

Teen Slaves

Delinquent Has No Will of His Own

By VICTORIA LEE.

The juvenile delinquent is abysmally obedient.

"He lives in a world of total positive obedience to his gang code and in total negative obedience to all authority figures."

Speaking was Willard E. Beecher, who together with his wife Marguerite, both counselors in human relations, run the Beecher Consultation Center, 253 W. 16th St. They are also on the staff of the Alfred Adler Consultation Center and Mental Hygiene Clinic.

In reality the delinquent is enslaved on both sides of the coin of conformity and does not know it. He is an abject conformist who imagines himself a strong character.

A teacher whom Mr. Beecher knows invited two of her students to have a soda. But they glared at her defiantly and said, "we don't take nuttin' from cops and teachers."

Obedient to Code.

This is a perfect example of negative-obedience which rules out all possibility of having a mind of one's own. In this case, obedience to their code forced the boys to decline the invitation. They dared not work for their own advantage.

"What it amounts to," said the author and lecturer, "is that they are under a kind of hypnotic spell. They see themselves as knights in shining armor, as 100 percent self-determining individuals, while in reality they are pathetic illustrations of total dependence."

This point he illustrated by noting that a child is a born consumer, and the whole goal of education is to make him a productive citizen. The delinquents never become productive; they re-

main perpetual consumers who demand baby sitters.

To cope with this formidable situation, Mr. Beecher said, people have tried to be both tough and soft.

Put Doubt in Minds.

Being tough doesn't work because, according to the gang code, all the delinquent has to do is thicken his skin so that he can take more than is handed out. Being soft is no solution, either, because the delinquent thinks this is an invitation to exploit authority.

"What must be done," he said, "and this can be done by the layman independent of the therapist, is to throw doubt in their minds that they have a mind of their own."

"They must be shown from their own activity," he continued, "that they are controlled entirely from the outside—negatively from the authorities and positively from the gang. Believing that they have everything, they will gradually realize they have nothing, that they are empty people—lacking any inner resources whatsoever."

When this hypnotic-like spell begins to wear off, it is often a tremendous shock to the individual Mr. Beecher pointed out. "At first, when all of the outside signals disappear, he feels limp as a lettuce leaf. But gradually he begins to get signals from inside and begins to develop some likes and dislikes of his own."

Tinted Nylons

Tinted nylons are on their way in for spring. But remember, when you go to buy: they look much darker in the box than they do on the leg.