

26 Broadway  
New York

January 18th, 1913.

My dear Sir:

I take the liberty of enclosing herewith a copy of a statement regarding the plans of The Bureau of Social Hygiene which I am sending to the editors of the New York City daily papers. In personal conference with me, these editors have all expressed themselves as heartily in sympathy with the work and as willing to give it publicity and helpful comment now and in the future.

In the hope that you may feel disposed, in like manner, to forward these plans—now for the first time publicly announced—to cope in a fundamental and permanent way with one of the greatest of world-problems, I am venturing to bring the matter to your attention.

Very truly,

*John D. Rockefeller, Jr*

**To be released for Publication Monday morning, January 27th**

**The following statement is given out for publication by  
John D. Rockefeller, Jr.**

New York, January 27, 1913.

## **THE ORIGIN, WORK AND PLANS OF THE BUREAU OF SOCIAL HYGIENE.**

The Bureau of Social Hygiene came into existence about two years ago, as a result of the work of the Special Grand Jury appointed to investigate the white slave traffic in New York City, which served during the first half of the year 1910. One of the recommendations made by it in the presentment handed up at the termination of its labors was that a public commission be appointed to study the social evil. The foreman of that body subsequently gave careful consideration to the character of the work which might properly be done by such a commission and the limitations under which it would operate. In this connection, separate, personal conferences were held with over a hundred leading men and women in the city, among whom were lawyers, physicians, business men, bank presidents, presidents of commercial organizations, clergymen, settlement workers, social workers, labor leaders, and reformers. These conferences developed the feeling that a public commission would labor under a number of disadvantages, such as the fact that it would be short lived; that its work would be done publicly; that at best it could hardly do more than present recommendations. The conviction also grew that the main reason why more permanent results had not been obtained by the various organizations which had dealt with the subject of the social evil during the past ten or fifteen years was that most of them were temporary. While active, they materially improved the situation, but as their efforts were relaxed, there came the inevitable return to much the same conditions as before. The forces of evil are never greatly alarmed at the organization of investigating or reform bodies, for they know that they are generally composed of busy people, who cannot turn aside from their own affairs for any great length of time to carry on reforms, and that sooner or later their efforts will cease, and the patient denizens of the underworld and their exploiters can then reappear and continue the traffic as formerly.

So the conviction grew that in order to make a real and lasting improvement in conditions, a permanent organization should be created, the continuation of which would not be dependent upon a temporary wave of reform, nor upon the life of any man or group of men, but which would go on, generation after generation, continuously making warfare against the forces of evil. It also appeared that a private organization would have, among other advantages, a certain freedom from publicity and from political bias, which a publicly appointed commission could not so easily avoid.

Therefore, as the initial step, in the winter of 1911 The Bureau of Social Hygiene was formed. Its present members are Miss Katharine Bement Davis, Superintendent of the New York State Reformatory for Women at Bedford Hills, New York; Paul M. Warburg, of the firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Company; Starr J. Murphy, of the New York Bar; and John D. Rockefeller, Junior. As the work develops, new members may be added.

One of the first things undertaken by the Bureau was the establishment at Bedford Hills, adjacent to the Reformatory, of a Laboratory of Social Hygiene, under Miss Davis's direction. In this Laboratory, it is proposed to study from the physical, mental, social and moral side each person committed to the Reformatory. This study will be carried on by experts and each case will be kept under observation for from three weeks to three months, as may be required. When the diagnosis is completed, it is hoped that the Laboratory will be in position to recommend the treatment most likely to reform the individual, or, if reformation is impossible, to recommend permanent custodial care. Furthermore, reaching out beyond the individuals involved, it is believed

that thus important contributions may be made to a fuller knowledge of the conditions ultimately responsible for vice. If this experiment is successful, the principle may prove applicable to all classes of criminals and the conditions precedent to crime, and lead to lines of action not only more scientific and humane but also less wasteful than those at present followed.

In entering upon its labors, the Bureau regarded it of fundamental importance to make a careful study of the social evil in this country and in Europe, feeling that this problem, like any other great and difficult one, can be intelligently approached only by means of a thorough and complete knowledge of all the factors involved, as well as all the methods and experiences of other cities and countries in dealing with it. Arrangements were made, therefore, in the early part of last winter to secure the services of George J. Kneeland, who had directed the Chicago Vice Commission investigation. Since that time, Mr. Kneeland, with a corps of assistants, has been making a thorough and comprehensive survey of the conditions of vice in New York City. This survey has covered not only houses of prostitution, Raines Law hotels, disorderly saloons, cafes and restaurants, massage parlors and other places where vicious people congregate, but also the personal histories of some two thousand prostitutes; and a study of all the case records for one year of a great majority of the hospitals and dispensaries in New York City, with a view to ascertaining the prevalence of venereal diseases and their ratio to all other diseases. Mr. Kneeland's report is now in progress of preparation and will be published within the next two months.

At the same time, the Bureau was fortunate in securing the services of Abraham Flexner, whose reports on the medical schools in this country and in Europe are so well known, to study the social evil and the various methods of dealing with it in the leading cities of Europe. Mr. Flexner spent the greater part of a year abroad, making a searching and exhaustive inquiry into the subject, and is now working on his report, which will be ready for publication this winter.

These studies are to be followed by others, in those cities in the United States where different conditions exist or where special methods of dealing with the social evil have been introduced, the object being to become familiar with all phases of the subject and all methods of handling it which have been tried in this country and in Europe.

Based upon all of these studies, which will probably be published by December of this year, it is the hope of the Bureau that there may be devised a practical plan for dealing with the social evil in New York City—a plan which public opinion can be brought to support.

In conclusion, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the spirit which dominates the work of the Bureau is not sensational or sentimental or hysterical; that it is not a spirit of criticism of public officials; but that it is essentially a spirit of constructive suggestion and of deep scientific as well as humane interest in a great world problem.

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