

LE 3 B7  
1947 AS  
W 2 656  
Cop. 1

WORKING WITH THE DELINQUENT

by

June Wanden

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of  
The Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER of SOCIAL WORK

in the Department

of

Social Work

The University of British Columbia

October 1947.

*Accepted and approved  
for M.S.W. by Social Work*

ABSTRACT

WORKING WITH THE DELINQUENT

BY

JUNE WANDEN

This study has grown out of a seven month contact which the writer had, in a local group work agency, with a gang of delinquent teen aged girls and boys from the downtown section of Vancouver. It is based largely upon the process records which she kept on the gang during its stay in the agency, with certain corroborative material from other community sources such as case work agencies, the Family Court, the Police Department and the newspapers.

The problem of delinquency is approached from a group work point of view; the chief purpose of the Thesis, therefore, is to indicate the strengths and short-comings of the group work process, as used here, as a treatment method. At the same time, the study deals with the family and environmental difficulties which have led the gang and its members into their present anti-social position. It stresses too, the attitude of the gang to the rest of society and in turn the reaction of society to the gang.

The First Chapter gives the background of delinquency in Vancouver. In it the writer comments on the increasingly serious nature of the problem in the city. She touches on the various factors responsible for the delinquent child's failure to adjust successfully - poor family relationships, bad environmental influences, crowded housing, limited recreational facilities and others - all of which have been considerably aggravated by the war. And in conclusion, she gives a general picture of the youngsters themselves and the gangs they have formed as a security against the rejection

which they have suffered during their growing years.

The Second Chapter introduces the gang to the agency. The writer tells of the referral made by the head of the women's division of the City Police, who, in the course of her duties, had become interested in some of its girl members. A description of the girls and their family backgrounds is included in this chapter. The first period of activity when the club operated as a girls' group, with the boys constantly in the background, is discussed. And the girls' preparations for the inclusion of the boys as guests at a Christmas party are described.

The Third Chapter deals with the first contact which the writer had with the boys at the Christmas party. Their attitude to the agency and to the group leader is very evident in the account of their destructive and quarrelsome behaviour on this occasion. Following the section on the party, a description of the boys and their family backgrounds is given, which makes their belligerent attitude to the world around them quite understandable.

The Fourth Chapter presents the gang as a whole, with the boys established, ostensibly as members of a dance committee, but actually as the governing body of the club. In this section, the complexities of relationships between the members of the gang and particularly between the girls and boys make up the major portion of the narrative. Their activities inside and outside the agency are described fully and indicate very clearly the instability and insecurity of

their daily existence.

In the Fifth Chapter, the writer continues her discussion of the club as a mixed activity, with the relationships between the girls and boys gradually worsening until they reach an open break. A description of the desperate attempt by the boys at a reconciliation is followed by an account of the withdrawal of the girls as a result of the mistreatment they have received at the hands of the boys.

In the Sixth Chapter, the experience of the gang in the agency is evaluated in accordance with Bernstein's Criteria for Group Work. In this section, the following questions are answered. Has the area of concern to the members been enlarged? Do specific interests develop so that they find wider expression both within and without the agency? Has the group matured in its sense of responsibility to the agency, How have the standards of behaviour of the group been affected by the experience in the agency? Have the prejudices of the group based on nationality, financial status and other factors been affected?

In the Seventh Chapter, the writer comments once again on the delinquent's position in the community. She indicates the limitations which a group work agency, handling this type of youngster, unsupported by other resources, must face. And she points out the necessity of a co-operative effort on the part of all welfare organizations and the community as a whole as the only effective method of dealing with the problem.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

<u>Chapter.</u>	<u>Page.</u>
Preface.....	
I. The Background of Delinquency in Vancouver. Increasing delinquency rates; factors affecting rise; present situation in Vancouver.....	1
II. Origin and Early Membership of the Club. Origin of the group; description of background of the girls; first period of operation as girls' group; preparation for the inclusion of boys.....	11
III. Inclusion of Boys as Members. First appearance of the boys; background of the boys and the girls they brought into the group.....	38
IV. The total gang in action. Permanent inclusion of the boys in the club; second period of operation as a mixed club.....	66
V. Temporary disintegration of gang. Evidences of disunity among gang members; attempts at reconciliation; withdrawal of the girls.....	99
VI. Evaluation of the Gang's Agency Experience. The group experience evaluated in accordance with Bernstein's criteria for group achievement.....	126
VII. Delinquency as a community problem. The position of the delinquent and his or her gang in the community; the problems of dealing with a gang and its members; the limitation of community resources; the future of the delinquent group as a part of a <del>groupwork</del> agency problem.....	136
Bibliography.....	142

## PREFACE

This Thesis is the study of a gang of teen aged delinquent girls and boys from the downtown section of Vancouver, who were referred by the police authorities to a local group work agency for supervised club experience. Taken from a group work point of view, it presents the youngsters in relation to their families, their gang, their club experience and their community.

Its purpose is twofold: to point out, in a consideration of the club sessions, the progress made, the problems encountered and the limitations revealed, in attempting the rehabilitation of the delinquent through group work alone; and to show, by a discussion of the gang's activities both inside and outside the agency, the necessity for a better understanding of the problems of the delinquent child on the part of the community as a whole, an understanding which might lead to a more effective program of prevention and cure than now exists.

The material used in this Thesis comes, to a large extent from the process records which the writer kept for the group during her seven month contact with the girls and boys in the agency. Other information of a general sort has been secured from Family Court and Juvenile Detention Home official reports, Industrial School Reports and the annual Police Report. Material from the records of social agencies who are handling or have handled cases dealing

with individuals and their families has been used. These case work sources were very limited, however, because in the majority of cases, contacts with such agencies were limited to relief giving during the depression when individualized service was impossible. Newspaper files for the past years have proved of considerably more assistance, since the members of the gang seem to have a far greater propensity for appearing in the public press than for getting into the files of social agencies. While this obvious lack of corroborative material has made a really comprehensive study of the gang impossible, it does indicate only too clearly the serious gaps in the present program of child welfare.



## THE BACKGROUND OF DELINQUENCY IN VANCOUVER.

### Chapter I.

The problem of juvenile delinquency is certainly not a new one in Vancouver. However, in the past year or so, it has been given a greater prominence than it ever received before. This present awareness is not confined to family court judges, probation officers, social workers and others active in the field of crime prevention and child welfare. It extends throughout the entire community. Suggestions ranging from a more frequent administration of the lash to more adequate recreational facilities have been advanced as possible solutions to the problem by civic and police officials, service clubs, women's groups and private citizens. Newspapers alternate tales of teen age exploits in the field of crime with demands from irate subscribers that "something should be done." And scarcely a day passes when the words "juvenile delinquent" are not placed prominently before the public in one form or another.

There is no doubt that the avalanche of publicity which has descended upon teen age activities since the conclusion of the war may account for a considerable share of this interest. Recent crimes committed by youngsters, including murder, robbery with violence and other major offences have been of a particularly sensational nature and have received

equally sensational treatment in the newspapers. However, this deliberate highlighting of juvenile crime in the press does not explain away the apprehension which is felt by those who are in close contact with the situation in Vancouver. Delinquency, they realize, is increasing at an alarming rate in the city.

While the critical nature of the problem is accepted by those dealing with delinquency, it is impossible to obtain an accurate estimate of the extent of juvenile crime in Vancouver. The general picture is confused and no comprehensive survey has been made which might clarify the situation. The only figures available are those from the Family Court which show just those who have actually been brought to the attention of the court and give no indication of the number of boys and girls who have been and are operating successfully outside the law. They do show a trend which is growing. The following table gives a list of the major charges<sup>1</sup> laid against juveniles in the past five years:

.....

(1) Compiled from the Reports of the Family Court and Detention Home, Vancouver, B. C. 1941 - 1945.

Major charges laid against juveniles 1941 - 1945  
 Compiled from Reports of the Family Court and Deten-  
 tion Home, Vancouver, B. C. (x)

	<u>1941</u>	<u>1942</u>	<u>1943</u>	<u>1944</u>	<u>1945</u>
House & Shop Breaking and Attempts.	64	53	50	46	87
Theft of Auto- mobiles and Attempts.	47	68	71	80	79
Thefts and Attempts.	99	73	95	71	76
Retaining Sto- len Property.	12	8	25	15	8
Carrying Weapons.	3	-	6	5	4
Wounding and Assaults.	5	8	11	10	7
Damage to Property.	12	11	12	1	1
Sexual Immorality.	13	17	24	46	37
Indecent Assault.	3	3	3	10	1
Robbery with Violence.	2	7	4	5	7
Intoxication.	11	11	18	22	29
Murder.	--	--	--	--	1

.....

(x) Figures for 1946 were not available for publi-  
 cation up to October 4, 1947.

-----

Workers who have observed the situation in Vancouver over a period of years are disturbed not so much by the actual increase in delinquency as by the serious nature of the crimes committed by young offenders in the period since the close of the war. Major crimes which were formerly the exception where juveniles were concerned have now unfortunately become the rule. Gangs who once would have been guilty of nothing more serious than petty pilfering are now extending their operations to armed robbery, and seem to be in active competition with older criminals.

While a similar upsurge of delinquency has been in evidence in other cities throughout Canada since the end of the war, Vancouver's position as the western outlet to the prairie provinces has made the situation here quite different from that which exists elsewhere. As a seaport it has always attracted a transient and lawless element. But mass emigration during the war from the prairies and the British Columbia interior increased the city's population by at least 50,000 and probably considerably more. And although some effort was made through wartime housing projects to provide living accomodation for this increased population, a great part of it was absorbed into the areas of the city where there was already the greatest crowding, the poorest living conditions and the most unstable community life. Because Vancouver is a widely scattered city, its slum or near slum areas, which include parts of the west end, the downtown commercial and

industrial areas, the East Hastings, Mount Pleasant and Fairview districts, cover a much broader area than do the slums in most of the other Canadian cities, and the boundaries of these areas were undoubtedly pushed outward to accommodate the influx of war workers.

The end of the war and the closing of war industries such as the shipyards and aircraft factories did not result in a wholesale removal of war workers to their former homes in the east. A large number of them remained in Vancouver to take their chances in the uncertain post-war employment market. In this they joined many of the older residents of the city who had found a brief prosperity during the war after the unemployment and uncertainty of the thirties.

The damage which was done to youngsters who grew up to adolescence during the war years was tremendous and far reaching. To a great many families the war meant a much higher standard of living. The war industries and the Dependents Allowance Board brought an assured income into the home. But this financial security was purchased at a high cost to the emotional security of the children involved. In a great many cases both parents were working and the children were left to fend for themselves. In others the father was absent from the home with the armed services while the mother was doing her stint in an aircraft factory. A good many families were broken up when the mother came out to the coast while the father remained at his job in the east. Broken families where

the father had already left the home were further crippled when the mother discovered that the war industries were much more lucrative than Mother's Allowance or Social Assistance.

Older brothers and sisters pushed school leaving dates ahead and at fifteen or sixteen were receiving wages far in excess of those on which their parents had had to support large families for years. There was no time in between shifts to carry on any sort of family life and even the questionable ministrations of the older children were withheld from those too young to work. Moral standards, as is always the case in wartime, became lax, and in many cases an absent father was replaced temporarily by another man or men. The crowded housing conditions offered no privacy and children were exposed to a wide range of experiences which must inevitably have colored their attitude to life. In the worst sections of the city, while <sup>the</sup> few group work agencies available struggled to provide some recreation, the most common playgrounds were the streets and the most popular meeting places, the cafes or pool rooms.

It is little wonder therefore that many youngsters in the older teen aged group today are finding it difficult to make a successful adjustment to society. Their lives have been a constant struggle. As small children they experienced with their families the deprivations of the depression years. During the formative years they were engulfed in the excitement, prosperity and disorganization of war. And now when

they are reaching the most difficult period in effective adjustment to the community as a whole, they are faced with the problems of reconversion. Their family life has been such that they have no reserves to fall back upon in this critical period. There is no security of relationships in the home to which they can cling. In many cases the parents are having so much difficulty re-adjusting their own lives that they have no time to be bothered with those of their children. Standards of behavior which must be built up over a period of years have never been established for many children in the community. The urge to have done with school as early as possible has left them unfitted to face the growing competition for jobs. But they have sampled prosperity and are determined to taste it further. Any obstacles such as the forces of law and order which stand in their way must be circumvented.

And so we have groups of youngsters, both boys and girls, wandering the streets of Vancouver looking for the security within their gangs which they cannot find elsewhere. They are filled with resentment against their families and their community and present a solid front against all outsiders. Home to them is merely a place to return to when there is nowhere else to go. The police are regarded as natural enemies to be avoided at all costs. The boys wear the prescribed zoot suit, an expensive, well tailored uniform which indicates their worth to people who do not know how crowded and dirty their

homes are. Their entertainment is chiefly of a commercial variety because too often they outwear their welcome at the few teen canteens and community centres open to them with their destructive behavior. Their energy is limitless and their desire for new thrills insatiable--gambling, fighting, "borrowing," flashy cars and drinking, all combine to make life exciting if not satisfying. Their code of ethics is simple: they have a tremendous contempt for an informer and a great respect for the bootleggers, gamblers, dope peddlers and other criminals who are familiar figures in their environments. Their ambition is to make as good a living as possible with a minimum of labor and an income from theft or other illegal sources is quite acceptable if one does not get caught.

This paper is the story of a contact made by a worker in the youth department of a local agency with a gang of teen aged girls and boys, whose family background, environment and outlook bear a close similarity to the conditions presented in the preceding paragraphs. The gang was brought into the agency on an experimental basis, the objective being to turn its boundless, undirected energy and strong feeling of gang loyalty into more socially acceptable channels, through the use of group work methods. Re-education was to be attempted by offering them an opportunity to develop new interests and activities, by including them, as a part of the agency in something larger than their own gang, by giving them a chance



to operate democratically in a controlled setting, rather than out on the street and by assisting the members with their individual problems of adjustment to a society to which they had not been conditioned. And most important of all in this process was the necessity for establishing in each boy and girl and in the gang as a whole, a feeling of complete acceptance by the agency and its staff, regardless of their behavior or attitudes. The security derived from a sense of belonging, of being wanted and liked had to come before any other steps could be taken in the direction of rehabilitation.

What follows is a picture of the gang and its members as they appeared to the worker. It shows, through a description of their behavior in the agency and elsewhere, their attitude to the community and their families. It indicates the measure of success which she had in dealing with the gang, and it presents the problems which she encountered. There must of necessity be many gaps and blind spots throughout the narrative because the group was elusive, and the desire to be identified as a member of the gang rather than as the member of a family is strong. Factual information from sources other than the members themselves has been difficult to secure since, strangely enough, family contacts with social agencies have been limited in many cases to social assistance during the thirties. However, a considerable fund of information has been secured through the worker's personal observations and through her contacts with other agencies and community sources.

which will give, if not a complete picture, at least a definite indication of the gang's status in the community and an account of the factors which have brought it to its present anti-social position.

## Chapter II.

### ORIGIN AND EARLY MEMBERSHIP OF THE CLUB.

Club 57 first became known to the agency in October. At that time Miss Thompson of the City Police contacted Miss Jackson, the personal counsellor and suggested the possibility of building a group around three girls in whom she had become interested. The three girls, Doris Johnstone, 16, Wilma Evans, 16, and Barbara Ebbett, 17, all living in the eastern section of downtown Vancouver, had been picked up on the beach by the police at five in the morning with two boys. When questioned by Miss Thompson they explained that the rest of their gang, both girls and boys, had spent most of the night with them but had eventually gone home. These three had remained out for the night because they knew the doors at home were locked at midnight. The two boys had stayed to keep them company. Questioning further revealed that all-night parties of this sort were a regular part of the gang's entertainment and that little if any of leisure hours were exercised by the families.

Before taking any disciplinary action herself, Miss Thompson approached the agency to see whether any arrangements could be made which would offer the girls some sort of supervised recreation. She was particularly interested in Doris, who she thought was the leader of the gang and who had expressed a desire to attach herself to a formal

agency group in which writing and dramatics would be given. An effort to get Doris to join the Agency by herself had failed and Miss Thompson felt that unless they came as a group none of them would appear. The gang, she realized, was a very rough one, undisciplined and with considerable sexual experience, and she was not too hopeful that they would be able to fit into the Agency set-up or that anything constructive could be done with them if they did become a part of the Agency. However, for the sake of the girls, she was most anxious that some sort of recreational program be tried on an experimental basis before more stringent methods were employed.

As a result of this initial contact, the worker met with Miss Thompson on November 1st to discuss more fully the plans for a club. Miss Thompson explained that while the incident which brought the girls to her attention had not been of a particularly serious nature, her subsequent investigations into their backgrounds had made it apparent that they were badly in need of assistance. All three had come from Saskatchewan with their families during the war industry boom and all three were victims in one way or another of family neglect or lack of understanding.

Doris was now living with her grandmother in a dirty tenement house in the downtown section. Her mother, who was partly Indian, also lived in Vancouver but not with her mother and daughter. On her infrequent visits to the home

she was usually drunk and when drunk was extremely brutal to Doris, who expressed nothing but hatred and fear of her mother. She had told Miss Thompson on several occasions of her intention to return to her father in Saskatoon when she had saved up enough money for the fare. The father, living with another woman there now, had a young family to support, but she was sure that he would take her back. The grandmother had no source of income other than Doris' salary, which was intermittent because she flitted from job to job and was frequently unemployed. Miss Thompson had found Doris especially appealing because of her obvious intelligence and her lofty ambitions which extended far beyond her grade eight and messenger jobs.

Barbara was another product of a broken home. Her mother had been deserted by the father when Barbara and her brother, Clarence, were two and three respectively. The mother had supported the family by housework and laundry jobs since that time, shopping the children out with relatives until she came to Vancouver to take a job in an aircraft factory. She had remarried three years before and there was another fourteen-month-old girl in the family. Barbara seemed quite fond of her mother, but expected and received no guidance from her. The step-father apparently made some attempts to deal with Barbara's misdemeanors but these were received with resentment both by the wife and step-daughter. The latter was currently employed in a tea factory but like Doris had consider-

able difficulty staying with a job, and her mother found it necessary to do part-time laundry work to keep her in spending money and clothes. Unlike Doris, she seemed quite content with her grade nine education and found the social life in the gang exciting and satisfying.

Wilma was the most fortunate of the trio, having both her parents in her home. She seemed to have a genuine affection for her father and mother and two younger brothers, and considered herself lucky to have a family which at least she did not actively dislike. Suffering from a rheumatic heart she found the restrictions of the illness very annoying and whenever possible ignored them, and did so without running into much opposition from her parents. She was taking grade nine at commercial high school but was carrying on a campaign at the moment to quit school and go to work in the factory where barbara was employed.

The two boys who were picked up with them by the police were a part of the group and daily companions of the girls. They belonged to a gang of zoot-suiters who had caused considerable trouble in the east end, and according to Miss Thompson, were a very bad influence on the girls. She felt that a good deal of the girls' difficulty was directly attributable to their relationship with this particular group of boys, and hoped that if the club were organized at the Agency the girls might transfer their interests elsewhere.

### Initial Contact With Girls.

It was decided during this conference that the club idea be placed before the girls. On November 8th the worker talked with the three of them in Miss Thompson's office. They had not been told of the reason for the meeting and apparently had been looking forward to a routine visit with the policewoman whom they greeted enthusiastically. Wilma and Barbara were frankly interested in the worker when Miss Thompson introduced her and explained that she had a proposition to offer, but Doris, very dramatic in a pair of red-rimmed harlequin glasses, was more reserved. Before the worker spoke Miss Thompson made it very clear to them that they could accept or refuse the proposition as they chose, without compromising their position with her in any way.

They listened attentively as the worker outlined the plan and once Wilma had established the fact that the club's membership would include their gang only and no outsiders, they became quite excited. Even Doris entered into the discussion with an announcement that she might now be able to act in a play. They were anxious to know what the program would include and when the worker, after suggesting several activities such as handicraft, beauty talks, etc., said that it was really up to them, Barbara, one eye on Miss Hewitt, asked whether the boys would be welcome at the Agency for parties. This was of prime importance to the others as well and when it was confirmed they were anxious to start immediately.

Membership was discussed at great length and finally a list of seventeen names which suited all of them was turned over to the worker, with a promise that Doris would phone in any removals or additions at a later date. Monday was chosen as the meeting date and as the following one was a holiday, November 18th marked the start of the club.

#### First Meeting of Club.

The opening night brought forth only the three originals who reported that the gang had decided that Tuesday was a better night for a meeting. At the second meeting three more appeared and by the following week the club's membership was fairly well established.

From the outset it was obvious that the enthusiasm exhibited during the worker's first meeting with the girls resulted from the fact that the gang now possessed what it had heretofore noticeably lacked--a clubhouse. And while this was a most important acquisition, it was also important to them to know whether or not they could fit into it comfortably. They listened very carefully when the worker went over the regulations which governed the use of the room. These they accepted quite readily, but two questions which they broached themselves seemed to concern them more than any of the others, and until these were taken care of nobody really moved in. One was smoking. "We're all bad girls," Barbara told the worker. "We all smoke." They were very



much surprised and relieved to learn that there was no regulation forbidding them to smoke, and immediately lighted up--being very careful to put the ashes in the ash trays and not on the floor.

The second and more important question concerned the boys. With some pushing from the others, Barbara brought up the subject on the first evening when the worker returned from an errand outside the clubroom. The matter had been under discussion during her absence and Barbara had been appointed spokesman. "We've decided to bring up something before we do anything more about a club," she explained in a very embarrassed manner. "We thought we better tell you about the boys we go around with--for when we have dances. They're drapes." The worker, deciding quickly that 'drapes' were zoot-suiters, assured them that the Agency did not worry particularly about what people wore. They launched forth then on a violent defence of 'drapes' who were, according to them, just as nice as anyone else. To prove their point they described an overnight trip which the gang had made up the mountain recently, the point being apparently that the boys were fine, outdoor types. The clinching argument seemed to be the carefully stressed sleeping arrangements in which the boys slept out under the stars while the girls had the cabin to themselves.

Once they had established what the Agency expected of them in the way of behavior, they were ready to move on to

discipline within the group itself, and in this, the 'gang' spirit was immediately apparent. On the first evening Wilma questioned the worker very carefully about the way clubs were run, a subject on which they seemed to be completely ignorant. The worker gave them a handbook on parliamentary procedure which they took home to study. At that time Doris insisted that closed ballots would be necessary to insure a democratically chosen executive. When elections were held the next week however, the slate of officers was produced as an accomplished fact at the beginning of the evening and no one raised any objections. They had, Wilma explained, discussed the matter outside and this was the way it was going to be.

#### Club Executive.

The president, Ellen Freiberg, aged 16, was a co-worker of Barbara's at the tea factory and lived in the same block as she did. She seemed to be in competition with Doris both for the leadership of the group and for the friendship of Barbara. Another former resident of Saskatchewan, Ellen was of German parentage and expressed great contempt for her parents who didn't speak English well. The youngest child in a family of two girls and two boys, she had<sup>been</sup>/more or less brought up by her older brother who "beat her up" and locked her in when her behavior was flagrantly bad, but who for the most part let her go her own merry way. She, too, had left school in grade nine.

The vice-president was Alice Donaldson, aged 15, who also worked in the tea factory. Her father and mother had separated when she was very small and her mother, a shoe factory employee, fearful that Alice might become involved with the wrong company, kept constant watch on her and was always breaking up her friendships. She was now trying to get her a job in the shoe factory so that her supervision would be more complete. Alice found this maternal anxiety frustrating and was forced to resort to lying in order to get out with the gang. Alice only went to grade eight in school.

Roberta Gibson, aged 16, was chosen secretary. She lived with her mother, step-father and two older brothers somewhat further out in the East Hastings area than the others. Employed as a messenger in the same place where Doris worked, she shared Doris' attitude toward employment and often found herself on her mother's bounty. In this case as with Barbara there was evidence of friction between mother and step-father in the matter of disciplining the children, and the mother worked in a wholesale flower shop to provide Roberta with extras. The two boys in the family were model sons, both having completed high school with high honors, but Roberta had been glad to leave school in grade nine. She alternated passionate affection for her mother with a desire to run away from home.

As a sort of "member at large" Ethel Nivinsky, aged 17, was also on the executive. Though not a leader in the group,

Ethel was definitely the steady influence. She was well liked by all the others and did not seem to become involved in any of their differences. Her position on the executive was, as indicated by her title, a general trouble-shooter. Ethel's parents had come from Russia shortly before she was born, and she was faced with the problem of adjusting her Canadianized outlook to the old-country customs of her parents. She did not get along well with them, but unlike the others made some effort to understand their point of view and conceded that "while the old man was a stinker" it wasn't all his fault. The family consisted, in addition to herself, of two older brothers, a married sister and one younger brother. The two older boys had been problems in their teens and one had served a jail sentence, but they had now steadied down and Ethel was quite optimistic about the chances for herself and her young brother. She had left school in grade eight because of a skin ailment which she still had and which caused her considerable embarrassment. Her work record stood up very well when compared to the others. Having been employed at the same factory job for about two years she seemed to be much more capable of accepting responsibility for herself than any of the others.

The three original members of the club completed the executive. Barbara occupied the most substantial position of all as treasurer; Wilma, because she sang very well, headed the entertainment committee, and Doris, in deference to her

dramatic potentialities, chaired the glamour committee. Most of the power rested with Ellen as president and Barbara, but Doris, the temporarily ousted leader of the gang, wielded considerable authority from her ambiguous position as a committee head.

### Discipline.

The rules and regulations which were established reflected very clearly the rules of the street outside, with an eye to the worker's sensibilities. The first two were strictly for the purpose of raising the tone of the gathering. They had decided, Ellen explained, that members would be fined a penny for swearing in club and a nickel for arguing. Another regulation to which all of them agreed with some reluctance was that there would be no smoking during business sessions. This was softened somewhat by Wilma who suggested a break half way through for cokes and cigarettes. Barbara very generously told the worker, who had not smoked in their presence, that she would be permitted to do so all the time if she wished. The punishment for missing two or more meetings was to be a "beating up." When the worker questioned this she was assured that they didn't hurt each other very much, but that they found this a good way to make people behave.

Other somewhat unorthodox disciplinary measures appeared as the club went along. One evening toward the end of the

meeting they decided to have a short concert. Wilma was asked to sing but she demurred. Barbara said, "We'll send that letter if you won't sing." Wilma argued and Barbara told the worker that they had a letter which Wilma had written in an off moment and they used it to make her do things. The worker said she thought Wilma would sing without benefit of blackmail. Ellen commented, "Sing, Maybe, but the letter's useful lots of other ways too." Neither Wilma nor any of the others seemed to consider this method of approach unethical. On another occasion Wilma appeared at the club with a lock of hair missing at the front. The gang had cut it off, she explained cheerfully, because she had been doing something she shouldn't.

However despite this acceptance of force as a means of discipline, there were no episodes of physical violence at the club meetings. And the worker felt that the often expressed threats were lip service to the code which the boys in the gang followed and did not actually characterize the relationship of the girls to each other. That this might be the case was indicated one evening when Doris and Ellen asked for the Agency first aid kit. At first Ellen claimed that she needed it to tape up a sprained wrist. When the kit arrived, though, the story came out. Doris had reportedly made some rude remarks about Ellen and the boys had bet Ellen five dollars that she wouldn't have the nerve to "beat Doris up" and make her eat her words. The girls had settled the matter

peacefully, but for the sake of appearances and the five dollars had decided to simulate a fight with adhesive tape and eye shadow.

#### Other Club Members.

Of the nineteen girls who attended the club only three proved unacceptable to the others. These three, it was interesting to note, were the only ones who were not actively friendly with the boys' gang.

One of them, Vera Lane, aged 15, was, if not a close friend, at least a great admirer of Wilma. Wilma brought her to the club in an outburst of generosity and thereafter ignored her. Vera's history was a tragic one. She had come to Vancouver from Alberta with her parents, older sister and younger brother four years ago. The parents had not been married because of a previous marriage by the father, and her mother had returned to Edmonton the year before and married someone else. The spring before she joined the club, Vera had had an illegitimate child by an American sailor of whom nothing was known. This experience had left her in a very disturbed condition and she was not able at the time she came to the Agency to establish any relationship with boys even on the most superficial level. Under the care of the Agency she was just beginning to emerge from self imposed isolation, but the group's overpowering influence in the opposite sex did nothing to assist her.

Her father, according to her case worker, was deeply interested in Vera's welfare and tried to keep her away from the older sister who had become a prostitute. Vera withdrew from the club when the boys appeared on the scene but remained in contact with the worker until she left Vancouver to go to her mother in Edmonton. The one contribution which the club made to her comeback was in the form of the Dubarry Beauty Course. While the rest of the girls toyed with the idea of taking the six week's self improvement course, Vera looked upon it almost as an open sesame to the normal society of which she had been depriving herself. After she left the club she secured a copy of the course from the worker and followed instructions religiously, reporting at intervals on her progress.

The other two girls, Louise Wallace, aged 15 and Stella Albert, also 15, were both wards of the -----Agency and came into the club more or less by accident through another of Wilma's indiscriminate invitations. They arrived one evening un-announced when Wilma was absent and there was not one to act as their sponsor. The others acknowledged their presence during a brief introduction by the worker but otherwise did not seem to be aware that they were there. Half-way through the evening the worker received a call from the house mother at the -----Agency, who wanted to be sure that the girls had arrived safely. She had only recently become house mother, and, accepting Stella's explanation



that they were regular members of the club, had permitted them to attend.

The worker was very much disturbed when she learned of the girls' background and felt that their continued membership in the club would be most unwise from the point of view of treatment. Both of them were suffering from serious behavior problems. Louise, who had been a ward all her life, had recently been removed from a foster home in which she had lived for thirteen years. The family had rejected her completely when she had become involved in a sex misdemeanor. Since her arrival in the shelter there had been another episode of this type which had been handled in the juvenile court. Louise had completed grade six in school and was now being tried out in grade eight. Not very bright, she was easily led and particularly susceptible to the poorer influences in her environment. One of these was Stella.

Stella, an aggressive youngster, had been a ward for only a few months. She had come into care at her own request when life with her father, two younger brothers and a succession of unsympathetic housekeepers had become unbearable. Her mother, who had deserted the family, was still living in the city and received a large share of Stella's affection. Stella was subject to epileptic fits but had only had one since coming into care. Her greatest problems were stealing and lying both of which were of a compulsive nature.

The two girls were living at the shelter as a part of the treatment prescribed by the psychiatric clinic, since neither of them was ready to go into a foster home. They had formed a very close friendship, and under Stella's leadership Louise was always getting into difficulties.

As an additional part of the treatment for each, group experience had been advised, and for this reason the house mother had been quite willing to have them attend the club. Neither of them was able to break through the barrier of indifference which the other club members showed them.

Louise, after several conferences between the worker and her case worker, was removed from the group and placed in another program which satisfied her liking for badminton and dancing. By that time her friendship with Stella was waning so that the transfer was effected without difficulty. Stella, however, had found the other girls in the club to be kindred spirits and in spite of their coolness was determined to make a place for herself. Her case worker was new and did not wish to make an issue of her removal from the group, and consequently, with misgivings on both sides, Stella stayed and tried with bribes of chocolate bars and boasts of prowess as a roller skater to become a part of the group.

Aside from Louise and Stella, there were only two other girls attending the club who came from outside the downtown section of the city. These two, like Stella, had become acquainted with Stella at school. They were sisters, Sylvia

and Betty Robertson, aged fifteen and sixteen respectively, who lived in Kitsilano with their parents and one younger sister. Sylvia was in grade nine with Wilma and Stella, while Betty had left school in grade ten and was working in the same place as Doris, and attending night school. Both of them had been members of the teen canteen at Alexandra House but had left that agency when they joined the gang. They showed evidences of a careful upbringing and the worker found it difficult to determine just what had brought them into the group. The only plausible explanation seemed to be that they had tasted the excitement and restlessness which were a part of life on the outskirts of the underworld and had found them exhilarating. They were both "going steady" with boys in the gang and their parents, who had met the boys, did not seem to question their choice of companions or even the late hours which they kept in line with their gang activities.

Three others joined the club when it was still operating as a girls' group, Vivian Selinchuk, aged 14, Margaret Tonstad, aged 15 and Julia Thompson, aged 16.

Vivian's history was quite similar to that of Doris. She and her mother and brother were living in Vancouver while the father remained in Saskatchewan. With Doris she was constantly plotting ways and means of returning to her father, and was extremely voluable in her dislike for her mother's whining and complaining ways. The mother had come from the Ukraine and according to school authorities was not able to speak a word of English. Vivian was still attending school

but disliked it intensely and was frequently absent. Her mother encouraged her in this and was always willing to back up her excuses when she played truant.

Of all the girls in the group Margaret seemed to be the only one who had no noticeable problems. She was happy in her home with her mother and step-father, enjoyed going to school and never accompanied the gang on their more flamboyant escapades. She had strong crushes on some of the boys but was content to worship from a distance. Her greatest boast, and the other girls were rather proud of this too, was that she had never even been kissed. The worker felt that the strongest bond between Margaret and the rest was the fact that she lived in the same district.

Julia, on the other hand, was the stormy petrel of the group. A very attractive and sensual looking girl, she lived up to her appearance and was well on the way to becoming an amateur prostitute. More promiscuous than any of the other girls, she was constantly in the throes of remorse because of the shame she felt she was bringing to her respectable family. She was also the frequent object of violent action on the part of the boys who punished unfaithfulness with beatings. Julia was the youngest in a family of five girls, with a considerable spread between her and the second daughter. The father had been incapacitated during the first world war and both he and the mother were over sixty, so that they did not take a very active interest in her activities.

None of her sisters seemed to worry about her and the only assistance she received with her problems came from her closest friends, Roberta and Ethel, who were constantly covering up her sins before the family found out.

### Program.

The members of club 57 had a very clear idea from the beginning as to what they wished to do with their club meetings, and any attempts at organization were not encouraged. When the first arrivals appeared in the club room the record player was turned on full blast and so it remained until the harrassed president removed the double socket and demanded at the top of her lungs that everyone "shut up and sit down" because she wanted to start the business meeting. This sometimes did not happen for several hours because the president herself was fond of jiving.

During this first period all the girls with the exception of Doris and Stella, Vera and Louise danced. These four, after one brief attempt had been made to teach them to dance, were retired to the sidelines. Jive seemed to be the only form which they used; consequently boogie woogie predominated and some records were played over as many as ten times in one evening. Sometimes they put on slower records of the torch song variety but these were for listening purposes only and nobody danced. Doris showed no inclination to learn but seemed content to discuss plays and books with the worker,

while Louise and Vera just sat and watched, smiling quickly if anyone glanced in their direction. They were difficult to engage in conversation and always answered in monosyllables. Stella looked after the record player but put on only those records which the dancers requested. This period too, was used for rehashing the week end's festivities.

The business meetings were carried on in strict accordance with parliamentary procedure as laid down in the handbook which the worker had given them and any deviations were promptly picked up by one or another of the members. The minutes were read and usually amended after an argument during which Roberta swore that she had copied things down just as they had been said. The fees had been set at twenty-five cents a month, plus the Agency fee of fifty cents a year and each week Barbara read off a list of those in arrears, which included everyone, and demanded a reason for their failure to pay up. The meetings were always situated wrongly with respect to pay day so that the books were never balanced. Once the treasurer's report had been given Ellen took over to present new business. Planning for the following week's program usually dissolved into a suggestion by Barbara that they would as leave dance as do anything else. The Dubarry Course received some attention out of courtesy to the worker who had brought it down, and Doris was assigned to the job of organizing it. Ellen went so far as to bring down her shorts, but aside from that the course was never heard from again.

Two things did interest them greatly however. One was the possibility of sponsoring a large dance. This matter had obviously been discussed at length with the boys and was a very important item on the agenda. They spoke with envy of other clubs who were able to hold dances, and were overjoyed when the worker secured permission for them to have one after Christmas. At first they planned to donate the proceeds to some charity like the Infantile Paralysis Fund--this suggestion came from Doris and Wilma--but Barbara and Ellen, who were more practical, hit upon the idea of buying club sweaters.

The other matter which concerned them was a Christmas party to which the whole gang was to be invited. During the month before the boys made their initial appearance at the Agency much effort went into arranging a suitable welcome for them. Elaborate plans were made for a floor show which would feature all the talent available. The girls had a great deal of fun planning this entertainment and considerable time was spent in impromptu rehearsals. This gave both Stella and Vera a brief sojourn in the spotlight. Stella, who had a pleasant voice, sang two solos and received for the first and perhaps only time a genuine response from the others. Vera also offered to sing but became terribly nervous and after two false starts went outside the clubroom and sang a duet behind the closed door with Wilma who had come to her aid. The others seemed to understand how difficult the ordeal had been for her and kept telling her how much they enjoyed her song.

Doris had an opportunity to do some acting too, although the opportunity was wasted because the other actors insisted on horse play when she wanted to be serious. Everyone joined in enthusiastically until Barbara pointed out that the boys did not like to have things planned ahead and that they probably would not let them put on the floor show. The others agreed that this would undoubtedly be the case and the plans were discarded.

The subject of food was important too. They wanted to do things properly--the lunch had to be really "sharp" so the boys would realize that they knew how to entertain. After much consultation and hunting through party books they decided on a very elaborate lunch which included olives, stuffed celery, different shaped sandwiches, cookies, cake and marshmallows for toasting at the fireplace. Stella immediately offered to provide the more inaccessible items such as marshmallows and no one protested. Ellen asked for volunteers for the various items and those who did not offer were told what to bring.

When it came to the actual ~~issuing~~ of the invitations to the boys they were suddenly assailed with doubts. Although club meetings seemed to be the only place where they were not together and their conversation indicated that they were more than usually well acquainted with the boys, the girls were nervous at the prospect of playing hostess. This, the worker felt, was an entirely new situation for them; under ordinary



ordinary circumstances the boys took the initiative with the girls following where they led. They were afraid that the first independent venture might not measure up too well and that the boys would ridicule their efforts.

The invitations did not go to individuals but to the gang as a whole. Barbara, acting as liaison, took a list of those whose presence was specially requested and promised to do her best. Her position as girl friend of the leader of the gang was an envied one, and one which she tried to maintain even though the leaders changed. When the worker asked if it was not possible for each girl to invite her own boy friend Ellen explained that if any of them came they all would so that there was no point in picking and choosing.

The boys' group was an amalgamation of what they called the "East" and "West" gangs. The first made up of boys with a European background, the second being mostly of British extraction. The "West" gang, from which the over-all leader Ernie Allen came, looked upon the others as "bohunks" but seemed to get along with them well. Most of the time they travelled together, but they liked on occasion to stress their separate identities. Two weeks before the party, the girls reported to the worker that their invitations had been accepted and all the boys were coming. The following week, however, it developed that Barbara had been temporarily ousted as Ernie's girl friend and she had told him that he and the "West" gang would not be welcome. The others were wrathful at her and

felt that she had been extremely foolhardy in defying the boys in this way. Doris expressed the opinion, though, that if they intended to come, a small matter like the cancellation of an invitation would make little difference. This was the way things stood when the boys joined the group.

#### Relationship Between Worker and Girls.

The first period of the club's existence was too short to permit the establishment of a very definite relationship between the worker and the girls. For both it was a testing period and on either side concessions were made. The girls showed their desire to co-operate as best they knew how, in establishing certain rules of conduct which they felt would please the worker. Any suggestions which she made in the way of activities were given a fair hearing and though none of them was taken up, they were discarded in such a way as to imply that they would probably be part of the next week's program. As they became aware that the worker's demands upon them were not going to be too heavy they relaxed and tested her further, at the same time giving constant evidences of their good intent. When she seemed surprised at some of the unorthodox statements of various members the others quickly retrenched and a placating explanation was offered. They tried to be honest, however, in presenting their group as it really was, because they probably realized that the time would come when their continued presence in the Agency would

be questioned, and they did not want to be accepted at first only to be turned out later when their behavior became difficult. The worker felt that the girls themselves would have had no difficulty adhering more or less to the Agency policy, but they were preparing her for the arrival of the boys who were not so amenable.

In spite of this obvious attempt at co-operation the worker was not accepted by the girls as group leader during that first month. She was an adult and therefore suspect. They were grateful for the opportunity to use the club room and accepted the fact that her presence as a representative of the Agency was necessary; but they had been able to handle their affairs for some time without the assistance of an older person and were not anxious to have adult interference now. Most of the group's decisions were made outside of club meetings without reference to the worker, in the same way as the executive was chosen, and the influence of the boys could be seen in many of them. Conversations about the more questionable activities of the gang were held when the worker was out of the room and cut off quickly when she returned, or took place around the record player where the noise cut off their voices. As a group they were quite comfortable talking to the worker on club topics, but all of them except Doris became uneasy when she tried to carry on a conversation with them singly and immediately began looking around for some excuse to get away.

Only once, on the last evening before the party, did they lower their reserves and include the worker in a confidential discussion. This was because they were in a highly excited state over an item which had appeared in the evening newspaper; and they could not contain themselves. Ernie's nineteen year old brother, Johnny, had been sentenced that day to a term of three years and twenty lashes on a charge of armed robbery. They spoke quite casually of the fact that all four Allen boys were mixed up in the dope racket which had resulted in Johnny's arrest, and did not consider it unusual that all of them except Ernie were dope addicts, although the oldest was only twenty-four. None of them was particularly sympathetic. Ethel expressed the sentiments of the others when she said that Johnny deserved what he got, his crime being, as far as the worker could see, not the drug store robbery but the fact that he got caught. Their attitude toward the prison sentence was similar to that which most people had during the war to the absence of a friend overseas. Such absences were to be expected in the ordinary course of events and no one wasted any time in useless regrets. The lashing, which the worker considered a barbaric punishment, did not seem to perturb them. Barbara said that her cousin had been given the lash one time and he didn't think it was so much; in any case she boasted Johnny was the boy who could take it. Ellen also had a relative who had received that punishment and it had not done him a bit of good.

His mother spoiled him all the time he was in jail just because she thought he had been hurt, and when he came out he was a bad as ever.

Even during this initial period, when the club membership was <sup>ostensibly</sup> made up only of girls, the worker felt that unofficially the boys were active members. They were kept fully informed of all that went on in club meetings and any decisions that were made received their approval in gang discussion before they became law. Once the girls had established a foothold themselves, all efforts were bent on bringing them into the club as rapidly as possible. Whether in the first place the girls planned to make them full fledged members or not, the worker did not know, but considering their superior position in the gang, it was inevitable that if the boys approved of the clubroom and its facilities they would take possession.

### Chapter III.

#### INCLUSION OF BOYS AS MEMBERS.

The period during which Club 57 operated as a mixed group lasted from January until the middle of May. But with the coming of the boys to the first party on December 17th, the club changed its complexion very decidedly. Unlike the girls, they made no attempt at the outset to establish a co-operative relationship with the worker. On the contrary, they behaved as this were just another place where their first visit would be their last. Their feeling of contempt and suspicion for the worker and the Agency, representing a society to which they did not belong, was apparent when they stepped inside the door. Just why they came the worker was not sure; perhaps it was because they could never resist an opportunity to make their resentment felt. Whatever it was, their actions indicated that they did not anticipate a very long stay. The girls were caught half way between; they wanted to retain the good will of the worker, but more than that they wanted to please the boys. The struggle was an uneven one. In the first evening the regulations which they had so carefully set up for the worker's benefit were apologetically but very definitely discarded.

The party was due to start at 8.30 but at 7.00 eight members of the "West" gang, ignoring the cancellation of their invitation, moved in. With them came a new girl, Isabel Vance,

who followed one of the boys, Jack Jamieson, around like a puppy. Since none of the girls had appeared yet, the worker welcomed the group and tried to make them feel at home. Her remarks were answered with monosyllables or ignored. The room was explored thoroughly and found in penetrating voices to be inadequate and unsuitable, and then the group settled around the record player. Before they had been there long Ernie reported to the worker that the room was too cold and the records were too slow. She lit the fireplace and went to her office for some more suitable records. On her return Ernie told her that the place was now too smoky and muttered that when you were invited to a party you expected at least to be comfortable. Thereafter until the girls arrived she was left to herself.

In all, seventeen girls and twenty-three boys attended the party. Of the club members everyone but Louise and Vera was present, the other girls, like Isabel having been invited by their boy friends. Only Stella brought her friends with her, and these two boys unfortunately were "squares", a word which in their vocabulary lumped all non-zoot-suiters into one class. The other boys came in separately in large groups.

For the first hour or so the girls remained bunched around the worker at the fireplace discussing the boys, who were similarly bunched around the record player. Wilma, as chairman of the entertainment committee, was ordered by the others to get the dancing started. She didn't want to because

she was scared, and asked the worker to do so. The worker approached the boys but they said they did not want to dance and went back to their conversation. Stella got one of her friends out onto the floor but this produced no results from the boys other than a few rude comments about "squares". Finally, when Ernie had turned out all the lights but a couple of candles on the mantelpiece, the party got under way.

Only three couples danced; the others found themselves comfortable chairs and settled down to a broad necking party with the boys becoming much more amorous when the worker was in their immediate vicinity. Because it was so obvious the worker decided that it was being done for the purpose of forcing some action on her part which they could defy, and ignored it as best she could. The boys who were not so occupied kept slipping out into the hall for drinks from a bottle which she knew was there but could never locate. While they denied the existence of such a bottle when asked directly, several of them boasted that they intended to "get really plastered tonight."

During this period frequent disparaging remarks were made about the two boys who had come with Stella. Finally Jack, who had been looking for an opportunity all evening, took exception to something one of them had said jokingly to Isabel. He grabbed the boy by the shirt collar and demanded an apology. Bobby stepped back and said that he hadn't meant anything. Jack continued to threaten and the worker went



over and told them to "break it up". Bobby moved off and Jack went over to talk to some of his friends who had been watching from the corner. In a few minutes he and another boy got up and went out to the hall. The worker went over to the others and said "We don't want any fights here." One of the boys mumbled, "There won't be none." "The other guy didn't do nothing to Isabel." Just then however there was a sudden rush of people to the hall. The worker pushed her way through the milling cloud to find Bobby's friend lying on the floor in a pool of blood and Jack giving Bobby a terrific pounding. The rest, both boys and girls, were standing around watching with great enjoyment. Jack was a good deal bigger than Bobby who kept ducking down onto his knees and screaming at him to stop. The worker got hold of Jack several times and tried to pull him off, but each time he lifted her out of the way and returned to the fray. Then she turned and appealed to the other boys. Ernie smiled pleasantly and shook his head. No one made any move except Ethel's special friend, Tony, who said half heartedly, "Aw, cut it out you guys." In desperation the worker announced that she would have to call the police if they didn't stop. This slowed Jack up and after delivering one more hard blow with his head on Bobby's chest he stopped.

Bobby and his friends, who had been raked across the face with a pair of homemade brass knuckles several times, went into the girls' washroom with Tony and some of the girls.

Jack in the meantime started to get his coat on and told Isabel to do the same. Several of the boys told him he didn't have to go and one of them came over and asked the worker, "You'r not going to call the police, are you?" She said she wouldn't but that she did not want any more displays like that. All of them, including Jack and Isabel, went back inside the clubroom.

The two boys who had received the beating were busy repairing the damage when the worker got down to the washroom. Both of them were pretty badly cut up, but were only stopping long enough to wipe up some of the more obvious evidences of the fight before getting out of the building. They were terrified of another attack, although Tony assured them that Jack and the other boy involved, Rudy Amatta, had had their quota of fighting for one night. Roberta, trying to make things a little better, pointed out that there was really nothing personal in the fight. It had been planned simply because they were "squares", and Stella should have known better than to bring them to a "drape" party. Everyone had known as soon as the two boys came in that they would be beaten up sometime during the evening.

The atmosphere in the clubroom was different after the fight. Having done their worst, the boys seemed to be willing to settle down and enjoy the party and deliberate efforts to annoy the worker were not so noticeable. For some reason she was in a slightly more favorable position with the whole

group; it may be because they had expected to be forcibly ejected by the police after the fracas and the worker's decision to let the party carry on had thrown them off balance. Whatever it was, while none of them apologized for the fight, a few off-hand gestures were made in her direction. The food was being passed around and she was kept well supplied by the servers. Even Jack picked up a sandwich from one of the plates and offered it to her, saying that this particular brand was better than most. When lunch was over several of the boys asked her to dance and were duly regretful when she explained that she did not jive. One of them, Tommy Baronchuck came over and wanted to know how she had got mixed up in this "gangster's club". The boys, he said had come to the conclusion that she was either a policewoman, a probation officer or a sucker. They could not make up their minds which. What he couldn't understand was why anyone would deliberately become involved with them.

The party ended suddenly with the announcement by Ernie that the boys were leaving. Wilma, who was busy cleaning up behind the coke bar, yelled at the other girls to come and help her. Ernie told them that if they wanted to come with the boys they would have to leave immediately. The girls hesitated for a moment, looking helplessly at the mess, then grabbed their coats. Wilma kept on cleaning and calling to the others to wait for her until the worker told her she had better go. Everyone was gone in less than two minutes except

one of the new girls who returned briefly to look for her wallet which had disappeared.

The condition in which they left the clubroom indicated as clearly as did any other phase of the party, the completely anti-social attitude of the boys. It was a shambles, with half eaten sandwiches, pieces of cake and broken coke bottles all over the floor, under the chairs and in the corners. Most of the marshmallows had been ground deliberately into the rug or the floor and the ping pong table was listing badly. Two chairs behind the ping pong table which nobody had any occasion to use during the evening had been smashed and stacked up like kindling wood in a corner. Several records had been broken and eight others which the worker had borrowed from a friend were missing.

#### Position of the girls in the gang.

With the coming of the boys the worker was able to see the girls in a more proper perspective. This initial contact with the group as a whole indicated clearly that in the social life of the gang, they took a definitely subservient role. During the early part of the evening there was no evidence of the easy interplay which characterizes relationships between the average teen-age boy and girl who are well acquainted. Each group kept strictly to itself for some considerable time, the girls waiting eagerly for a sign from the boys, who displayed a complete indifference to them. When the boys were

ready to take an interest they summoned the girls to their sides in a lordly manner and the party proceeded in accordance with their inclinations. At no time during the evening did the girls assert themselves in their position as hostesses or in any way indicate that they as a club might feel responsible for the behavior of the group in the Agency. Several times Ethel and Doris apologized surreptitiously for the conduct of the boys, but these apologies came more in the form of an explanation that one must expect such behavior from the boys and a plea for understanding from the worker, than as an acknowledgment of regret for their misbehavior.

There was no doubt that, as Miss Thompson had surmised, the relationship of the girls with this group of boys was such that it might lead them into very grave difficulties in the future. However at the time when they came into the Agency, the relationship was too close for the worker to consider them as other than a single group. The girls were an integral part of the gang and while on the surface they were more amenable than the boys, they shared with them a deep resentment against all forms of authority, which made it possible for them to accept and condone almost any type of delinquent behavior.

#### Boys' Membership.

In the gang five boys stood out as those who possessed, for one reason or another, a much greater prestige than the

others. Of these five, three came from the "West" gang.

Ernie Allen, 17, an Irish boy, was definitely the leader. His position of authority derived to a certain extent from the fact that his oldest brother, Bill, was, in the eyes of the gang, a big time operator. Bill was always a good "touch" and was suspected by the police of paying the boys well to deliver dope to his customers. They did not consider his interest in them other than kindly however, and Jack reported to the worker on one occasion that "there were fifteen guys in the room who would have it in for anyone who laid a finger on Ernie, because his big brother was so white to them". In addition to this Ernie was cleverer than most of the boys, and his dark, rather sinister good looks made him very popular with the girls. At times he showed signs of a careful training in the social graces, but while the girls reported that he had never beaten up a girl himself, he did nothing to discourage the others in such activities.

His parents lived in the West end but he was staying with Bill. According to the -----Society, the father had been a victim of shell shock during the first World War and spent much of his time in Shaughnessy Hospital, and the mother was mentally unbalanced. Discipline in the family had been very strict and sometimes brutal when the boys were young and all of them had been afraid of their parents. Now that they were well launched on a criminal career though, the mother sided with them in their anti-social behavior and even encouraged it.

The three younger boys hero-worshipped Bill and two of them were now serving jail sentences as a result of his dope peddling activities. Ernie himself did not have a job other than a rumored one in Bill's business which paid him, according to the girls, thirty dollars a week. He had completed grade ten at school. In this connection it is rather interesting to note that most of the boys had gone farther in school than the girls, the reason being apparently that they wanted to be on the rugby and basketball teams.

Jack Jamieson, 18, owed his position of eminence to the fact that he was one of the best fighters in the gang. He was also one of the most hot blooded and was constantly defending the gang or his girl friend Isabel against real or fancied insults. Jack had been in trouble for a long time. His father had deserted the family when he was only eighteen months old and the mother had had a hard time keeping the children, Jack, an older brother, and a younger sister, together. She had been able to take the girl with her to work but the boys had had to shift for themselves at a very early age. They had come out from Saskatchewan during the war years and the mother was now employed as an elevator operator. She had reared the daughter carefully but had found the boys dull and always hard to handle. Jack was only in grade five at the age of thirteen and at that time his mother had appealed to a children's agency in the city for assistance because of his difficult behavior. Shortly after that his older brother had been killed in a gun fight with the police during a robbery

attempt and Jack himself had started on a career of crime. Since that time he had spent all five birthdays in detention. His mother was fond of him but found it impossible to have him in the house with the daughter, who was a well-behaved and intelligent youngster, so he spent the time when he was not in jail with Ernie's brother Bill.

Denis Peterson, 17, was the third member of the "West" gang. He acted as Ernie's lieutenant and as such occupied a substantial position in the gang. Most of the information on Denis' background the worker secured from the relief records. These indicated that his family had at one time been highly respected in the community and Denis showed evidences occasionally of a better background than most of the group youngsters. The father had lost his butcher shop in the early days of the depression, however, and for the next ten years the family had been on relief. The parents had stayed together until Denis was about eight years old, when they had begun quarreling and the father had left home. After that the four children, three boys and a girl, had been passed from one to the other and there had been constant accusations and recriminations on both sides. Finally the father had disappeared altogether and the mother had been left to support the family. Denis worked steadily, and unlike the other boys in the gang seemed willing to contribute to the support of his family. He was quite an intelligent boy and had completed grade ten at technical school.



The first member of the "East" gang, and its leader, was Rudy Amatta, 18, a short powerfully built Italian boy who, like Jack, commanded respect with his fists. He was known throughout the East Hastings district as a very tough individual, and the four sharp silver rings which he always wore on his left hand had scarred many a face. Combining a tendency toward brutality with an inferior intelligence, Rudy was potentially one of the most dangerous members of the gang. He was the youngest in a family of four boys. His father had worked for the city as a laborer until 1931, after which he had been unemployed for ten and a half years and during only part of that time had been on relief. In that ten and a half years the family had suffered extreme hardships with insufficient food, very little clothing and on one occasion, no furniture. Rudy had had trouble with his eyes from the time he was a very small boy, but the family had not been able to secure medical attention for him, and when the worker first saw him his eyes were in very bad condition, whether because of this earlier trouble or his frequent fights she did not know. He had only gone to grade seven in school, and his one big regret was that he had been expelled from school before he had had a chance to get into high school and play rugby. At the time he joined the club, Rudy was working with his brothers in a garage.

Also one of the gang's better fighters was Theo Nedila, a seventeen year old Finnish boy. More intelligent than

either Rudy or Jack, Theo nevertheless shared their fondness for violence, and when the gang was involved in a fight he was usually one of the instigators. His family background showed a long history of relief and deprivation too during the thirties, but his father had been more enterprising than the others. He had managed to run a small coal business on the side and though the relief office was morally certain that this was the case they had never been able to prove it. A member of the Communist Party, he had been strongly opposed to the government and all of its departments, including the police, and somewhat anarchistic in his tactics, so that it was possible that Theo came by his dislike for authority honorably. He had completed grade nine but had not been employed at any job steadily in the two years since he had left school. Theo was planning to become a linotype operator, but after waiting for two years to get into a newspaper office as an apprentice he was almost prepared to try something else.

In addition to these five boys there were twelve others who attended the club regularly. About those for whom there was no listing in the Social Service Exchange it was almost impossible for the worker to get much accurate background information, because even after a good relationship had been established with them they were still most reticent about their families and even their addresses. In some cases therefore, as with many of the girls, what follows will depend

strictly upon the worker's observations. The first five boys described below were members of the "West" gang.

The first two, Doug Callus, aged 20, and Johnny Callus, aged 19, were the only brothers in the group. These two were in a unique position. Both of them attended college; Doug was in third year Commerce and Johnny in second year. And, while they were quite serious about their studies and sometimes advocated higher education for the other boys, this did not prevent them from participating in some of the delinquent activities of the gang which would inevitably come to the attention of the college authorities. Neither of them was a particularly strong personality, and in spite of their superior education they did not possess any leadership qualities. They were great admirers of Ernie's and one or other of them was usually shadowing him.

Their parents had operated a restaurant in the downtown section of Vancouver for a number of years and were well thought of in the district. They had always been too busy, however, to pay much attention to the boys and even when they did get into trouble, no attempt was made to withdraw them from the gang or to discipline them in any other way. No great concern was shown by the parents during their court appearances. It was difficult for the worker to reconcile the ambition which had caused them to send their sons to college with their apparent disinterest with their extracurricular activities. Very little information was available on the background and family relationships of these

two boys which might explain what had brought them into the gang. The only indication was in Johnny's comment that "The old lady had never been at home--she was always in the cafe." Doug and Johnny, who were Greek, were the only members of the "West" gang who were not of British origin.

Roger Newston, aged 17, like the Callus boys, belonged to a family which was fairly well situated financially. His parents owned a grocery store in the east end and he was considered by the girls to be the best "catch" in the gang. An only son, his contact with the gang caused his parents a good deal of worry and he was frequently punished for associating with them. The parents were anxious to have him finish his senior matriculation and when he was expelled from the ordinary high school, they sent him to a private college. Roger himself at times appreciated their attitude and he was never really at ease when he was with the gang. They held a fascination for him, however, and even though he was overcome with remorse afterwards he did manage to sneak out of the house and take part in some of their more violent episodes. With Ernie he played on a city Agency basketball team, and practices were used as an excuse to be with the gang. He was friendly with a number of the girls, but unlike the others he always took his current friend home to meet the family. His mother never approved of the girls and as a dutiful son, Roger accepted her rulings and transferred his affections often. Each girl as she was chosen fondly hoped that she would be looked upon with approval but this never happened.

Clarence Ebbett, aged 18, Barbara's older brother, was the only boy who was related to the girls in any way. An effeminate looking boy, he was definitely under the thumb of the others and was willing to follow wherever they led. According to the girls he secretly disapproved of Barbara's friendship with the gang and was particularly opposed to her relationship with Ernie, but she as the stronger personality over-rode him and did as she liked, and Clarence did not dare express his opinions openly. Although he worked steadily in a bicycle shop and made a fairly good wage, the greater part of his earnings came from crap, at which game he and his closest friend, Alf Federici were most adept. They were never without dice, and at every club meeting, the worker had to rout them out from behind the showers where they were busy removing money from three or four of the other boys. Clarence had gone as far as grade nine in school.

Joe Rivers, aged 17, was the last member of the "West" gang. The second of four boys, Joe was another whose family had spent the thirties on and off relief rolls. His father, a carpenter, had been the victim of a disease which was sometimes diagnosed as arthritis and sometimes as a case of malingering. Depending upon what the diagnosis was the family was given social assistance or refused it. This made for extremely straightened circumstances, and during the period of eight years when the father was unemployed the family was evicted by actual count eleven/<sup>different</sup>times. There was considerable

trouble between the parents since the father, because of his illness, was irritable and difficult to get along with; finally in 1942 he moved out of the house. He kept returning however, and was continually upsetting the relationship between the mother and children with his accusations against her. The family remained on assistance until the older brother secured a job as a seaman and then the responsibility for their support was transferred to him. Joe had completed grade nine and was now employed himself as a seaman in coastal shipping. He contributed his earnings to his family but these were sporadic because Joe did not work regularly. The older boy, after one prison term for theft, had settled down to a steady job and was doing well.

Sam Almack, aged 18, was known as the best dressed boy in the 'East' gang, a title which Ernie held for the 'West' gang. A handsome red-headed boy of Polish origin, he was extremely vain about his appearance and even went so far as to carry a big old-fashioned black umbrella when it rained. Known as a gossip and trouble maker, Sam was frequently the object of disciplinary action by the other members of the gang, who accused him of trying to cause a split in their ranks. In between punishments, however, he seemed to be quite well accepted by the other boys. Sam was an only son. His father had died when he was very young and the mother had remarried when he was about twelve. He did not get along well with his mother or step-father and only lived at home when he could not afford to live elsewhere. Two of his

uncles were involved in the drug traffic and the police believed, although they had no actual proof, that Sam himself had started taking dope. He had gone as far as grade eleven at technical high school and was very proud of the fact. More than any of the others he seemed to be possessed of a strong school spirit, and even now when he was no longer attending he kept himself well informed on the school's progress in sports and always attended all the social functions. He worked as a bootblack, a job which he found very satisfactory except for the fact that it made his hands dirty. Sam stuttered badly but this affliction did not seem to bother either him or the other members of the gang.

Tommy Baronchuk, aged 20, was the most stable member of the boys' group. The youngest member of a family of three, Tommy was, according to the girls, hopelessly spoiled by his parents and two sisters. The worker noted that their idea of 'being spoiled' involved nothing more than an easy, affectionate family relationship. They were jealous of Tommy because he was so well treated by his family and reiterated again and again to the worker that his mother 'sure was swell'. Tommy had worked steadily for several years in the shipyards and with an eye to the future had salted away a substantial bank account. His explanation for his membership in the gang was that everyone was bound to go wild at one time or another and he was getting the urge out of his system. He was planning to settle down shortly, though and was considering going to university, as his

family wished him to do. In the meantime he enjoyed the excitement of the gang's activities. He stayed on the fringe, however, and was never implicated in anything more serious than a street fight. Apparently feeling that he was capable of taking care of himself, the family did not interfere very much in Tommy's affairs.

Tony Kallella, aged 17, an Italian boy, was a very popular member of the group. He owed much of his popularity to the fact that he was a happy-go-lucky individual, with a very charming personality. But in addition to this, he had an older brother, Mike, who was a prominent boxer in the city, and that in itself would have guaranteed his position with the gang. The others felt a certain responsibility for Tony because he had tuberculosis, and he was not allowed to mix in their fights or smoke or drink too much. Beyond this, although he was supposed to be a bed patient on two hours light exercise, neither Tony nor the rest of the gang considered it necessary to go in their health measures. In all other things, such as early hours and quiet recreation, the gang was his ally against Mike, who tried to keep him in line. His parents had been in Canada for thirty years, but they had never become naturalized and they had not learned to speak English. The father had been very strict with Mike and the daughter, but the three younger boys had openly defied him, and the job of bringing them up had been turned over to Mike, who had a strong sense of duty toward his family. After one trip to jail as a result of the zoot-suit riots,



the second eldest boy had settled down to a fairly stable existence under Mike's guidance, but Tony and the youngest boy were still causing him a great deal of worry.

Tony had been in a sanatorium for about nine months when he was sixteen, but had been discharged for misbehaviour with one of the female patients. Shortly after his release from the hospital he had been arrested and convicted of car theft and sentenced to six months in jail, which he spent in the infirmary. He was taking treatments every week during the time when he attended the club, and was under the care of a local children's agency. They found him co-operative during visits, but a very unsatisfactory patient the rest of the time. They also found that, in spite of his easy-going nature, he had a vicious temper, and the case worker reported that she had witnessed violent quarrels between Tony and his parents, when he had felt that they were informing on him to her. Mike made a practice of taking Tony with him on any of his boxing tours so that he could keep an eye on him, and tried in many other ways to regulate his schedule, but Tony wanted to enjoy life at the moment and could see no point in the long-range plans for his recovery.

The family had been hard up during the depression, but although the father had applied for social assistance on several occasions, he had been unable to accept it when the time came. He was a gardener by trade, but most of the family income came, according to the case worker, from the earnings of the two older sons and from a bootlegging

business which the father ran on the side. Tony had left school in grade nine, and was employed when his health permitted as a bootblack.

Alf Federici, aged 21, another Italian, was the oldest boy in the gang. He had been at one time the leader, but he made no attempt now to hold his position. When the club began to meet, Alf was in a transition period, moving from this younger group into a broader field of operation, and while he attended club meetings regularly, his need for and interest in the gang was rapidly dwindling. His ambition in life was to become a successful gambler, and in his own small way he was well on the way to achieving that aim, at considerable cost to the other less experienced boys. Alf had no serious criminal tendencies. It was his intention to live within the law, but as close to the limit as was comfortable.

He was one of a family of six children, three older and two younger than himself. His mother was a widow, and for a good many years, while the family was growing up, they had lived on the Mother's Pension. The boys in the family, four of them, had been unruly and difficult to handle, but none of them had ever been in serious trouble. The four who were working, Alf included, all contributed to the upkeep of the home as a matter of course, and there seemed to be no problem of relationship among the members of the family. Alf had gone as far as grade nine in school, and was employed as a laborer in the railway yards. He planned to give up this job, however, as soon as he was well established as a gambler.

There were three other boys in the group. But about these three the worker was able to secure no background information whatever. There was no record on any of them with the Social Service Exchange, the school board or the police. None of them was listed in the city directory or the phone book. They never mentioned in conversations which the worker held with them any member of their families. And the girls, from whom she secured many of her leads, claimed to know nothing about their backgrounds. In fact, for all the worker knew, they might have sprung fully grown into the gang without any antecedents.

One of them she knew only by the name of 'Apple'. He was about eighteen years old, a sinister-looking individual with a trace of Negro or Indian blood in him, who disappeared from time to time for a week or two and then turned up again. There was an air of mystery about Apple which was carefully nurtured by the boys, who maintained that they had never heard his last name. When he was in town he stayed with Ernie's brother, Bill, and as if to make his anonymity more complete he even wore Ernie's clothes. Of all the boys, Apple was the most intractable, and never once during the time he attended the club did he let the barriers down. He did not take an active part in club proceedings, but sat back watching everything with a cynical, contemptuous smile, and when the worker tried to approach him, he turned her aside adroitly.

The other two boys, Mac Holenchuk and Nick Slowinsky, while they lacked the mysterious aura which surrounded Apple,

were in their own way as secretive as he was. Max, a slim dark boy of about seventeen, was the gang's chief exponent of jive. He knew every boogie record that had ever been made, and was considered by the others to be an authority on music. On this subject he was very talkative, but when anything more personal came into the discussion, Max withdrew. Whether this secrecy arose from some deep-rooted cause or whether it was just a natural inclination to keep his affairs to himself, the worker did not know. Whatever it was, Max made a conscious effort to keep his family and background hidden. He was a cheerful boy, and his behaviour did not indicate that there were any serious problems lurking below the surface. Like Sam and Tony, he was employed as a bootblack.

Nick Slovinisky, aged 18, was a sullen, heavy-set boy, who took offense at the slightest provocation. He was the only member of the group who, during her contact with them, ever threatened the worker with physical violence; and at times he seemed to translate his resentment against society into a personal resentment against her. He was full of contradictions, however, and the worker's commendation was more important to him than to any of the others. He liked to have her watching whenever he played ping pong or danced, and almost begged for a favorable comment each time. But any attempts on her part to find out anything about his background were met with immediate hostility, and the relationship between them was temporarily broken, and had to be laboriously built up again. Consequently, beyond the fact that Nick was a

hard worker and had to be up every morning at 5:00, she learned nothing at all about his private life.

With the boys came two new girls who also became members of the club. These two, unlike the other girls, had established more or less permanent relationships with their boy friends, and because of this they were treated with greater consideration by all the boys in the gang.

One of these was Jack's girl, Isabel Vance. Eighteen years old, Isabel was much more mature than Jack, but she seemed to be possessed of a deep and continuing affection for him. Their friendship had lasted for more than two years, and during his frequent incarcerations she had remained completely faithful to him. He, on the other hand, was often unfaithful and sometimes unkind to her, but she always forgave him and was ready to take him back. The other boys obviously admired her steadfastness, and when Jack was away they treated her with the greatest respect.

Her family, who were strict God-fearing Presbyterians, disapproved of her friendship with Jack, and endeavoured by locking her in her room and other methods to keep her away from him, but without success. Jack's criminal activities upset her a good deal and she hoped to be able to straighten him out, but in the meantime she was giving him an acceptance which he badly needed. Aside from this infatuation, which the worker found hard to understand from Isabel's point of view, she seemed to be a normal youngster. A quiet, well-read and intelligent girl, she would have fitted more readily than

any of the others into an average teen-age group. She had completed grade ten and was now attending private business college.

The other girl was Theo's friend, Bertha Weldon. The relationship between these two was even more difficult to understand than that between Isabel and Jack. Bertha was two and a half years Theo's senior, and often gave the appearance of being older than her nineteen years. Theo, in many ways, was young for his age. At times, seeing them together, the worker was reminded of a mother dealing with her particularly obstreperous offspring. Whatever the attraction, there could be no doubt that Bertha was entirely devoted to Theo, and the friendship was one of long standing. The other girls in the group felt that she chased him too much, and implied that the affection was mostly on her side. This was partly true, the worker felt; but there was nevertheless a strong bond between them.

Bertha was an independent individual, quite capable of making her own decisions and carrying them through. She was pregnant all the time she was attending the club, and seemed to accept her condition calmly and without any evidences of inner conflict. As soon as she had discovered that she was pregnant, she had started attending the clinic at the hospital. She intended to keep the child and felt that she would be able to care for it and herself without the assistance of a social agency. She expected that once Theo was settled in a permanent job they would be married, but in the meantime was

satisfied to have him admit paternity. The girls said that she had deliberately become pregnant in order to hold Theo; and the worker, considering Bertha's ready acceptance of the fact, felt that this might possibly be true. At times Theo took his impending responsibilities seriously, but he was reluctant to take the final step of admitting paternity. Bertha, however, was quite confident that he would do so when the time came.

Bertha had attended art school after finishing grade ten, and was employed by one of the department stores as a poster designer. Since she did most of her drawing at home, she was able to continue working right up until the birth of her son in June. Her family did not approve very highly of Theo, but they did not seem to interfere in the relationship or give any indication that they considered her behaviour unorthodox.

### Return from Holidays

Following the party there was an intermission of three weeks for the Christmas holidays. And during that time the worker, new to the game, questioned whether the group would risk another appearance at the agency. She thought that they might find it easier to withdraw than face the music. She was wrong. The holidays had been filled with bigger and better parties and fights, and when they returned on January 7 the club affair was nothing but a dim memory. They were too busy looking ahead to regret what was past and gone.

The worker, deciding that nothing was to be gained by post mortems at this point, took the cue from them and made little mention of the more unpleasant features of the party.

There was almost a full attendance of the girls at the first meeting of the new year. It was devoted exclusively to two subjects--what did the worker think of the boys, and when were they going to hold their big dance? The first topic took precedence over jiving during the informal period at the beginning of the evening and exhaustive discussion followed the worker's non-committal report on such boys as she could remember. The concensus among the girls was that they were all awfully 'cute' including Jack, who was just a little excitable. The worker would be pleased to know, they reported, that the boys had decided that she was okay. This, they felt, was a compliment of the highest order, because the boys did not usually like people--'people' being adults--at all.

The question of the dance was broached with great enthusiasm. The gang had talked it over, Ellen said, and they would like to have it as soon as possible. The conversation which followed indicated that the dance project had received considerable attention and was one which was dear to the hearts of all of them. The worker pointed out, though, that the agency would not be able to sponsor a large dance for them if there were going to be any exhibitions of behaviour like that at the party. Barbara assured her solemnly that the boys had really been upset about the whole affair, and if they were given another chance, such an outrage would not occur again.



The worker wanted some further evidence of the boys' good faith, however, so she suggested that they might be willing to act on a dance committee with the girls. She felt that in this way she might be able to instil some sense of responsibility into them. That was just what the girls had been waiting for, and hardly were the words out of her mouth before they had set the following Monday as the first committee night. Officially, only the executive and certain of the boys were to attend, but an exchange of knowing smiles indicated that everyone would be there.

The committee did not meet on the following Monday as planned because the boys had to go to a boxing match and were unable to make it until Tuesday. But thereafter every Monday was committee night, and the boys became a permanent part of the club.

## THE TOTAL GANG IN ACTION

### CHAPTER IV

During the next five months, the tempo of the club was anything but smooth. The instability of the youngsters was apparent in everything they did. It showed in the uncontrolled excitement which pervaded the clubroom after a week-end of particularly violent or daring activity. It was evident in their reluctance to face any issue squarely and in their inability to hold to any decision, however simple, from one week to the next. It was especially noticeable in their desperate endeavours to keep the gang together against all opposing forces whether external or internal. Life for them was in a continuous state of upheaval. They were constantly searching for something, and while they put a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and energy into the search, as soon as the going became too tough, they changed their objectives and turned with resentment from what they had wanted so badly before.

In this major period of the club's existence, no miracles were achieved; there were no sudden conversions to a better way of life. On the contrary the gang, except for certain minor alterations, was in a worse position with regard to the community at large when the session ended than it was when it began. The chief value of the club, therefore,

aside from the precarious relationship which was established between herself and most of the members, lay, the worker felt, in the opportunity which it offered to observe the gang in a fairly unrestricted situation.

#### Establishment of Dance Committee

The first session of the whole club came after a hair-styling exhibition by Mr. Carson, a friend of Miss Thompson's who had volunteered his services. The girls had been most enthusiastic when the worker had suggested the exhibition and had postponed the boys' appearance until 9:00 to make it possible. Mr. Carson wanted to give them some instruction on the proper care of the hair, but they were interested only in new and startling hair styles which would impress the boys when they got there. After a few unsuccessful attempts at a long range discussion of beauty culture, he abandoned himself to immediate repairs, and the girls lined up, with much jostling, to take their turn. He had got about half way through the group when the thunder of feet on the stairway, and the sound of raucous voices announced the arrival of the boys. Mr. Carson was at once deserted by all but his current subject, who disengaged herself from his comb as rapidly as possible and joined the rest of the girls in the washroom where they were re-touching their make-up. By exerting considerable force, the worker was able to bring some of the girls back into the

clubroom to clap when Ellen offered a quick and also forced vote of thanks to Mr. Carson, who was somewhat bewildered by his dismissal. Shepherding him past the boys, the worker had to talk loudly in order to drown out their comments, which indicated that they approved neither of his profession nor of his abilities.

Back in the clubroom, after delivering him safely to the door, the worker was confronted by Ellen who assured her that she would never have the nerve to act as president in front of the gang, and would the worker mind taking charge. So the worker went over to the group of boys who were holding a conversation in one corner of the room and asked them to get out some chairs. Ernie asked very rudely, "Who do you think you are, giving orders?" The worker replied that she was the boss, and walked away. In a minute they started to get out the chairs, and after a great deal of noise and confusion everyone was seated.

Doris took over the role of chairman and explained that the dance was just a try-out, and that they really had to be good or they would be put out of the agency. The boys made no open comment about this, but whispered among themselves and laughed. Barbara said there could not be any fights or drinking--this comment was dismissed as unnecessary by Denis--and Doris went on to say that the boys were to pick a committee to work with the girls' executive. She suggested that they nominate a leader. Ernie laughed at this, but when his name was put forward, he refused to stand.

They wrangled back and forth until finally Tony ripped up some paper and handed a piece to each of the boys. There was a lot of fooling around, with Tommy explaining to Rudy how many x's to put down for each name so that they would know whom he meant. Denis' name was chosen on the ballots which Tony counted. Doris announced that the gang now had a new leader, and Ernie guffawed again.

They went on to choose the other committee members. As each position came up, Ernie's name was mentioned, but he refused, saying that he would not be present for the dance. Stella, forgetting her experience with the 'squares' at the Christmas party, announced that she had two boy-friends who possessed a large number of records and had expressed a desire to assist with the dance. When the question of records came up, she immediately suggested their names; Nick and several others muttered threats against what they termed, 'lower Shaughnessy drapes'; and they were about to be eliminated when Ernie decided that if they would bring all of their three hundred and seventy-five records, they could belong to the committee. Rudy was appointed bouncer, with instructions to 'ask people nicely to leave and if that didn't work to hit them'. Sam was placed in charge of the coke bar, and some time was taken up in computing, for the worker's benefit, how much money they could make per case by 'spiking' the coca cola. The preparations for the dance began to pall before long, and Denis decided that they would have to put off further decisions until next week because

there were too many non-committee boys present--everyone being aware, of course, that the same number would appear next week.

Having dealt with this piece of business, they wanted to relax. Denis, Ellen and Barbara approached the worker to ask permission to set up the record player and dance. Since the player in the lounge was the only one available, the worker, with some misgivings, told them that they could move in there if they were very careful, it being the nicest room in the building. Denis gave his personal guarantee that everything would look just the same after they had been there as it had before, and with that they adjourned to the lounge.

The gang seemed to be aware that the worker was worried about the welfare of the lounge and its furnishings, and for some reason most of them decided to co-operate in keeping the room tidy. Only Apple and Ernie refused to comply with the worker's requests, and they carried on the policy of attracting her attention by obnoxious behaviour.

Surrounded by ash trays, they insisted upon putting their cigarettes on the floor, and at one point staged a very realistic fight which had the worker worried until Tommy rushed up to assure her that they were only playing.

The girls took turns sitting down by the worker and telling her how nice the boys were and how nothing would happen tonight. They attributed Ernie's 'unusual' behaviour to the fact that he had recently been arrested on a dope peddling charge, and was now out on bail awaiting trial.

(According to the records, Ernie had been arrested when police had intercepted a package addressed to him and containing a flashlight into which had been packed four hundred capsules of morphine.) Ernie, the girls said, was quite innocent of the charge, but he was 'taking the rap' for his older brother, Tom. He expected to be sentenced the following Thursday, so naturally he was feeling a little belligerent. All of the youngsters, and Barbara Particularly, were regretful about his impending departure from the gang, but they accepted it without argument. Barbara told the worker proudly that he had asked her to write to him in prison, and the others considered this a great honour.

The evening concluded without incident and in a burst of industry which must have surprised even themselves, Denis, Tommy and several others made a tour of the room straightening chairs, picking up cigarettes and collecting coke bottles. Tony thanked the worker for being 'so regular' and they trooped out the door, leaving her with the impression that they considered her a very lucky woman to have got off so lightly.

#### Agency Policy Regarding Group

The sojourn in the lounge resulted, among other things, in a clarification of the agency policy regarding Club 57. While the board and the teen-age committee had authorized the club's presence in the agency, they had not realized

prior to this occasion its destructive tendencies. It was ironical, therefore, in view of their behaviour at the earlier party, that the damage which brought the youngsters most forcefully to the attention of these two groups was something for which they were not actually to blame. A check of the lounge on the morning after their visit showed that the rubber on the soles of their shoes had marked the hardwood floors so badly that re-sanding was necessary. The maintenance worker was very much upset because the repairs meant considerable expense; and this episode, when added to the Christmas party which had made extra work for the janitorial staff, raised the question of the continued attendance of the club at the agency. The proposed dance, too, caused a great deal of perturbation.

So it was decided that before plans for the club went any further, all the factors involved in carrying a group of this sort should be explored carefully and some definite decision reached regarding the policy to be followed in dealing with them. The worker presented the matter to the teen-age committee, giving a clear picture of what had already happened and indicating what might happen in the future, if the gang was permitted to remain in the agency. While she held out no promises for success, she stressed the potential value of a continued acceptance of the youngsters by herself and the agency, regardless of their behaviour. In its discussion of the situation, the committee at no time considered dropping the club. The members felt that the



agency, as one of the larger downtown group work institutions, owed a definite responsibility to gangs of this type, and were prepared to accept the fact that serious disciplinary problems might arise at any moment. Their recommendation was that the club be encouraged to operate under agency sponsorship, and that it be given the same opportunities to use the gymnasium facilities for large dances as were granted to other clubs in the agency. The only restriction suggested was that the regular club sessions be confined to the more serviceable gym clubroom rather than the lounge. The active support of this committee, together with that of the board and the general secretary, continued throughout the session, although on numerous occasions their patience was sorely tried.

### Program

That the formation of the dance committee was merely a pretext for the boys to move into the agency became increasingly obvious as time went on. They wanted a dance, certainly, but the small matter of organizing it concerned them not at all. As Tony remarked, "Aw, we know what we're supposed to do at the dance. Can't we just fool around?" This was a familiar theme and each evening some new reason for postponing the planning session was presented. Denis offered the most unconvincing excuse when he explained to the worker that most of the boys, all of whom were already in the

room, were attending a boxing match, so it would not be possible to do anything that night. On only one occasion did they voluntarily submit to a business meeting, the chief purpose of this being to inform the worker--since the rest of them already knew it--that Ernie and not Denis was to be the boys' leader as well as the club president.

Ernie made farewell appearances every Monday night, and received a remand every Thursday; but he had decided to assert himself at least temporarily. Apparently he just wanted to make his position clear, because when the worker asked him to take charge of the meeting, he refused; and after a brief skirmish in which several people were pushed forward as possible chairmen, they all returned to their various activities. The club was a place to dance or listen to records or play ping pong or just talk. None of them wanted a formal program; they had not the patience to settle down to any sort of discussion; but they seemed to find it satisfying to have a definite place to come on a definite evening, and attendance, particularly by the boys, was very regular.

The girls, who were still holding separate meetings on Tuesday nights, told the worker--without noticing their inconsistency, that the boys were no good at organizing things. They would be useful on the dance night for keeping order--if, Doris said darkly, they did not decide to start the trouble themselves--but otherwise they were not much help. But although they professed to accept full

responsibility for arrangements, the girls, too, took the dance lightly, and their meetings were taken up with discussions of what would be done with the proceeds rather than with work for the event itself. Their one constructive suggestion was that none of the boys be permitted to handle the cash at the door, checkroom or coke bar. Stella promised to bring the records, and Bertha offered her own and Theo's services in painting posters; but beyond this, the dance preparations were left in the worker's lap. The Tuesday night sessions were soon over-run by the boys, who hung around outside the agency waiting for the girls to finish. They were finally invited in on the Tuesday before Ernie's trial, because he wanted to have one last night at the club, and Julia, his current interest, launched a strong appeal for his presence which was backed up by the other girls. As it happened, he was acquitted because of insufficient evidence; but the precedent of attendance at the Tuesday night meetings had been set.

#### Relationship Between Worker and Club Members

During the period before the dance, which took place on February 8, the worker made slow but steady progress in becoming acquainted with the gang. The girls were very friendly, and at times showed a willingness and a desire to confide in her. For the most part these confidences were of a social nature and were, she felt, carefully expurgated.

In some cases, though, they did divulge certain details of the boys' sub rosa activities, indicating that they trusted her not to pass the information on to the police. One such instance occurred when Jack Jamieson and Ernie Allen were arrested on a breaking and entering charge. (According to the police, a store in the west end had been broken into, but the night watchman had appeared on the scene and the two burglars had escaped by smashing a plate glass window at the front of the store. Blood on the glass showed that one of the intruders had been injured. Jack and Ernie had been picked up by a taxi close to the spot and taken home. When the police arrived later to arrest Jack, he was attempting to bandage a severe cut in his leg. Both boys claimed that the injury had been received when he was struck by a car, and since it was impossible to prove otherwise, they were acquitted.) The girls discussed the affair quite openly in front of the worker, and it seemed to be common knowledge among the gang that the boys had been guilty of the offense.

In close co-operation with the police force through Miss Thompson, the worker found herself in a difficult position at times, when the gang gave her information of this sort. But since none of it actually constituted evidence, she did not jeopardize her position with the group by handing it over to the police. Miss Thompson was most understanding in this connection, and realized that much of the worker's effectiveness in handling the youngsters came from their sure knowledge that she was not an informer. Miss Thompson

herself was well liked by the girls, and for Wilma, Doris and Barbara, a visit to her office was definitely an event. In many ways, she took over the role of case worker for these three, and her advice on their problems of family relationships was highly valued. Doris, particularly, formed a strong attachment for her, which carried on long after their official interviews ceased. As an indication of her popularity, it was interesting to note that Miss Hewitt received the only invitation issued for their dance.

In the group, Doris, Ethel, Vivian and Wilma were the most approachable. They appeared anxious to establish a close relationship with the worker, and during the club sessions spent considerable time with her. Except for Ethel, who was very much interested in Tony, these girls were awkward and uncertain of themselves when the boys were around, and seemed to find security in staying close to the worker. The others were pleasant, but usually indifferent to her, and showed by their actions that they looked upon her more as a part of the clubroom facilities than as a person.

The boys were a much more difficult proposition. All of them but Tony, Denis and Tommy, ignored the worker's presence during the first two weeks, unless she approached them directly, and then they withdrew as rapidly as they could. After a few rebuffs, she made no further attempts at friendship until they were ready to approach her. A number of them, the worker felt, waited for Ernie's verdict before they made up their minds whether to accept her or not.

As it happened, he chose to acknowledge her presence following an argument over a ping pong game. The best player, Ernie had set up the regulation that the winner played all comers, and since he also kept the score it was difficult for anyone else to win. Tommy, who was his opponent in this particular game, appealed to the worker on one very obvious point, and she backed him up. Ernie argued about it until the rule book was produced, then he grinned and said magnanimously; "All right, from now on you keep score." In this official capacity it was much simpler for the worker to build up an acquaintance with the boys, and gradually the impersonal conversation about the game developed into an easier relationship, although the worker was always aware that she was on probation.

### Discipline

After the first party, the worker had very little trouble with discipline at the regular meetings, chiefly because very few rules were imposed on the group. The only things she felt called upon to mention were closing time and crap games. The club generally lasted from seven-thirty until eleven o'clock. At about a quarter to eleven she would ask the record player operator to make the record on the machine the last. After three or four last records, someone, usually Denis, would yell, "All right, gang, let's go," and they would make their noisy exit.

The crap games were not so simple. The gang members were very fond of this sport, and whenever the worker left the room for so much as a minute, she would return to find all the boys on the floor in a circle. After considerable argument, a compromise was finally reached by which they agreed to play for matches instead of money, thereby removing the gambling element from the game. She was suspicious, however, that once they left the agency, the matches were converted to cash.

#### Relationship with Other Groups in Agency

The only contact with other groups in the agency in this early period was an unfortunate one, and one which showed how vulnerable the youngsters were, in spite of their hard-boiled exterior. A junior group, holding a party upstairs, had some refreshments left over, and decided, as a friendly gesture, to bring them down to Club 57. Without speaking to the worker first, they appeared in the clubroom doorway, laden with sandwiches and cake. As soon as they entered, a silence fell in the room--everyone stopped whatever he was doing to look them up and down, and the atmosphere immediately became hostile. Instead of leaving the plates, they tried to pass them around, making polite little comments as they went. The gang seemed to close ranks automatically against the intruders. Not one of them spoke or accepted the proffered food, and finally the young girls

turned in embarrassment to the worker, who asked them to put the plates on the counter. She shepherded them outside, thanked them quickly for their thoughtfulness and returned to the room. In an effort to improve the situation, she explained that it was the custom in the agency for clubs who had food left from parties to give it to other groups meeting in the building. The only answer to this came from Nick, who said bitterly, "We don't want anybody's left-overs." The food remained on the counter untouched all evening, and a slight pall seemed to have descended upon the group. There was no doubt that the junior girls, for all their good intentions, had hurt their feelings. The whole affair was badly handled, but the worker was caught completely unaware by their unexpected reaction to a perfectly ordinary courtesy. They did not include her in their displeasure, however, and the following week the incident seemed to have been forgotten.

#### Relationship Between Girls and Boys

Just before the dance, trouble developed between the girls and boys for the first time, and the club threatened to disintegrate. The girls arrived at the Monday night meeting looking very disconsolate, to report that they had stood the boys up on the preceding Saturday and gone out with the Thompson gang, a rival east end group. The boys had told them on Sunday that they were through with the club, the



dance and everything. Roberta had received a black eye from Clarence, and the others were in fear of similar reprisals. But while they were worried about the punishment which they expected would result from their unfaithfulness, they were much more upset to think that the boys were going to throw them over. When the worker asked them why they had deliberately broken the engagement, none of them could give a reason, except that it might have been because the Thompson gang had had cars and they had wanted to go for a ride. They obviously preferred their own gang, but as far as the worker could see, it was constitutionally impossible for them to refuse an invitation.

Life was looking very black, and Barbara expressed the feelings of all of them when she said that the club might as well close now, because it would not be any fun without the boys. However, the boys suffered a change of heart, and swarmed into the room in a belligerent mood about an hour after the meeting began. They were full of threats, and their language, which was usually guarded in the worker's presence, was filthy.

None of the girls made any attempt to defend her position--all seemed to accept this as the natural consequence of their behaviour. After the boys had stormed around for a while, the worker cut in to suggest that they make up their minds about the dance. Sam announced that they were having nothing to do with the affair, and everybody started to talk at once. With the record player going at top

velocity, the din was terrific. The worker asked Ernie to take over. He told Denis to calm the others down, and co-operated to the extent of turning off the record player and putting the double socket in his pocket. Denis climbed on the counter and shouted, "For God's sake, shut-up you guys." They quieted down a little, and three or four of the boys, with all the girls, gathered around Denis. The rest of the boys withdrew to the back of the room and sulked. Sam and Clarence continued to argue until Ernie said, "Oh keep quiet, Sam. The gang'll be at the dance;" and they agreed grudgingly to re-consider their decision. Denis, anxious for reconciliation, re-assigned the boys to their jobs, and concluded the business session by saying, "No crocks, eh gang? We want this dance to be respectable." The girls, in a moment of abandon, had asked the Thompson gang to the dance, and when Barbara mentioned this, the row broke out afresh. Rudy said flatly that if they came, they would be beaten up, so they had better be warned to stay away.

The boys spent the rest of the evening giving the girls sly pinches, twisting their arms, and dancing in a particularly rough manner. Since the girls seemed to accept this as their due, the worker did not interfere. Once, however, when Tony was twisting Ethel's arm and she started to cry, she went over and shook her head at him. He let Ethel go and said, "Well, what would you do if somebody stood you up just to go out with another guy?" The worker

said that she did not think she would twist the other person's arm, if that was what he meant. He said that was because men didn't cheat the way girls did. Tommy and Denis came over and discussed the infidelity of women at length. Roger commented that the boys had no technique, and they had to hit a girl to make her understand what they were saying. This brought others into the conversation and there was a rousing argument with the girls, under the worker's wing, expressing their views quite freely. Nothing was settled--when it was all over the boys still felt that women had to be disciplined frequently and the girls claimed that the boys were rough and coarse. Barbara and Ellen announced that in future the boys were only to come on Monday nights because they did not always want to have a bunch of 'toughs' hanging around. This passed without comment from the boys, beyond Tony's query as to when the girls began issuing orders.

They all left together, in more or less good order. But when the worker ran into them down the street, the boys were already taking their revenge. Half of the girls had been rolled in the snow and were soaked from head to foot, Julia and Roberta were weeping loudly because they had been slapped, and the rest of the girls were taking refuge in a cafe, with some of the boys standing guard outside. When the worker tried to reason with them, Sam said, "They've just got to learn that they can't give us the run-around." This battle was followed by a reconciliation that same

evening, and the gang seemed to have forgotten its differences at the next meeting.

This was the first in a long series of outbursts over the same issue, and as time went on the matter of dealing with relationships between the girls and boys became increasingly difficult. The basic problem, as the worker saw it, was that the two groups were at different stages of development. The boys had reached the place where they were ready to establish relationships of fairly long standing, during which the girl of their choice was expected to be completely faithful. They were more broad-minded about their own behaviour, but in the cases where they did have such relationships, they were inclined to devote their attentions almost exclusively to one girl. The girls, on the other hand, with a few exceptions, were subject to violent crushes which rarely lasted for more than a week or two, and they did not consider that such crushes should exclude them from dating other boys. As Barbara said, "The boys want to be too serious all the time--and we like to play the field." Theirs was the more usual teen-age attitude, but it was certainly not compatible with that of the boys, and since the boys' reaction to any sort of betrayal was to strike out against the offending person, trouble was inevitable. The beatings which the girls received did not alter their behaviour very much, but neither did they seem to bring forth any feeling of resentment against the boys. In their code, it was a boy's prerogative to mistreat his girl friend if she strayed, and

until the boys' methods of discipline reached serious proportions, they took their punishment without complaint and almost as if they enjoyed it.

### First Dance

The dance gave the worker an opportunity to observe the gang at first hand on one of its hectic Saturday night outings. Aside from exhibiting a proprietorial air and showing a certain fleeting sense of responsibility for the crowd's behaviour, they might have been spending the evening in Chinatown or at some of their other hang-outs.

The affair started well, and for several hours looked as if it might be a success even in the worker's critical eye. The gang arrived two hours before starting time and displayed a last-minute desire to assist with preparations. Up to that point, Stella's two lower Shaughnessy friends had been helping the worker to get the gymnasium ready. They, incidentally, were hoping through their co-operation at this dance to secure permission to hold weekly dances of a semi-commercial nature at the agency. They were reckoning without the others, however, because while they took a cavalier view of their duties, the members of the club were very much aware that they were the hosts, and they did not intend to be ousted from this position. The girls spent most of the time before the dance in the washroom, taking out pin curls and fixing their make-up. But the boys

hovered around the worker, acting very business-like and re-iterating their promises of 'no liquor, no fights and no crap'. Denis made a special point of telling her that he had left his 'crock' at home for the first Saturday in Months, and she expressed proper appreciation of this noble gesture. The paying guests were slow in coming, and for a time the gang was in a fever of apprehension that the dance would not be a success. This first venture was important to them, and however nice the dance might be, it could not possibly be a success without large numbers of guests.

The crowd, when it did arrive, was what might have been expected from the word-of-mouth advertising the dance had received. About three-quarters of the two hundred and fifty guests were boys, all zoot-suiters, and like the club members, possessed of a belligerent attitude to life. The girls, most of whom were unescorted, looked and behaved very much as the girls in the group did. Most of the boys seemed to feel that they should pay admission only if they were cornered, and Tony and Alf, who were assisting Ellen at the door, concurred in this. Tony even went so far as to lend his skeleton key to some of his friends who wanted to get in through the balcony. Ernie and Apple, while they had been helping to move furniture, had managed to get away with a roll of fifty tickets, which they went out and sold on Hastings Street, pocketing the proceeds themselves.

Dancing was spasmodic all evening--there were never more than six couples on the floor. The rest of the crowd

occupied themselves in various ways. The worker broke up eight different crap games, in which a good many of the club members, contrary to their vow, were involved. The boys stopped playing as soon as she came on the scene and eventually she cut out the games altogether by collecting their loose change each time for the coke bar. Others found the showers a convenient place to drink, and there was a heavy traffic of half empty coke bottles between the clubroom and the showers. Most of the boys were drinking, but it was difficult to find their source of supply, because they had a look-out at the foot of the stairs, and whenever the worker appeared, all the evidence was whisked out of sight. Ernie and Apple returned from their foray on Hastings Street obviously the worse for wear. Ernie was drunk, but under control--Apple was weaving badly and was argumentative. The worker spoke to Denis about it, and he assigned Johnny and Max to the job of keeping track of them. The balcony was being used for necking purposes, and while the club members agreeably came out of their clinches when the worker spoke to them, other couples who were interrupted were defiant and rude. The rest of the crowd just stood around the gymnasium, the boys on one side and the girls on the other. Alf and Tommy worked hard to get them to mix, but without success. Finally Rudy, who was slightly drunk but still co-operative, closed the clubroom and ordered everyone into the gymnasium. Taking over the public address system, he announced that everyone was to dance--or else. This

produced some results, and Rudy came over to receive the commendation of the worker, and to tell her that he did not think he would be having any fights.

Miss Thompson was present at the dance, and in spite of her official position was well received by both boys and girls. Doris attached herself to her as soon as she arrived, and for a while acted as her escort. But the greater part of her evening was devoted to Jack Jamieson, who found her an attentive and sympathetic listener. Much of the conversation was taken up with a vivid and detailed description of how he had injured his leg at a service centre dance--a version which amused Miss Thompson somewhat, since she was morally certain that it was a plate glass window rather than a knife which had done the damage. The rest of the time he talked about his sister, of whom he was very proud. Miss Thompson was not introduced to him as an officer and did not mention the fact herself, so she did not think he realized that he was consorting with the police. She remained until about eleven o'clock, leaving just before the main event of the evening. In her opinion the dance had been, for this group, extremely orderly.

She had been gone about five minutes when Johnny Thompson and three members of his gang arrived. They went straight through to the clubroom, which Rudy had re-opened and was supervising. The minute they appeared, Rudy set down his ping pong racket and took a poke at Johnny. The worker knew nothing about the fight until she ran into a



stampede of boys trying to get up the stairs. Theo explained quickly to her that the fight was on, but knowing that she did not like to have them on the premises, the boys had agreed to go outside. They charged through the gymnasium, gathering the rest of the crowd as they went. Finally, unable to restrain their tempers any longer, they holed up in the men's washroom, and the over-flow of the crowd which couldn't get into the room milled out into the lobby. The most unfortunate aspect of this was that the Student's Christian Movement, which was holding a conference in the lounge, had just completed its session and was in the process of leaving. The members joined the crowd and to all appearances enjoyed the show as much as anybody else.

The worker was able to make her way into the washroom, but when they saw her there, Jack and Theo insisted upon removing her, explaining that they did not want her to get hurt. Before the fight became general, Johnny and his three companions were able to get outside, with Rudy hot on their trail. Ernie and Apple followed them down the stairs. After the combattants had gone, Denis reported to the worker that when the fight had begun, he had placed guards on all the doors to see that nothing happened. Then he told Max, Nick and Theo to look after the front door to see that none of the Thompson gang could return. At this point the police, who had been called, arrived on the scene, and a sudden calm descended on the crowd. Finding that the trouble was over, they left, promising to return if it broke out again. They

had just disappeared when Rudy returned in a fury to say that Johnny Thompson and his crowd had taken Ernie and Apple with them in their car, and that they were returning with the rest of their gang to finish the fight. The dance was forgotten in anticipation of the battle.

#### Indication of Co-operation with Worker

The crowd moved out of the building quickly, some of them to get away before the trouble started and others so that they would be able to get a good view of the fracas. The club members stopped briefly to express their regrets at the way the evening had turned out. Tony's comment was backed up by the rest of them, "We always pull something like this. No wonder no one wants us around." Tommy wanted to know who was going to clean up, saying that he obviously could not stop now to help, but that he would be willing to come in the following day. The girls and some of the other boys offered to do the same. The worker accepted their offer, after which they left, with profuse apologies for Rudy's behaviour. The crowd hung around outside waiting for the Thompson gang to return until the desk clerk telephoned the police, who came and dispersed it. The battle took place later in Chinatown, after the two gangs had spent half the night looking for each other.

The dance was not a success in many ways, but there was evident during the evening a co-operation which the worker

could not have counted upon a few weeks earlier. The girls stuck to their posts at the door, the coke bar and the checkroom, even though they would have much preferred to be free agents. Some of the boys, like Denis, Tony and Alf, worked hard, according to their lights, to keep the affair as orderly as possible, and even Rudy, until he was confronted by Johnny Thompson, was quite co-operative. Sam, in the coke bar, served faithfully until he discovered that someone had stolen his new gabardine coat, and even then he did not go after the thief until he had summoned Julia to take charge. Though they broke all the rules they had set up for the dance and all the promises they had made to the worker, their actions were in no way as deliberately antagonistic as they had been at the first party. They were willing at this point to admit responsibility, even if they were not ready to do anything about it.

### Car Theft

The offer of assistance with the clean-up job was not followed through, because by Sunday afternoon three of the girls were in juvenile detention home, four of the boys were in jail, and the rest of the gang was much too excited to think of such mundane things as sweeping floors. The newspaper report went as follows: "Three teenage girls are in the juvenile detention home, and the police are searching for four boys following a short but wild chase after a

stolen auto at 4:20 a.m. yesterday. The stolen car was first spotted by Constables G. Grant and G. Bell as it turned west on First Avenue from Commercial Drive. It speeded up when the driver noticed the police car following him. As the stolen vehicle swung into a lane at the rear of the Woman's Bakery, it hit a woodpile and ground to a stop. Seven young people, three of them girls, leaped from the car and fled into the nearby bushes. Search of the wooded area led to the capture of two sixteen-year-old girls, while Constable O. Johnson discovered the third girl hiding under the bakery. No trace was found of the male companions."

The worker did not hear of the arrests until Monday night, when the gang began to gather at the agency at the unusually early hour of 6:30. On her arrival, an animated conversation was interrupted by Ellen who wanted to know if she had heard about the others, that 'it' had been in the newspapers. The worker had not yet seen the papers, and asked them to tell her what had happened. Both Ellen and Wilma became shy, and said that the girls did not want the worker to know about it. Finally Ellen said, "Ernie will tell you." The worker turned to Ernie, who explained that the gang had gone for a ride in some 'hot' cars, and Doris, Barbara, Vivian, Jack, Tony, Max and Doug were in custody. When he had finished the story they all began to talk at once. Both Ellen and Wilma had had an opportunity to go for a ride, but had refused, and had tried to stop the other three girls. Ernie was virtuous about the fact that he had

also been invited but had not gone, since he knew that Jack could not possibly be riding around in a 1946 Mercury legitimately. The boys were highly indignant because they had all been picked up for questioning by the police, and Roger was particularly disturbed. His family did not like it when things like that happened, he said. As each new member of the gang came in, the whole affair was rehashed, and it was evident that a number of the others had been joy-riding, too, but had been able to discard their cars before they had been reported stolen. The boys were angry at Barbara, Doris and Vivian because they had informed on the four boys, who had not been picked up till later, and Rudy said that they would be much safer in jail than outside where the gang could get at them. Nobody came to the defence of the girls except the worker, who was howled down.

'Squealing' was a cardinal offense. Tommy asked the worker, "Well, what do you think of your gang now? It was bad enough when all the boys were convicts. Now the girls are starting." He asked Clarence how it felt to have a sister in the lock-up. Clarence laughed uncomfortably but did not comment.

This episode took precedence over any discussion of the dance, but surprisingly enough, for the first time they held a fairly long business meeting. It started out with a statement by Margaret, "I guess that's the last dance our bunch will have around here." The worker said that no decision had been reached yet about Saturday dances, but that the fight had done them a good deal of harm. Ellen

expressed regret but reported that the two gangs were friends again and there would be no more fighting. The worker commented that the reconciliation could have come at a better time. Ethel brought up the subject of the tickets which had been sold on Hastings street, and asked what should be done about it. Denis said that Ernie had offered to pay for them and this would take care of the matter. Ethel did not want to let go so easily but Ernie moved around beside her and told her to keep quiet. After considerable bickering, the worker stepped in and said she thought if the tickets were paid for there was no need for further argument. All their other lapses from grace were discussed at length. None of them would admit to being drunk--'feeling good' was as far as they would go. Rudy's behaviour was explained away by the statement that he always had a fight on Saturday night--it was in his blood. He did, however, make extravagant promises for the next dance if there were one. Tommy thought the crap shooting had been poor--it gave the place a bad name. Clarence said that there would be no more crap shooting now that Tony was in jail. This statement came at an inopportune moment because the worker had just noticed that the boys not taking part in the meeting were having a game in the corner. Several decisions were made in case there was another dance. The name of the club was to be changed so no one would know they were the same group; everybody was to be searched at the door for liquor; dice were to be left with the cashier, and Rudy was only to come if he were in a

peaceful mood. In order to make sure that there would be regular business meetings, they decided that the 'reliable guys' were to come in with the girls at seven o'clock and the others were not to appear until 8:30, after which they would just 'fool around'.

There was a good deal of excitement in the atmosphere during the entire evening, and once the business meeting was over the boys began to wander. Several of them went up to the gymnasium and heckled the archery group until the worker went up and collected them. Downstairs again, they started a water-gun fight in and out of the showers, and carried on with this form of amusement until they conceived the idea of putting the girls under the showers. While she was breaking this up, Tommy explained to the worker that the gang was always wilder when something 'big' had happened on the week-end. They stayed until about 10:45 when Denis suggested that they leave, so the worker could get home early for a change. Going through the gymnasium they tried out the vertical bar and all the other equipment and did a lot of yelling and shoving. In the lobby, Denis and Alf went over the list of the boys who were to come at seven and told the others not to show up till 8:30 next time. The list was sanctioned by Ernie and they left.

The following morning, the worker contacted the Juvenile Detention Home and was told that the girls were being released that day. No charges had been laid against them, but they were to give evidence at the trial of the four boys.

Miss Thompson called to report that she had seen Barbara and Doris who, she said, were disturbed not so much by their misbehaviour as by the fact that the boys would consider them informers.

All three of them came down to the agency Tuesday evening. They were rather sheepish, but were feeling quite important nevertheless. The episode had been exciting, and now that they had been released they were able to savour it. Doris assured the worker that the first thing they had thought of at the detention home was that she and Miss Thompson would find out and be disappointed in them. The worker admitted that both of them were worried and surprised when they heard of it. Barbara said they had certainly learned their lesson; and with these preliminaries out of the way, they launched into a description of the chase. The other girls listened in rapt silence as they told about careening down the highway at eighty miles an hour with the police car in pursuit. Barbara discounted newspaper stories which said that the boys had run off and left them to 'take the rap'. She had been beside Jack when the police had started to fire at them, and he had pushed her down to the ground so she would not get hurt. All the boys had tried to help them and had yelled instructions, but they had been laughing so hard they could not run. None of them had been the least bit afraid, they said, until the police had caught them. They had not told on the boys. Each was quite definite about that. It was Barbara's mother who had told the police



which of the group were involved. The officers had questioned them several times, and the first time they had all told lies. After that they had told the truth, but had not mentioned the names of their companions.

They had not liked the detention home very much. Doris said she had cried all night after they had locked her door. She seemed more unhappy about the affair than the others, who were chiefly worried about the boys' reaction to their release. Doris' mother had come out to the home, but she had refused to see her at first. Finally she had gone out, and her mother had been crying, she said, as if she were actually sorry for what had happened. But it was just a display for the officials, Doris thought. She felt badly about her grandmother, who had 'taken it hard'. Barbara had expected a 'licking' when she got home, but her parents had just looked awfully sad and said they were glad to have her back. Clarence had been sad, too, but he had not said anything mean to her. Vivian said her mother did not care one way or the other. She had hardly noticed her absence.

They stayed just long enough to tell each of the girls their story; then they left because Barbara and Doris had been placed on a curfew by their families. On the way to the street car, the boys caught up with them. They accused Doris and Barbara of turning the others in, and told them with a great deal of profanity what was going to happen to them. Rudy and Denis walked on either side of the worker, telling her how much trouble the girls had got them into. She asked

if the boys who had been arrested had been in the car. Denis said impatiently, "Oh yes, they were all there. But those girls sure don't have much loyalty." The worker said the girls had told her they had not talked and she accepted their word. Rudy argued, "But look what the boys are going to get and the girls are off with nothing." She pointed out that the girls had had nothing to do with their release, and said that in her opinion they should have started thinking about results before the car was taken, not after. The boys agreed that the others had been stupid to take the car, but they still could not accept the girls' betrayal. Tommy was the only one who defended them, and he said that any time a car was missing those 'guys' were just naturally picked up and they had probably admitted it. The worker was not sure that the girls would arrive home intact with the boys in this mood, but Rudy finally agreed to a compromise, "We won't do nothing tonight. We'll wait and see what happens at the trial."

According to the newspapers, friends of the accused packed the police court to the doors for the trial. The worker decided, after giving the matter serious consideration, that her presence in the courtroom might jeopardize her position with the group, and would in any case serve no useful purpose, so she did not attend. The girls gave completely conflicting evidence, with the result that Max and Tony received a remand. Jack was found guilty and sentenced to nine months. Doug was fined \$150 and placed on suspended sentence. Max and Tony also received suspended sentence

TEMPORARY DISINTEGRATION OF GANGCHAPTER V

The trial brought with it repercussions which once again threatened to break up the gang. The first indication of disunity came from the girls who arrived at the meeting that night about an hour ahead of the boys. Doris, Barbara and Vivian were full of their experience on the witness stand and hoped that, having confused the issue, they had regained the good opinion of the boys. Barbara and Vivian were in a gay, excited mood, but Doris seemed unhappy. She and Barbara had lost their jobs as a result of the affair and in addition to this they had been forbidden to have anything to do with each other. Ellen was gloating over this fact, since Doris had replaced her as Barbara's best friend and now she hoped to regain her former position. The worker asked if their parents knew they were together tonight. Barbara pointed out that the club was different - you could not get into trouble there. Ellen continued to prod Doris until she flounced out to the washroom with Vivian and Margaret in tow. From the conversation which took place while she was out of the room, it was apparent that she was being groomed as scapegoat, in case the boys were still not mollified. Barbara appeared reluctant, but with some coaching from Ellen, admitted that if anyone had 'squealed', it must have been

Doris. Some of the others defended her in a half hearted manner, but the worker felt that all that was needed to undermine her completely was a little pressure from the boys.

The worker had just succeeded in returning Doris and her two supporters to the clubroom in a reasonably cheerful frame of mind when Julia came over to report that Denis and some of the boys wished to speak with her privately in the hall. Tony, Clarence and Sam were with Denis. All of them were looking grim and Sam had a large bandage over one eye. Denis explained that the boys had had a big argument and half of them had decided to withdraw from the gang. The worker asked what the trouble was. He was not very clear on this, but said that a lot of them were angry with the girls for informing and that someone, namely Sam, (who had been kicked in the eye by Theo), had been passing rumours around and that the gang were just generally fighting among themselves. They wanted to come down into the basement to have it out, but had agreed to get the worker's permission first. Denis thought there might be a fight - he hoped though that it could be settled otherwise. The worker said she did not want a brawl, but that she was willing to take a chance on them.

Tony disappeared outside and in a minute returned with the rest of the boys, who established themselves in two opposing camps on different sides of the basement and breathed fire at each other. Sam, in the meantime, had gone inside with the girls. The worker hovered around until Ernie

suggested, because of the bad language which would be starting to fly, that she should go into the clubroom too. She did so, and was immediately surrounded by the girls who wanted to know what was happening. They were sure it was an outcome of the girls' evidence and once again Doris came in for the greater share of the blame. Over the blare of the record player could be heard the sound of angry voices and from the little she could pick up, the worker quite agreed with Ernie about the language. The battle waged furiously for about half an hour. Then Denis came to the worker and said, "They aren't finished arguing but they'll come into the clubroom now."

They slunk into the room, still hostile and sullen and arranged themselves in groups, glaring at each other. Denis suggested that they have a business meeting right away. Rudy told the worker he was going to have something to say in this meeting. Ernie started to leave, but his gang gathered around and coaxed him to stay. He slumped down in a chair looking very black. Rudy climbed up on a stool and called the meeting to order. His speech, though slightly profane, was eloquent. He was getting sick of all the bickering and back biting among the members of the gang - girls talking about girls behind their back, boys doing the same - all causing trouble. He used Sam as an example. He, Rudy said, had got his eye kicked in because he had been telling tales among the gang. He asked Sam if this were not so. Sam said there had been no foundation for his gossip

and admitted that he had deserved the punishment. Rudy agreed and went on to say that unless they all stuck together and played square with each other, the gang might as well break up. He stepped over to the door and flung it open with a dramatic flourish. If anyone wanted to leave the gang, they could go now - he would deal with them on the way out. No one moved. He returned to his stool and asked all those in favour of staying to raise their hands. Everyone, thoroughly cowed by this time, was only too glad to do so.

Having accomplished this, he told them that if they had any other beefs they were to settle them. Murmurs from the boys indicated that some of them were still displeased with Sam and the three girls. Sam was taken back into the fold after he had formally apologized to Ernie, for some obscure reason, and the two had shaken hands. Rudy was magnanimous about the girls. He would not, he said, state his personal opinion of them at this time - obviously it was unprintable - but since they were members of the club too, the boys were to treat them decently in club meetings - what they did to them any other time was left to their own discretion.

The boys wanted to become regular members of the club from now on, he said, not just dance committee people. He was quite democratic about this however, giving the girls an opportunity to vote them into the club by another show of hands. Barbara meekly mentioned fees and Rudy, carried away by his success, announced that the boys could easily contribute a dollar each to start. A loud protest from them

was smothered when he demanded ominously, "Any beefs, you guys, Just take them up with me!" The question of attendance of the whole gang on Tuesdays was settled by the girls, who said that since the car episode, their families had been clamping down and they were just allowed out on one week night. They decided to hold the club on Monday evenings only in future.

The rebellion quelled, Rudy brought the business meeting to an end and sat back to receive the plaudits of the gang and the worker. Everyone had been very much impressed by his speech and for the rest of the evening he was surrounded by an admiring audience. The worker, too, had considered the speech effective, but she was inclined to attribute much of its success to Rudy's fighting potentialities rather than to his oratory. Aside from this, however, she was sure that he was putting into words the feelings of the others when he made his plea for unity among the gang. There was panic in the air when the possibility of a break-up came out into the open. Whatever their differences, membership in the gang meant security to all of them and their ready acquiescence once Rudy took control, showed how anxious they were to climb back to safety. Relief was evident during the rest of the evening and former adversaries fell over each other in their efforts to be affable. Even the three offending girls were included in the atmosphere of brotherly love which enveloped the clubroom. Denis thanked the worker for allowing them to hold their reconciliation in the agency and said, as

if he were pointing out a new idea to her, that this just proved what he had always contended - that arguments could be settled without having to resort to force.

### Referral of Doris

The only person who did not weather the storm was Doris. Several factors were involved in her withdrawal from the club. As the worker anticipated, she bore the brunt of the boys' and consequently the girls' displeasure over the car episode, once they got over the rosy glow of renewed friendship. Her close relationship with Barbara had been disrupted, because Barbara, inconstant in such things, had returned quite happily to Ellen's sphere of influence once the fun of secret rendezvous with Doris began to pall. And in her home as in the gang Doris was faced with complete rejection. Her natural reaction was to try to escape from the whole situation by leaving the district. In this desire she was alternately encouraged and discouraged by her grandmother. Her appeal to the worker for help resulted in the first group work-case work referral in the club.

The referral was not a success; it foundered before Doris ever made an appearance at the agency to which she was referred. And while the lack of results was partly attributable to faulty handling, much of the trouble lay in the fact that Doris was too old, at least in experience to accept, in her first contact with a case work agency, the services



of a children's association. And there were no other agencies in the community who could handle her problems. Her case made only too evident the almost insurmountable difficulties with which one was faced in making any sort of practical alteration in the vagabond existence of youngsters of this sort. For sixteen years she had been permitted to do very much as she pleased, with neither affection nor discipline to keep her in check. She had been out on the streets at all hours of the night, exposed to adventures which would make a quiet, well ordered home seem dull and plodding by comparison. Now her behaviour pattern was fairly well established. Whenever a situation became too difficult or unpleasant, she withdrew from it and tried something else. This was apparent in her work record as well as elsewhere, and in her decision to leave home, she was once again following the line of least resistance. As soon as she realized the complicated nature of such a move, Doris lost interest.

Her first plan was to move into a girls' residence but when she discovered that she was too young to do so, she expressed herself as willing to try anything the worker suggested. She was not too happy when she learned that any placement would have to be made through one of the children's agencies in town. Like most of the members of the gang, Doris looked upon social agencies with suspicion, as possible threats to her independence. Then too, she pictured leaving home as something in the nature of a dramatic

runaway, rather than as a slow, careful process in child welfare. For these reasons, the worker decided to proceed slowly, explaining thoroughly all the steps required in such a move. However, even after becoming fully informed in the matter, Doris was apparently ready to go to the agency and see what they had to offer. The worker had a conference with Miss Smith of the social agency in question and made arrangements for an interview between her and Doris. Right up until the day of her appointment, Doris kept assuring herself that this was what she wanted. At the last minute though, she was unable to follow through.

The worker did not see her again after she had failed to keep her appointment with Miss Smith. Doris explained to Miss Thompson several days later that she had decided against going to the agency because her grandmother had been upset at the prospect of losing her. Looking back upon the case, the worker realized that the grandmother should have been brought into the discussion right at the first, but Doris had been strongly opposed to any such contact. Her grandmother would not leave the house and Doris was not anxious to have the worker visit her there. Her greatest mistake in the handling of the case came, the worker felt, when she finally did call at Doris' home. It was a dreadful place, one of sixteen suites in a small, dirty, unpainted tenement house. Her grandmother peered out from behind a half open door and told her Doris was not home. The worker gave her name and asked if she would have

Doris get in touch with her. Without answering, beyond a mutter which the worker could not understand, the old woman slammed the door in her face. This visit was, the worker believed, what finally removed Doris from the agency. She told Miss Thompson that she could not bear to face the worker now that she knew the kind of place in which she lived.

Because Miss Thompson was continuing her interest in Doris, the worker made no further attempt to contact her. In this connection it might be noted that throughout the period of her membership in the club, Miss Thompson had always been in the background ready to offer advice and assistance to Doris with her personal problems. There was, therefore, considerable duplication of effort, as well as some confusion, because the two advisors were approaching her problems from different points of view. The worker, as club leader, possessed no authority and naturally had to operate within the limits of the existing welfare program. Miss Thompson, on the other hand, was able to take direct action, and direct action was what Doris wanted.

#### Preparations for the second dance

The rest of the gang, under Rudy's watchful eye, remained on good terms with each other and the worker during the weeks prior to the second dance. After the row among the boys, Ernie seemed to lose his position as behind the

scenes leader of the gang, to be replaced by Rudy, whose approach was more direct. He took his job seriously and seemed to feel that the success of this second dance was necessary to consolidate his gains. Consequently there were regular business meetings and everyone was told over and over again what their posts for the night would be. The gang undertook to supply all the records for the event themselves and Ethel, who was in charge of collecting them, by some miracle or organization was able to secure about two hundred from the various members. This was a concession because records were valued possessions and there was always the danger of having them stolen. Among the collection were some which looked suspiciously like the ones which had gone missing at the first party. When the worker mentioned this, the boys explained, quite unabashed, that they had 'borrowed' them. Bertha and Theo spent several nights making highly colored posters with zoot suiters and Varga girls all over them. And throughout the preparations ran stronger than usual the promises of good behaviour. Rudy particularly, seemed to want to keep in mind the new leaf he was turning over and he spent a good deal of time reassuring the worker.

#### Trouble outside the agency

These good intentions were interrupted however on the Saturday before the dance when they became involved in a

brawl at a sister agency, the Crescent Centre. Rudy started it with one of his regular Saturday night efforts. When the police arrived, they demanded that the troublemakers be identified and with considerable reluctance one of the members of the Crescent dance club named Rudy, Theo and Nick, who, of course, had vanished by that time. The news of the identification spread and once the police were safely out of the way, the gangs began to gather. It was amazing how quickly the word passed around the east end on occasions such as this - within half an hour about a hundred boys were milling around outside the agency ready to attack the dance group as they left. In the intermission before the police appeared again, the besiegers were able to make off with twelve overcoats through the window of the cloak room. The boy who had made the identification and the group leader were finally smuggled out the back of the building into a truck and taken home when the gangs threatened to charge the place. And some of the others were beaten up once they got beyond the protection of the prowler cars which came and dispersed the mob.

The gang arrived at club meeting on Monday night in the excited mood that always followed a week end of this sort. The version which they gave the worker of the Crescent affair was quite different from that of the other leader and if she were to take their word for it they were far more sinned against than sinning. The coat episode was not mentioned and when the worker brought it up, Rudy assured her that that was

the work of 'some other guys'. They were intent upon securing revenge for the outrageous treatment they had received and were having a little difficulty fitting their own highly moral dance into the schedule of mayhem they were planning for Crescent on the following Saturday. The worker went to a great deal of trouble to make clear to them the relationship between the two agencies. Theo said, "We don't have any beef against the club. It's just the people who go there." The worker, on rather precarious ground, asked if they would not resent having someone else break up their dances. To this Denis replied airily, "Nobody would dare." The matter was discussed back and forth at length, and they were not a little disappointed that the worker should question their conduct. She did manage to extract a half hearted promise that they would leave the Crescent Centre alone, but the promise was strictly in the nature of a palliative and not to be taken too seriously by either side.

### Second Dance

Their own dance, except for a few new and vicious side-lights was similar to their first one. However, if the behaviour of the crowd as a whole was worse, that of most of the members was much improved. The girls once again stuck rigidly to their posts and with some difficulty hung onto most of the money they had collected. The boys were determined to keep order at any price - and for a time they did -

the price being large numbers of fights out in the alley, which, except for the evidence of several bleeding noses, were kept successfully from the worker's eyes.

None of the girls in the club and only a few of the boys did any drinking. Tommy was one of the exceptions. He was obstreperous and insisted upon playing Tarzan with some ropes which hung from the balcony to the gymnasium floor. When the commissionaire tried to halt his activities, he became nasty, and the worker called in Denis to deal with him. Nick, who was also drunk, came to Tommy's defence and told the worker to leave him alone or he would hit her. Denis took the two of them outside. In about five minutes Tommy rushed back in with a bleeding nose and swelling eye. Denis told the worker, "I'm sorry I had to hit him. I couldn't reason with him any other way." Nick had come around to Denis' way of thinking after Tommy had landed an indiscriminate kick in his stomach.

Ernie had also been drinking heavily, but whereas Tommy was quarrelsome, he was amorous. On one of her patrols through the balcony, the worker came upon him and Julia staging a reconciliation which went far beyond the bounds of ordinary necking. She tapped Ernie on the shoulder and suggested that they slow down, then went downstairs and sent Tony up to take a look around. Ernie appeared looking like a storm cloud a few minutes later at the cloak room, demanded his coat and left. Julia came over and apologized, saying that Ernie had been terribly embarrassed at being

caught be the worker. Julia herself was not perturbed - she gave the impression that she was explaining away a slight lapse in etiquette to a stodgy adult.

The boys managed to keep the dance under uneasy control until about eleven o'clock. And when the blow-up came it was not Rudy who touched it off. With a remarkable display of self discipline he managed to stay out of trouble for the entire evening. At regular intervals he reported this fact to the worker and they congratulated each other on his exemplary behaviour. What might have happened had Rudy been in the building when the main bout took place will never be known; for some reason he chose that half hour to visit elsewhere, returning to the dance in time to express righteous indignation at the disgraceful conduct of the others.

The battle took place in the lobby once again because the boys were trying to observe the proprieties and do their fighting outside. Clarence, who was quite drunk, claimed that another boy had tried to hit him over the head with a broken bottle and they were proceeding to the street to settle their differences. The commissionaire and the janitor got hold of the two boys however and tried to cajole them into returning to the gymnasium. Theo came over to the worker and said, "You'd better let them get it out of their system. Clarence is too high to hurt the other kid much." The worker agreed with him, but the two men insisted upon peace. Clarence and Theo went back into the gymnasium while the other boys cowered behind the commissionaire. The worker



tried to get him away from the building, but he was stubborn and insisted upon waiting while someone went in to get his friends. When they came out, Clarence, Theo, and several others came too, and without any warning, the fight was on.

About ten boys were involved. It was an extremely brutal fight, in which all participants and particularly Theo and Clarence used their feet. While one of the boys was lying on the floor unconscious, Theo kicked him again and again in the stomach. The two men and the worker tried to stop the fight, but the boys, beyond shoving them out of the way, paid no attention to them. Somehow they got through the doors at the top of the stairs and continued the battle on the steps. Finally one of them was pushed through the glass doors and the others followed him. The loud crash calmed them down somewhat and when the police, whom the receptionist had called, arrived a few minutes later, all the combatants had disappeared.

Since the group in the gymnasium was not aware that anything had been going on and dancing was fairly general, the worker allowed the dance to carry on till twelve o'clock. The club members gathered around her to find out what had happened. They seemed to be genuinely upset about the fight and worried about the trouble she would get into because of the smashed doors. Tony said, "We might as well admit that we can't handle large dances. From now on we just have parties with our own kids." The others agreed, placing the

blame on the visitors and ignoring the fact that the investigators of the fight were, as usual, members of their gang. They were very much afraid that this would mean the end of the club and were relieved when the worker assured them that the Monday meetings would continue.

When closing time came, the boys could not get the crowd to leave. Several older fellows who had come in late commandeered the public address system and the records and insisted upon having a request program. The mood of the crowd became unpleasant when Denis announced that they were closing up shop and finally Alf came over to the worker and said, "We think they need a couple of blue uniforms to move them. It'll take a brawl to get them out otherwise." The police were called again and when they appeared on the scene, the gymnasium emptied quickly.

Damage was considerably higher at this dance than at the earlier one. In addition to the front doors, two others had been splintered. The store room had been broken into and three cases of coke bottles had been deliberately smashed all over the floor. The clubroom and gymnasium were a shambles and pools of blood in the washrooms, the showers and on the stairs indicated that there had been a number of violent arguments. However, in spite of this, most of the club members had done their duty to the best of their ability and a desire to co-operate with the worker had been evident during the entire evening. Sam came through surprisingly. He stayed long after the others had gone, sweeping the clubroom and

picking up broken bottles. The others offered to stay, too, but the house secretary was anxious to get everyone out of the building, so they left without too much urging.

The gang suffered a severe loss the following day. Rudy and Max were arrested for car theft. They had gone for a ride and in the course of the usual police chase had jumped a ditch, plowed through a fence and turtled the car, thereby smashing it up rather badly. For this they each received a sentence of eighteen months. With Rudy gone, the gang was minus a leader as well as a strong advocate for unity. Ernie, after his humiliating experience at the dance, withdrew from the club temporarily, and Denis, at least in the meetings, took charge. They seemed to have had their fill of dances and were content to settle down to a fairly tranquil round of ping pong games, dancing and talking. The removal of Rudy from the gang seemed to have a quieting effect on the others, and for some time they managed to keep out of difficulties both in and out of club meetings.

Their apparent change of heart was especially noticeable when their arch enemies, the Crescent club, held a dance at the agency on a Monday night. The worker, when approached, refused to cancel the regular meeting of Club 57 for that night, since she felt that this would be unfair, and might have a detrimental effect upon her relationship with the group. With considerable reluctance, therefore, the dance committee agreed to issue an invitation to the members of Club 57, at the same time telling certain of their own boys, who had annoyed the gang, to stay at home.

When the gang arrived the worker told them that the Crescent group had invited them to the dance. Tony announced that they knew all about it and had intended to crash it anyway. The worker pointed out that the other club had been willing to make a friendly gesture and she was hoping that her club would do the same. They were hard to convince, but finally Denis said, "All right, gang. No rough stuff." Then, turning to the worker, he added, "But we're not going to have them in our club room messing it up." Nick, who had been put out of the Crescent club several months before, started to leave as soon as he saw them in the gymnasium. The worker asked him where he was going and he said, "I suppose I'm going to be kicked out of here too." She explained that he had a perfect right to come in since he was a member of Club 57 and after a good deal of coaxing, she was able to shepherd him down to the clubroom. He refused to go up to the dance for a long time and when he did, he stuck close to the worker and was continually demanding her attention.

The dance was a huge success as far as inter-club relationships were concerned. By this is meant that there were no fights or even near fights. Club 57 members kept their identity and did not mingle much with the others, but they did loan some of their records - names carefully taken down by Alf - to the committee, and they did limit their criticisms of the dance and its sponsors to snide remarks among themselves. The worker was regularly informed by the boys

that she should be proud of her gang, and Ethel said it just showed you how nice the boys could be if they tried. The absence of liquor and the presence of a hefty policeman greatly assisted the boys with their good intentions, but they felt that the credit belonged entirely to them.

The clubroom was a source of fascination to the Crescent youngsters, and some of them were graciously permitted to view it. They were not allowed to mess it up however--anyone who was seen to put a cigarette butt on the floor was severely reprimanded, and all coke bottles were returned to their boxes in good condition. Denis kept one of the Club 57 girls or boys on duty in the clubroom all evening, and every once in a while, to show his authority, he closed the room and sent everyone but club members back to the dance. On one occasion, when a group of the boys were huddled on the floor having a crap game, Tony said in a shocked voice, "Not in front of guests, you guys." The clubroom was definitely their property, and they wanted the others to realize that fact.

Ernie, who had not attended club since the second dance, appeared at the front door about 9:30 and asked the worker coldly if she would send Denis out to him. She invited him in but he refused, saying that he had merely come to see Denis and did not intend to stay. The worker got Denis and sent him to the door. A few minutes later Denis came up to her and whispered out of the corner of his mouth, "I just smuggled Ernie into the clubroom by the back door." The worker, not understanding the significance of this move, said, "But he

could have come through the front door just like everybody else." "Better this way." Denis replied cryptically and off he went. Thereafter, with a little conciliating on the part of the worker, Ernie became once more a faithful member of the club. Apparently he felt that this unorthodox means of entry had evened the score between himself and the worker and he was able to return without losing face.

#### Increasing disunity among the gang members

The lull in aggressive activities which was climaxed by the Crescent dance did not last long. As has been stated before, the relationship between the girls and boys was most unstable. During the period in which the club met, the bond of interest between them was gradually weakening and by spring, all the girls, except Bertha, Ethel and Isabel had transferred their affections to boys outside the gang. Most of them kept on attending club throughout the winter. Following the Crescent dance however, there was a definite dropping off in the girls' membership, while the boys' attendance remained high.

The boys did not take kindly to this withdrawal on the part of the girls and their attempts to halt it became more and more violent as the gang dwindles. Outbursts in club meetings became more frequent and vicious. The anger of the boys seemed to be directed against the girls as a

group and those who remained in the gang were as liable for an attack as were the girls who had left. Julia, whose unfaithfulness was notorious, was singled out for considerable rough treatment. In fairness to the boys, it must be admitted that she was constantly leading them on, and no amount of punishment seemed to teach her that her behaviour was not wise. On several occasions, the worker returned to the clubroom to find her weeping hysterically, with Denis and Ernie disappearing rapidly out the door. Each time they had administered a beating before they left. Once when Sylvia refused to take an order from Doug, he knocked her off her stool onto the floor and kicked her in the stomach. The worker caught him in the act and told him and the other boys that she would not countenance such treatment of the girls in the agency. After that they were sly in their attacks but an unpleasant undercurrent remained.

At the same time, the boys became actively delinquent again. The whole gang was picked up by the police on a charge of receiving stolen property at Bowen Island, and Doug, Joe, Nick and Theo were committed for trial. All of them received suspended sentences and were fined. Joe went out immediately and, with another boy, stole a car and was arrested after the inevitable chase. The other boy received a nine month sentence, but Joe was acquitted when he claimed he did not know that the car had been stolen. Doug and Theo in the meantime had been arrested on a charge of breaking and entering. They too were acquitted. Tony

was charged with assault and battery as a result of a cafe brawl in which he struck a girl. He was fined and returned to the care of his older brother, Mike.

In the midst of this violence, the gang decided to make another attempt to get together again. Denis and Ethel engineered a party to which all members of the club were invited. Most of the gang attended and for the greater part of the evening the clubroom was filled with nostalgia. Good times of the past were the topic of the conversation and there was a rather pathetic effort on the part of the boys and Ethel to revive the old gang feeling. Ethel was particularly anxious to keep the group together because she and Tony had become engaged and she did not want the quarreling between the others to interrupt this engagement - which it might easily do, since Tony resented very strongly that his friends were, as he said, 'being given the run around by those dames'.

This party was the closest to an ordinary teen age affair which the club held. Only Apple brought liquor and his offers of drinks were refused by most of the others, including his old drinking companion, Ernie. Dancing was more prevalent than usual and the necking, which distinguished an ordinary meeting from a party, was discreet. Barbara told the worker, "We wouldn't mind going out with the boys if they were always as nice as this. They're the best looking kids we know, if they only weren't so tough." The food was passed out in an orderly fashion and when Theo



and several of the others dropped bits of cake and sandwiches in the shower stalls where they were dining, Ernie scolded them, got out the broom and swept up the crumbs.

The atmosphere was filled with sweetness and light until about eleven thirty, when the worker went upstairs for a few minutes. When she returned, everything was changed. About half of the girls were barricaded in the washroom with the boys outside trying to push the door in. The girls were getting their coats and preparing for a hasty exit. When the worker appeared the boys fell back from the door, with loud and profane threats against Julia and Roberta. She sent them back into the clubroom and with considerable difficulty managed to get the washroom door open. Julia was lying on the floor moaning and Roberta was sitting on the wash bowl, holding one eye and howling. Julia was completely hysterical and screamed every time anyone went near her. It was impossible to get a lucid story from the others. They were all, even Ethel, furious, and their language was similar to that which the boys had been using on the other side of the door. The row had started when Tomy slapped Ethel for some reason unknown. The other girls had come to her defence, while the boys jumped in on Tony's side.

After making several attempts to get Julia off the cement floor, the worker went to the clubroom to get one of the boys to carry her upstairs. They had all disappeared by that time, so with much hoisting and pulling, she and Ethel managed to get the rigid Julia into the lounge. When she had

recovered sufficiently to move, the worker went to call a taxi. But Julia became stubborn. She wanted to go and find Ernie and insisted that the taxi be cancelled. No amount of talking could convince her otherwise. Finally she left with Ethel and Roberta, who by this time were also anxious to find the boys.

Julia, Roberta, Ethel, Barbara and Ellen came in the following day, at the worker's request, to discuss the question of continuing the club. The worker explained to them that, in view of the violent turn in the behaviour of the boys, she felt that she could not be responsible for bringing them together in club meetings since they did not see each other elsewhere any more. Roberta said, "Oh, but we see them all the time. They go everywhere we do and act much tougher at dances and places than they do here." Barbara told her that they would have to stay home altogether if they were not going to run into the boys. The girls were becoming nervous because the boys had been threatening them with mass rape. This had happened before, they said. Betty and Julia had gone up the mountain with Joe and Denis several weeks before for the week-end. When they got to the cabin, all the boys but Tony, Ernie, Ron and Tommy had been there. They had been kept in the cabin for two days and according to Julia, each of the boys had attacked them. Another girl who had had a date with Sam had been caught in the same way with the gang.

The worker pointed out that in the first place they

should have known better than to go up the mountain with these boys. They, however, did not see anything wrong with week-ends. That sort of thing went on all the time and sexual experiences were a regular part of their lives. What they did not like was this type of mass activity. A suggestion by the worker that she take up the matter with their parents or the authorities brought forth loud protests. Ethel said they would be kept in for three nights or so and nothing else would happen. The worker's value, according to Barbara was that they could talk things over with her which they would never dare tell their parents, and if she were going to let them know, they would have no one in whom they could confide.

The worker tried to make them see that rape was a serious offense and that if the boys were actually behaving in the way which they described, it would be better to deal with the problem immediately. They began to renege then. None of them would consider laying a charge, partly out of fear of reprisals, the worker felt, and partly because up to a point they had been quite willing to co-operate with the boys. After a great deal of discussion it was decided that they would avoid insofar as possible any contact with the boys, and if they did see them they would do nothing to rouse their ire. The worker told them tactfully that according to her observations much of the trouble was started by the girls themselves with their provocative behaviour. She was to have a serious talk with the boys on the following Monday. Ethel said they all thought she was okay, and might listen to her.

The serious talk was held at the next meeting, which was attended by most of the boys and none of the girls. They listened courteously and agreed heartily with all the worker's statements. They were treating the girls too roughly. They were getting into too much trouble with the police. They were having too many fights. And they were liable to get into really serious difficulties if they were not careful. All this the boys allowed--then they went back to their ping pong games and records. Thereafter, while they continued to be very friendly and talkative with the worker, they steered the conversation firmly away from their misdemeanors.

The club carried on for two more weeks with only the boys in attendance. During that time, everything was peaceful, both inside the club and out. The girls, who dropped in several times to see the worker, reported, without a great deal of interest, that they had not been molested by the boys in any way. The boys in their turn seemed to be more or less content to drop in for a few games of ping pong on Monday nights. They were quite regretful when they learned that club meetings would have to be stopped because the worker was leaving the city. But when they found that she would be visiting Chicago during her absence they immediately became enthusiastic. Nick suggested that she find out what the boys in Chicago were doing and see if she could not bring back a few new angles for them. Sam put in a large order for records and everybody wanted cigarettes. Since only one carton could be brought across the border, they gave her

several fool-proof smuggling methods. They said loud good-byes all through the building, repeated their orders and instructions, and promised to see her on her return.

As he was going out the door, Nick bowed from the waist and kissed her hand in his best continental style, and the others applauded noisily. On this affable note, the formal club sessions ended.

## EVALUATION OF THE GANG'S AGENCY EXPERIENCE

### CHAPTER VI

The five preceding chapters give a picture of Club 57 and its members as they appeared to the worker during her seven months' contact with them. It is not hard to see, from the case history of any one of them, just how they qualified for membership in a gang such as this; and it is apparent from their behaviour how they are reacting to the circumstances that placed them there. But the problem of achieving their successful adjustment to the society of which they have run afoul is more complicated. A solution to that problem was not much nearer at the end of the session than it was at the beginning. However, a critical evaluation of this group work experiment indicates that some progress has been made toward rehabilitation of the club members.

Perhaps the best method of presenting both the failures and successes of the project is to view it in relation to the universally accepted requirements for effective group work as established by Saul Bernstein in his article,  
<sup>1</sup>  
"Criteria for Group Work".

1. Saul Bernstein--"Criteria for Group Work," Chapter in The Practice of Group Work, Edited by Dorothea Sullivan, editor Association Press, New York, 1941.

Concerning group achievement, he asks the following questions:

"Has the area of concern to the members been enlarged?"

"Do specific interests develop so that they find wider expression both within and without the agency?"

"Has the group matured in its sense of responsibility to the agency?"

"Have the standards of behaviour of the group been favorably affected by the experience in the agency?"

"Have the prejudices of the group based on nationality, financial status and other things been altered or improved by the agency experience?"

None of these could be given either an entirely affirmative or an entirely negative answer. There has been some success in each area, but the problems in the way of complete success continue to loom large. As to the first one--the horizons of the group have been widened to a certain extent. When they first came to the agency, the group members, especially the boys, presented a solid front against all intruders, including the worker, other groups and the agency itself. They took what they wanted and left their trademark of destruction everywhere. Gradually, however, as they came to realize that they were being accepted both as a group and as individuals in spite of their best efforts to force an eviction, their attitude changed, and the resentment and distrust so apparent at first was replaced by friendliness and even confidence. The Crescent dance which came

toward the end of the session showed clearly the difference in their approach. Where once they would have done everything in their power to annoy the worker and the visiting group, on this occasion they co-operated to the extent of offering their own records to the committee--a tremendous concession--and indicated in other ways that they were doing their best to behave. On that evening, too, everyone who crossed the threshold of the clubroom knew that the members of Club 57 were the hosts. They were proud of the appearance of the place, and pointed out its attractive features eagerly to the visitors, whose premises were more makeshift. By that time, the youngsters were very much a part of the agency, and although they were possessive, they were secure enough in their position to be "out-going" in their relationship with a rival group, without any fear of having that position usurped.

But while the agency is more favorably situated now in their eyes, the gang's reaction to the rest of the community is much the same as it was when they were referred. The outbursts of violent behavior and vandalism continue. The criminal activities of the boys are still serious, and if anything more frequent than they were before. The general picture is bad. In the large and complex problem of turning these socially crippled girls and boys into individuals who can operate effectively as a part of the community, the new rapport between them and the agency has established only a small foothold.

Regarding the development of specific interests among



the group members, it must be admitted that there has been little success. However, in the worker's opinion, the group was not ready to accept new activities during their period in the agency. When they came, they were looking for a clubhouse, a place where they could get together and dance, listen to records or just fool around without being told to move along because they were annoying the other customers. They did not want organized activities: any attempts on the part of the worker to bring system into their meetings were looked upon as evidences of the authority they found elsewhere. However, the two large dances which they planned and carried through were new experiences to many of them, since their usual role at a dance was that of the unwelcome guest sneaking past the commissionaire. It is difficult to estimate the value which these events had for them. Certainly the fact that they were the sponsoring group was of great importance to them, and in their own way, most of them endeavored to do their duty. But the responsibility was too great. Had the dances been successful, the history of the group's progress might have taken a different turn. As it was, they seemed almost relieved after the second failure, to return to the security of their own clubroom and their own small group.

One of the strongest deterrents to effective program planning was the effect that outside activities had upon the group members. Nothing they found in the agency could equal the thrill of a car chase with the police, or a lusty fight

in Chinatown, or the enjoyment derived from any of their other questionable pastimes. And whenever anything exhilarating occurred on Saturday night, there was an aftermath on Monday in club meetings which disrupted completely any plans they might have inaugurated the preceding week. During the entire winter, the gang went from one peak of excitement to another, with no time in between to relax and get on with the business of living a normal life. This constant state of agitation, when coupled with their reluctance to look any further into the future than the next day, made long range planning impossible.

Then too, the unstable relationship between the girls and the boys in the group was another fact which hindered the development of other interests. Alone, the girls might have moved fairly rapidly. Their few meetings showed that they had a normal teen-ager's interest in such subjects as beauty culture, dramatics and music. There was something here on which to build a program. But at the beginning, their enthusiasm for the gang was at its height, and with their usual lack of foresight, they welcomed the inroad upon the club which eventually led to their temporary withdrawal from the agency. The worker, too, made the mistake of assuming that their relationship with this particular gang of boys was of a permanent nature, and encouraged the move. Subsequent events proved that the opportunity for offering effective assistance to the girls would have been far greater had the group functioned as it was originally organized, with the rapidly changing boy friends appearing

only at parties or special events. However, whether this would have been possible at the outset, when they were so deeply involved with each other, is questionable; and whether the girls would have remained together without the boys' presence--they being the back-bone of the gang--is equally in doubt.

The third question, which deals with the development of the group's responsibility to the agency, has been partly answered already. In this area, the group has advanced considerably. At first they showed a complete disregard for the club's property, and were deliberately destructive. They made no attempt to co-operate in any way, and at times pushed the patience of the worker and the agency almost to the breaking point with their unpleasant behaviour. In addition to this, they considered anything removable to be fair game, and popular records, which were high on their priority list, were stolen with amazing regularity as fast as they were replaced. This attitude underwent a change, however; as their sense of belonging to the agency grew, their desire to destroy or steal its property diminished. This does not mean that such activities ceased altogether. At the last dance the damage was much greater than it had ever been before. But on that occasion, they did not commit their acts of vandalism with the bravado and deliberate intent which characterized their earlier efforts. The broken doors were incidental to a fight brought on by too much drinking, and the following Monday, the combatants were most apologetic

and anxious to make amends. After that dance there was no further difficulty over keeping the clubroom tidy. At their last party, they took quite seriously the job of setting the place in order.

Stealing, too, ceased eventually to be a problem. On one occasion, just before the club stopped, several records were taken, but they were returned the following week with the terse explanation that they had been borrowed. The worker's purse was never touched, although during the last two months it was left in the clubroom all the time, whether she was present or not. As one of the boys explained to her, "It wouldn't be right to lift your purse."

In putting his question concerning standards of behaviour, Mr. Bernstein considers important, as an indication of the effectiveness of the group experience, evidences of a maturing sex attitude among the members of the group. In this particular area, it is rather difficult to comment. The sex attitudes of the group members were well established before they came to the agency, and were so much a part of their background and environment that it was almost impossible to alter them in any way. The relationship between the sexes in the gang was, as has been stressed in the narrative, that of the superior male to the subservient female. This relationship was complicated considerably, however, by the fact that the girls were promiscuous and for the most part unable to maintain the standards of faithfulness which the boys required of them. Trouble was

inevitable and toward the close of the session the punishment meted out by the boys to their erring girl friends was reaching serious proportions. Both girls and boys appeared willing to air their problems of relationship with the worker, but such discussions usually descended into arguments in which each sex hotly defended its own stand. When she had an opportunity to broach the subject of sex with the girls, the fear of mistreatment by the boys over-shadowed everything else, and the basic problem was left untouched.

Mr. Bernstein comments that most groups tend to have prejudices based on nationality, financial status and other factors. The prejudices of this gang are somewhat different from those of the average teen-age group. Their position in conflict with ordinary society gives them a common bond, and the nationality or colour of their members makes little difference. There was some exchange on the subject of 'bohunks' between the boys of British and European extraction, but this was on a chaffing level and not taken seriously by either side. The three members of the gang who were of mixed blood were accepted on an equal footing with the others, and their family background was never mentioned by the rest. An indication of their attitude to the question of colour came when Wilma and Barbara, on their initial contact with the worker, defended their decision to include the name of a Chinese girl on their list of prospective members. They were afraid that the worker herself might not accept the girl--there was no question of their own acceptance of her.

In other areas, it is difficult to differentiate between prejudices and the defiant attitude which they display toward everyone who crosses their path. Their approach in most things is negative--they look for and usually find the worst. This experience in a group work agency, prepared for aggressive and unpleasant behaviour, has been valuable in that it gave them an opportunity to outwear their destructive tendencies and move along into a more acceptable relationship with the agency and the worker.

During the seven-month period, a good relationship has developed between the group members and the worker. It is more advanced with some than with others, but with all of them it is easy and friendly. The girls were quite approachable from the first, and the boys, after showing considerable diffidence for a time, seemed eventually to look upon her as a necessary part of the club. The worker has moved slowly in offering personal counsel to the club members. Following the unsuccessful attempt to refer Doris and her resultant removal from the club, she concentrated her efforts on building as solid a relationship as possible with the gang as a whole, hoping in the next session to move into a more individualized type of work.

The future of the club is as unpredictable as its past has been. It did not operate during the summer officially, although it was possible for the members to drop in at any time if they wished to do so. Almost every week a few of them appeared, but the fact that their own room was not

available discouraged this practice to a certain extent.

As a postscript, it is interesting to note that both girls and boys have returned to the agency this fall. Relationships between them have not improved, but as a compromise, since both groups feel that they belong in the agency, they have decided to enlarge their membership to include the current friends of each.

DELINQUENCY AS A COMMUNITY PROBLEMCHAPTER VII

The problem of the delinquent and his gang is not, as must have been apparent in the preceding chapters, one that can be dealt with by any single agency. Rehabilitation of youngsters of this type is the responsibility of the total community - social workers, policemen, teachers, employers, cafe owners, and all the other people whom they meet in their day. The society with which they are in conflict must be ready to accept them, must be willing to co-operate with the social forces in the community, whose job it is to prepare the way for their return, before any wide-spread results can be expected. This means, of course, that there is a tremendous task before us.

One of the major obstacles in the way of any real progress with gangs such as this is the cumulative effect their behaviour has upon their relationship with the rest of the community. It is a vicious circle. The youngsters look upon everyone they meet as a potential enemy and strike out blindly without waiting or wanting to see first what their reception might be. In a social agency, this difficult behaviour is accepted as symptomatic and does not act as a barrier to their continued participation. But the general public who see nothing but their acts of



vandalism and are continually annoyed and inconvenienced by their destructive actions, classify them as hoodlums and demand that stronger controls be exercised. With each fresh outburst the gangs are pushed further away from society and as this happens, resentment grows and with it, defiance. Few people have an opportunity to know the gang members as individuals - their nuisance value far outweighs any of their more attractive characteristics, and in many cases those who originally take a tolerant view of their activities come to the conclusion after several deliberate rebuffs that what they need is a few months imprisonment where they would learn to behave.

In other ways, too, they manage to annoy everyone with whom they come in contact. In their homes, as long as things are running smoothly they are left to themselves, but when they get into difficulties with police or because they need money, they immediately become a source of irritation to their parents.

At work they are completely undependable. They accept jobs with great enthusiasm, sure each time that they have found their niche. A few days later they are coming in late and by the end of a week or two they are living on their friends or family again and on the trail of something new. However good the opportunity may be, its advantages are overruled by a desire to stay in bed or take an extra day on the week-end. They will not accept discipline from their employers and a reprimand is often followed by an absence of

several days, which naturally leads to dismissal.

The same behavior pattern is usually followed in school. Truancy is an occupational disease and many of them wait only for their fifteenth birthday to leave. If it comes in the middle of a term they quit anyway, showing no interest in finishing the school term. The boys are often sports minded and carry on with their school rugby and football and very little else until they are asked to leave. When they mention school, their stock phrase is not, 'When I finished such and such a grade', but 'When I was expelled'.

In cafes, theatres, dance halls and other places of commercial recreation, their fighting tendencies, noisy, attention attracting speech and horseplay make them immediate objects of disciplinary action. In many places, higher cover charges, bouncers and other devices are used to discourage their attendance. If they are allowed to patronize an eating spot or dance hall, it is with reservation on the part of the proprietor - a reservation which is usually well-founded in the light of their subsequent actions. Consequently, the only places where they can really feel at home and welcome are those where uncontrolled behaviour is an accepted part of the night's entertainment and where they inevitably meet the older criminal types, whose successful careers are to be envied and if possible emulated.

Some means of educating the public to the problems and

needs of these gangs must be found. They are an annoying, disrupting influence in the community, it is true, and often innocent people have to **resort** to force as a means of self protection against their lawless activities. Nevertheless, there is very little understanding offered to the youngsters and in too many cases the annoyance which they cause leads to retaliation in kind when a more tolerant approach might prove more effective. If for no other reason than to protect their property and persons, it would behoove the citizens of Vancouver to look upon the delinquent gangs in their midst as social cripples rather than as hoodlums.

However, a more open minded attitude on the part of the public could not possibly repair the damage that a decade and a half of rejection and deprivation has caused to these youngsters. Their condition is serious and as yet no cure has been devised which has proven completely effective. In the group work situation, the poor behaviour patterns which came to light during a seven month period are left almost untouched. The instability of relationships, the family conflicts, the irresponsibility and refusal to look or plan ahead remain. An exciting existence as part of a street corner society is a difficult thing to combat with the facilities at the disposal of the average group work agency. Re-education of youngsters whose way of living has developed for so long in the wrong direction is a complicated project that calls for a tremendous amount of training, skill and insight.

In this connection, it must be pointed out that Vancouver is not geared to handle the delinquent gangs operating throughout the city at the present time. Many of the gang members look upon existing social agencies with great mistrust, as threats to their independence. In a number of cases their only contact with such agencies has been as a part of a family receiving social assistance and that during the depression, when the administration of relief funds took precedence over case work. But from friends who came under the wing of some of the societies, they have acquired some quite fantastic stories of mistreatment and rigid discipline which make referral a thing to be avoided at all cost.

Then too, the agencies to which they could be referred would have to be children's societies. The difficulty there is that while they are children in age, youngsters of this type are too old in other ways to be classified as such. Their problems, which have been developing unchecked over a period of sixteen, seventeen or eighteen years, require intensive, psychiatric treatment of a type not available here. There is a need in the city for some sort of youth serving case work agency which would specialize in the problems of the adolescent and would not carry in its name the stigma of the word 'children'.

That the gang contact with the group work agency recorded in this thesis was hopelessly inadequate was apparent on many different occasions throughout the session.

With a membership in the gang of over thirty and an average attendance of from sixteen to twenty, the amount of attention the worker could give to any individual was limited. The need for a much broader sort of treatment which would include intensive work with the individual members and their families was obvious at every turn. The contact did show however, the value of a group experience of this sort as a part of an over-all rehabilitation program.

Probably the greatest contribution the group work agency can make to the gang and its members is to act as a liaison, or as a training ground in which they can learn to live satisfactorily together and with the rest of society.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### BOOKS

- Aichorn, August, Wayward Youth, New York, The Viking Press, 1945.
- Breckenridge, Sophia, and Abbott, Edith, The Delinquent Child and the Home, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1921.
- Bernstein, Saul, "Criteria for Group Work", Chapter in The Practice of Group Work, Dorothea Sullivan, editor, Association Press, New York, 1941.
- Burt, Cyril, L., The Young Delinquent, London, University of London Press, 1944.
- Glueck, Sheldon, and Glueck, Eleanor, One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1934.
- Healy, William, The Individual Delinquent, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1922.
- Healy, William and Bronner, Augusta, Delinquents and Criminals; Their Making and Unmaking, New York, MacMillan Publishing Co., 1926.
- Healy, William, and Bronner, Augusta, New Light on Delinquency and its Treatment, New Haven Publication for the Institute of Human Relations, Yale University Press, 1939.
- Healy, William, Bronner, Augusta; Baylor, M. H.; Murphy, Prentice, Reconstructing Behavior in Youth, A. A. Knopf, 1931.
- Shaw, Clifford, The Jack Roller, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1938.
- Shaw, Clifford; Zorbaugh, Frederick; Mackay, Henry; Cottrell, Leonard, Delinquency Areas, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1929.
- Slavson, Samuel, An Introduction to Group Therapy, New York, The Commonwealth Fund, 1943.

- Tannenbaum, Frank, Crime and the Community, Boston, Ginn and Co., 1938.
- Thurston, Henry, Concerning Juvenile Delinquency, New York, Columbia University Press, 1942.
- Thrasher, F. M., The Gang, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1926.

#### PERIODICALS

- Linderman, Wanda, "An Experiment in Case Work-Group Work Co-operation", The Group, Volume 7, November, 1945.
- Moyle, H. B., "Some Psychiatric Comments on Group Work", The Group, Volume 8, January, 1946.
- Scheidlinger, Saul, "Patterns of Case Work Services in Group Work Agencies", The Group, Volume 7, November, 1945.
- Schuytema, Guy, "The War, The Family Group, and Social Agencies", The Group, Volume 7, June, 1945.
- Sack, Harry, S., "Leadership and Aggressive Behavior", The Group, Volume 7, June, 1945.
- McCleary, R. D., "Group Work with Delinquents", The Group, Volume 7, June, 1946.