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## **Juvenile courts and juvenile delinquency: the Inner London Juvenile Court 1930 – 1950**

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I am going to look today at a sample of records taken from the Inner London Juvenile Court between 1930 and 1950. The findings I will present are derived from a database I compiled last year from the records of that court; I am about to extend this database over the summer. My original purpose in compiling the database was to test out empirically the observations of Basil Henriques, a magistrate at that court in that period, which he had published in *Indiscretions of a Magistrate* (1950).<sup>1</sup> Whilst my database achieved this purpose, it also yielded much data that sheds much light on the social history of youth crime in the East End in the mid-twentieth century. Thus I begin my paper with the usual caveat that this is work in progress, and welcome your comments.

My previous research had looked at the university settlements in the twentieth century, and particularly at the ways in which these charities had become interested in child welfare as well as boys' and girls' clubs, and by extension, with the prevention or reduction of delinquency. By 1929, the Inner London Juvenile Court had moved to Toynbee Hall, a settlement in Whitechapel, East London. A number of East End settlement wardens were juvenile court magistrates during its tenure at the settlement, namely J.J. Mallon of Toynbee Hall, Miriam Moses of the Brady Clubs and Basil Henriques of the Bernard Baron Settlement. Although I was initially interested in the connections between the court and the settlements, I became aware of the rich literature of the period on the treatment of young people which provide an insight into the discourses around juvenile delinquency. There is a small, but nevertheless growing body of historical work on the subject, including Pamela Cox's work on delinquent girls, Abigail Wills on masculinity and institutional care, Harry

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<sup>1</sup> Basil L.Q. Henriques, *The Indiscretions of a Magistrate: Thoughts on the Work of the Juvenile Court* (London: Non-Fiction Book Club, 1950).

Hendrick's work on the youth problem and Victor Bailey's on the development of legislation between the Children Acts of 1908 and 1948, to name but four.

Thus my aim with my current (and future) database is to bridge the gap between the qualitative – the literature on youthful delinquency, existing oral histories, visual representations in film – and the quantitative, the figures produced by the courts, the police and charities such as the Howard League in this period. In the first instance, the database simply provided me with data on the incidences of prosecutions of particular crimes or care cases, and an indication of how the magistrates dealt with them. Yet the records have more to tell us than being an indication of the policing of certain crimes – they can tell us something about the nature of poverty and affluence in the East End and its neighbouring areas, as well as about gender, class, and to an extent, race.

### **The Inner London Juvenile Court**

The Inner London Juvenile Court originally formed part of the Metropolitan Police Court system, and grew out of the Old Street Magistrates' Court. In accordance with the 1908 Children's Act, the Juvenile Court split away from the main or adult proceedings of the Old Street Court. The 1908 Children's Act made various recommendations for the running of juvenile courts, notably that they should not be held at the same time as sittings of 'adult' courts, and that they should ideally be held elsewhere. Part of the rationale for the court moving to Toynbee Hall in 1929 was to make it less intimidating for young people, a key point made in the 1908 Act but which was not always applied.<sup>2</sup> Juvenile courts were often held in rooms normally used by the adult courts, which could in themselves be physically intimidating, or on the same day that the police courts were sitting, potentially bringing children and young people into contact with adult criminals. Removing the courts to other

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<sup>2</sup> Victor Bailey, *Delinquency and Citizenship: Reclaiming the Young Offender, 1914 - 1948* (Oxford Clarendon, 1987). 22

locations was one way of circumventing these issues. In the case of Toynbee Hall, it was also to place the court closer to welfare services that families could call upon or be directed to as part of routine court and probation business. The court was housed in various rooms around the settlement until the opening of the 'New Block' in 1938. The 'New Block' was built as part of the settlement's fiftieth anniversary celebrations, and included purpose-built classrooms, a roof-top playground and a music room which doubled up as the court.<sup>3</sup> As per the requirements of the 1933 Children and Young Persons Act, the court dispensed of the more formal furnishings favoured by adult courts, and used normal tables and chairs laid out in close proximity – so that children would not have to raise their voices to be heard by the magistrates and court personnel.

The court sat one day a week throughout the year, with three magistrates in attendance. Three main types of events were handled by the courts – summonses, charges and remands. Summonses introduced cases to the courts, often being brought by the Metropolitan Police, but also by individuals, family members, the London County Council and private companies. It was quite common for summonses to be brought by individuals or groups who were not the Metropolitan Police, but it did not follow that these cases were 'civil'. It was common for employers to bring employees who had stolen or attempted to defraud them to court, whilst the LCC brought children to the court in order to instigate care proceedings. At the charge hearing, children and young people were able to enter a plea. Children and young people could be remanded in custody at any stage. Some were bailed on their own recognisances or by their parents and other family members, but many were sent to remand homes. Remand was used as a period in which to gather information on the child and his or her family, and in some cases to refer the individuals involved for medical and psychological tests. In some care and protection cases, it appears to have been used as a means of keeping children away from potentially harmful home environments for as long as possible.

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<sup>3</sup> Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years* (London: Routledge, 1984). 120

## **Temptations**

The most common offences that boys – and occasionally girls – were charged with were larceny (unlawful taking) and breaking and entering. Boys were keen thieves at all ages, only branching out into other forms of crime as they entered their later teenage years. Yet where boys were involved in stealing, their crimes tended to be opportunistic and petty. They were also creative, quickly picking up new ideas for getting hold of desirable items. Automatic vending machines proved an enormous temptation to boys of all ages, and gangs of boys must have spent much time plotting ways and means of getting money and various types of goodies from them. One gang in 1930 set themselves the task of stealing 2s 17d from a machine, along with 11 ‘Oh Boy!’ nuggets.<sup>4</sup> Cigarettes were also popular commodities for relief from these machines, which could be broken out of machines, although one ingenious young man used a brass disk in order to trick the machine.<sup>5</sup> Another group of boys in 1935 were keen to remove the chocolate from a vending machine in Old Street Underground Station.<sup>6</sup> Stealing from these machines was still a popular activity in 1940, 1945 and 1950, but an activity that maintained its ground was theft from gas and electricity meters. In both cases, potentially large sums of money in small denominations were kept in these devices, often away from immediate adult surveillance. The cash involved – shillings and pence – was unlikely to attract attention in the same way that pound notes might. It offered a challenge and an opportunity to demonstrate devious skills. Many East End homes paid for their utilities in this manner, so meters were readily accessible. Such thefts seemed ‘victimless’ as one stole from an inanimate object or a public space rather than taking an object from a person’s body or private domestic space. But it was also true that children and young people stole from meters for less nefarious reasons. Betty, a young woman befriended by Edith Ramsay, an East End social worker, stole 2s 6d from a meter in the house where her

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<sup>4</sup> London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA) PS/IJ/O/019 Charges 11 Mar 1930

<sup>5</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/019 Charges 25 Feb 1930

<sup>6</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Charges 5 Feb 1935

mother lodged in order to be able to make a visit to her beloved elder brother, who then lived with his wife and new baby on the outskirts of London. Betty was caught, prosecuted and sentenced to probation with a residential requirement to live at a Jewish Girls' hostel.<sup>7</sup>

Yet boys were by no means beyond more 'traditional' forms of stealing, with several cases of shoplifting or theft from market stalls coming to the court throughout the period. But their methods altered to accommodate the opportunities around them. Motor vehicles in particular provided new means of acquiring goods that could be used by the defendants, passed onto friends and family, or sold. By the 1930s, Sainsbury's the grocers had developed an innovative scheme of using lorries to deliver goods to homes in urban and suburban areas.<sup>8</sup> Such grocery vans, with the back doors left open whilst the driver completed the delivery, were tempting in several cases where 'jump-up jobs' were committed. One boy liberated a turkey from such a van in the week before Christmas,<sup>9</sup> whilst another helped himself to jars of spice.<sup>10</sup> Commercial and private vehicles were equally at risk. Theft from inside cars was common and opportunistic. One group of boys helped themselves to a driver's carefully-assembled picnic hamper.<sup>11</sup> In one case, two boys stole a pair of spectacles from a car. Although highly inconvenient for a poor-sighted driver, it emerged from the minute of adjudication that one of the boys had stolen the glasses in order to correct his poor sight. Unfortunately, whilst the court sent him to an ophthalmological hospital in Swanley, Kent to receive treatment he still gained a criminal record.<sup>12</sup> And older means of transportation still provided ample opportunities. There were various cases in which boys made off with

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<sup>7</sup> Bertha Sokoloff, Edith and Stepney: The Life of Edith Ramsay. 60 Years of Education, Politics and Social Change (London: Stepney Books, 1987). 51-52

<sup>8</sup> [www.j-sainsbury.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=188&caseid=interwar#interwar](http://www.j-sainsbury.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=188&caseid=interwar#interwar), viewed 16 January 2008

<sup>9</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/027 Remands 11 January 1935

<sup>10</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/019 Charges 11 February 1930

<sup>11</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Charges 15 Jan 1935

<sup>12</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Remands 15 Jan 1935

costermonger's or market barrows, providing them with the trader's goods and a rather expensive piece of retail equipment. One boy was a serial taker of ponies and carts across the East and West Ends, operating under at least two names over several months, and stealing around £50 of property.<sup>13</sup> On rare occasions were children brought before the court on counts of automobile theft. There were a small number of cases in which cars were stolen, but which were often prosecuted as larceny cases with accompanying road traffic offences.

In both cases of larceny and breaking and entering, the majority of cases involved theft from commercial rather than domestic property. Stealing from commercial property accounted for 40.2% of cases in 1930, 32.6% in 1935, 32.48% in 1940, 28.9% in 1945 and 10.77% in 1950. Breaking and entering commercial property in the same period accounted for 5.9% (1930), 17.9% (1935), 9.5% (1940), 10% (1945) rising again to 16.15% in 1950. Yet not all breaking and entering charges resulted in full prosecutions, as a number were downgraded to stealing cases. Receiving stolen goods and being in possession of stolen goods/goods believed to be stolen accounted for a very small proportion of cases. As with stealing from vending machines or gas meters, the young stole desirable items from shops and warehouses, in what might be perceived to be 'victimless' crimes – taking from those who already had more than enough. [Why do they go up and down? Down-grading of offences as well as changes in shops]

Whilst breaking and entering or stealing from dwelling houses remained a minority pursuit in the period, the number of appearances appears to have risen dramatically by the end of the

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<sup>13</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Remands 1 January 1935, Remands 12 February 1935, Remands 26 February 1935

Second World War. Only a small number of cases of breaking and entering homes were recorded in the sample period (3 in 1935, 1 in 1940 and 4 in 1945), whilst stealing from homes grew from 2.9% in 1930 to 7.1% in 1935, dropping slightly to 6.37 in 1940 to a high of 15.5% in 1945 before falling again to 6.92% in 1950. There was also a small but nevertheless perceptible increase in stealing in other places, such as street robbery and theft from air-raid shelters. These accounted for two and three cases seen in the 1940 and 1945 samples respectively, although these were not present in the 1950 sample. The war marked a subtle change in the nature of theft. The apparent decline in thefts from commercial properties was accompanied by a small rise in thefts from dwelling homes, and a change in the types of items taken. Whereas pre-war breaking and entering had resulted in the theft of such items as a silver watch and chain,<sup>14</sup> chocolate,<sup>15</sup> razors,<sup>16</sup> jewels<sup>17</sup> and several cases of relieving young men of bicycles left in yards or passages, wartime theft took on a different nature. In 1945, a gang of boys stole £20 from a house – a considerable amount for the time.<sup>18</sup> The theft of cash from homes was not unusual in the period, with three separate cases involving this crime.<sup>19</sup> Another boy stole 18 racing pigeons from a backyard<sup>20</sup>, valuable in themselves but priceless to the owner whose pets they were. Savings stamps were also stolen from homes, whilst items of identification – identity cards, driving licences and the like – were also desirable items for thieves, along with wallets and handbags.<sup>21</sup> In one case, a girl stole a handbag from a woman seeking refuge in the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter.<sup>22</sup> Given that many people took to carrying all their documentation and valuable items with them during bombing raids, we can only imagine the victim's distress at potentially having lost

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<sup>14</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Remands 15 Jan 1935

<sup>15</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Summons 12 March 1935

<sup>16</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Remands 8 Jan 1935

<sup>17</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/058 Charges 26 February 1935

<sup>18</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/058 Charges 5 February 1945

<sup>19</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/058 Charges 8 January 1945; Remands 15 January 1945; Charges 22 January 1945;

<sup>20</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/058 Charges 26 February 1945

<sup>21</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/058 Remands 1 January 1945; Remands 15 January 1945; Charges 19 February 1945;

<sup>22</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/058 Remands 22 January 1945

everything – but also the increased value of papers and coupons in an economy in which rationing books and paperwork were paramount and where there was a lively black market in such items.

This evolution from taking items that were convenient yet valuable to taking items that were valuable yet personal is a fine one. Whilst there were many consistencies in approach and method, the frequency with which more personal items were stolen within this overall trend is striking. With the limited nature of the sources, this leads to further questions. Did playing on bomb sites inadvertently encourage looting, or a lesser identification of personal items with individuals? If families were regularly losing their precious items, did this lessen the value of other people's precious items, and increase the importance of gaining coupons and other useful items through illicit means? In terms of patterns of reporting and arrest, this change could be attributed to the police not having the same volume of young people to deal with as they did before the war as a result of the waves of evacuation; it could be a result of greater vigilance of property through the efforts of firewatchers, bomb site rescue and safety efforts, as well as people keeping an eye on activity around the bombed-out homes of friends and neighbours. Given the shame attached to stealing from neighbours in popular memory,<sup>23</sup> it is possible that some people were more likely to report seeing personal items on the black market out of distaste for stealing from the dead and wounded, or because of the inconvenience it would cause another. It is also surely the case that the importance and value of these items led to people reporting their loss or theft to the police rather than writing the goods off or pursuing the matter informally. Nonetheless, the picture of boys and young men generally and typically engaging in the various types of theft remains consistent both with the

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<sup>23</sup> Roger Hood and Elizabeth Joyce, "Three Generations: Oral Testimonies on Crime and Social Change in London's East End," *British Journal of Criminology* 39, no. 1 (1999). 142

earlier court records. It is also consistent with the findings of numerous studies on the nature of crime in the East End. Dick Hobbs has pointed to the market culture of the East End in which stealing from commercial bodies and selling the goods via the black market was common, if not 'normal' behaviour.<sup>24</sup> Oral history work undertaken by Hood and Joyce found that respondents recalled that stealing from 'your own' – your neighbours or people of a similar economic background – was considered shameful behaviour, although they also noted that, given this taboo, it was less likely that their respondents would admit to such behaviour in their past.<sup>25</sup>

Clearly boys and some girls were willing to explore the boundaries of respectability in this area. It is difficult with the constraints of access to legal records and rigorous ethical practice as well as the willingness of oral history participants to talk comfortably about such issues to push this topic further at the present time. Although it is possible to propose that the experience of the war loosened concepts of morality and respectability – as well as presenting greater opportunities to transgress boundaries – these findings in relation to the Inner London Juvenile Court must remain speculative for now.

### **Care and control**

The other main area in which prosecutions were brought 'against' children and young people concerned the civil remit of the court. These were divided into two types – 'beyond control' and 'in need of care and protection'. Unlike entries for other offences on the court registers, these entries usually provided the minimum information required. Boys of all ages were

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<sup>24</sup> Dick Hobbs, *Doing the Business: Entrepreneurship, the Working Class and Detectives in the East End of London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>25</sup> Hood and Joyce, "Three Generations: Oral Testimonies on Crime and Social Change in London's East End." 142

brought to the court by mothers who appeared to be reaching the limits of their patience with bad behaviour, whilst older girls were typically brought to the court for being out of control. This often meant in practice that they were spending time with boys. As with reports of 'bad' behaviour of young female evacuees,<sup>26</sup> spending time with boys was a wonderfully vague complaint, which could extend from a girl incurring the displeasure of her parents and guardians by chatting with boys to those girls who were engaging in pre-marital or promiscuous sex. But it is apparent from some of the notes for those girls brought to court on beyond control charges that they were referred for medical examinations. Occasionally, the minutes note that the medical examination was in respect of a pregnancy, but on the whole, there is little information from which to build up a picture of girls' 'misbehaviour' as handled by the Inner London Juvenile Court. Although there were some notable exceptions. One young woman had warrants out for her arrest after escaping from an approved school. She was remanded to Holloway Prison for adult women prisoners, where she managed to gain recognition for being an 'unruly' inmate – such behaviour being noted in the registers for the information of the magistrates.<sup>27</sup>

'In need of care and protection' encompassed a wide range of problems. The children of alcoholics were often brought to court under this category,<sup>28</sup> as were children found fending for themselves on the streets.<sup>29</sup> There were many cases in which the parents were simply

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<sup>26</sup> For 'consorting with soldiers' as a symptom requiring hostel treatment, see D.W. Winnicott and Clare Britton, "Residential Management as Treatment for Difficult Children" in D.W. Winnicott: *Deprivation and Delinquency*, ed. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd, and Madeleine Davis (London: Tavistock, 1984). D.W. Winnicott, "Children's Hostels in War and Peace," in D.W. Winnicott: *Deprivation and Delinquency*, ed. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd, and Madeleine Davis (London: Tavistock, 1984). 56. For the wide variations in what 'bad' behaviour could mean, see Susan Issacs, ed., *The Cambridge Evacuation Survey: A Wartime Study in Social Welfare and Education* (London: Methuen, 1941). 88-9

<sup>27</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Special hearing 12 January 1935

<sup>28</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/019 Charges 21 Jan 1930

<sup>29</sup> LMA PS/IJ/O/019 Remands 18 March 1930; Remands 25 March 1930; PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Remands 29 Jan 1935

described as ‘not exercis[ing] proper guardianship’, a loose term which could include alcoholism or drug abuse, a lack of supervision and discipline, or a general failure to secure the child’s needs.<sup>30</sup> In many cases, the parents or guardians were too involved in the lives of their children – several were brought to court having been found living in circumstances liable to encourage seduction or prostitution or for the similar charge of being exposed to moral danger. In 1930, two large families with very young children were prosecuted under this section of the 1908 Children Act.<sup>31</sup> Ten years later, the children of one household were removed by the courts following an offence under the Punishment of Incest Act 1908 against a female member of the household.<sup>32</sup> The Children and Young Persons Act of 1933 also introduced the category of Schedule One offences against the young. In 1940, a 14 year old girl was sent to the East London Maternity Hospital as part of an interim order following a Schedule One offence against her – in other words, that another young person had sexually or otherwise assaulted her, resulting in her pregnancy.<sup>33</sup> One boy was committed to a home after being found living in a house used by a prostitute for prostitution: a last resort, it would seem, after being left destitute after his mother was placed in custody.<sup>34</sup> Children brought to the court on in need of care and protection cases were unlikely in most cases to go home once the case was brought. Cases were usually remanded over a period of weeks whilst evidence was generated, buying time for the case to be built, but also to keep children away from allegedly abusive parents, guardians or home environments. The numbers of in need of care and protection cases rose during the Second World War, mirroring the NSPCC’s campaigns

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<sup>30</sup> PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Remands 8 April 1930

<sup>31</sup> PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Charges 4 February 1930

<sup>32</sup> PS/IJ/O/045 Cases 13 February 1940

<sup>33</sup> PS/IJ/O/045 Cases 5 March 1940

<sup>34</sup> PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Remands 14 Jan 1930; Remands 11 February 1930

about mothers who left their children alone during air-raids and the abuse of evacuee children.<sup>35</sup>

## **Adjudications**

The overwhelming majority of cases were dealt with in the following way: from after being summonsed and then charged, young people were typically remanded or bailed for at least a week. Before the Second World War, the standard amount for which defendants were bailed was 40 shillings. This was not an inconsiderable sum, and in the majority of cases, the defendant's parents or guardians were responsible for their good behaviour. Being bound over to keep the peace was often accompanied by a probation order, typically for a year, but less often for two years. Yet this was occasionally a rather heavy-handed sentence for relatively minor crimes. A boy who stole a bottle of milk from a doorway was bound over for 20s and given a probation order for twelve months<sup>36</sup> – whilst a boy who had been part of a gang who broke into a property with intent to commit a felony received the same sentence for what was a more serious crime.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout the period, probation orders were the most common outcome that young people could expect. Probation orders for twelve month periods were the most popular, accounting for 22% of all cases sampled, whilst probation orders of all durations were the outcomes of a third of all cases. Probation orders came with various conditions. Young people could be required to live away from their parental home, or to avoid bad company; others were

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<sup>35</sup> "Children and Air-Raids," *The Child's Guardian* 1940. "Child Evacuees and the Society," *The Child's Guardian* 1941.

<sup>36</sup> PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Remands 5 February 1935

<sup>37</sup> PS/IJ/O/027 and PS/IJ/O/028 Remands 29 January 1935

required to attend youth clubs or uniformed organisations. There was often a requirement of ‘good behaviour’, to avoid coming into further contact with the law. Although probation officers appeared to have heavy workloads, they were nevertheless involved in the lives of their charges. Films such as *Children on Trial* (1946) pictured the probation officer as walking confidently around the slums to find Fred, her charge, and going to his home to assess its over-crowded, squalid conditions.<sup>38</sup> The speed with which probation officers brought young people to court for breach of the condition of their orders suggests that visits at least on a weekly basis were common.

However, the likelihood of a probation order forming the main part of a sentence was dependent upon the offence prosecuted. In cases involving larceny – stealing and breaking and entering (the latter often being downgraded to the former) – probation orders of 12 or 24 months were common. In 1930, 36.59% of cases involving theft from commercial properties were concluded with 12 month probation orders, whilst 24.39% were given 24 month orders. Five years later, breaking and entering commanded a rate of 51% of defendants being given 12 month sentences, whilst only 3% were committed to institutions. Stealing from commercial properties likewise had a rate of 21.6% for 12 month orders, with a 5% committal rate – although those who stole from dwelling houses in that year could well expect to be committed, as the committal rate was 15%, compared to 30% being put on probation for 12 months. The same patterns held true in 1940 (29.41% received 12 month probation orders) and 1945 (15.38% for 12 month orders for stealing from commercial properties, 46.43% for stealing from homes). With the exception of 1930, in all other years around 30% of all larceny defendants were dismissed under the Probation of Offenders Act or

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<sup>38</sup> Jack Lee, "Children on Trial," (United Kingdom: Home Office: Crown Film Unit, 1946).

discharged under the Summary Jurisdiction Act. Dismissal under the Probation of Offenders Act (1907) usually meant that the case against the defendant was dismissed, on the grounds of the trivial nature of the offence, the defendant's normally good character or extenuating circumstances. Likewise, there were similar provisions under the Summary Jurisdiction Act.<sup>39</sup>

Children and young people who were brought to the court on such 'civil' charges as being beyond control or in need of care and protection were the most likely to be committed of all groups. Over 50% of the beyond control cases in 1930 were given probation orders of 24 months, with 18.75% of defendants being committed to institutions. 76.9% of the care and protection cases resulted in committals in 1930, a trend which continued throughout the intervening years. Whilst it was quite common for most cases to stretch over a number of weeks with defendants being bailed or remanded, the care and protection cases took this to a further level. It was common for cases to be repeatedly put back as evidence was gathered, with the children living in homes or with court appointed persons. In many cases, children were committed to homes until they were 16 or 17 years old and theoretically able to fend for themselves, but in a handful of cases, older children and their parents were given supervision orders, administered in a similar way to probation orders. However, the Second World War disrupted these patterns. Such cases rose during the War, arguably in parallel with the disruption of family life. In 1940, 44% of care cases were committed to institutions, whilst an additional 16.67% of the cases were referred to maternity hospitals as a condition of their committal. In these cases, the circumstances in which the girls – all under 14 – fell pregnant are largely unclear, although in one case, the girl appears to have been the victim of an

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<sup>39</sup> L.A. Atherley Jones and Hugh H.L. Bellot, *The Law of Children and Young Persons (in Relation to Penal Offences) Including the Children Act 1908* (London: Butterworth, 1909). 44

offence under Section 1 of the 1933 Children and Young Persons Act. Committal rates had decreased to 10.34% by 1945, although 65.52% of cases were on interim orders pending completion – suggesting that the war was perhaps slowing up the rate at which cases were closed, but not that practice in removing children from homes had changed.

### **Young offenders and the Inner London Juvenile Court**

These findings illustrate to us that the majority of crimes committed by youths and prosecuted by the courts were, on the whole, relatively minor, involving petty theft from commercial properties. The court statistics add weight to the concept of the slide into criminality, as outlined by Jerry White in *Campbell Bunk*,<sup>40</sup> with opportunism driving many of the crimes here prosecuted. Likewise, the overwhelming concentration of girls on the ‘care’ side of the equation complements many of Pamela Cox’s findings on girls and young women and the ways in which they were treated by the judicial system.<sup>41</sup> The picture we may derive from this is one of mischievous boys ‘pinching’ goodies from shops and automatic vending machines, with a few very bad girls who ran riot, refusing to listen to their parents and keeping bad company. Yet this overview can only be a limited one, given the crimes that are likely to have gone undetected. That it was common for gangs of boys to indulge in criminal behaviour together would support the findings of the Carr-Saunders, Mannheim and Rhodes survey of the Inner London Juvenile Court in the late 1930s. One of the findings of this report was that juvenile crime in East London – but not elsewhere – was linked to high ‘gang’ membership, as well as limited access to leisure and club activities, and

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<sup>40</sup> Jerry White, *The Worst Street in North London: Campbell Bunk, Islington between the Wars* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), Raphael Samuel, *East End Underworld: Chapters in the Life of Arthur Harding* (London: Routledge, 1981).

<sup>41</sup> Pamela Cox, *Gender, Justice and Welfare: Bad Girls in Britain, 1900 - 1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003). 3-10

low rates of employment amongst fathers.<sup>42</sup> It would appear that the efforts of the settlements to provide opportunities for constructive leisure in the East End failed reach all young people, or rather those who most needed it. Some problems – such as abusive parents – could not be solved by club attendance alone. However, the magistrates in this court in this period were keen to keep the child or young person within their community for as long as possible. The financial implications of being bound over, especially if the money was found by a family member, placed the onus of policing that agreement upon the family, if only that the money should not be lost. Probation likewise kept the young person in their community in many cases, but brought the young person and their family into a close relationship with the probation officer. The probation officer attended to the holistic needs of the child and his or her family, and acted promptly when things went wrong. Although the magistrates at this court were keen to point out the problems that a bad environment could cause for a young person – Basil Henriques was especially vocal on this subject<sup>43</sup> - they nonetheless kept the majority of young people in their home environments and local communities. The onus on the courts was to provide a means by which the ‘bad’ influences could be checked.

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<sup>42</sup> A.M. Carr-Saunders, Hermann Mannheim, and E.C. Rhodes, *Young Offenders: An Enquiry into Juvenile Delinquency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942). 75, 81, 92 and 110

<sup>43</sup> See Henriques, *The Indiscretions of a Magistrate: Thoughts on the Work of the Juvenile Court*. *Passim*.

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