

CRIME PREVENTION IN THE  
NEWLY-ORGANISED SWEDISH POLICE



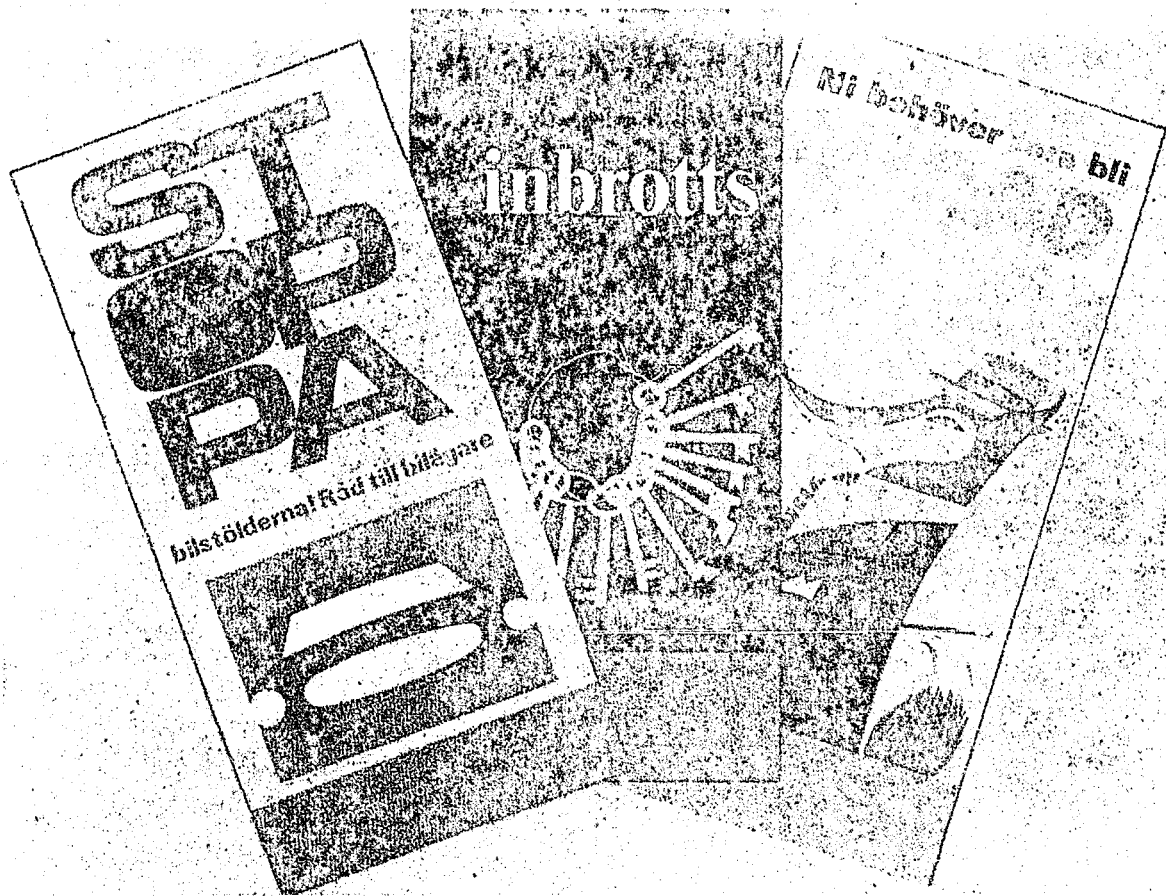
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ACQUISITIONS

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Three of the brochures published by the Swedish Police.

- Advice for car owners
- "Fall the burglar", advice on protecting the home against burglaries
- Advice to shopkeepers on how to avoid fraud.

# CRIME PREVENTION IN THE NEWLY-ORGANISED SWEDISH POLICE

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On 1st January 1965 the Swedish Police were brought under the control of the state and at that time there was renewed interest in the problem of crime prevention. Preparatory work carried out before nationalisation had already highlighted the importance of this problem, in particular questions of organisation and responsibility with regard to systematic crime prevention.

## THE AIMS OF CRIME PREVENTION

The best method is to try to prevent crime, instead of taking repressive measures once the offence has been committed. Faced with a situation which is getting worse every year, the police cannot afford to give up preventive measures. It is simply a matter of finding appropriate fields of

action where efforts will give short-term as well as long-term results.

Compared with other sectors of the community such as the public health or fire departments, where prevention has always been considered

better than cure, the police have got off to a slow start. But the prevention of crime is every bit as important as that of illness and fire.

From the standpoint of the national economy, crime prevention should be considered worthwhile and important. Huge amounts of money are involved: damages caused by criminal offences, public expenditure on rehabilitation for criminals, the losses incurred by their non-productivity, etc. Each offence avoided and each adolescent encouraged to "go straight" represents so much

direct profit for the community. Therefore, money spent on crime prevention is a very profitable investment.

Another important aspect of crime prevention work as far as the police are concerned is that of giving the public information and advice on how to protect themselves from criminal attacks. Such help effectively counterbalances all the repressive measures the police are forced to take, and which are obviously not always very popular.

### CRIME PREVENTION INSTRUCTIONS

Clauses in the Police Regulations and in special regulations drawn up for the National Police Headquarters stipulate that crime prevention is most important and should be carried out by all police services. These clauses state that "it is the special duty of the police to prevent crimes and offences"; every police chief should "ensure that preventive measures are taken". The National Police Headquarters must "devote its attention to the prevention of crimes and offences" and "draw up orders and instructions relating to the duties of the various police departments with regard to information, particularly that given to the public on preventive measures".

A 1959 Government circular also deals with preventive measures, particularly with regard to juvenile delinquency and co-operation between the police and social services; among other things, it stresses the need for social services to be informed by the police as soon as it becomes evident that intervention of a pedagogic or therapeutic nature is needed in a case. It also emphasises the necessity for permanent co-operation between the police and the other authorities in the field of crime prevention.

In this circular, two means of co-operation are put forward:

— the creation of **local collaboration groups** which would allow representatives of the police, the school authorities and the committee for the protection of juveniles to meet often to discuss crime prevention;

— **combined street patrols** (on foot or in cars) made up of police officers and representatives of the committee for the protection of juveniles, the school authorities and other public services.

A **Central Co-operation Committee** was set up in 1964 to co-ordinate the activities of all organisations and authorities which, at national level, are concerned with measures to combat juvenile delinquency: these include the Attorney General's Office, the police, the national headquarters of organisations for the treatment of delinquents, the welfare department (the central body for the committees for the protection of juveniles), the departments of education and employment, etc.

### THE DUTIES OF THE DIFFERENT WORK UNITS

#### At national level:

The National Police Headquarters is the highest

police body in Sweden. One of the services mainly responsible for purely police work has a department whose particular role is to co-ordinate crime

prevention activities in the police. Its duties include:

- contacts with local police forces with a view to taking certain joint action at national level;
- collaboration with other authorities and professional bodies wishing to undertake preventive measures;
- giving the public information on how to prevent crimes and offences using the mass media, brochures, photographs, etc.;
- training police officers in crime prevention at national and regional level;
- contacts with the national department of education and drawing up guidelines for lectures on respect for the law, to be given by police officers in colleges, schools, etc.;
- organisation of socio-police activity such as active detection and prevention;
- arranging contacts between the police and social welfare departments with a view to giving the latter all the relevant information on cases requiring a therapeutic approach, discovered by the police.

#### At local level:

The chief of each local police district is responsible for the effectiveness of the crime prevention measures taken in his district and of the information given on crime prevention both inside

and outside his force. He can delegate the various crime prevention duties to the appropriate police officers.

Most local police districts have a "protection department" responsible for crime prevention in the district. These duties are mainly of a socio-police nature, such as relations with the welfare department, active crime prevention work, lecturing in schools on respect for the law, etc.

Sweden's three largest towns employ 104, 77 and 25 police officers respectively for this kind of work. In districts with populations of between 50,000 and 100,000, the number of police officers employed on crime prevention work is from 8 to 12, elsewhere from 2 to 12 depending on the number of inhabitants.

Apart, then, from their other duties, these protection departments deal with local crime prevention work. But every police officer should do prevention work as part of his other duties, for example by giving the public advice on how to protect themselves from different crimes and offences. These services should never outstep the officer's own experience and knowledge in this matter. But officers carrying out surveillance duties, investigations at scenes of crime, recording complaints, etc. all have excellent opportunities for giving members of the public with whom they come into contact advice on crime prevention.

### GENERAL REVIEW OF THE POSSIBILITIES OFFERED BY CRIME PREVENTION WORK

Crime prevention work can be divided into four parts which obviously cannot be isolated one from the other or kept within strictly defined boundaries: they influence and complement each other.

1. The first important crime prevention factor is the **risk run by an offender of being caught**. Traditional police activities such as surveillance and patrol duties, detection, technical investigations at crime scenes, enquiries etc., are all preventive, if enough crimes are discovered. An

efficient police force with adequate staff and equipment is in itself preventive. The obvious and immediate risk of being caught undoubtedly has a deterrent effect on would-be offenders.

2. **Active detection work**, particularly that carried out by protection departments among young people but also among adults on the brink of becoming criminals or asocial, constitutes an important crime prevention activity. This is also where the collaboration mentioned previously takes on a concrete form, as do the contacts which

must be made between the police and the different community welfare services.

3. **Educating children to respect the law** — in the form of lectures given by police officers in State compulsory schools — is also an important aspect of crime prevention. Here, within the framework of the school, the police have a useful influence on the rising generation, teaching them the importance of respect for the law so that they may become good citizens.

Police lectures come under the heading "Law and Legislation" as part of civics instruction. They are completely devoid of any moralising aspect. The police officer giving the lectures deals only with actual situations, mainly those concerning juvenile delinquency, community reactions to crime, why an organised society needs laws and regulations, etc.

One important aspect of these lectures is the personal contact between police officers and children, since the pupils are often very interested and ask lots of questions. The lecture is prepared by the civics teacher, who has already taught the children the basic principles of "Law and Legislation", and is followed by a discussion. The police officer illustrates his talk by showing filmstrips, photographs, drawings, brochures, etc.

Children in the fourth grade (10 to 11 age group) are given one-hour lectures, and those in the seventh grade (aged about 14) have two-hour lectures. Attendance at these lectures is **compulsory** and therefore each year about 105,000 pupils in each grade are affected by them. If enough staff is available in the different police districts, and if the local school authorities are willing, one lecture can also be given to the ninth (and last) grade.

In this connection, the police try as far as possible to keep in contact with the parents' associations, notably to discuss the problems of juvenile delinquency and the possibilities of taking preventive measures through collaboration between home, school and police.

4. The fourth field in which crime prevention work can be applied is that of preparing the public



A police officer arrives at a school to teach the pupils the principles of "law and justice".

against crime, i.e. showing them better means of **self protection**. Police experience has shown that many crimes and offences would not have taken place if the victims had been more careful. Therefore the information given by the police on this subject is very important and will have to be developed even further.

This is why advice on being more careful and on better anti-theft devices is given directly to the public by police officers in different situations. Another method involves using the press, radio and television. Besides all this, brochures have been published giving advice on how to avoid car thefts, burglaries, frauds against shopkeepers and offences against old people.

Another important crime prevention task consists of getting in touch with other authorities and professional bodies which share the desire of the police to prevent and avoid crime; the police co-operate with the post office authorities and the banks to prevent attacks on post offices and banks, postal and banking frauds and forgeries, etc.

Commercial bodies are actively engaged in the fight against shop-lifting and fraud using false cheques—offences which are constantly on the increase. Sailing clubs help the police to try to

avoid boat thefts. Bicycle and moped manufacturers and dealers are trying to improve their anti-theft devices, and insurance companies are concerned about perfecting anti-theft systems for cars, shops, flats, etc.

To sum up, these four types of crime prevention activities should help the police to keep crime within normal bounds and encourage as many members of the public as possible to take part in the fight against crime.

### TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Since the Swedish police are still in the initial stages of their work in crime prevention, the question of staff training is very important. Therefore, since the Spring of 1965, approximately 600 police officers have attended a series of 20 weekly lectures, given for both senior officers and ordinary policemen with special crime prevention duties in the field. Normal training in police colleges includes instruction on crime prevention, which is given to all ranks. In addition to this, each

year 30 to 40 police officers attend at least one lecture a month on subjects relating to crime prevention and socio-police work.

Sound training in crime prevention is necessary if all police officers are to acquire as soon as possible the required amount of knowledge and the interest in the subject to enable them to put into practice in their everyday work all the different possibilities of crime prevention.

### CO-OPERATION IN CRIME PREVENTION

If crime prevention is to be effective, it requires co-operation and a sharing of responsibilities on as wide a basis as possible. The police cannot be expected to carry out unaided all the duties of crime prevention: all citizens and all institutions have a role to play.

The possibilities of action are practically boundless; any well-advised initiative has a beneficial effect on the fight against crime.

As for the measures intended to combat juvenile delinquency, enquiries are already being made into the possibility of a more effective collaboration between the various authorities concerned. This collaboration should become even closer at local level: the police, the schools, organisations for the protection of juveniles and child and juvenile psychiatric centres should work closely together in matters concerning young offenders, so as to be able to take preventive measures before it is too late.

Co-operation brings to the bodies concerned a deeper understanding of their own problems, which is certainly very useful in helping them achieve their aims: to give assistance to children, young people and others who are either on the way to becoming—or have become—criminals or asocial.

A policeman handing out a copy of the brochure on the prevention of car thefts.



O. EFRAIMSSON



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