

KANSAS CITY

Society for Suppression
of
Commercialized Vice

INCORPORATED

DR. JOHN P. VINES, President
E. T. BRIGHAM, Vice-President NAT
SPENCER, Secretary
PRESTON DOBBIN, Treasurer

REPORT OF SECRETARY
OCTOBER 28, 1932

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Headquarters, 510-511 Ridge Bldg.

Main 7037

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE
SOCIETY FOR SUPPRESSION OF COM-
MERCIALIZED VICE FOR THE YEAR
ENDING OCTOBER 28, 1932

To the Directors:

The month of October, 1932, ends the 18th year of the work of the Society for Suppression of Commercialized Vice against immoral conditions in Kansas City. The effectiveness of our efforts in subduing vice has varied with the different degrees of co-operation by law enforcing officials.

The Injunction and Abatement law places the responsibility for prostitution on the ownership of the property involved. The Prosecuting Attorney holds the key to its enforcement. The present Prosecuting Attorney has refused to use the key and we have been deprived of our most effective weapon against commercialized vice.

Since the police management has announced that its principal efforts would be against "major crimes," presumably murder, burglary, holdups and kidnapping, "minor crimes" of prostitution, gambling and the illegal sale of liquor have received scant attention. The lack of effective official action against immoral conditions has resulted in an increase in the number of immoral houses, an extension in the use of gambling devices and in the opening of numerous speakeasies. The net result is that we have at present a wide-open town.

By investigation we locate immoral places. They are reported to the police. Many of these places have been repeatedly referred to the officials for action. The police have considerably reduced street walking on 12th Street and temporarily closed a few of the immoral houses; but on the whole,

prostitution has been on the increase in recent months. The following is a copy of our last report to the Chief of Police:

Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 26, 1932

Robert E. Phelan, Chief of Police,
City Hall, Kansas City, Mo.
Dear Chief Phelan:

Our investigation just completed shows the results given below. Immoral places marked with a star were in our last report. Reports are given only on the places that were active at the time of the investigation. The worst immoral locations are the Panama Hotel, 538 Walnut, where nearly a dozen prostitutes are harbored; and the blocks numbered 600 on East 13th and on East 14th St. where there are nearly solid sections of immoral houses.

401 E. 4th St., Ground Fl.,
Colored
513 E. 6th St., White 311 E. 6th
St., 2nd Fl., Colored
808 E. 6th St., Colored 810 E.
6th St., Colored*
609 Oak St., Colored*
214 Independence Ave., 2nd
Fl.*
218 Independence Ave., 2nd
Fl.*
18 1/2 E. 7th St.*
10 1/2 E. 8th St.*
538 Walnut St., Panama Hotel*
610 1/2 Walnut St., Walnut
Hotel
7 1/2 E. 8th St.
701 1/2 Main St., Rooming
House
726 Main St., Laclede Hotel*
6 1/2 E. 10th St., Commerce
Hotel
605 E. 13th St., 1st Fl.*
609 E. 13th St., 1st Fl.
613 E. 13th St., Ground Fl.,
Apt.
615 E. 13th St., Ground Fl.,
Apt.*

617 E. 13th St., Ground Fl.,
Apt.*
620 E. 14th St.*
618 E. 14th St.*
616 E. 14th St.*
614 E. 14th St.*
609 E. 14th St., 1st Fl., Apt.*
607 E. 14th St., 1st Fl., Apt.*
605 E. 14th St., 1st Fl.*
1529 Locust St.*
1527 Locust St.*
1431 Locust St., 1st Fl.*
1123 Locust, Jackson Hotel 1118
Cherry, Rooming House
1129 Cherry, 2nd Fl.*
1233 Cherry St.*
1419 Cherry St.
1423 Cherry St.
1425 Cherry St.
1509 Cherry St.*
1623 Cherry St.
1627 Cherry St.
1130 Holmes St.
1200 Holmes St., Holmes Hotel*
1332 Holmes St.
1410 Holmes St.*
1420 Holmes St., 1st Fl.* 1422
Holmes St.
1708 Holmes St. Colored*
610 E. 17th St., Colored*

Immoral Hotels

Near the entrance of the following named hotels colored uniformed porters solicit trade with the added inducement of "nice girls" for the company of guests, with all kinds of drinks. All of these hotels were previously reported:

Hotel Ritz, 1403 Main St., 3 girls*

Hotel Frances, 1405 Main St., 3 girls*

Hotel Strand, 1420 Main St., 4 girls*

Grand Hotel, 1702 Main St., 2 girls*

Travelers Hotel, 1922 Main St., 4 girls*

Hotel Sutter, 217 W. 12th, 4 girls*

Hotel Central Annex, 305 W. 12th St., 4 girls*

Gambling

There was a general removal of slot machines last Saturday and Sunday but the proprietors of the places say that they will be back again the last of this week. There have been about 8 slot machines in the vicinity of 39th and Main, not far from the Westport High Schools. There were about 20 slot machines on Southwest Blvd. The elaborately equipped gambling places at 553 and 611 Main St. retained their slot machines. There are no door keepers at these places. The slot machines were not removed from the drug stores at the northwest corner of Grand and Independence and the northwest corner of Grand and Missouri.

It is understood that the slot machines are owned by the Mills Company of Milwaukee and placed in stores on a percentage of the receipts. This "racket" is presumed to be controlled by a north side politician.

206 E. 12th St.

216 E. 12th St.

314 1/2 E. 12th

St. 107 E. 12th

St. 611 Main St.

Gambling on Races Is
Conducted at These
Places

553 Main St.

Gillis Bldg., 2nd Fl.

1211 Baltimore Ave.

123 W. 12th St.

1114 Wyandotte St.

The attendance at these places varies from about 25 at the smaller places to 75 at such larger places as 107 E. 12th and 1211 Baltimore. Women gamble at 107 E. 12th St. The gambling begins about noon and continues till about 5:00 p. m. Nearly all these race gambling places also conduct "black jack" games.

Illegal Liquor Sales

The "drug store" at 124-6-8 Missouri Ave., admits to its main drinking place only those who pass inspection. It caters to high class trade. Many expensive cars are parked nightly about this place.

The recent activity of federal prohibition officers confirms previous reports on places where liquors were illegally sold. There are still many such places where the national and state liquor laws are being violated.

Our Society urges that you use all the means at your command to remedy the above located deplorable conditions.

Yours very truly,

SOCIETY FOR SUPPRESSION OF
COMMERCIALIZED VICE By Nat
Spencer, Secretary

Indecent Literature

Our efforts to get the federal government to restrain the sale of indecent literature from news stands on the ground that it is a violation of federal law to transport obscene literature from one state to another, have not been successful. Mr. Nugent Dodds, assistant Attorney General of the United States, gave the following report:

"You are informed that careful investigation was made of the alleged transportation in interstate commerce of the magazines which you transmitted to the Department some time ago. The reports of these investigations were submitted to the

appropriate United States Attorney in whose districts jurisdiction would lie. In a number of instances the grand juries refused to return an indictment. In another district the defendants were arrested and brought before a United States Commissioner, who discharged the defendants on the ground that the magazines were not obscene. In several other districts the United States Attorneys held that the particular magazines submitted were not obscene as a matter of law. In no case was an indictment returned.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General:

Nugent Dodds,
Assistant Attorney General."

However, another attempt to suppress the sale of obscene literature from the news stands is now in progress. A Public Morals Committee of the Society for Suppression of Commercialized Vice has been formed from similar local committees in Men's Bible Classes. The committee has caused the purchases of offensive literature. This has been presented to the Grand Jury and six indictments have been returned—three each against two individuals. The offenders have been arrested and released on \$500 bonds. Their trials have been set for Monday, October 31, and will probably be in Judge Lyons' court.

The literature purchased is of the vilest imaginable sort. The evidence is conclusive and we look for substantial penalties. Our Society is not so much animated by a desire to have these individuals punished for their crimes as it is to show other dealers the penalties which await them if they continue the sale of vile literature.

Immoral Shows and Movies

Heretofore, the emphasis of our organization against immoral shows has been directed toward the lower types of vaudeville and burlesque shows; but it

is increasingly evident that the influence of bad movies is more corrupting to morals, especially of the young. The lower types of shows are attended in the main by adults whose perverted tastes seek unwholesome stimulations. It is the young people that furnish a large portion of the patronage of the movies.

Rev. Clifford Gray Twombly, D. D., of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with the ladies of his congregation, recently made an intensive five weeks study of the movies exhibited in that city. Of 67 films shown 21 were adjudged to be good, 17 were listed as indifferent and 29 found to be bad. Several of the worse films were called "horrible" and not visited. If the films of this group were listed they would make a total of about 50 per cent of unwholesome pictures.

Dr. Twombly gives extracts from the advertisements of these movies which show grossly immoral features.

The "Parents Magazine" reports on 188 feature films exhibited in August, 1931, and says that "only 17 per cent of the films were fit for children from 12 to 18 years of age."

Lord Irwin, late Viceroy of India says that the "corrupting character of American movies is one of the major causes of the loss of the white man's prestige in the East."

The New Statesman of London, England, says:

"Americans should realize that so long as the United States travesties and profanes herself before the whole world by the loathsome pictures that pour steadily from Hollywood, there is little excuse of complaining if other peoples think America ridiculous."

Rev. Dr. Percy Dearmer, Canon of Westminster Abbey declares:

"It is quite possible that if a quarter of the things about the moving pictures which are seriously alleged by expert observers are true the whole world may be demoralized in the next generation."

The most effective remedy for bad movies is to

stop their production. This can be done through a national commission in charge of the whole industry. The alleged attempt to clean up the movies upon their own initiative has failed. National legislation for such supervision is being considered by Congress and should be supported by all friends of the rising generation.

Through the centuries, moral progress is definitely upward. We live in a vastly better world than did our ancestors in the middle ages. But moral progress is not in a gradual upward movement. It comes in waves. We are now in a trough of the wave. This fact is revealed in a general looseness of morals; in the popularity of gambling; in the prevailing flood of pernicious literature; in the toleration of licentious amusements; in the endurance of character destroying movies and in the placid indifference with which many of our good citizens permit the encroachments of these devastating [sic] influences on youthful characters.

The present conditions call for an awakened public conscience; a candid facing of the facts and a determination to overcome these influences that tend to undermine personal worth and national stability.

Respectfully submitted,
Nat Spencer, Secretary

Our work against vice is supported by voluntary contributions. No officer of the Society receives any compensation. Interested persons are invited to assist the Society financially.