sup>
Training School	1952	Negombo	Borstals for lads 18-21 yrs.	Govt.	234 <sup>d</sup>
Remand Home	1952	Koggala	Remand and Borstal lads 12-14 yrs.	Govt.	116 <sup>e</sup>
Remand Home	1953	Pannipitiya	Remand for lads 14-21 yrs.	Govt.	667 <sup>e</sup>
Remand Home	1953	Kandy	Remand for lads Central Prov.	Govt.	24 <sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Directly obtained from the Manager, Rev. Fr. Coupel, O.M.I.

<sup>b</sup> Directly obtained from the Superintendent, Mr. W. Silva.

<sup>c</sup> Administration Report, Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services Ceylon Govt. Press, Colombo, 1954, p. B22.

<sup>d</sup> Directly obtained from the Superintendent.

<sup>e</sup> Administration Report, Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services, Ceylon Govt. Press, Colombo, 1954, p. 24. Total No. of admissions minus the No. of those not charged with offences.

The chief purpose of this chapter has been to assess the situation of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon, in other words to answer the question: Is there juvenile delinquency in Ceylon so extensively as to constitute a problem? The background of legislations, the analysis of crime figures, and the survey of Correctional Schools have given the answer viz. that the extent and urgency of the problem merit research. The next chapter will further clear up the ground by enquiring into the types of Juvenile delinquency in Ceylon.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TYPES OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN CEYLON

In the first chapter a general assessment of the situation regarding juvenile delinquency in Ceylon was obtained by examining the crime figures and by surveying the condition of Correctional Schools. In the present chapter it is proposed to study juvenile delinquency from the point of view of its quality rather than its quantity. At first glance the crime figures themselves show a trend towards increase and the situation seems discouraging. An analysis of the types of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon might be more helpful at this point, to find out the possible causes and suggest the easiest remedies.

For this purpose a classification was made from the records of personal files kept at three Correctional Schools in Ceylon. The Schools chosen were the following:

- 1) The Reformatory or Certified School at Maggona. Here, as stated in Chapter I, the population is a mixed one in terms of age, nationality, religion and province.

- 2) The H.M.S. Training School, Wathupitiwela, where there is also a mixture regarding Province and religion, but selectivity regarding age and ability.

3) The H.M.S. Training School, Negombo, which may be considered as the higher department of the H.M.S. Training School at Wathupitiwela. The following tables will supply classification regarding age (IV), nationality (V), religion (VI), and province (VII).

The next point of interest is how juvenile delinquency is distributed with regard to nationality. The races of Ceylon comprise the Sinhalese, the Ceylon Tamils, the Indian Tamils, the Ceylon Moors, the Burghers and Eurasians, the Europeans, the Malays<sup>1</sup> and the Veddahs. The Sinhalese form the bulk of the population (67%) and live in the West, Centre and South of Ceylon. The Tamils are generally divided into two groups, Ceylon and Indian Tamils. The former are permanent residents chiefly found in the North and East Provinces of Ceylon and forming 12.3% of the population, while the latter are temporary immigrants who come to work in tea, rubber, and other plantations, and form 10.2% of the population. The Ceylon Moors are evenly distributed in the Island forming 6.3%. They are descendants of Arab settlers who intermarried with the Tamils. The Burghers and Eurasians are of Portuguese or Dutch descent. They are 0.4% of the total population. The Malays like the Moors are Mohammedans by religion. They form 0.3% of the population. Table V gives the distribution of juvenile delinquents according to these nationalities.

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<sup>1</sup> Stamp, L.D. and D.D.M. Gooneratne, Ceylon, the Land of the Sinhalese, Orient Longmans Ltd., Madras, 2nd Ed., 1951, p. 118-130.

TABLE IV.-  
Distribution of Juvenile Delinquency with Age.

Age in Years	Maggonna	Wathupitiwela	Negombo	Totals
9	2	-	-	2
10	3	-	-	3
11	12	-	-	12
12	24	-	-	24
13	20	-	-	20
14	40	-	-	40
15	54	22	-	76
16	67	37	22	126
17	51	50	45	146
18	36	39	51	126
19	16	20	47	83
20	-	12	39	51
21	-	10	30	40
Totals	325	190	234	749

The age group 16-18 has the highest frequency in this classification. This is more or less the same as in other countries. In Ceylon this is the age at which village lads roam into the towns in quest of employment; being unskilled and unable to accommodate to urban life, some of them drift into crime.

TABLE V.-  
Distribution of Juvenile Delinquency According to Nationality.

Nationality	Maggona	Wathupi- tiwela	Negombo	Total		Actual % of Pop.
				No.	%	
Sinhalese	174	134	180	488	65.2	67
Ceylon Tamils	82	35	31	148	19.7	12.3
Indian Tamils	6	0	4	10	1.3	10.2
Moors	54	11	17	82	10.9	6.3
Burghers	2	5	2	9	1.2	.5
Malays	7	5	-	12	1.6	.3
Totals	325	190	234	749	99.9	96.6 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The Europeans, Parsis, Afgans, and Veddhas make up the balance 3.6%.

According to Table V the Sinhalese are equally represented in the delinquent group and in the total population. The Ceylon Tamils are 7.4% more in the delinquent group, while the Indian Tamils are 8.9% less in the delinquent group. The probable explanation is that the Indian Tamils live in Ceylon only, in the Estates where they have ready employment. Boys of the 9-14 age group are provided compulsory education in the Estate Schools, while lads between 15-21 are employed in the Estate field work or in the factories. They would not live in Ceylon unless they have means of livelihood. It is also probable that the Ceylon Tamil juvenile delinquents do not receive proper handling in an environment congenial to them and there are more recidivists among them. This will be examined in greater detail in Chapter III. There is no Correctional School in the North and this is probably the reason why the Government has planned to build<sup>2</sup> the next Borstal in Hingurakgoda, which is in the North Central Province. The Moors also have 4.5% more in the delinquent group than is warranted in the population. The Moors have been backward in education and

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<sup>2</sup> Ceylon, Administration Report of the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services 1952, Colombo, Government Publications Bureau, p. B4.

organization for quite a long time. This was stressed by Mr. A. R. A. Razik, a member of the special Committee on Education appointed in 1943<sup>3</sup>.

It would be of interest to know how the various denominations are represented in the groups of juvenile delinquents. The Buddhists are mainly Sinhalese, and according to the ancient Sinhalese chronicles they introduced their religion in 300 B.C. with the result that Buddhism has been the predominant religion<sup>4</sup> for over twenty-two centuries; they have 57% of the total population. Next to Buddhism, Hinduism has the largest following, with 19.8%. Numerically, the Christians come third, 10%, and of these 80% are Catholics. The Moors and Malays embrace Islam as their religion; they count 6.6% of the population. There are other religions that do not come into the present analysis.

As is to be expected every denomination is well represented in the Correctional Schools (See Table VI). The most marked difference is 8.6% among the Muslims. This further favours the conclusion that this community of Moors

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<sup>3</sup> Ceylon, Report of the Special Committee on Education, Colombo, Government Publications Bureau, 1944, p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Census and Statistics, Ceylon Year Book 1952-1953, Colombo, Ceylon Government Press, p. 51.

TABLE VI.-  
Distribution of Juvenile Delinquents According to Religions.

Religion	Maggonā	Wathupi- tiwela	Negombo	Total No.	%	% in Total Pop.
Buddhists	102	128	176	406	54	57
Hindus	91	25	21	137	18	19.8
Muslims	82	16	17	115	15	6.6
Roman Cath.	44	19	20	83	11	8.1
Protestants	6	2	--	8	1	1.9
Totals	325	190	234	749		93.4 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Other religions not represented in the Correctional Schools make up the 6.4% remaining. The Veddhas are mostly animists.

and Malays (who are also Muslims by religion) is not well organized. There are very wealthy merchants among them, but there are also many who dwell in the slumlands of the various crowded towns of Ceylon.

Closely connected with the questions of nationality and religion is the distribution of juvenile delinquency according to the nine provinces of Ceylon. The distribution is given in Table VII. In this Table the Western Province is naturally the highest as it is the most populated region and contains Colombo, the Capital. The next in order is the Central Province whose chief town Kandy was once the Capital and the seat of the last King of Ceylon. The distribution of juvenile delinquency runs parallel to the density of population.

The Superintendents of the three Correctional Schools have kept a record of the initial offences for which the delinquents were admitted. An analysis of these offences in Table VIII will help in the unravelling of the chief causes of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon.

From this analysis it is evident that the most frequent initial offence for which lads are sent to Correctional Schools is theft in some form or other. In the list given above the first four are theft, housebreaking, criminal breach of trust, and attempted theft. These four amount to 82% of the total.

TABLE VII.-

Distribution of Juvenile Delinquents According to Provinces.

Province	Maggona	Wathupi- tiwela	Negombo	Total No.	%	% of Pop.
Western	177	101	126	404	54.2	40.6
Southern	12	7	37	56	7.5	14.0
Eastern	8	4	3	15	2.0	2.2
Northern	23	13	9	45	6.0	4.3
Central	62	36	27	125	16.8	15.3
North Central	5	4	--	10	1.8	1.1
North Western	17	9	--	26	3.4	7.0
Uva	8	5	12	25	3.3	3.5
Sabaragamuwa	12	11	20	43	5.7	12.2
Totals	325	190	234	749	100.2	

TABLE VIII.-

Distribution of Delinquents According to the Initial Offences Committed by Them Before Admission.

Nature of Offences	Maggona		Wathupitiwela		Negombo		Total Average	Rank
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Attempted Theft	24	7.4	4	2.1	-	-	4.75	4
Theft	201	62.3	110	58.0	145	61.4	60.50	1
Housebreaking	26	8.1	27	14.2	21	9.0	10.43	2
Breach of Trust	17	5.3	14	7.4	-	-	6.35	3
Wilful Hurt	3	0.9	4	2.1	3	1.3	1.43	10
Possessing Ganja	14	4.3	3	1.6	11	4.7	2.86	7
Possessing Toddy	4	1.5	2	1.5	11	4.7	2.50	8
Criminal Trespass	8	2.4	5	2.6	2	0.9	2.01	9
Cheating	1	0.3	1	0.5	4	1.8	0.90	13
Rape	-	-	1	0.5	3	1.3	0.90	13
Criminal Force	-	-	3	1.6	4	1.8	1.10	11
Homicide	-	-	4	2.1	-	-	0.7	15.5
Escape Custody	-	-	1	0.5	3	1.3	0.9	13
Gambling	14	4.3	5	2.6	12	5.7	4.2	5
Retaining Stolen Property	13	4.0	4	2.1	10	4.4	3.5	6
Forging	-	-	1	0.5	1	0.4	0.5	17
Arson	-	-	1	0.5	2	0.9	0.7	15.5
Pickpocketing	-	-	-	-	2	0.8	-	18
Totals	325	100.6	190	100.4	234	100.6	100.5	

TYPES OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN CEYLON

The fifth and sixth in order of frequency are gambling, and the retaining of stolen property. These two are also connected with theft and dishonesty, making the total of 89.7% of the total number of initial offences. To discover the most radical causes of juvenile delinquency it is necessary to study why 89.7% of the lads committed theft in some form or another.

The seventh and eighth (possession of toddy and ganja) require some explanation. Toddy is the fermented juice of the coconut flower. In moderate quantities it is an accepted form of nutrition as it contains yeast and vitamins. It is often recommended in cases of malaria and tuberculosis. Arrack is the alcoholic liquor distilled from toddy and is the Ceylon man's whisky. There is in Ceylon a large State Distillery and four private distilleries approved by Government. But there are several grades of arrack and the cheapest grade being very diluted is watery. Hence the demand for a home distilled product called "pot arrack". This is prepared in poor shanties and is circulated for clandestine sale, because it is an excise offence either to distill, retain, or sell this form of homemade arrack. But this occupation is the only mainstay of poor families living in certain localities along the sea coast where the coconut palms thrive.

In a poor family of this environment the parents would distill pot arrack and the adolescent boys would venture to help with the sale. Adventurous lads would take bottles of this liquor on their bicycles to prospective buyers but often they are rounded up by the Police or the Excise who draw up the cordon to the Correctional Schools. Intrinsically, therefore, this is a debated problem. Why should the Government and a few rich men have the monopoly? Why were so many small distilleries that gave employment to thousands of people along the coast closed down on Government order? Why should the price be so high and the quality so poor? Is it ethically wrong for a poor man to tap toddy from the trees that grow in his garden? Is it ethically wrong to distill arrack at home? Finally is it morally wrong for a poor boy to help his parents in the sale of a home product which brings money to the family? Anyway, it is an offence for which lads are punishable by imprisonment.

The eighth in the list of initial offences is the possession of ganja which is a dope sold by the Government, but trafficked by gangs of experienced adults. In the towns to which this contraband is smuggled from India, scheming men employ youngsters to ply this nefarious trade as children have a greater chance of slipping through the hands of the Police. But they do not always escape and perhaps it is a

blessing that they are caught, for this kind of employment brings in its wake other forms of wickedness. At the root of this type of delinquency is poverty and the existence of dope traffickers, who are not unknown to the Police. As in the time of Dickens, Faggins escape and Oliver Twists are victimized.

The next nine types of initial offences are: criminal trespass, wilful hurt, criminal force, cheating, rape, escape from lawful custody, homicide, arson, forging and pickpocketing. Of these only criminal trespass (2.0%) and wilful hurt (1.4%) were found in all the three Correctional Schools. Rape (0.9%) and homicide (0.7%) had been committed only by lads over eighteen years of age. Arson (0.7%) and forging (0.5%) were also absent among lads below sixteen years. The two cases of pickpocketing (0.3%) were youths of twenty who had been "trained" in the art by adult gangsters operating in Colombo. These nine offences are not specific to Ceylon and are the usual gamut of delinquency. Altogether they amount only to 10.3% of the total. Therefore in the next chapter, the possible factors that contribute to the specific types of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon will be discussed in detail.

## CHAPTER III

### SPECIFIC FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN CEYLON

In the second chapter, it was established that theft is the most frequent type of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon. At this stage it would have been very useful if a detailed examination of the motives for theft had been conducted in the three Institutions. For this purpose, however, three requirements would have been essential: permission from the authorities, a few days' stay in each institution and the help of a band of workers, chiefly a psychologist, a psychiatrist and a social inquirer.

As these means were not available, the writer, by special appointment, met the Superintendents and obtained their considered views. The Superintendents consulted were the Rev. Fr. V. Coupel, O.M.I. of the Reformatory Maggona, Mr. W. D. Silva of the H.M.S. Training School, Wathupitiwela, and Mr. E. L. Fernando of the H.M.S. Training School, Negombo. In addition the writer has interviewed Mr. Jegasothy, the Chief Probation Officer, Colombo, Mr. J. A. Perera, the Probation Officer, Negombo, and Mr. J. V. Hill, the Superintendent of the Certified School, Hikkaduwa. Information has also been gathered from the Office of the Editor, Ceylon Daily News, and the Juvenile Court, Bambalapitiya.

Comparing these views with the analysis of initial causes listed in Table VIII, the writer has classified the following special factors that are chiefly responsible for the upward trend of Juvenile Delinquency in Ceylon.

1.- Poverty and its Concomitants.

As seen in Table VIII, the most frequent offence has been theft and the motivation has been poverty. From a perusal of the personal files, it was revealed that the articles stolen were mostly articles of food: rice, coconut, yams, milk, maldive fish and occasionally chicken.

P.B. 24 of the Administration Report of the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services for 1952 reports the case of a boy 15 years old, who was charged with the offence of selling toddy. On enquiry it was revealed that the boy was very poor, the eldest of 5, abandoned by their father. He had assisted his uncle in the sale of this toddy, to help his mother.

P.B. 19 of the Administration Report for 1953, quotes the instance of a boy of 9 who had been initiated into a life of crime because his father, after long years of illness, died leaving the mother and five children unprovided. These two cases are among the many that point out to the fact that poverty has been the chief occasion of juvenile delinquency.

There was only one case of a Tamil lad, son of wealthy parents, and the nephew of a high Government official, who had relapsed often into petty thefts. Other cases support the general conclusion that it is the needy boy who steals.

The concomitants of poverty may be considered in two types of environment, urban and rural. In the urban environment, the usual concomitants are two (a) the sordid life in the slums, and (b) the victimization of poor children by unscrupulous employers. In the rural environment (a) the chief concomitants are lack of opportunity, and (b) the drifting away of village lads to towns.

Urban areas.- In an Island of 25,000 sq. miles, there are eight million people and of these 16% live in urban areas. Moreover, the population is on the increase<sup>1</sup> at the approximate rate of 100.6%, so that the villages of yesterday are fast growing into urban units. At this rate of increase, the planning of housing schemes has not gone apace. It is true that both the central and the local governments have been building houses in certain localities for their employees, but the supply has been far behind the demand.

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<sup>1</sup> Ceylon, Ceylon Year Book, Colombo, Department of Census and Statistics, 1952-1953, p. 39.

One has only to walk through the meandering streets of Wolvendahl and Mariakade, where large families are packed in dingy subterranean hovels, to imagine how the polluted atmosphere could influence the daily life of those inhabitants. Some parents have to live in Colombo, for the sake of jobs. Others have been there before the large mansions went soaring up the sky. These impoverished families now depend on casual earnings and on charity. The writer came across the case of a delinquent whose father being a convalescent T.B. patient received an allowance of Rs.25.00 (or \$5.00) a month and supported his family from that allowance.

Overcrowding in slum areas is responsible for many serious disturbances in family life. In Old Ferry Lane, Slave Island, for example, one may see a family of nine living in a space 18' x 15'. The head of the family is a daily paid labourer. Two little rooms do service as kitchen, bedroom, dining room and parlour. A bathroom is out of the question. In such a home where nine mortals are huddled up together, decency is difficult, delicacy impossible, premature acquaintance with conjugal relations inevitable. Father and mother, brothers and sisters sleep together in one stuffy corner, while the only couch is reserved as a settee for a casual visitor. These houses have no backyards,

the lane itself being trysting place for adolescents and playground for grimy kids. These homes where persons of different age and sex jostle one against the other are scenes not only of sexual malpractices but also of family feuds.

In 1953, the overcrowding in Colombo had grown to such an extent that for lack of land and lack of money, scores of poor families have built temporary shanties along the slopes of the road near the Victoria bridge. The walls are of old zinc sheets, used planks, or jutehessian and the roof is of cadjan. Each shanty could not have cost more than Rs.15.00 (or \$3.00). It is from these crowded slums of Colombo and other towns that many of the waifs and hoipoloi spring. It is not argued here that all the needy are delinquent but most of the delinquents have been needy, in other words, sprung from very unwholesome and poor environment.

The second concomitant of poverty in urban areas is the victimization of poor lads by unscrupulous employers. In this category of employers are included the enterprising managers of eating houses, tea kiosks and small hotels; also the bachelor clerks of firms and government offices, whose monthly income do not permit the keeping of servants but whose status requires the ministrations of "podians" or boys. There is no fixity of tenure, no standard salary, no

possibility of promotion. Since there are so many youngsters going begging for employment, these employers take them on for a mere pittance, usually Rs.25.00 to 30.00 per mensem (i.e. ₹5. or ₹6.). When salaries are not paid as promised, and when conditions of service are intolerable, the podians bolt, usually with a wristlet or a fountain pen left carelessly somewhere by the employer. Cases of such stealing have been found in the records of the lads at Maggona Reformatory. In one case the lad had run away with Rs.10.00 from the master's drawer. "Now aren't you sorry for this theft?" asked the Brother Infirmarian. "No Brother, the master had not paid my last month's salary. I am only sorry that I got caught."

Another type of unscrupulous employer is the head of a secret gang or racket of adult black-marketeers and dope merchants that pry on the look-out for lads with swift foot and deft fingers. These wicked employers are found in several towns and are the usual headaches of the Police, the Excise and Probation officers. It is true that only a lad with delinquency already in his veins gets into the tentacles of these "pests". But it is also true that if these pests could be rounded up, young delinquents would not have the occasion to go so far in crime.

Rural areas.- In the rural areas or in villages the first concomitant of poverty is inequality of opportunity for education or employment. Although Ceylon is not an industrialized country, and its future prosperity depends on agriculture, the system of education that prevailed in the last few decades has not fostered agricultural training. The workman's son, the farmer's son, aspire to hold white collar jobs. For the Entrance Examination to "Swabasha" (mother tongue) Training Colleges alone, there have been 22,000 to 25,000 candidates each year. Usually only 1500 or 2000 are chosen. This gives an idea of the population of youngsters who have managed to pass the Senior School certificate Examination (Grade XIII) or its equivalent. The numbers of young persons who leave school earlier and roam about in search of employment are not recorded.

As for adults it is recorded that in 1951 the Central Employment Exchange had 52,707 in its Registers, while a subsequent survey revealed that these figures did not present a true picture of the unemployment situation in Ceylon<sup>2</sup>.

The Superintendents of the Correctional Schools are of opinion that there is nothing in village life that holds the youngsters together - no hobbies, no hiking, no places

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<sup>2</sup> Ceylon, Ceylon Year Book, Colombo, Department of Census and Statistics, 1952-1953, p. 98.

of legitimate recreation. Consequently they idel the live long day, they play dice (keta), they loiter in the bazaar smoking beedi and joining the gangs of rowdies.

Another section of these unemployed youngsters, who are neither educated enough to earn a white collar job, nor persevering enough to stick to the plough, prefer to trace their steps to the nearest town or city in quest of employment or excitement. For the first few weeks they live a hectic life, slipping into cinema halls, jumping on street cars (trams) and generally tramping through their new habitat. Gradually, however, the majority of these lads drift into the gangs of street loafers and develop into delinquents.

## 2.- Social Customs.

Another factor of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon is the existence of certain social customs that are taken for granted, but are quite questionable. Two important customs can be pointed out here: (1) the system of unstable marriages, and (2) the custom of so-called "adoption" of children as servants.

System of unstable marriages.- Under this heading are included marriages of certain classes of people living in the remote districts of the central area of the Island.

There are poor and uneducated people in remote villages who just come to live together, without registration of marriage. The woman does not know her rights and when she is left in the lurch, she and her offspring sink into dire poverty. In certain rural localities a few still practice polyandry, by which is meant the custom of calling one young woman to keep house for two brothers under the same roof. Among the muslims, polygamy is fairly common. Whatever name is given (unregistered marriage, polyandry or polygamy), the result is alike, the existence of children who are uncared for. In places where Religious Orders have established creches and orphanages, these unprovided children find a home, but in places where the population is predominantly Buddhist or muslim, such foundling homes are not encouraged. Usually these unwanted children are looked after by an old grannie or a childless aunt, but the lack of home discipline results in delinquent behaviour.

One of the worst customs in Eastern countries is that of adopting little children for domestic service. This is fairly prevalent in Ceylon too. From ancient times, it has always been considered a hall mark of "respectability" to have a couple of servants in the house. Housewives who are too proud to attend to domestic service and too stingy to pay a registered servant, resort to the doubtful

expediency of adopting an orphan. This is not a legal procedure of adoption but simply the "getting down" of a poor lad through the service of a middle man. Once the boy is adopted in this manner, from the early hours of dawn till late in the night, he has to sweat and toil sweeping the house, preparing the tea, going to market, bathing the dog, running on various errands and doing all manner of menial service to the young "mahatmayas" and "nonas" of the household. What is more, in certain cases, the defenceless lad has to put up with an occasional beating. Having no proper food or clothing, without sufficient sleep or recreation, without any knowledge of religion, these little servants drag on a very miserable life, while onlookers will sympathise saying that the child has a bad "karma" or is under the influence of an unlucky grahaye (star). Some of these lads seeing that they "have caught the tiger's tail" turn to illegal means and are often tracked down by the police. Before the World War II, this type of delinquency was frequent in the homes of Colombo. But now owing to the fact that many cooking devices and modern gadgets are available in Colombo, this type of "bogus adoption"<sup>3</sup> and consequent

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<sup>3</sup> "A large number of these thefts can be attributed to Harsh treatment, long hours and inadequate or no wages", Ceylon Government Publications Bureau, Administration Report of the Inspector General of Police for 1939.

delinquency are more frequent in the outstations. It would be interesting to check up how many lads in Correctional Schools in Ceylon have been in domestic service of this dubious nature.

Lack of Voluntary Service.- As mentioned in Chapter II, up to 1943, only the Reformatory at Maggona conducted by the Oblate Fathers and Brothers, provided a place of refuge for the delinquent boy<sup>4</sup>. Christian Charitable Institutions are found dotted over the Island to take care of the lepers, the T.B. patients, the deaf and blind, the orphans and the aged, but in recent years a moral brake on their enthusiasm has been exerted by certain Government authorities.

Evidences of this wave of mistaken nationalism are seen in the Department of Education and Health. For example non-Ceylonese religious are not registered any more in the service of schools. The Minister of Health flatly refused permission to the Municipality of Negombo to call in the aid of Religious Nursing Sisters at the Local Hospital which has been chronically overcrowded and badly managed.

As for the problem of juvenile delinquency the dearth of religious bodies and other voluntary services is more

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<sup>4</sup> Delinquent girls are not numerous in Ceylon and the few are well cared for by the Good Shepherd Nuns at the Refuge Home, Nayakakande, Wattula, Ceylon.

keenly felt. On the other hand the Ministry of Home Affairs has been vacillating regarding its policy. For example, since 1943 it has initiated a scheme of State Institutions which have been described in Chapter II. The avowed purpose was to take over from the Reformatory at Maggona all the non-Catholic delinquents. When the Government funds dwindled, however, it found that it was cheaper to continue sending lads to Maggona. But this is no assurance that Government has given up the idea of State monopoly of social services.

The Ministries remember that "a dog in the manger" policy is harmful to the welfare of the State. The Ministries should not wish to take over everything and private enterprise religious or otherwise should be encouraged in a democratic state. On the other hand, Religious Orders in Ceylon have been so accustomed to the system of grants that they have seemingly forgotten our Lord's injunction to launch into the deep. Wherever there is good work, the questions that come up are the following: "What grant shall we receive? Where are the lands? Where is the capital expenditure? What guarantee have we of maintenance?" If Don Bosco or Father Flanagan had started asking these questions, where would the delinquents of Italy and the U.S.A. find refuge?

#### 4.- The Status of the Schools.

The fourth factor contributing indirectly to the unsuccessful control of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon is the state of the correctional schools themselves. These schools are meant to be places of re-education, rehabilitation and prevention; but the emphasis so far has been on segregation and detention.

In other words, the Correctional Schools in Ceylon are prisons of a milder discipline. Among the Sinhalese the equivalent of "delinquent" is seldom used. A boy in a correctional school is dubbed a "kirahara holla", a boy prisoner. A boy tries his best to avoid the catastrophe of being sent to one of these institutions and the parents consider it a disgrace on the family. Buddhists look upon it as a decree of Karma or fate. This unhealthy attitude to correctional schools cannot be imputed to anyone in particular but it is there. This will be clearer from the following comments of each correctional school.

The Maggona Reformatory.- Although the Institution has done a very valuable and unique service for the last seventy-five years, it can stand much improvement. The premises and houses are very clean and roomy, the discipline works like a clock, the documents are kept to date, the

accounts show very good management. Perhaps the defects may be enumerated as follows:

a) Old Methods.- At the time of opening in 1880, it was handed over to the Oblate lay Brothers, who have toiled hard at this gigantic task. But as natural, they have not moved with the times. They have translated the routine of a religious community into this Reformatory. Some of the present group of brothers are between 60 and 70, and they still rule the house, jealous of any newcomer, be he brother or father, Sinhalese or French. New brothers have been sent there several times but had to return disappointed due to daily bickerings. The modus operandi is not quite suited to modern times. For example, the rattan cane and the hand cuffs, the dark room and the unbelted pants, the public accusations and exhortations as in a Coulpe, the practice of shaving half of the head, the uncouth handling by hired guards, called Gurunanseys, all are remnants of the past, which create the atmosphere of barracks. Perhaps this process would have given good results twenty-five years ago, but it is doubtful whether it will succeed now. In recent years the percentage of success has gone down to 60%. The following two records of convicts in an adult prison of Ceylon were produced in one of the interviews by the writer.

Convict "X", age 22.

Crimes	Punishment
1. Petty theft at age of 15:	8 cuts in Court.
2. Petty theft:	10 " in " .
3. Petty theft:	10 cuts in Court and 3 years at Maggona.
4. Major theft:	3 mo. Rigorous Imprisonment in adult prison.
5. Major theft:	6 months R.I. and 3 years' Police Supervision.
6. Major theft:	2 years R.I. and 2 years' Police Supervision.
7. Housebreaking at age of 21:	2 years R.I. and 3 years' Police Supervision.
8. Housebreaking and theft:	1 year R.I. and 5 years Preventive Detention.

Convict "Y", age 27.

Crimes	Punishment
1. Grievous hurt at age of 15:	4 cuts in Court.
2. Theft:	3 years at Maggona.
3. Grievous hurt:	6 months' R.I.
4. House trespass:	3 months' R.I.
5. Housebreaking:	2 months' R.I. and 2 months' Police Supervision.
6. Theft:	1 year's R.I. and 3 years' Preventive Detention.
7. Causing hurt:	3 months' R.I.
8. Extortion:	6 months' R.I.
9. House trespass:	2 years' R.I.

One of the probable reasons why the Ministry of Home affairs in Ceylon intends to take over the majority of delinquents is that the officers of the Ministry have noticed cases like the above which tend to signify that the treatment at Maggona Reformatory had not effected sufficient reformation. The Maggona Reformatory is certainly in great contrast to places like St. John's Industrial School at Toronto and St. Joseph's Industrial School at Alfred. The problem at Maggona is one of personalities. The old Brothers do not see any wisdom in new methods and since they are specialized people who will not fit in anywhere else, they are allowed to carry on. All new hands have failed to break up the barriers built by them, the more so that the Manager of St. Vincent's home, usually another old man, is in the favour of the old crew.

b) Lack of cooperation between State Officials and Religious Body.- As mentioned earlier, the State, since 1943, is slowly building up a series of Borstals and Remand Homes. There is a probability that in the future the State Institutions will absorb all the non-Catholic delinquents. This means that the Maggona Reformatory, which has accommodation for 400 lads, will get only about 50 every year. Just now the State has no funds, but the Officials have only

postponed the day. The rate of payment has also been low. The government is only the stepmother to denominational institutions. This lack of cordiality between the Church Authorities and the Officers of the Department is a cause of stagnation at the Reformatory, Maggona.

The H.M.S. Training School, Wathupitiwela.- Of all the State Correctional Schools, this is the best. The site is excellent, the building adequate and the staff enthusiastic. The most serious drawback in this institution is that being under the common rules and regulations of a Government service, the expenses are far out of proportion with the results. Public Service Regulations insist that the harvest and crops, the fruits and other garden produce be sold to a third party and the money spent to buy foodstuffs for the lads. The Contractor usually buys the produce and sells it back with a profit. Wherever the contract system is in vogue, the Institution spends more than necessary. It was revealed by the Manager of the Maggona Reformatory that the monthly expenses on a lad are usually Rs.45-; while in the H.M.S. Training School, the expenses are Rs. 75.00 per mensem. The high rate at H.M.S. Training School are prohibitive to greater expansion.

The H.M.S. Training School, Negombo.- The premises and buildings of this Institution had been utilized for years as an adult prison and they were taken over to serve the present purpose only two years ago. The buildings do not inspire any confidence either in the lads or in the casual visitor. Moreover, the guards are officers transferred from adult prisons and their meticulous attention to office routine prevents them from taking a humanitarian view of their work. The kitchen and the workshops are very old and dingy. The classrooms are stuffy. In fact one wonders whether in the present circumstances there is any other improvement possible than the demolition of all these old prisons and the building of a new school. Even here there is the disadvantage of overcrowding in the Town of Negombo which has a population of over 20,000. At the most this Institution is a make-shift organization and will take a long time for proper development.

The Certified School, Hikkaduwa.- In Chapter I it was mentioned that this was a half realized dream. The buildings are thoroughly inadequate and some of the boys live in temporary halls built of mud and wattle, and thatched with cadjan. The workshops are not equipped to meet the requirements of the population. The poultry **yards**, the piggery and the duck ponds are evidently in need of complete over-hauling.

On the day of the writer's visit, there were scores of lads suffering from sore eyes and the staff were not provided with the necessary medical aid to attend to them. The Superintendent has too much work on his hands, while the Magistrates of the surrounding districts continue to send more and more delinquents of the age group below sixteen years. The escapes from this certified school have been the highest on record and there is no way of preventing this tendency. In brief, this school is a glaring example of theorizing without practical planning and without the financial support indispensable for such planning. If this certified school had been under private management, it would have been closed down long ago.

The Remand Home at Koggala is now utilized as a branch of the Certified School at Hikkaduwa. This happened on account of a protest by the Superintendent of the latter school. The Remand Home, again, is patch work as it is only a renovated military camp. The outcome has been that the youngsters here are like orphans on a circus tour. The regular work of this Home is that of a Hostel for observation and grouping. The children sent there on remand get this attention, but the children sent for detention and training do not get half the attention.

In general the Correctional Schools in Ceylon lack proper orientation. Their prime purpose should be the rehabilitation of the boy in trouble or in need. Instead they have aimed at being self supporting Industrial Schools. The Industrial training given there include printing, book-binding, tailoring, clock making, carpentry and motor mechanism. These are all done with machinery which will not be available to lads after they leave the Institution. For example, the planing and sawing and drilling of timber are done by machinery and this is never possible in the small carpentry sheds where the lads might seek employment when he returns home. The stitching of soutanes for priests is the main type of training given to lads who have a desire to learn tailoring, but on return home, they will never know how to stitch a coat or shirt for the layman. It is one thing to run a self supporting Industrial School but it is quite another thing to train delinquent lads to learn a small trade that will give them employment on their return home and thus keep them off the streets. This criticism is true of the Maggona Reformatory to a great extent but it is true of the other Correctional Schools which are also beginning projects in these lines.

In conclusion, the state of affairs in all the Correctional Schools and Remand Homes is not satisfactory and is one of the factors that contribute, although indirectly, to the crime figures mentioned in Chapter I.

5.- Dearth of Ancilliary Services for After-care.

This is the fifth factor that contributes to the spread of delinquency in Ceylon. According to research workers<sup>5</sup> in this subject of juvenile delinquency in other countries, it is essential that there should be after-care associations to take over the lads that complete their period of detention. Without this coordination of the Correctional School and the after-care association, there is no preparation for the readjusted child to return to the community. The good resolutions made in the correctional school do evaporate quickly if the lad is not well placed either in a job or in a substitute home. The Maggona Reformatory has no such association and in spite of Government's prodding, the Manager has never consented to allow volunteers to visit or take an active interest in the lads<sup>6</sup>. He has never tried

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<sup>5</sup> Norman Fenton, The Delinquent Boy and the Correctional School, Claremont Colleges Guidance Centre, California, 1935, p. 134-146.

Gluech, S. and E.T. Gluech, Unravelling Juvenile Delinquency, Commonwealth Fund, N.Y., 1953.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, Comparative Survey on Juvenile Delinquency, Part IV Asia and the Far East, N.Y., 1953, p. 95.

to organize an after-care association although it would be very easy to do so, on account of the network of parishes that exist in Ceylon. Some good work is done by the Training School after-care Association. The Chairman is the Government Agent of the Western Province and there are representatives from the Police and the Prisons Departments. The Secretary has his office in the Colombo Kachcheri<sup>7</sup>. There are about 500 voluntary workers distributed in the island who are impeded to help in placing the lads after training.

In the opinion of the Superintendents of the Governmental Institutions however, the Training School after-care association has also become another Government office with its usual red tape. What they prefer would be volunteer services like Trade Guilds which would give assistance to the lads, to take up work for which each one has an aptitude and a training. No religious organization in Ceylon has taken up this work so far as it has not been brought to their notice.

The above factors are the chief five that in the opinion of the Superintendents loom large in the etiology of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon. The first two are

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<sup>7</sup> R. Abraham, The Training School after-care association, Amended Report, 1948, p. 1, and  
Ceylon Government Publications Bureau, Administration Report of the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services for 1953, Colombo, Government Press, p. B16-17.

supported by the analysis of Chapter II, the third and the fifth were suggested by the officers concerned and the fourth was the conclusion arrived at by visiting the Institutions and reading the Administration Reports of the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services. In the next chapter, remedies and suggestions to solve this problem will be offered in greater detail.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUGGESTED REMEDIES

The previous chapters have given a bird's eye view of the situation of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon. The first chapter has supplied information on the extent and the second chapter, on the type of juvenile delinquency, while the third has stated the five main factors specific to Ceylon. It remains therefore to suggest remedial measures which will help improve the situation. The following suggestions are the result of discussions with the Superintendents of the Correctional Schools and the Probation Officers mentioned in Chapter III. Consultations were also made with Dr. H. W. Howes, C.M.G., P.B.E., M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D. (London), who was the Director of Education in Ceylon from 1950-1954. At present he is the UNESCO Consultant in Education attached to the Caribbean Commission. He has visited not only the Colleges and High Schools, but also the elementary schools in Ceylon. As Director of Education he had the duty of assessing the progress of the Correctional Schools. His opinion has been sought by the Ceylon Government in various public Committees.

The remedial measures may be considered under five main headings as follows:

1. Agricultural bias in education and re-education.
2. Public opinion against the bogus adoption of children.
3. Establishment of boys' clubs and the extension of the Boys' Scout movement.
4. Training in cottage industries.
5. Establishment of welfare agencies for the purpose of after-care.

These remedial measures will be explained one by one in greater detail.

#### 1.- Agricultural Bias in Education and Re-education.

The physician who has to cure certain types of skin diseases prescribes remedies which will enrich the bloodstream and thus radically prevent those diseases. Mere external applications will be only temporal palliatives. Juvenile delinquency prevalent in a country may be considered an external manifestation of the impurity of its bloodstream. It is not only the lads who have to be tackled, but the whole body politic. As regards society in Ceylon the root cause of its illnesses is poverty. The cause of poverty is the inadequate economy of the land. There was a time when Ceylon was so prosperous that it was called the Granary of the East. Blessed by nature, Ceylon has no reason to be poor. The present situation is due to the diversion of

## SUGGESTED REMEDIES

*Economics!  
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agriculture from food crops to cash crops. In the times of the Sinhalese paddy (rice) was cultivated in abundance and Ceylon was self-supporting as regards food. From 1505 A.D. to 1658, it has been under the Portuguese who did nothing to develop or even to continue paddy cultivation. From 1658 to 1796, the Dutch ruled the island and converted it into a land of cinnamon and other spices. From 1796 to 1948, it has been under the British. At first the mountainous area was planted with coffee but after the coffee pest, tea, rubber and coconut have been planted on an extensive scale, with the result that the peasant and his paddy cultivation have been badly neglected. Ceylon's economy, therefore, depends on world markets. During the war it was rich on account of the sale of rubber. Soon, however, came the financial crisis. Cash crops benefit the landed proprietor: food crops will benefit the large majority<sup>1</sup>. In brief, unless agriculture of paddy and other food crops is extended, Ceylon will always remain a victim to exploitation by other countries.

*What has this to do with Delinquency?*

There is another important consideration here. The cultivation of tea and rubber has given employment mostly to Indian labourers who are brought to Ceylon by agents.

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<sup>1</sup> Goonerathe, D.D.M. and Dudley Stamp, Ceylon the Land of the Sinhalese, Orient Longmans Ltd., Bombay, 1951, p. 44.

This is the reason why juvenile delinquency is very low among the Indian Tamil population as shown in Table V. The natives of Ceylon have never taken much interest in working on the tea and rubber estates because they feel that they have been deprived of their ancestral holdings by the pioneer planters who were Europeans. Now that the Ceylonese have become free members of the Commonwealth, it is time that agriculture, best suited to the vast majority of the people, should be encouraged and extended.

In Ceylon, schools have a tremendous influence on shaping the mentality of its people. Education from the kindergarten to the university is given free, and compulsory for children from 5 to 14 years old<sup>2</sup>. At present, owing to the influence of the "colonial" mentality, there is a hankering for white-collar jobs and a constant influx from village to town. If cultivation of paddy and other food crops is given pride of place in the Ceylon School system, these tendencies will decrease. Slums will not become crowded day by day, and lads will not need to invade the towns in search of jobs. The growing generation will take pride in being good farmers.

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Census and Statistics, Ceylon Year Book 1952-1953, Government Press, Colombo, November 1953, p. 83.

It is not proposed that agriculture should be the pivot on which the educational system will turn. It is proposed that the bias should be towards agriculture. If ordinary schools should have this bias towards agriculture, "a fortiori" should correctional schools devote more time on agriculture and give a good training to the lads in the open fields so that they would return as useful farmers and not job-hunters. The village lad is used to open air life. It is not advisable to shut him up in workshops as he will always go back to his home environment.

Another argument in favour of this new orientation in education and re-education is the experience of the After-care Association. In its Report<sup>3</sup> for 1953, it states two things clearly - first, that it is very difficult to find jobs for lads released from correctional schools as Government refuses to employ them and, secondly, that most of the lads gave up the jobs arranged for them. No wonder that ex-Reformatory lads are not offered jobs by the Government or private firms when employment is so difficult even for non-delinquent lads in Ceylon.

The first remedy proposed is therefore a radical one which does not involve expenditure on the part of Government.

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<sup>3</sup> R. Abraham, The Training School After-care Association Annual Report 1953, Colombo, Canton Press, 1954, p. 20.

Most schools have free land space. The Correctional Schools in Maggona, Wathupitiwela and Hikkaduwa possess plenty of acres suitable for cultivation. In fact, the school that has given most emphasis so far on agriculture, i.e. the H.M.S. Training School, Wathupitiwela, has always had good results<sup>4</sup>.

## 2.- Public Opinion Against Bogus Adoption of Children.

In Chapter III it was pointed out that one source of juvenile delinquency was the practice of adopting children and turning them into domestic servants. On this matter the writer consulted His Excellency Mr. R.S.S. Goonewardene, the Ambassador for Ceylon in the United States. This gentleman is an experienced lawyer. Opinion was sought also from Mr. Raju Kumaraswamy, the Ceylon delegate at the Colombo Plan Conference. According to these gentlemen the adoption of children's ordinance was formulated in 1941 with the purpose of providing a kind of foster home placement for young delinquents who were not advanced far in delinquency<sup>5</sup>. But some "foster parents" had misused this privilege. What is therefore necessary is not legislation to counteract this

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<sup>4</sup> Ceylon Government Publications Bureau, Sessional Paper XVIII, 1949, Government Press, Colombo, 1949, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, Comparative Survey on Juvenile Delinquency Part IV, Asia and the Far East, N.Y., 1953, p. 63.

tendency but greater public opinion against such bogus adoption. More vigilance on the part of the police and child Protection Societies is necessary to prevent the exploitation of child labour. There is sufficient legal provision to protect children in such predicament as seen in section 69 of the Ordinance No. 49 of 1939. "If any person who has attained the age of sixteen years and has the custody, charge or care of any child or young person, wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes him, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed, in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health (including injury to or loss of sight or hearing or limb or organ of the body, and any mental derangement), that person shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to a fine not exceeding one thousand rupees or to imprisonment of either description for a term not exceeding three years or to both such fine and imprisonment"<sup>6</sup>. The remedy, therefore, is to create public opinion and demonstrate by concrete cases that the law is on behalf of the unprotected child. The Child Protection Society in Ceylon has been very dormant in the past, judging from the many cases that are reported in the papers

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<sup>6</sup> Ceylon Government Publications Bureau, Ordinance No. 48 of 1939, Children and Young Persons, Government Press, Colombo, p. 35.

and go unpunished. The Police too have been often taken up by the influence of the employer.

3.- Establishment and Encouragement of Voluntary Services.

Under this title are included Boys' Towns, Boys' Clubs, Community Centres, Boys' Scout Troops and such like agencies which will help the State in the prevention or treatment of juvenile delinquency. So far in Ceylon there are thirteen Boys' Clubs. These are mostly for the sons of policemen and are managed by the Police Department<sup>7</sup>. What the writer proposes is an extension of the programme to include other boys too. For this purpose the Government should encourage Municipalities, Urban Councils, Town Councils and Village Committees to establish Boys' Clubs. Parish priests too would like to form such associations for the benefit of their parishes. The Legion of Mary which is well organized in Ceylon has the personnel to look after Boys' Clubs. What is lacking is the confidence that the Government will not interfere but encourage these associations. In recent years the State has shown a tendency to monopolize everything, education, health services, social work and even trade. It is this

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<sup>7</sup> Ceylon Government Publications Bureau, Administration Report of the Inspector General of Police for 1953, Ceylon Government Press Colombo, 1954, p. A52.

tendency on the part of State officials to monopolize and centralize everything that has acted as a wet-blanket on private enterprise. The same is true of religious bodies. Except the Oblate congregation, no other religious body has come forward to take up the work of re-education of the delinquent boy. The Salesians tried to find a footing during the War (1939-1945), but they withdrew as no encouragement was forthcoming. In 1953, the Provincial (in India) of the Brothers of St. Gabriel explored the situation and returned undecided. Religious bodies look for a certain amount of guarantee and they do not find it. This does not mean that a private institution to be run on the lines of Fr. Flanagan's Boys' Town will fail. It only means that the government policy is to control and centralize all projects while religious bodies do not venture without guarantee of regular support. From the point of view of the writer, Voluntary societies should take the initiative and work so efficiently as to attract the support of the public and the State. At the same time the government should realize that it cannot tackle single-handed all the problems of modern society and that its duty is to be the patron of all sincere workers in the upliftment of society.

In this class of Welfare agencies should be included the Boys' Scout Movement which has been tried and found

successful in certain parishes, for instance St. John Bosco's at Kaluaggala, St. Mary's, Hatton, St. Sebastian's Diyalagoda, St. Mary's Ganegama, and the Baptist Church, Kurana-Katunayake. There is an attempt to translate scout literature into Sinhalese and Tamil. This movement will help solve the problem of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon in two ways, firstly by preventing, secondly by treatment. The organization of Scout Troops in our villages will keep off lads from straying and idling. That will train them in the good use of their leisure time and the enjoyment of pure pleasures. Secondly, if the spirit of the Boys' Scout Movement (with its spirit of service and loyalty and its flare for out-door life) is introduced into the Correctional Schools, the delinquent lads will take to the regime much more friendly than at present. Open prisons for adults have been recommended by the Special Commission<sup>8</sup> of 1949. The writer pleads for open prisons for delinquent lads, with the spirit of the Boys' Scout movement permeating them. Ceylon lads will respond to kind and reasonable treatment.

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<sup>8</sup> Government Publications Bureau, Report of the Special Committee on Prison Administration, 1949, Colombo, Ceylon Government Press, 1949, p. 27-30.

#### 4.- Training in Cottage Industries.

In Section 1 it was proposed that there should be a bias in favour of agriculture. Section 4 comes as a complement.

Under this sub-heading is proposed a re-orientation in the Industrial training given at present in the Correctional Schools in Ceylon. The three main institutions mentioned in Chapter II provide training in carpentry, tailoring, printing, book-binding, textile weaving, iron work and kitchen work. Machinery imported from France, Italy and England are used for carpentry, printing and iron work. This gives good income for the institutions. But the lads will never get a chance to handle this type of large scale machinery after leaving the institutions for their villages. Industrial development of Ceylon has been attempted and failed. In 1951 the following factories were closed down: the Acetic Acid Factory at Madampe, the Paper Mill at Kakkapalliya, the Ceramic Factory at Negombo, the Coir Factory at Katunayake, and the Drugs Factory at Maradana<sup>9</sup>. There is very little chance for a Ceylon lad to get employment in a factory. There is hardly any chance for an ex-reformatory lad to find such employment.

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<sup>9</sup> Ceylon Department of Census and Statistics, Ceylon Year Book 1952-1953, Colombo, Ceylon Government Press, 1953, p. 211.

Instead of the machine based industries, it would be better to give a training in what are known as Cottage Industries. These are within the reach of the ordinary villager: "Cottage Industries ought to be regarded as the backbone of the country's rural economy. A fair section of the population is engaged in these industries as a full time occupation. To many, these afford a means of supplementing their income. Thus these industries play a vital and important role in providing an income for a large section of the rural population"<sup>10</sup>. The following are considered Cottage Industries: Textiles with hand looms, Coir, Pottery, Mat-weaving, needlework, lace-work, pulp toy making, and basket weaving. For these the raw material is available in the rural areas and only cheap apparatus is necessary. There is always a local market for dusters, towels, sarongs, ropes, brushes, door mats, pots, pans, mats, rugs, laces, toys and baskets. It is for these reasons that a training in Cottage Industries will be far more useful to the village lad than training in Industries that involve large machinery and imported raw-material.

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<sup>10</sup> Op. cit., p. 216.

5.- The Establishment of Ancilliary Service for After-Care.

The fifth remedial measure was suggested by Mr. Jegasothy, the Chief Probation Officer of the Prisons and Probation Department, Ceylon. His argument is that there is little provision in Ceylon of voluntary agencies that will take care of lads who are sent out into the wide world after their term in the Correctional Schools. His argument is borne out by the following figures that reveal recidivism or relapse among the delinquent population. It is evident that approximately 70% of the delinquent lads are relapsed cases.

This high rate of recidivism means on the one hand that the lads do not get the proper kind of treatment in the Correctional Schools, and on the other hand that there is no adequate provision for their after-care. As regards treatment, the service of psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers could be recommended, but this thesis started with the avowed purpose of recommending only what will not be expensive to the State. Therefore it remains to see what could be done to take care of the lads after they have left the Correctional Schools. At present there is only one After-care association and that a Government agency. It is recommended that the Church authorities as well as private

TABLE IX.-  
Degree of Criminality.

	Number	%
First offenders	95	12.6
Probation failures	46	6.1
One previous conviction	320	42.6
Two previous convictions	180	24.0
Three previous convictions	64	8.5
Four previous convictions	44	5.8
	749	98.6

societies take interest in after-care. Some of the big parishes in Colombo, Jaffna, Kandy, Ratnapura, Chilaw and Trincomalee have been charitable societies already established. These could be persuaded to include in their activities the after-care of delinquent boys. The Wesleyan Church, the American Mission Society and the Salvation Army could also be requested to look after the protegees of their respective denomination. The Y.M.C.A and the C.T.M.A., the J.O.C. and the C.W.A. are powerful enough to take care of the lads in Colombo municipality. While the Community Centres of other localities could look after their own.

In this thesis attention has been focussed on the fact that juvenile delinquency in Ceylon is not merely special and segregated problem but one that is intricately bound with the welfare of the whole community. State and Church, philanthropists and social workers, parents and teachers should cooperate in solving this problem which is both extensive and urgent, for the bandit of today is the juvenile delinquent of yesterday, and the innocent child of the day-before yesterday.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to study the problem of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon from the point of *education*, ~~psychology~~ and sociology. The first chapter has appraised the extent of both adult and juvenile crime in order to show the urgency of the problem. The second chapter has analyzed the situation with a view to discover what type was dominant. It has been shown that in Ceylon although the figures are comparatively high, there is no evidence of the gangster or bravado type of juvenile delinquency. The dominant type is that of theft in various degrees.

Chapter three contained a summary of causes and circumstances that tend to maintain this sad state of affairs. Poverty and certain social customs on the one hand led to juvenile delinquency and the lack of prudent handling by the state and the public aggravated it.

The remedial measures proposed in chapter four are evidently not the ideal, as Ceylon cannot afford any more expenditure on social services. The five remedies proposed have been dictated by a sense of practicability.

They are:

1. The introduction of an agricultural bias in all schools and especially the Correctional Schools.
2. A strong public opinion against the bogus adoption of children.

3. The encouragement of auxiliary services like the Boys' Clubs, the Boys' Towns and the Boys' Scouts.

4. The emphasis on the teaching of Cottage Industries.

5. An appeal to welfare agencies to help especially in the prevention of juvenile crime and the after-care of lads who leave the Correctional Schools.

At the same time it is confessed that the present thesis is not the last word. There is room for more scientific experiment and research. Now that the writer has been grounded in the methodology of research, he hopes to pursue the subject further and propose a more scientific scheme for the solution of this national problem.

*How about the  
Rest of the  
World?*

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### General

Burt, Cyril, The Young Delinquent, New York, Appleton, 1925, 619 p.

This is a good introduction to the subject of delinquency and gives the psychological approach, especially from the view point of instinctive tendencies. There are special types of delinquency discussed and the remedial measures indicated for each type. The book contains certain interesting case studies. The chapter on children's lies and how to prevent them is of special interest. The author was till recent times the professor of Psychology in the University of London. His experiments and researches are mostly limited to the city of London.

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This is a book on applied psychology and contains chapters on the handling of difficult and problem children.

Fenton, Norman, et al., The Delinquent Boy and the Correctional School, Claremont, Claremont Colleges Guidance Center, 1935, p. 182.

This is a report of a successful experiment at the Whittier School, California, and is compiled by the leading members of the staff. It contains both a historical survey of this institution and the guiding psychological principles that have activated the organizers. Chapter II "Delinquent Boys Individualized" and Chapter IX "Preparing the Boy for Return to the Community" have been of special interest to the writer.

Glueck, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Unravelling Juvenile Delinquency, New York, The Commonwealth Fund, 1953, p.

Perhaps the most up-to-date and scientific study of juvenile delinquency. It has been carried out by experiments on a delinquent and non-delinquent group in the same environment. The authors have been associated with other psychologists, psychiatrists, medical men and social enquirers, Rorschach technicians and other experts. The book contains the results of their experiments and the conclusions regarding each factor contributing to juvenile delinquency. Every chapter has a summary of logical deductions. Much money, time and energy have been spent on this project.

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The Department of Social Affairs of the United Nations has conducted a world wide study of juvenile delinquency. The five regions studied are Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and the Far East and North America. The present survey is the fourth. It has been compiled from questionnaires issued in the various governments, by Miss Katayun H. Cama, Ph.D., formerly Judge of the Juvenile Court, Bombay, India. It is well documented regarding the situation in India, Burma, Ceylon, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand. The emphasis is on Japan and the State of Bombay. Regarding Ceylon, however, the information seems to be at least ten years behind time.

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Special to Ceylon

Abraham, R., The Training School After-Care Association Reports from 1943-1953, Colombo, Caxton Printing Press,

This is a small pamphlet report issued annually by the Manager of the After-care Association which is a quasi Government body.

Ceylon, Government Publications Bureau, Report of the Special Committee on Prison Administration, Colombo, 1949, p. 89.

This contains very definite information on existing conditions and proposals for improvement. Of special interest for this thesis have been the following sub-titles: After-care, Borstal training, the Young Delinquent, Probation Service and Remands. This report is usually known as the Gratien Report and has been an epoch making document on Prison and Probation Services in Ceylon.

Ceylon Government Publications Bureau, Administration Reports of the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services for the years 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, Colombo, Ceylon Government Press, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, p. 68.

These reports have the same organization as they were written under the direction of the same Commissioner, C.C. Shockman. They were mostly meant for the eye of the Secretary of State, Downing Street, London. They contain statistics that helped the building of this thesis to some extent.

Ceylon Government Publications Bureau, Administration Reports of the Commissioner of Prison and Probation Services for the years 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, Colombo, Ceylon Government Press, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953 and 1954, p. 116.

These reports have a different organization from the above-mentioned four as they were written under the direction of the new Commissioner G.V.F. Wille. The spirit is evidently a new approach to the problem of crime and the statistics are arranged in a different order. With the organization of Borstals, Remand Homes and Juvenile Courts and the expansion of the Probation Service, the material is more bulky and of greater interest to the student.

Ceylon Government Publications Bureau, Administrative Reports of the Inspector General of Police for 1952 and 1953, Colombo, Ceylon Government Press, 1953 and 1954, p. 114.

These two are of some interest as the new Sinhalese Inspector General of Police has been keenly interested in a scheme of Boys' Clubs and he has already opened thirteen such clubs.

Ceylon Government Publications Bureau, Departmental Standing Orders, Appendix G, Colombo, Ceylon Government Press, 1947, p. 32.

This book of directions to Probation Officers is of some interest to the present thesis as on p. 6-10, they are given definite instructions regarding juvenile delinquency.

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So far the latest comprehensive Report on Education in Ceylon. The Chairman was then the Minister of Education and the members were mostly educationists representing various denominations and interest. Rev. Fr. M.J. Legoc, O.M.I., also served on the Committee. It was of interest on account of Chapter X on Industrial Education and Chapter XVIII on Individual differences and abnormal children. The Report is available in English as well as Sinhalese.

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The above four documents supply the legal background to the method of treatment of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon. They are mostly concerned with procedure regarding youthful Offenders and young persons, and the routine to be observed in the H.M.S. Training Schools.

Hamlin, Cyril, "Juvenile Delinquency" in the Journal of the National Education Society of Ceylon, Colombo, Wesley Press, 1953, p. 49.

The writer of this article is an Inspector Grade I. Children's Branch U.K. Home Office and came to Ceylon under the Colombo Plan Technical Assistance Scheme. He has visited Probation Units and various institutions connected with the treatment of delinquent children. His article, though brief, is a searching analysis of juvenile crime, its prevention and treatment.

AN ABSTRACT OF  
THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN CEYLON

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The Problem of Juvenile Delinquency in Ceylon

~~The Problem.~~- The statistics of both adult and juvenile crime in Ceylon had shown a tendency to increase every year until 1947, when the State appointed a special commission to report on the Prison and Probation Services. Towards 1949, when the recommendations of the Commission were put into force the figures decreased to some extent, but in 1953, owing to the financial crisis, all forms of social services were curtailed and the problem of juvenile delinquency remained without a solution. In 1954, the figures show an upward trend.

~~The Method.~~ Owing to lack of facilities for psychological tests, an investigation of a strictly statistical nature is impossible at the present time. The author therefore resorted to the method of collecting data from the Superintendents, the Probation Officers and social workers who have been interested in this problem. He has also studied the Government publications, Year books, Census Reports and administration reports dealing with this problem.

~~The Factors.~~- The factors of juvenile delinquency are both general and specific. In this thesis only the specific factors pertaining to the environment in Ceylon have been detailed. They are five: 1) poverty and its concomitants,

2) certain social customs like polyandry, polygamy and adoption of children for domestic service, 3) the dearth of voluntary agencies, 4) the state of the Correctional Schools themselves, and 5) the lack of ancilliary services to deal with after-care.

~~The Remedies~~ From the interviews and the documents, the author has made five inferences in the way of suggested remedies: Agricultural bias in education and re-education in Ceylon, public opinion against the adoption of children as servants, the encouragement of voluntary agencies like Boys' Clubs, and the Boys' Scout Movement, the training in Cottage Industries and the establishment of ancilliary services for after-care.

Conclusion.- In making these recommendations, the author's first concern was that of practicability as the State cannot afford to launch an expensive scheme. Moreover, the recommendations will mean only a new orientation to existing organizations. Since it is not an expensive scheme, it is bound to effect a more permanent improvement in the problem of juvenile delinquency in Ceylon. When however, psychological tests, suited to the country, are available and the author succeeds in forming a team, it is hoped to conduct a more scientific survey into this problem.



Joseph Jayasuriya, The Problem of Juvenile Delinquency in Ceylon, M.A. thesis presented to the Institute of Psychology of the University of Ottawa, 1955, viii-88 p.

In Ceylon, the statistics of both adult and juvenile crime had shown a tendency to increase every year until 1947, when the State appointed a special commission to report on the Prison and Probation Services. The figures decreased to some extent about 1949, when the recommendations of the Commission were put into force; but in 1953, owing to the financial crisis, all forms of social services were curtailed and the problem of juvenile delinquency remained without a solution. In 1954 the figures were showing an upward trend.

In Ceylon, the factors of juvenile delinquency are both general and specific. In this thesis only the specific factors pertaining to the environment in Ceylon have been given consideration. They are five in number: 1) poverty and its concomitants, 2) certain social customs like polyandry, polygamy, and adoption of children for domestic service, 3) the dearth of voluntary social agencies, 4) the state of the Correctional Schools themselves, and 5) the lack of ancillary services to deal with after-care.

On the basis of his documents and his interviews the author has made five inferences in the way of suggested remedies: stressing agricultural education and re-education in Ceylon, raising public opinion against the adoption of children as servants encouraging voluntary agencies, like boys' clubs and the Boy Scout Movement, training in Cottage Industries, and establishing ancillary services for the after-care of the Correctional School leavers.