UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE - INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

National Conference on Research and Teaching in Criminology
Cambridge, June 1966

THE PLACE OF CRIMINOLOGY IN THE TRAINING OF THE POLICE

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Beginnings

During the past fifteen years the value of the study of criminology has come to be widely accepted by members of the Police Service. The pioneer work done by the Extra-Mural Departments of the Northern Universities, notably Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield, has set a pattern which has stood the test of experience and time. Writing ten years ago in The Police Review, Dr.N.A.Jepson gave an interesting account of what had been done as a first step by the University of Leeds: a three-year course, the years being devoted to the legal, sociological and psychological approaches, taught in eight centres and grouped in ten classes, had attracted three hundred police officers, of whom one hundred had completed the course and seventy of whom had taken the final examination.

This course and its analogues in the North constituted a major departure in police training, fully in accord with the developments which have resulted in the Service's present training structure. Since the end of the second world war a thorough and coherent training scheme has evolved - probably the best and fairest in the world. Every recruit gets a substantial basic and refresher training at the district police training centres and much in-force training to supplement it. There is a nationally-arranged system of professional examinations to qualify officers for the ranks of sergeant and inspector, for which in-force training is available as well as correspondence courses. Specialist training in a variety of subjects is continuously being given to officers who have shown particular aptitudes, notably the Home Office detective training courses, and the national Police College deals with the higher training of the Service.

The College, now at Bramshill in Hampshire, trains men and women of all ranks for the key stages in their career. Upwards of four hundred officers pass out of the College annually and to date some nine thousand officers have had College training. There are now four courses. Sixty rigorously selected young officers are given a year's course, successful completion of which entitles them to accelerated promotion to sergeant. Two hundred and eighty officers who have already proved themselves in the rank of sergeant are given a six-month course to prepare them for the responsibilities of the inspector ranks. Forty-eight officers who are likely to be promoted superintendent in the near future are given a three-month course to prepare them for divisional or departmental command. Twenty-four senior officers are given a six-month course to prepare them for the highest posts in the Service. All these courses are designed to stimulate a wider outlook and to impart management quality; all contain a strong liberal element (fifty per cent of the syllabus in the case of the two junior courses is devoted to history, government, social studies and current affairs) and the College has an academic as well as a police directing staff. Several of the officers who distinguish themselves on the most junior course are now sent to universities as Bramshill Scholars to read for honours degrees.

The extra-mural study of criminology thus grew in parallel with the official training scheme of the Service. The police today take a very different view of the need for adult education than that which prevailed before the modern phase began in the late nineteen-forties. The widespread and sustained interest in criminology is a testimony to the police officer's keenness to gain insight into the society he serves and to relate his own vocation to the other social services. Criminology, he has found, offers keys to many doors and teaches many languages which are increasingly spoken as society develops its sense of responsibility for those who for one reason or another fail to accommodate themselves to its rules.

2

BONDS

In some academic circles it is fashionable to decry criminology for its miscellaneousness. A discipline which embraces the study of law, of psychology, of sociology and of statistics is highly suspect to the more conservative teacher with the established order and well-charted ways of his own ancient faculty in mind. Yet this very diversity appeals strongly to the police officer. He knows diversity: it characterises his own work. He, too, is concerned with the law; he is an empirical psychologist and he has sociological experience which the research expert must often envy; he is a walking encyclopaedia of case-studies; and he is the prime source of the statistics on which the criminologist must base many of his conclusions. The enthusiasm with which thousands of police officers have accepted criminology is a very natural one. It is his subject, however its techniques and approaches may be strange to him.

Another natural sympathy springs from the pragmatism common to the criminologist and the policeman. Both work in terms of observation and experience. A policeman's work in the criminal field disinclines him to generalization: he soon learns that the infinite variety of human nature and of circumstance gives every case uniqueness. He long ago came to the conclusion, which criminologists were longer in reaching, that the facts are more important than the assumptions and the theories. This essential empiricism must always make for a strong bond between the practical policeman and the academic enquirer.

Above all, however, is the identity of aims. The aims of criminology, as the late Dr. Grünhut wrote, in an article which he was asked to contribute in 1959 to The Police Journal to define the nature and scope of the subject, "are practical, as it is expected to lead to improved methods of preventing crime and of leading offenders to a law-abiding life in the community". The prevention of crime is the primary object of police. In its other great object, the detection and prosecution of crime, criminology has much to teach, especially through its legal and psychological branches.

Barriers

There are still great barriers between the policeman and the criminologist. Police work by its very nature is confidential and breeds reserve. Who would have it otherwise ? The taciturnity so ingrained, though, has resulted in the peculiar paucity of police literature. The Official Secrets Acts, of course, have a great deal to do with this, and the need to "clear" even the memoirs of a retired police officer is a heavy deterrent. An even heavier one is the pressure of police business, which leaves little leisure of writing or reading. The policeman's hours are longer than those of most callings and must be so disposed that the service covers the twenty-four hours of every day of every wee

Another barrier to communication is the lack of higher formal education among policemen. The authorities have of recent years begun a determined attac on the problem of interesting sixth-formers and graduates in the police career, but the majority of serving officers left school early. Nowadays there is muc more likelihood of the bright youngster being put to "A" level work in G.C.E., and going on to university or similar training and a special effort is called for if the Service is to attract its fair share of better-educated young people. The situation is nevertheless less serious than it seems. The educational net is far from infallible. Experience shows that people who left school at fifteen or sixteen are often in their twenties the intellectual equals of graduates and professionally educated contemporaries. Headmasters know well that schooling does not always appeal to youngsters of sterling quality and intelligence who are anxious to embark as early as possible on the practical activity of earning a living. Many such youngsters find their way into the Police Service. The fact that most police officers have not had much formal schooling can easily be over-valued.

Police duty is itself a great educator and sharpener of the wits. The policeman in his early years with the public soon develops his sense of responsibility, his judgment and his initiative. Then, again, the officer who aspires to higher rank must also in his early twenties resume the habit of study if he is to pass the two qualifying examinations. These demand years

3 of hard work in leisure time and have been equated in difficulty with the examinations for law degrees and for the bar. The Service, as indicated above, is doing a great and increasing amount, too, to give higher training of staff-college and university quality to its most promising officers. Its good will in these respects is evident in the facilities so often accorded to those who are furthering their education by attending University Extension and other courses. The "mature" student, who has proved his worth in the discharge of his vocational responsibilities, is a more valued character in universities today than ever before - the years immediately following the second world war taught a lesson which has not been forgotten - and the performance of police officers who have succeeded, despite being early school-leavers, in gaining university places, gives every reason for confidence in their capacity to tackle academic work. The educational barrier is often more apparent than real.

The exigencies of police work produce certain factors, and they are hard to counter, which militate against the successful completion of courses held in leisure time. This has proved disappointing to extra-mural teachers who have seen the numbers on their course declining during a session. The incidence of shift-work is such a factor and so is the movement of officers on transfer, which particularly affects members of county constabularies, and which is more and more common nowadays when ambitious officers are encouraged to seek promotion by transferring to another force. With the best will in the world on the part of the police these depletions are bound to occur.

The adverse factors are not all on the police side. It may be questioned whether the courses offered are always as well designed or as well staffed as they might be. The teaching of law in criminology classes devised specifically for police students could sometimes be better tackled, for instance: one occasionally comes across a class of experienced people who have been much concerned with the administration of the criminal law being taught subjects in which they are better versed than the teacher. There is, of course, every reason for criminal law to form a salient part of the syllabus, and usually it is taught in such a way as to illumine the somewhat dogmatic approach that practical application of acts and sections inevitably inculcates. Whatever can be done to relate particular knowledge and individual experience to basic principles and the wider scheme can only be good, and this is the great gift the academic approach has to give to the practical person.

It is perhaps asking too much - though surely not in this Institute, with its association with the Director's classic History of English Criminal Law - to suggest that more emphasis might be placed on the historical approach to criminological studies: this, too, helps the student to a better perspective and a surer grasp of the factors of a situation. Dare it be suggested, also, that the criminologist might take more account of the imaginative literature of his subject ? Shakespeare, Dickens and Dostoevsky offer much to the student of crime, as do Balzac, that ardent questioner of Vidocq, or Maupassant. As Freud found, the artist often anticipates the scientist who has to work in terms of human destiny, and the criminologist might sometimes succeed in making a classic live for his students where the teacher of literature had failed. To ask this is to ask for more miscellaneousness, indeed, but in criminology that can hardly come amiss.

A practical problem which cannot be ignored in organising criminological courses is that teachers in fields other than that of the law are in short supply for extra-mural work. There are more barristers and law graduates with time on their hands than there are sociologists or social psychologists. There is every reason for gratitude to hard-pressed university teachers who give up their evenings to extension work. What is particularly gratifying is the good opinion university teachers generally form of their police students and their pleasure in being allowed to share in their practical experience.

The Way Forward

This contact between criminologists and police officers is surely the most hopeful feature of the whole scheme. People may well look back in years to com and see in this the beginning of a valuable departure in social science. The two parties to it have so much to learn from each other. On the one hand there are the people daily involved in the machinery for the prevention and detection

of crime, with their great wealth of experience in dealing with offenders at large in their natural habitat, and on the other the people with the skill to marshal, interpret and make articulate that experience, which otherwise must sink into classified files. It is saddening to think how much of that experience is already lost and how much of it might profitably have been made accessible not only to the research worker but also to the whole Police Service, of this country and of the world.

It has been thought in some quarters in the past that courses should be organised for police officers exclusively but the view has prevailed that there is more benefit for all concerned if other workers in the social field, such as magistrates, members of the Prison Service, probation officers, and civilians in police employ are able to attend the same classes. The argument that police students will not participate freely in discussion if laymen other than the teacher are present is ill-founded. A diversity of occupations can only lead to valuable exchanges of experience and to better understanding of others' points of view. Exchanges of this order are especially useful to police officers and help to offset the factors making for their isolation in the community.

This paper began by reference to the pioneer effort made by the Northern Universities in developing the study of criminology among police officers. It is pleasing to be able to report at this stage that similar study has now been established firmly in the London area.

The initiative was taken by the Principal of the East London College of Commerce (Toynbee Hall) in 1963 by proposing to the University Extension Committee that criminology courses should be promoted for police forces in and around London. This was accepted and an Advisory Committee was formed to administer the scheme with the assistance of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies. The Committee, as now constituted, includes the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, a College Principal, criminologists, a senior police officer, representatives of the Prison Department of the Home Office, and also of the Police College. The student-response was excellent and no less than sixteen classes were formed.

The University has now instituted a Certificate in Criminology, awarded on successful completion of a three-year course, with sessional and final examinations. The original form of the course was a first year on the general principles of criminal law and the other years were devoted to the causes of crime and the theory and practice of the penal system. An alternative year's work is being offered this autumn on the individual in institutions and in society. The Certificate, with its stringent academic requirements, has proved particularly attractive to the police. The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and other chief officers have taken a most constructive interest in the scheme and all concerned have done their best to minimize the difficulties police duty inevitably puts in the student's way.

The Police Service, then, has come to look upon criminology as a natural subject for its officers to study in their leisure hours. The great bulk of the work is done under University Extension-style arrangements but senior officers have attended residential seminars at this Institute as a matter of duty and criminologists are regular lecturers at the Police College and at various refresher courses for seasoned officers which are held throughout the country.

The way forward lies in developing the association so auspiciously begun between criminologists and police officers. The joint enterprises in research which this association encourages us to envisage must surely come soon and bear fruit. How the bond may best be strengthened will be a useful theme for this Conference.

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