Training and Law Enforcement
A Look into the 1980's

By S. BURKETT MILNER, PH.D.
Associate Professor
Social Justice Professions
Sangamon State University
Springfield, Ill.

According to St. Augustine, time is a three-fold present—the present as we experience it, the past as a present memory, and the future as a present expectation. Thus, using this criterion, the future of law enforcement has already taken form, since the decisions shaping this future have been made.

Planning for the future does not require gazing into a crystal ball, but rather a careful examination of the past and present. By reviewing a number of trends in society and criminal justice, the resulting changes in police training can be anticipated. What is certain is that there is a need for change in police training, a change that will occur in the 1980's.

As can be expected, crime will continue to rise in the 1980's, but perhaps at a slower pace. And the citizens' cry for a "war on crime" will not be abandoned. "The public demand for control and prevention of violent crime will grow stronger."1 This demand, coupled with emphasis on effective performance, will increase the pressure placed upon instructors, making it necessary for police training to become more crime specific.

Technology will be the single most significant influence on crime and the criminal justice system, as it has been in the past. Technological advances offer a variety of opportunities for committing crimes now unknown or uncommon. The movement toward electronic banking allows for new opportunities for criminal activity which need to be examined systematically by both law enforcement personnel and police trainers. In addition, detection and apprehension will become more difficult because of the widespread use of citizens' band radios by criminal groups.

August Bequai maintains that computer crime is rising, a fact posing a formidable problem for law enforcement personnel. With the advancement of computer technology comes more intricate and sophisticated forms of white-collar crime. In addition to the destruction of computer installations, computers are being programmed by criminal groups to steal information, services, and property. However, the greatest threat comes in the financial arena. By simple manipulation of computer systems, fictitious assets and earnings can be created with the push of a button. Presently, only a few police officers are adequately trained to investigate computer crimes. As these crimes become more widespread and...
known, police instructors will be expected to develop training programs to prepare investigators to meet this challenge.

In the same respect, consumer protection is "theft" is likely to prosper rather than disappear in the 1980's. Certain business practices, such as manufacturing and selling defective products and deceptive advertising, will become group crimes rather than the practice of individuals. Thus crime control methods will be forced to shift their attention from individual responsibility to collective responsibility in order to deal effectively with large-scale crime. In so doing, the emphasis of police training will focus on group as well as individual control. Police in the future will, of necessity be members of a team, with the training curricula emphasizing team-building skills.

Advances in technology between needs and resources, State legis­ lature and local governments are beginning to look more closely at expenditures. This present emphasis on accountability will intensify in the near future. Police training practices, once regarded as a "feast or famine" proposition, will no longer be considered as being the same. Those factors contributing to domestic agitation do not show signs of abatement, making it impera­ tive for every police officer to be ade­ quately trained to deal effectively with these occurrences.

Police training programs in the 1980's will be skills-oriented, although some will still continue to be, as was the case in the 1970's. The current emphasis is largely aimed at preparing police officers to deal with administrative and technical matters. Recruits are thoroughly schooled to fill out forms and write reports, and more on physical training and more on the complex problems of society, particularly those faced by the average police officer.

Kelling and Fogel maintain that officers can be trained in the academies to emphasize citizen contacts and the development of skill in handling these contacts. Greater emphasis could be placed on handling service calls in ways other than rapid re­ sponse, such as counseling and resolv­ ing minor conflicts or vandalism.

As police functions become more complex, police instructors will incor­ porate into their curricula techniques emphasizing group work and team decision making. Along with the training curriculum, a reorientation of police work is necessary. Police training will be placed on facts and memorization of rules and regulations. Attention will be directed to discretion and good judgment. Trainees will be encour­ aged to think for themselves rather than let someone do it for them.

McCreary has identified several indications of changing environment for police managers, one of which is the growing acceptance of police uni­ onization. If the trend in Europe is fol­ lowed in the United States, police unionization will allow officers a greater role in the decision-making process. In Sweden, there are joint management boards with union representation. The German police have employee coun­ cil; police officers in France choose approximately half of the membership on promotion and disciplinary boards. Unions such as these, in addition to their concerns for wages, working con­ ditions, and fringe benefits, will also play an important role in professionalizing the occupation.

There are strong indications that the next decade will see police officers demanding the right to participate in organizational decisions. Police man­ agers are beginning to realize that office­ ial training is just as important as police­ make and are urging their employees to provide input. Thus, the trend is toward developing courses and workshops which will be used by police officers to express their concerns. To avoid learning the hard way, man­ agers of police training instructors to prepare officers for their new role as participating managers.

Presently, there is a growing trend to place civilians in key positions that have traditionally been occupied by sworn police officers. This trend will be continued during the 1980's, which will result in a number of changes in police procedures. The diversity in recruits could lead to the emergence of personnel problems during their time in training. Recruits from widely different backgrounds will report. With different backgrounds, the selection of which recruits make significant difference in police training. By taking a broad perspective, diversity in recruits will benefit the police force.

Inservice training will be required to adjust their curricula so that their graduates can successfully pass the licensing examinations. Since police officers will be required to update their knowledge, law enforcement agencies will also become involved in "recurrent education" and "lifelong education." Inservice training will be a mandatory requirement.

There is reason to believe that agencies in the 1980's will pursue a dual-level process, as is done in the military services in the United States and the German police. This process will include a substantial increase in the number of police officers enrolled and enlisted men. Lateral entry will become more common in order to attract talented persons needed for specialized law enforcement tasks, in­ cluding administration and manage­ ment. The European experience in this regard may become more common in the United States. Civilian liberal arts-trained personnel will be involved in the police organizations.

Many European countries require candidates for ranking police positions to meet certain educational and train­ ing standards prior to their considera­ tion. In the United States, the typical pattern is for an officer to be promoted and then trained. If police agencies in the United States continue to follow the European pattern, some have, police academies and law enforcement programs at universities and colleges will be expected to provide a variety of training opportunities which will help to meet this need.

Another practice that will become more commonplace in the next decade is the licensing of police officers. This will require training academies to adjust their curricula so that their graduates can successfully pass the licensing examinations. Since police officers will be required to update their knowledge, law enforcement agencies will also become involved in "recurrent education." Inservice training will be a mandatory requirement.

In the past 10 years, educa­ tors and police administrators have been given serious attention to the relationship between the educational system and the criminal justice system. Recently, an important question has been raised: "What have been the results of a decade of increased edu­ cational opportunities for law en­ forcement officers?" Lawrence Shen­ bert, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York at Albany, made reference to this in a paper presented at the 1977 IACP con­ vention in Los Angeles.

"Something is wrong in police education. Whether the causes are being a cause for upgrading the police institution has be­ come a very different reality. A decade of rapid expansion has provided more education to more police officers than ever before. But a growing body of evidence suggests that higher educa­ tion has not provided police with the tools that it intended. Many more and more college-educated recruits enter the law enforcement profession, training academies and in­ stitutions of higher learning will learn to prepare a more professional police force. An accreditation process for criminal justice degree programs is also established, and police training programs will become more relevant and operate in the coming decade.

Police trainers in the 1980's will find their work more arduous and challenging. They will be asked to prove the value of their training, while simultaneously competing for funds for a greater number of training opportunities. As opposed to the tradi­ tional view that police training courses today, training programs during the next decade will be more specific and job-related. This would result in a vast change in training and law enforce­ ment.
END