

Will Our Cities Be 'Places of Terror'?

Washington, D.C. (RNS)—American cities, "in a few more years, will become a mixture of 'places of terror' and armed 'fortresses,'" the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence has warned here.

Under current policies, the commission predicts that central cities in the United States will be unsafe in varying degrees with the well-to-do living in privately-guarded compounds and radical groups maintaining "tremendous armories of weapons that could be brought into play with or without provocation."

The commission's estimates were based on a study of the rising crime rate in the U.S. They used the Uniform Crime Reports published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and its own special study of 10,000 arrest records in 17 cities.

With its predictions of the worsening effect of crime on American cities, the commission issued this warning.

"Public and private action must guarantee safety, security and justice for every citizen in our metropolitan areas without sacrificing the quality of life and other values of free society."

"If the nation is not in a position to launch a full-scale war on domestic violence, especially urban ill, at this moment, because of the difficulty of freeing ourselves quickly from other obligations, we should now legally make the essential commitments and then carry them out as quickly as funds can be obtained."

Through the use of its own study and the FBI crime re-



this picture of crime in the U.S.:

Primarily a phenomenon of large cities, violent crime is overwhelmingly committed by males, concentrated in the ages of 15 to 20 who live in a ghetto, are blacks, and are "repeat" offenders. The victims of these criminals usually have the same characteristics—male, youth, poverty and black. The only exception are victims of robbery who are very often older whites. Differing from the pattern is robbery violent crimes of homicide, assault and rape tend to be acts of passion among intimates or acquaintances.

These statistics provided the basis for a prediction of the future shape of the cities if no "effective public action" is taken. This is how the commission thinks metropolitan areas of the future will look:

• Central business districts will be protected by "eco-

large numbers of people shopping and working during the day and will be deserted during the hours of darkness with the exception of police patrols.

• High-rise apartment and residential compounds will be equipped with private security guards and devices, thus becoming "fortified cells for upper-middle and high-income populations."

• Suburban neighborhoods will be protected by "economic homogeneity and by distance from population groups with the highest propensities to commit crimes."

• Unless there is a sharp change in the federal and state law concerning ownership of guns, the availability of such weapons will enable citizens to "supplement inadequate police patrols in neighborhoods closer to the central city, and extreme left-wing and right-wing groups will have tremendous armor-

'Our cities will become armed camps'

'Public and private action must guarantee safety and justice for every citizen...'

ies of weapons which could be brought into play with or without any provocation."

• Patrolled "sanitized corridors" will provide transportation access to the city, using vehicles equipped with security devices and parked only at indoor garages. "Armed guards will 'ride shotgun' on all forms of public transportation."

• The central city's streets and residential neighborhoods will be unsafe in varying degrees with the ghetto areas "places of terror with widespread crime, perhaps entirely out of police control during

ing nighttime hours." Armed guards will "ride shotgun" on protect schools, libraries and playgrounds in the ghetto areas.

The commission concluded its estimate with this prediction:

"Between the unsafe, deteriorating central city on the one hand and the network of safe, prosperous areas and sanitized corridors on the other, there will be, not unnaturally, intensifying hatred and deepening division. Vic-

and the defensive response of the affluent will become still more elaborate."

Woman Elected Head Of Church Council

Detroit (RNS)—A tall, silver-haired psychologist was elected here as the first woman president of the National Council of Churches. Dr. Cynthia Wedel, 61, will head the organization of 33 Protestant and Orthodox Churches for three years.



Dr. Cynthia Wedel

The wife of retired Canon Theodore Wedel of Washington Episcopal Cathedral succeeds Dr. Arthur S. Flemming.

Dr. Wedel was elected by a vote of 387 to 93 over the Rev. Albert B. Cleage, Jr., of Detroit, a United Church of Christ pastor nominated by the National Committee of Black Churchmen (NCBC).

Dr. Wedel, a member of the Episcopal Church, is former staff head of the NCC's Department of Christian Unity. She resigned last June and is currently associate director of the National Resource Center for Voluntarism in Washington, D.C.

She holds a Ph.D. degree

Support Draft Resisters, Council of Churches Asked

DETROIT — (RNS)—Member communions in the National Council of Churches were asked to support financially pastoral services to 60,000 U.S. draft resisters and military deserters in Canada in guidelines recommended by the NCC's General Assembly here.

Delegates approved a series of proposals drafted after 30 top U.S. churchmen conferred in Windsor, Ont., just across the river, with leaders of the Canadian Council of Churches and with a group of eight draft resisters.

The U.S. group revealed in a subsequent press conference that the estimated 60,000 already in Canada is increasing by 20,000 per year. Two thirds of the present number were said to be deserters.

The NCC resolution requested the Canadian Council to form a co-ordinating group to evaluate the needs for pastoral services among the refugees and to accept and disburse funds toward that end.

At the post-consultation press conference, U.S. churchmen stressed that they were not encouraging Americans to flee to Canada to avoid the draft or military service. A statement of the consultation said:

"As churchmen who have helped raise up many of these men whose conscience now rejects participation in the (Vietnam) war, violations of due process and brutalization in military life, we must not abandon them in their hour of critical need."

Canadian law allows foreigners to remain six months as visitors. After that, one can become a "landed immigrant" if he obtains enough points. Jobs are important in that process. The estimate that 30,000 are seeking to be "landed immigrants" is based on reports from help centers which try to aid persons finding employment.

The Rev. Richard Killmer, a staff member of the Interreligious Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, said he understood that most of the refugees did not plan to return to the U.S. unless a general amnesty was granted.

adian clergy, the Episcopal Bishop noted:

• Many young men were surprised to know that many U.S. dioceses provide counsel and legal advice to those who have problems of conscience with the draft.

• The military chaplains are of little help because they "belong to the system." Here there was real bitterness expressed.

• The young people feel rejected by their fellow Americans but most are not bitter and hope to return to the U.S.

Bishop Aims Draft Dodgers' Views, Problems

SYRACUSE — (RNS)—An Episcopal bishop, on his return from Canada where he conferred with young Americans who fled the draft, reflected serious concern about "what the Vietnam war is doing to our young people and our country."

In a report made public here, Bishop Ned Cole of the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York said, "I am saddened by the hardness of heart of people my age about others who are especially sensitive to the complexities of this war."

Among his impressions of his talks with young Americans and members of the Can-

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