

KATZEN

6645 32nd Street, NW
Washington 15, D. C.
April 4, 1957

Mr. Bernard Katzen, Counsel
State Legislative Committee on Narcotic Study
Room 918, 18 West 45th Street
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Katzen:

When you were here a short while ago you asked me to give some thought to what studies you should make as counsel for the Joint Legislative Committee on Narcotic Study. You mentioned specifically the New Jersey and Ohio experience and the Riverside Hospital, and told me to follow through with suggestions about these and other things that might appear to be pertinent to the study.

The first thing to do is to define the problem, that is, find out what it actually is in relation to health and the social order and then what should be done about it. You have started on this by consulting with people who know something about drug addiction from the standpoint of medicine and science rather than merely listening to those who tell how many more arrests they could make if they had more personnel to make them, how many addicts they could keep off the streets if given this personnel and if the laws were made more severe. A philosophy based on the latter approach has taken possession in this country. It has distorted thinking and produced fear so that even those who know are afraid to speak. I believe I gave you several instances where scientists who spoke were abused and efforts were made by crusaders to punish them.

You mentioned the California Crime Commission and I suppose you have reference to the report of the Citizens' Advisory Committee to the Attorney General on Crime Prevention, March 26, 1954. This is one of the better reports. It would have been much better had it not suffered somewhat from the over-all hysterical narcotic philosophy. You will find on page 26 the nonsense I told you of, about one pound of heroin costing \$1,228,800, an amount that puts the 6 grain a day addict in the \$1,000 a day expense bracket. The Senate Subcommittee on Improvements in the Criminal Code gave a much worse exhibition. The work of these two committees, especially the latter, should be contrasted with that of the Rolleston (1924) Committee in England. This committee, headed by a physician, made a report based on medical facts that are now English law. Our extremists in one breath sneer at the English, saying that they have more addicts than they know of, which is of course true, because the English have sense enough not to dig up muck that gives no odor when undisturbed. In another breath they say that the English method is the same as ours. In this they ignore the English regulations, a copy of which I gave you, and ignore reports made by Americans who have specifically studied how the English handle the matter.

With this background of thought, I make a suggestion that I consider important: It is that you appoint a committee of scientists to report to your committee on the salient facts of addiction. Specifically, they should report on the relative importance of medical and police measures in control, whether there is anything about addiction that justifies making it in law our worst

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crime, as has been done by the Federal government and some States, or whether sentences with an upper limit of 10 years with discretion left in the hands of courts as in England would be a more desirable punitive phase of approach, whether more and better treatment facilities with follow-up should be provided, and whether the discretion of physicians in handling addicts should be liberalized somewhat on the basis of the English plan, etc.

Another important thing that the committee should do is report on the effects of heroin so that your committee and the public may hear from a competent group whether this drug has the devastating effect that the public has been led to believe it has. The committee should be asked to report on the behavioral aspects of heroin addiction, whether or not heroin causes physical or mental deterioration and to what degree, whether it is worse in this respect than other opiates like morphine and compare its effects in these respects to alcohol, the barbiturates and other sedatives that might seem appropriate to the committee.

The committee should be made up mostly of psychiatrists who have had experience with addiction, pharmacologists who have studied narcotics and know how to evaluate them, and possibly a penologist or two of high reputation. It should not be hampered by law enforcement people like narcotic inspectors and enforcement officers. Competent as some of these people are, they do not have the knowledge and scientific experience essential to enable them to distinguish cause from effect, to resist pressure and propaganda and to resist the desire to make a name by arresting and sending more and more people to prison. Such people are too likely to be led astray by superficial findings like the number of arrests, without wondering whether most of this may be wrong and closely related to the punishment formerly inflicted on insane people.

I am giving suggested names for the committee. I don't know some of these people except by reputation. Many of them would be useful advisors on any aspect of addiction. Among the names are two of the foremost penologists in the United States both of whom have dealt with thousands of addicts.

James V. Bennett, Director of The Bureau of Prisons
Justice Department, Washington 25, D. C.

Mr. Bennett has been director for about 20 years.

Austin McCormick, Professor Criminology
University of California, Berkeley, California
Address: 2340 Vine Street, Berkeley 9, California

Mr. McCormick was formerly Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Commissioner of Corrections, New York City, and Head of the Osborn Association.

S. B. Wortis, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry
New York University, Bellevue Medical Center
New York, New York

Dr. Wortis was a member of the Drug Addiction Study Group of the World Health Organization, meeting in Geneva in November, 1956.

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Karl M. Bowman, M.D., University of California Medical Center
San Francisco 22, California

Dr. Bowman is Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, University of California, and former President of The American Psychiatric Association.

Frances J. Gerty, M.D., Director of Psychiatric Division
Neuropsychiatric Institute, University of Illinois
912 South Wood Street, Chicago 12, Illinois

Dr. Gerty is a member of the Council on Mental Health, American Medical Association.

Gunner Gunderson, M.D., Chairman, Board of Trustees, American
Medical Association, 1836 South Avenue, La Crosse, Wisconsin

Leo H. Bartemeier
The Seaton Institute, 6420 Reiserstown Road
Baltimore, Maryland

r. Bartemeier is Chairman of the Council on Mental Health, American Medical Association and former President of American Psychiatric Association.

Walter Bromberg, M.D., 2720 Capitol Avenue
Sacramento 16, California

Dr. Bromberg has written several books on psychiatry and several illuminating articles on marihuana addiction.

Winfred Overholser, M.D., Superintendent
Saint Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington 20, D.C.

Dr. Overholser is former President of The American Psychiatric Association.

Harris Isbell, M.D., Director, Addiction Research Laboratory
U. S. Public Health Service, and member of the Drug Addiction Committee,
American Medical Association.

H. K. Beecher, M.D., Dept. of Anesthesia, Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston 14, Massachusetts.

Dr. Beecher is Dow Professor of Research in Anaesthesia, Harvard Medical School and Member, Council of Pharmacy and Chemistry, American Medical Association, and Member, Drug Addiction Committee, National Research Council.

Dr. Nathan B. Eddy, Room 9N 313, Building 10
National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland

Dr. Eddy is a former Professor of Pharmacology, University of Michigan and a member of the Drug Addiction Committee, National Research Council. He has done exhaustive research on narcotics and has written extensively about them.

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Dr. Maurice Seevers, Department of Pharmacology
University of Michigan Medical School
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Dr. Seevers is a member of the Drug Addiction Committee, National Research Council.

George H. Acheson, Professor of Pharmacology
University of Cincinnati
Eden and Bethesda Avenues
Cincinnati 19, Ohio.

If you should select any of these men to report on heroin or anything else about drug addiction, don't expect them to do anything except get together and make a report. It would be a waste of time for them to start new research and in any event you could not wait for new studies. Include a pharmacologist or two for the heroin report.

It would probably be profitable for you to see Dr. Kenneth W. Chapman of the National Institute of Mental Health, Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Chapman has been liaison officer between the States and the Public Health Service. He has studied the handling of addiction abroad, was in charge of the Lexington Hospital and made a study of the Riverside Hospital, New York. I have not seen his report.

You should of course be thoroughly familiar with the Riverside Hospital work including its after care program, but I don't believe you have the staff to do an independent study. You will get more from Dr. Gasmol, from his annual reports and from Chapman, P. H. S. Report.

You asked about studying the effect of the Ohio and New Jersey drastic laws. A real study of the effects of these laws would be useful. The real study would not be limited to whether more or fewer people are being arrested now. It would include the tragedies such as happen when a judge gives an offender 20 years for doing something comparable with taking one drink of whiskey. Shortly after the Ohio law became effective I got a report (not checked carefully by me) of an offender who was given 20 years for an offense that in England, France and other European countries might have been punished by a one month sentence. I have been told recently of a Baltimore judge who gave 10 years for possession of 1/2 of a marijuana cigarette (not checked into by me) but I have checked into many preposterous legal narcotic crimes committed by crusaders no better or worse than the 15th century witch burners or the purveyors of virtue and justice who flogged and tortured the helpless insane.

If I can be of further assistance, don't hesitate to call on me.

Very truly yours

Lawrence Kolb, M.D.