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Training

Training and Law Enforcement A Look into the 1980's

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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



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known, police instructors will be expected to develop training programs to prepare investigators to meet this challenge.²

In the same respect, consumer protection or "naderism" is likely to prosper rather than dissipate 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.³

Feeling the imbalance between needs and resources, State legislatures and local governments are beginning to look more closely at expenditures. This present emphasis on accountability will intensify in the next decade. Police training programs, once regarded as a "feast or famine" proposition, will no longer be considered the "sacred cows" of law enforcement. Academies will be asked continuously to demonstrate their value, and training programs will be expected to have job-related performance standards and certification that graduates can perform at a certain desired level before graduation.

With the continuation and intensification of the energy crisis, and in light of rising gasoline costs and limited resources, government units will place a ceiling on fuel expenditures, resulting in the reevaluation and redesigning of patrol tactics. As a result, training personnel will be called upon to assist their departments in stretching the patrol dollar.

Certain population trends, such as suburbanization and changing population structure, will follow the general pattern of the earlier decade, placing another burden on police training. As shifts in the racial composition be-

tween inner cities and the suburbs take place, police officers will have to become more aware of behavioral dissimilarities. What should also be considered is the general age imbalance currently taking place. By the year 2000, the number of persons age 65 and over will exceed 28 million (11 percent of the population), pointing to an expected rise in crimes against the elderly during this period.

In addition to societal changes, there are indications that the police environment may experience dramatic alterations. Repeated studies have

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shown that police spend the majority of their time on service-related functions, with domestic disturbances being the most numerous. Those factors contributing to domestic agitation do not show signs of abatement, making it imperative for every police officer to be adequately trained to deal effectively with these occurrences.

Police training programs in the 1980's will be skills-oriented, although considerably different from those now offered. Contemporary police training is aimed primarily at preparing police officers to deal with administrative and technical matters. Recruits are thoroughly schooled to fill out forms, shoot straight, defend themselves, and judge behavior from a legalistic point of view. In the next decade, police training will place less emphasis 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 han-

dling these contacts.⁴ Greater emphasis could be placed on handling service calls in ways other than rapid response, such as counseling and reassuring citizens who had been victimized.

Commenting on police training in the United States, the British police historian Charles Reith wrote, "It can be said of police training schools that the recruit is taught everything except the essential requirements of his calling, which is how to secure and maintain the approval and respect of the public whom he encounters daily in the course of his duties."⁵ While this is partially true today, it will become less of a problem in the 1980's.

The training sections on psychology, sociology, and abnormal behavior will be reoriented to include realistic applications and associated performance standards. The "war game" training used extensively by the military will become common; staging of mock situations, together with associated police response, will simulate the pressures and problems of actual operational conditions. Recruits will find themselves thrust into street situations, such as landlord-tenant squabbles, during their training period.

In the next decade, more changes in police recruitment and promotional practices can be expected. Court-ordered removal of employment barriers will intensify, increasing the number of minorities and women admitted to police training classes. While there is little evidence to suggest that different kinds of people—black v. white, college educated v. high school graduate, men v. women—behave differently once they become officers, neither is there much evidence to the contrary. Assuming such differences exist, the selection of who is hired could make a significant difference in police training. In the same respect, this great diversity in recruits could lead to the emergence of personnel problems during their time at the academy. Since most instructional staffs and counselors drawn from police ranks are not competent in this area, training institutions will call upon professional counselors to provide these services.

As police functions become more complex, police instructors will incorporate into their curricula techniques emphasizing personal, group, and team decisionmaking. Less reliance will be placed on facts and memorization of general guidelines, and more attention devoted to discretion and good judgment. Trainees will be encouraged to think for themselves rather than let someone do it for them.

McCreedy has identified several indications of changing environments for police managers, one of which is the growing acceptance of police unionization.⁶ If the trend in Europe is followed in the United States, police unionization will allow officers a greater role in the decisionmaking process. In Sweden, there are joint management boards with union representation. The German police have employee councils; police officers in France choose approximately half of the membership on promotion and disciplinary boards. Unions such as these, in addition to their concern for wages, working conditions, 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 managers are beginning to realize that officers have valuable contributions to make and are urging their employees to provide input. Thus, the trend is toward a system of shared authority. To avoid learning the hard way, managers will expect 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 been traditionally occupied by sworn personnel, a move made by several progressive police departments in recent years. This will continue into the 1980's, which will be characterized by a substantial increase in the number of civilian employees in law enforcement agencies. Once again, training academies will be called upon to provide citizens specialized training needed to fulfill their roles in police departments.

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 recruitment of officers and enlisted men. Lateral entry will become more common in order to attract talented persons needed for specialized law enforcement tasks, including administration and management. The European experience in this regard may become more common in the United States. Civilians literally run most police departments in Europe. Three hundred of the top police positions in Sweden are reserved for lawyers who are selected from the upper ranks; 10 percent of the detectives in Germany are recruited from the legal professions.

Many European countries require candidates for ranking police positions to meet certain educational and training standards prior to their consideration. 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, as 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 officers become eligible for promotion.

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 be up to date, law enforcement academies will also become involved in "recurrent education" and "lifelong education."⁷ Inservice training will be a mandatory requirement.

During the past 10 years, educators and police administrators have given serious attention to the relationships 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 educational opportunities for law enforcement officers?" Lawrence Sherman, Graduate School of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York at Albany, made reference to this in a paper presented at the 1977 IACP convention in Los Angeles:

"Something is wrong in police education. What began as a dream for upgrading the police institution has become 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 education has not provided police with the best that it has to offer. . . . Both higher education and the police have settled for second best."⁸

As more and more college-educated recruits enter the law enforcement profession, training academies and institutions of higher learning will team up to prepare a highly professional police officer. An accreditation process for criminal justice degree programs and also police training programs will become standard operating practices in the coming decade.

Police trainers in the 1980's will find their work to be both frustrating and challenging. They will be asked to prove the value of their training, while simultaneously answering the demands for a greater variety of training opportunities. As opposed to the traditional catchall, generalized training of today, training programs during the next decade will be more specific and job-related, resulting in significant changes in training and law enforcement.

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Footnotes

¹The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions and The Center for the Study in Criminal Justice, *Criminal Justice in 2000 A.D.*, p. 20.

²August Beaul, *White Collar Crime: A 20th Century Crisis* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1978), pp. 106-107.

³*Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴Kelling and Fogel, "Police Patrol," in Cohn, ed., *The Future of Policing* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978), p. 176.

⁵Leonard Territo, C.R. Swanson, and Neil C. Chamelein, *The Police Personnel Selection Process* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1977), p. 189.

⁶McCreedy, "Changing Nature of Police Environment," in Cohn, ed., *The Future of Policing* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978), p. 176.

⁷Lloyd Cooper, "Make Way for Recurrent Education," *Training and Development Journal*, November 1976.

⁸Lawrence Sherman, "Higher Education For Police Officers: Why Not the Best?" unpublished paper, 1977.

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