

CHAPTER XVI
INTRODUCTION

By

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CHAPTER XVI

INTRODUCTION TO SURVEY OF ORGANIZED CRIME

The survey of organized crime deals with the principal sources of the crimes of violence in the city of Chicago. It discloses a startling and amazing story of the interlocking interests of gambling, bootlegging, vice, and politics. Back of this organized crime and this organized corruption is syndicated vice, syndicated gambling, syndicated prostitution and syndicated liquor selling. Back of all this is the philosophy and the environment which creates youthful criminals, for the criminal career is progressive and usually the first offense was but a gesture of boyhood and comparatively trifling in its nature. A crime is but a rebellion against organized society and the laws under which organized society has chosen to be ruled and governed. A criminal career is a misdirected career; usually there is to be found some fundamental reason for this rebellion and for this misdirection. The survey or special study of organized crime not only portrays the extent of this rebellion, but gives an insight into some of the causes.

Not the least of the disclosures that have been made are those of the permanence of the reigns of the lords of the underworld and the introduction of the capitalistic system into their operations. There are combinations in restraint of trade even in the gambling, the vice, and the liquor businesses, and a central control and stabilization of prices is everywhere being sought and accomplished. The illegal liquor business furnishes a stable means of livelihood for many of our confirmed robbers and burglars, and these captains of the underworld have been able to rally to their support the suffrages of a large portion of our population. By becoming political powers, they have been able not only to secure immunity for themselves, but in a large measure to make our city government itself a partner in crime. Their feudal tenure of office and their Warwick-like power to make and unmake political candidates and to control the policies of the city government has been astounding. The careers of the captains of our professional gunmen have been much longer than those of any of our political representatives, our mayors, our chiefs of police, or even of our college presidents. During the last twenty-five years but one chief of police has been able to retain his office for more than two years, and even he was deposed at the end of four years. Administrations have come and administrations have gone, but the overlord of vice has still continued in power. Protest after protest has been made, reform ticket after reform ticket has been promoted, but so far no radical change has been made and, although some of the underlings have been tried and convicted, the captains of crime have gone unwhipped of justice, and in the recent beer wars and bombings in Chicago not one leader has been convicted. Mont Tennes, who made himself a gambling king by his monopoly of direct news from the race-tracks, reigned and defied decency for more than a score of years. Tim Murphy, but for a brief imprisonment in the penitentiary for robbing a mail train, would have gone unpunished, and, although he was ultimately murdered, it was not because of his crimes

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but because he was suspected of having double-crossed his former associates. Al Capone, the vice syndicatist, for a long time has been a leader among us.

Crime and the reign of the captains of crime have entered the field of otherwise legitimate business. The "racketeer" is merely a captain of gunmen and a man who undertakes by force to accomplish and guarantee the trade regulations and the freedom from competition in the lesser industries, which in the higher and wealthier callings are accomplished by means of the trade association and by the "gentlemen's agreement." He is a captain of the gunmen whom organized vice and organized gambling and liquor selling have brought among us and have maintained.

We have tolerated in Chicago a medieval feudal system. We have our war lords. We have had our small armies of mercenaries. These armies have been recruited by the gambling, the vice, and the liquor interests, but their services may be obtained by anyone who will pay the price. Vice, gambling, and liquor selling can hardly call on the public for protection, but often the gambler and the liquor seller is the victim of the "hi-jacker" and himself needs defending. He always desires to rid himself of competitors and of obnoxious rivals. He, therefore, hires mercenaries and these mercenaries have been allowed to be maintained because a large number of our policemen have been bootleggers or connivers with bootleggers, and only too often public officers have profited from the lawlessness which they have protected.

For many years, indeed, Chicago has been under the domination of the underworld. For many years Chicago has tolerated vice and now the underworld and vice have it by the throat. We have complained of crime; we have preached the gospel of a respect for the law; yet we have exhibited to our youth the spectacle of policemen in full uniform acting, not only as customers of, but often as partners in our brothels, our gambling houses, and in liquor selling. For all this the public is responsible; for the public has allowed it to exist.

These are the facts. This is the dark side of Chicago. The measure of crime in Chicago is the measure of its social selfishness, of its public indifference, and of its public corruption. Yet, they do not tell, nor does the survey of organized crime tell, the whole story of Chicago. If the measure of crime in Chicago is the measure of its corruption, the salvation of Chicago will lie in its fundamental integrity. This hope this very survey evidences. It has been fearlessly and scientifically conducted. It has not hesitated to tell the truth; and in the fact that the public-spirited citizens of Chicago are willing to have the truth told and to face it, lies the city's best hope of redemption.

The critic and the historian, also, would be unfair, indeed, and would lack in the true scientific spirit if he only saw and was content merely with disclosing what the survey of organized crime has disclosed. No one has the right to condemn Chicago without at the same time realizing and giving due credit for what Chicago has achieved and without realizing the greatness of the problems that have been hers. Every student of public affairs must realize that the prevalence of crime in Chicago and in America is in a large measure *due to our very newness and to our very democracy*. To a certain extent it is due to our very altruism. Crime is the problem of adolescent

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youth and the failure to properly deal with crime is nearly always a weakness of an adolescent city and of an adolescent nation. *There has always been crime upon the frontier.* The main trouble with Chicago is that it is too young and that it has grown too fast.

It is absurd to seek to compare Chicago with the city of London, or to compare America with any European nation. In London there is a cosmopolitan population with a common history, a common tradition and, in a large measure, a common religion of a thousand years. America is not only a nation, but a nation of nations. This is especially true of Chicago.¹ Next to New York, perhaps, it is the greatest melting pot of America. Not only is it the meeting place of the east and of the west, of the north and of the south, but two-thirds of its population were born on foreign shores or are the children of the newly arrived immigrant. It, too, has a difficult negro problem which confronts no city of the old world. There are reasons why there are more murders and assaults and more race and gang conflicts in Chicago than there are in any European capital. In Europe, the races are segregated into nations and states and principalities. While in Europe, therefore, race conflicts take the form of wars, in America, they constitute breaches of the peace and criminal offenses; they take the form of gang murders and assaults and they come into the criminal courts. The government of London, also, and the political structure of London are the growth of centuries. Chicago was born but yesterday, and sprang to manhood overnight. It has no ancient traditions. The growth of Chicago has been

¹ According to the 1920 census, the nationalities in the city of Chicago were divided as follows:

	Percentage
American	23.80
Polish	11.81
German	10.55
Russian	8.55
Swedish	5.72
Irish	5.40
Italian	4.80
Czechoslovakian	4.30
Negro	4.05
Austrian	2.69
English	2.51
Canadian—Other	2.30
Hungarian	2.29
Norwegian	2.00
Lithuanian	1.60
Danish	1.09
Greek	1.00
Scotch	0.96
Jugo Slavian	0.82
Dutch	0.82
Roumanian	0.43
French	0.42
Swiss	0.32
Belgian	0.29
Canadian—French	0.23
Indian, Chinese, etc.	0.11
All others	1.14

Since 1920, the population has increased by nearly 500,000 people; that is to say, by the addition of a city as large as Minneapolis. The number of Negroes has increased from 109,000 to nearly 160,000.

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too rapid for the proper formulation of its governmental structure. Its business men have been too engrossed in their avocations to study its political and social needs. Not only is this the case, but we are handicapped by our very system of government. The Constitution of Illinois was made for a rural and not for an urban community, and Chicago has everywhere been handicapped by a denial to it by the Legislature of the measure of self-government which is absolutely necessary to a great metropolitan center. Our criminal machinery, also, was not devised for urban exigencies.

As we suggested before, the growth of Chicago has been too rapid for the proper coordination and formulation of its governmental structure. In 1840 its population was 4,470; in 1860, it was 109,260; in 1880, it was 503,185; in 1900, it was 1,698,575; in 1920, it was 2,701,705; and in 1928, it was 3,150,000. In the eight years intervening between 1920 and 1928, we added to our population 448,000 people. That increase alone would represent the population of many of our largest American cities. Not only is this the fact, but Chicago is the stopping off place of a continent. It is not only the industrial center, but the pleasure seeking center of a vast inland empire. It is a city of colossal wealth. "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together," and not only the restless pleasure-seekers come to Chicago, but the cutthroats and the thieves of a continent. The pay roll of a manufacturing or business establishment in a small town and the deposits of a bank in a small town are far less attractive to the robber than the pay roll or the deposits of the Chicago institutions. The pay roll and deposits in Chicago, in fact, mount up into the billions. With the exception of the city of New York, Chicago furnishes the richest field for plunder that is to be found in the United States. In ninety-three years Chicago has grown to be the third largest city in the world. The bank clearings of the Chicago district for the year 1927 amounted to the enormous sum of \$35,958,216,000.00. Is it to be wondered that the robber is to be found among us?

Chicago is a city of marvelous paradoxes. It is a city of 1,060 churches and of numerous other religious organizations. It is a city of universities and of theological institutions. It is a city of libraries, parks, and playgrounds. It is a city of magnificent altruism. Its chief defect has been in its very energy, its very industry, and its very democracy. It has welcomed to its streets the people of every community and has sought to provide for them on a large scale. As in all new cities, its industries and its industrial development have been absorbing. Its business men have furnished employment to millions and have established institutions for the culture of millions, but they have had little time for the engrossing world of politics. They are charitable towards the people of the slums, but they do not understand them nor the problems that are theirs. They have left these people to the control of the often corrupt politician. They have had too much of the usual and sublime American optimism, too much of the feeling that all is well with the world. They have been engrossed in every thing but in government. While they have given millions for education and for charity, they have failed to provide for their own police department.

Not only is the population of Chicago very great, but it extends over an area of 208.6 square miles and it has around it a vast suburban area

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to which its criminals go and from which they often originate, yet its police force is entirely inadequate. London, with its homogeneous population, has one policeman for every 175 people. Rome has a policeman on every street corner. Chicago, however, has only one policeman for every 900 people. Of these policemen, a large number are engaged in traffic duty, and it is to be remembered that the automobiles in Chicago largely outnumber those which are to be found in London. Not only are these things true, but governmentally Chicago is at a disadvantage. We in Chicago, and especially the members of our State Legislature, have failed to realize that, to a large extent Chicago, to the criminal, is a frontier city and that to Chicago come the reckless, the disappointed, and the criminal classes that formerly went to the newer areas of the west. Now that the American frontier, to which the reckless and the lawless, as well as the industrious and the enterprising alike went, has vanished, our great metropolitan centers have become the Meccas for the adventurous of all kinds.

In the immense wealth of these cities are to be found the counterpart of the gold mines of the west. To these cities come the immigrant, who formerly, to some extent at least, was attracted by the free lands of the public domain. In these cities he is crowded and forgotten and finds none of the comradeship which is so common among the pioneers. Now, too, that freedom has come and the gospel of opportunity has everywhere been preached, thousands of Negroes have come to us from the rural centers of the south and have given to us a rapidly increasing population, whose natural home is in the fields and not in the streets and congested quarters of a great city, and who lack the guardianship and advice of their white masters and friends.

Industrially, artistically and educationally, Chicago is one of the wonders of the world. The ability that is shown in the management of its industries is amazing. The knowledge that is to be found in its universities cannot be ignored. University men, as a rule, however, have been scholars rather than administrators; though at times they have thought wisely, they have had but little influence in the affairs of government. To a very large extent Chicago is an overgrown village. With the machinery of a village and a combination of ward, township, and county government, it is attempting to govern a city of over three million inhabitants, a suburban area of a million more, and a daily list of visitors numbering into the hundreds of thousands. It is everywhere handicapped by the fact that it is after all but a subordinate municipality, governed in many things by the Legislature, deprived of the right of self-government in many material matters, and subject to the restrictions of a constitution which was created for an agricultural state and with no idea that within the boundary of Illinois would be situated a great metropolis. There was also no thought of the racial problems that would confront this metropolis. Few dreamed that in that metropolis there would be, as there is today, a great cosmopolitan population, one-third of whom were born in Europe. Few would have dreamed that in that population there would have been a rapidly growing negro element which now numbers approximately 180,000. Few would have dreamed that Chicago was to become the great distributing point and the great railroad center of a continent. Even the wildest of dreamers failed to envision the

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enormous wealth that would be Chicago's and the lodestone that that wealth would afford to the common criminals and the still more dangerous corruptionists.

Chicago is a city of marvelous paradoxes. It is a city of the slums and of the river wards and of the lake front and of Michigan boulevard. To it have come and prospered the well-to-do. To it have come hundreds of thousands of the poor of Europe who, in most cases, have arrived without friends and without money. In its slums and river and railroad wards have congregated the native-born "downs and outs" of a large part of the American continent. It is a noticeable fact that in these less favored areas, in these abiding places of the transients and of the "downs and outs," and of the newly arrived immigrant, are to be found the breeding places of the gangs, of the Mafia, and of the professional criminal.

But the problem of Chicago is the problem of America, herself. At the gates of America and at the gates of Chicago, is the inscription:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refugee of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed, to me;
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

This is the noblest expression of our democracy. We are glad that it was written; we are glad that in a measure its promise has been fulfilled. Our only fault has lain in our exuberant optimism, in our giving of an altruistic invitation without counting the cost, or providing for a reception committee; in our assumption of a magnificent duty, but a tendency to believe that all that was necessary was to assume, in our blind belief, that somehow or other things would work out well without our watchfulness, and that all we had to do was to develop our industries so that the poor might be employed, and maintain our schools so that the poor might be educated. We have entertained a fatuous belief that the rule of the good, the wise, and the great would always be among us and that a quiescent and self-absorbed moral and industrious class would control our politics and be a match for the ever active and well informed corruptionist. We have failed to realize that a universal suffrage has given the ballot to all, and that the corrupt politician can mass and control the votes of the uninformed so as to perpetuate himself in power. We have been content to build churches and libraries without seeing that they are occupied. The favored classes have manned and directed our industries, provided lavishly for public education, contributed as no other people have done for every charitable cause, but they have lived in the suburbs and have kept themselves aloof. We have failed to face our democracy. We have seen its wondrous possibilities and its magnificent altruism, but we have failed to realize and to confront its tremendous problems.

The problem of crime is the problem of youth. Every criminal career has its beginning. One of the chief merits of the Survey of Organized Crime lies in the fact that it does not merely portray the operations of the adult desperado and master criminal, but discloses to us the environments and the neighborhood social philosophies which, when they were mere boys,

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started these outlaws upon their careers of crime and which frequently have made it possible for them to obtain and to maintain political power and immunity from punishment. It shows the importance of environment. It gives us a glimpse into the inner life and ideals of the railroad and the river wards and of the dwelling places of the nomads and of the strangers who are within our gates. It shows us something of the origin of the street gangs and of the youthful criminal, and how foolish it is to expect such an environment to produce a moral and law-abiding youth, possessing the right theories of life and of success, when everywhere around him he sees official lawlessness and vice in the saddle; when he sees his hardworking father laboring for a few dollars a day and accumulating nothing, and the bootlegger and the gambler riding in limousines. It shows the necessity of getting down to fundamentals. If we would control crime in Chicago, we must control the thoughts and the aspirations and the ambitions of youth and the moral and social atmosphere and outlook of the districts and localities where our criminals are trained and nurtured.

As long, however, as organized crime exists; as long as our courts fail to properly function and our prosecuting agencies are paralyzed, so long will the philosophy of crime be among us. The survey on organized crime presents an appalling picture of corruption and criminal domination. It discloses the facts as they are. As long as crime is organized and efficient, and the administration of justice is unorganized and inefficient, so long will crime be a problem in the community.