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Conscientious Objectors Aid Crime

WE are not winning our war against crime because too many conscientious objectors won't fight. They may not admit they side with outlaws, but they don't count much for law and order.

The first line of defense against crime is the home. That is where discipline should start, along with teachings about right and wrong, and respect for the rights and property of others. For whatever reasons, parents who fail to accomplish this are allowing the enemy to infiltrate society.

Schools, under duress and court orders, have pretty much abandoned moral teachings and strict discipline. Many teachers have reason to fear young hoodlums in their classes, but others may be fugitives from their own responsibilities.

Churches, too, often have been lacking in aggressiveness to try to close the gaps in our morality and ethics. Critics claim that churches should stay out of politics, but if we ever are to clean up our politics so that crime can be stopped, church members are going to have to enlist in the war on crime for the duration.

The term "conscientious objectors" might not be applicable when police stage illegal strikes against the public or when corruption is discovered in law enforcement ranks, but either is a victory for crime, because respect for law and order slips.

Police, prosecuting attorneys and courts complain that they are undermanned, overworked and underpaid.

But more money and more manpower will be effective only if officials determine to enforce the laws. Such determination appears weak in many places now.

From the Supreme Court of the United States down to the local police court, judges may be classified as conscientious objectors in the war on crime when they give greater consideration to the rights of criminals than they do to rights of victims.

Recently, an Oklahoma City district judge declared that home owners and business men have no right to shoot intruders who intend only to rob and steal. This objection disregards the fundamental that if property is not safe, neither are our lives.

Among the more vociferous conscientious objectors are those who argue that "victimless crimes," such as drunkenness, gambling, pot smoking and prostitution, should be

legalized. They overlook the obvious. Those who indulge are themselves victims.

Lawmakers often become conscientious objectors in the war on crime when they vote with criminal defenders among their numbers to insert escape clauses and loopholes in otherwise good laws, so that attorneys may obtain freedom for their clients on technicalities.

Corrections and rehabilitation officials are charged with care and feeding of "prisoners of war" in the battle against crime. When they push outlaws through back doors in order to make room for others at the front doors, they are reinforcing the ranks of the outlaws. The way to stop crime is to take criminals out of circulation.

The size of the army of criminals is increasing year by year, and conscientious objectors won't fight back. It is plain that those who want law and order must bring forth more powerful weapons to win.