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The Socializer

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY NEWSLETTER

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

No. 9

February 22, 1973

KERCHER STARTS ON TRAIL OF AFRICAN CRIME

How do you understand causes of criminal behavior, when the concepts of crime used in the legal system are largely foreign to those of indigenous group norms? This is one of many questions Leonard Kercher has been considering as he prepares for further research on East African crime.

African conceptions of deviance emphasize the threat of disturbing the balance in social groups, and the need to compensate victims of criminal acts. Restitution, expiation of guilt, and reinstitution of wholeness in the group are key considerations. In contrast is the British system of justice which conceives of crime as a challenge to the abstract notion of society. One of the difficulties of understanding crime in Africa is perceiving the complex interrelationships of different cultural ideas, European and African, combined in the legal code.

"Socio-cultural Factors in Criminal Deviancy in East Africa Near the Close of the Colonial Era" was the topic of a paper Leonard recently gave at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association in Philadelphia. Highlights from this paper were also presented to a February 7 luncheon meeting sponsored by Western's Institute of International and Area Studies.

Differing conceptions embodied in the legal systems of East Africa was just one of many topics Leonard touched on in his consideration of Socio-cultural factors in African crime. Among other key factors he discussed were those of interpersonal stress, intergroup conflict, rapid social change, urbanization, and the weakening of agencies of social control.

It has been suggested that there may be important things which Americans might learn from Africans in the area of penology. For example, prisons have a very strong philosophy of reeducation in East Africa, and rates of recidivism are reported to be extremely low. These are among the points which Leonard hopes to study more systematically than has been done in the past.

Last week Leonard left for England, where he will spend four months studying the colonial backgrounds of East African systems of crime and punishment. He will give special attention to corrections procedures, including parole and after-care as well as the prison system. Most of his work will be in libraries at London and Oxford.

Next fall Leonard plans to visit East Africa for further study of their corrections systems. He has previously visited there in 1960-61, 1965 and 1968.

SOCIOLOGISTS "DOING SOCIOLOGY"?

"Doing Sociology: Inquiry Teaching, Action" will be the general theme for the North Central Sociological Association meeting at Cincinnati, Ohio, May 10-12.

There will be 23 different sections or panels, including five panels related to the main theme. Jerry Manis is general program chairperson, and Dave Chaplin is chairperson of the section on comparative and historical sociology.

MADNESS IN OUR METHODS

Persons concerned with methods are in the process of a reevaluation of how various courses fit together. Paul Wienir is leading in this reconsideration.

Walizer reports an example of current changes in the methods area in his individualization of Stat I this semester. He will report at the end of the semester on the success of this approach.

REMEMBER CES!

Faculty and Graduate Students are reminded of the availability of the facilities and services of the Center for Educational Studies. The Center is sponsored by Western and the Grand Rapids Public Schools. Its mission is to facilitate research in the area of public education. The Center also has funds available to support projects requiring more than the usual transportation, secretary, keypunching, materials, etc. Costs provided to projects through the Center. For information, see Charlie Keely, Jim Bosco in Teacher Education, or Al McEvoy.

IRWIN TAKES ON HORTON

Richard D. Irwin, Inc., has published as one of its Programmed Learning Aids series, a Basic Principles of the Social Sciences, by Paul B. Horton, Robert L. Horton, Joseph Olson, Keith Fabian, Gerald Sicard, and Larry Winebrenner. The last four scholars are members of the faculty of Miami Dade Junior College. They contributed the introductory section and the sections on economics and political science.

WESTERN TO HOST CONFERENCE ON CHILE AND PERU

"Chile and Peru: Two Paths to Social Justice" is the theme of a conference to be held at Western on March 29-30. Plans for the conference were recently announced by Leila Bradfield, Chairman of the Latin American Committee.

Visiting sociologists who will give main presentations at this conference include William Foote Whyte and Linda McEwen. Whyte, of Cornell University, will discuss "The Peruvian Paradox--Military Rule and Popular Participation." McEwen, of Wayne State, will present "The Road to Socialism in Chile: Forces in Opposition to Structural Change."

Meetings will begin on Thursday morning, March 29, and last through Friday afternoon.

JACKSON TO COME

Jacqueline Jackson, Associate Professor of Medical Sociology in the Department of Psychiatry, Duke University, has accepted our invitation to come to Western as Visiting Scholar during the 1973-74 school year. Dr. Jackson's specialty is in gerontology.

THIS AND THAT

Dave Chaplin has just finished the manuscript for a book entitled, Peru: A Corporatist Revolution, to be published late this spring by Transaction Books, E. P. Dutton. Dave will present a paper on "Internal and External Obstacles to Family Planning in Latin America" in a panel on "Future Social Science Research on Population Policy" in the March 1973 meeting of the International Studies Association meeting in New York City. He will also serve on the National Science Foundation graduate fellowship award committee in February. His primary task this semester, however, is editing a symposium entitled, "The PMS Prelude to the PBES Budget Rationale for the Fiscal Year 1973-74" (unpublished confidential memo, WMU-Sociology Offset Press, 1973).

Luis Lacar, Sociology Graduate Student, and Chester Hunt have an article on Muslim - Christian Relationships in the Philippines in the July 72 issue of Solidarity. Getting out this issue was the editor's last work before being placed in prison by the Marcos regime!

Chet Hunt reports from his sabbatical in Mexico (address: San Jose del Tajo Resort, P. O. Box 31-177, Guadalajara 5, Jalisco, Mexico): "I have been working rather slothfully at sociology, Spanish and golf; but today [Jan. 31] a slight earthquake set my rocking chair in motion and shook me up a bit, so I should get into gear. My first step was to consult the golf pro, and the rest will follow in order."

A recent article by Friday, "Problems in Comparative Criminology: Comments on the Feasibility and Implications of Research," appeared in Freda Adler and Gerhard O. W. Mueller, Politics, Crime and the International Scene, New York: Rothman and Co., 1972, pp. 356-363. Paul Friday has recently been appointed Co-Chairman of Membership, American Society of Criminology, 1973.

Stan Robin and Mort Wagenfeld presented some pretest results of their NIMH project ("Emerging Roles of Community Mental Health Workers") at the Community Psychiatry Workshop, San Juan, Puerto Rico, February 5-8.

"Courthouse Coups d'Etat," an article by Jim Schellenberg about past violent controversies over county seat location, will be featured in the March issue of The American West magazine of the Western History Association.

Don Bouma will complete 23 years as a member of the six-person Michigan Committee for the selection of State Fulbright-Hays scholarship winners. With the Feb. 1 selection of four Michigan scholars for the 1973-74 school year in foreign countries, the state committees will go out of existence. The Institute of International Education is instituting a regional selection procedure to replace the state committees. Originally appointed to the committee in 1950 by Gov. G. Mennen Williams, Bouma has been Chairman of the selection group since 1952.

MORE THIS AND THAT

Keep April 6 in mind for the Michigan Sociological Association meeting at Ann Arbor.

Cora Marrett presented a lecture on "Changing the Status of Women: Has the Academic Community a Role?" at Purdue University February 15. Her answer was yes.

Charles Tilly, social historian at the University of Toronto, will be a visiting scholar at Western late in March. He will be sponsored jointly by the departments of political science and sociology.