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TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN POLICE.

REPORT ON WOMEN POLICE IN GERMANY BY Mlle. ERKENS,
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Translation.

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Interest in the question of women police in Germany dates from the institutions founded at Cologne during the British occupation in co-operation between English and German women. Since this first experiment the appointment of women police officers or agents has been discussed both in public and in police circles. Opposition to this new institution centred in the old conception of the police as representing the will of the State expressing itself by force.

The police force itself, however, has developed along lines better adapted to the employment of women. In all modern democracies the police, which was formerly purely repressive, is more and more developing functions of prevention, protection and assistance.

The police force may even be said to have developed almost maternal qualities and duties, and thus have paved the way for the entry of women.

Then again penitentiary laws and authorities are becoming increasingly imbued with a psychological and social sense. They no longer consider only the act of which the delinquent is accused, but his personality, the material and moral conditions of his life and the various direct and indirect causes which led his
to break the law. From this point of view preliminary reports, enquiries and investigations change their character; they are in the nature of social diagnosis and require of the police official social and psychological qualities and experience.

This change has had two effects. Firstly it has shown the necessity of improving the professional training of the police by means of social and psychological studies, and secondly it has permitted the employment of women for certain special duties.

Up to the present women have chiefly represented this socially educated type of police agent, but the new principle of professional education is now being applied to men also.

In Germany women police agents have been introduced in Prussia, Hamburg, Saxony and Baden.

The Government authorities and the women's organisations agreed that the functions of women police should be different from those of men: the very raison d'être of women police lies in the need for making a distinction between the different duties. Two departments were allotted to women. Firstly, all duties connected with the protection and preventive treatment of women and children of both sexes. This is the department known as the "Säulingspolizei" or protective police. The second department is part of the criminal police and deals with enquiries and investigations of all criminal cases concerning women and minors; such enquiries extending to social or psychological factors are better performed by women than by men.

Another very important difference to be noted is the distinction between the department of protective police and that of public or private institutions for social relief. The only duties of the protective police are to discover children and women who are in moral danger and to take provisional measures for their protection - these measures differing in each particular case - with the object of handing them over to institutions responsible
for rendering assistance in a more final form. This final form of assistance is not within the competence of the police. It is important to define these different powers with great exactitude, for there is much confusion on the point. In its work on behalf of children the police is responsible for intervening at the first moment of danger or demoralisation while the harm can still be remedied. This permanent supervision, which ensures that measures will be taken in time, is a matter for the police, but the measures themselves come within the competence of other institutions.

These preventive duties in the interests of children in large towns is to-day, very difficult and complicated, especially when it is considered that the abolition of regulated prostitution in Germany no longer allows young girls to be arrested on suspicion of being prostitutes. The provisional steps taken by the police form the basis of all later measures, and if the provisional measures are unsuitable these later measures may fail in their effect. Street work and supervision in places of amusement and recreation therefore call for qualities of quick and accurate diagnosis in order to recognise the different types of depravity, abnormality and mental defects, as well as to discern the different degrees of moral degeneracy. Great skill, too, is required in the choice of measures which will be effective without involving penitentiary treatment, viz., good advice, reprimands, sending of persons to their homes or to charitable institutions and even preventive confinement. A way has to be found of combining respect for personal freedom and the private life of the minor with the need of protection.
The special department in charge of women police in Germany is also responsible for the supervision of child beggars and young street vendors.

The largest clientele of the women police naturally consists of girls in moral danger. The methods employed with these girls aim at inducing them to leave of their own free will the dangerous situation in which they are placed. Preventive confinement can only be used as a last resort in cases of complete drifting and moral laxity. It is a principle with our police that, in all relations with them, these girls will have to deal with women. This means that when girls are conveyed to hospitals, prisons, lawcourts or educational homes, they are always accompanied by women agents.

These protective police duties which have hitherto been entrusted to women, in our opinion only constitute a beginning and could be extended in several directions, for example, to the supervision of the female staff of café-restaurants.

A few remarks may be added regarding the other department, that of criminal police.

Naturally, the women's organisations object to the employment of women as detectives, especially when they are used as "agents provocateurs". The rôle and value of women police is seen in the preliminary enquiries. Having been trained for social service, they are able to judge the material and moral situation of the delinquent, the influence of his or her conditions of life, and the psychology and physical circumstances of his or her personality. Naturally, the woman policeman cannot replace a doctor or a psychological specialist who carries out examinations, but she can say whether the enquiry should be supplemented by a medical examination. She is especially able to deal with complicated cases in which the two sexes are involved by their special passions and defects.
Owing to their particular qualities, women police are entrusted with the investigation of offences which have been committed against or by women and minors. When offences have been committed against them, minors are examined by women for offences against decency - a task which demands great tact and wide experience of the psychology of child witnesses.

Hitherto, in these cases of offences against decency, women have been entrusted only with the examination of children against whom an offence has been committed, leaving to men the examination of the offender. This gave rise to certain difficulties from the point of view of the unity of the investigation. Lately, the experiment has been made at Hamburg of having all the facts of the case examined by the women police, if necessary giving them men as assistants.

A few further details may be given regarding the development of women police in Germany. Prussia has introduced them in seven towns, the number of women employed being 60; in Bavaria twelve are employed and in Saxony, six. At Hamburg the department of women police is still in process of organisation and at present employs nine women agents.

In Prussia, the women belonging to the women police form part of the police force, and are under the orders of a woman commissariat under a woman commissioner directly responsible to the Chief of Police. At Hamburg there will be a larger organisation with a woman's inspectorate in charge of different commissariats.

The professional training of the women police lasts from four to five years - two years of social training in a social school, and one year's practice at work to acquire the social service diploma. In Prussia and at Hamburg only women
holding this diploma are accepted for the police. They are then attached for special training to a police office where they acquire practical experience and attend theoretical courses lasting several months, before passing their commissioner's examination.

This is a somewhat long period of training - longer than that of men performing similar duties - but in setting up this institution we do not wish to copy slavishly the duties of the men police but to create a new type - a type not only feminine, but having a more thorough education and sounder professional qualifications from the social point of view.