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# THE TRAINING OF THE CRIMINOLOGIST<sup>1</sup>

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Three more or less distinct types or groups of persons have contributed to build up the field of present day criminology, both theoretical and practical, namely: (I) Those whose business it is to discover crime and apprehend and identify criminals; (II) those whose business it is to deal with the apprehended criminal; (III) those whose contact with crime and criminals is that of the student and scientist. The special qualities, abilities, and training of the personnel in each of these groups has influenced and will continue to influence in many direct and indirect ways the development of criminology. Without attempting the thankless task of determining who or what constitutes a criminologist, this paper will consider a few of the problems relating to specialized training in each of the fields above mentioned.

## I.

The need for specialized training of law enforcement officers is generally admitted without argument, yet there nowhere exists any very extensive program of such training. It appears that police work is in many ways like salesmanship, a mixture of many vaguely recognized and somewhat contradictory qualities difficult to isolate and not always subject to transmission by teaching. Although many cities and other governmental units offer some type of police training, most of these courses appear to be of the lecture or demonstration type where someone presumed to be an authority tells all that needs to be known about the subject in the course of a week, or a month, or three months,—after which the policemen-pupils “graduate” according to the best approved academic tradition, including a heribboned “diploma.”

From data returned by thirty-nine cities and police schools in 1930, Barry<sup>2</sup> classified the training offered as of four types, namely:

<sup>1</sup> Paper read before the Section on Criminology, of the American Sociological Society, at the Annual Meeting, December 30, 1935.

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<sup>2</sup> Barry, A. G., “Needs and Goals for Police Training,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Vol. 22, No. 2, July, 1931, p. 171-195.

(1) Apprenticeship training where experience is the main teacher; (2) administrative detail and routine techniques to enable a man to execute specific orders more efficiently; (3) technical problems in the application of scientific methods to detection, identification, capture, and conviction; (4) interpretative explanations dealing with diagnosis, prognosis, prevention, and therapy involved in typical problems or situations. A fifth type was suggested as in process of developing, that is training in the research approach which would encourage the policeman to seek an understanding of his problems from a careful, objective study of the facts.

During the summer of 1935, the writer made some investigation of the courses and the organization of curricula in the police schools of fifteen states. Short courses were the rule, averaging from four to six weeks, with little thought given to the problem of continuity or of development of subject matter from simple to more complex.

A training program of interrelated courses, standing in logical developmental relation to one another and offering continuity and extensive technical knowledge in the various police fields, is apparently nowhere in existence in the United States. Much that passes for police training at the present time is little more than a gesture to gain favorable publicity and a device for making existing police personnel feel enhanced prestige through having "graduated" from some kind of a "school."

It is clear that multiplying the number of these uncoordinated short courses will not contribute much to the development of better trained police personnel. The work of different kinds of police officers differs widely and it is not at all clear that any one course is specially desirable for all. City police departments, for example, usually emphasize military drill and the "school of the soldier" in what is sometimes called the "basic course." Rural peace officers, county sheriffs, and the majority of small town officers have apparently no particular need for such training. Similarly, many of the special problems confronting rural officers probably seldom come to the attention of the policeman on a city police department.

Three steps appear to be fundamental in order to bring police training out of the present chaos of miscellaneous short courses and make it a coordinated program of interrelated courses significantly related to the duties of the specific job and to the capacities of the individual policeman. These steps are:

- (a) A job analysis of police work to determine the characteristics and peculiar duties and problems of each kind of job. This is a difficult task but nevertheless a highly necessary one. Until accurate knowledge has been obtained of what actually needs to be done on each police job, no training program can hope to reach any considerable standard of effectiveness.
- (b) A teaching analysis of the specialized police jobs to see what elements can be taught, and what are the best teaching methods. It is entirely probable that the "school" technique successful in teaching the essentials of one type of police work may be entirely inadequate or inapplicable in another type of work. Simply herding in all available men on the force and giving them a course of lectures, an examination, and a diploma may not be police training at all in any serious sense of the word.
- (c) Selective techniques need to be developed to insure that only persons of ability and reasonable promise of future usefulness will be accepted for training, or recommended for promotion as the result of such training.

Of these three fundamentals, the last is perhaps of the greatest immediate practical significance. Said August Vollmer in 1932:

"Accepting the standards established by the Los Angeles Civil Service Commission (minimum score of 120 on the Army Alpha examination) as the lowest standard compatible with good police service, we are forced to recognize the fact that over 75% of the members of the police forces of this country are not mentally endowed sufficiently to perform the duties assigned."<sup>3</sup>

If Mr. Vollmer is correct in the estimate that three-fourths of present day police force personnel are mentally incapable of doing the work assigned to them, it is obviously true also that they are incapable of profiting materially by training which would qualify them for a better performance of their jobs.

The eventual goal of a police training program is presumably a course for able young people that will lead to careers in police work.<sup>4</sup> Before much time need be given to the details of such a course, it is apparent that important and far-reaching changes in the methods of selection and the conditions of tenure must be effected. Career work in the police field is clearly related to career

<sup>3</sup> Vollmer, August, "The Wickersham Police Report," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Vol. 22, No. 5, January, 1932, p. 720.

<sup>4</sup> For an account of one of the most ambitious programs of what is meant to be career training now in progress in this country at San Jose State College, California, see MacQuarrie, T. W., "San Jose State College Police School," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Vol. 26, No. 2, July, 1935, p. 255-261.

work in other fields of the public service. Certainly no course of training, whatever the excellence of its instruction or the prestige of the school, can make career work out of jobs controlled by political machines or seriously subjected to political pressure. Police personnel, as well as other types of public personnel, must be removed as far as possible from what is generally called "politics" before any very effective result can be expected from training programs, no matter how ambitious or well conceived those programs may be.

## II.

There is a large and heterogenous group of persons whose principal business it is to deal with and care for the apprehended criminal. Two general divisions of this group are readily distinguishable, namely, (a) persons connected with court procedure and the law in determining sentences; (b) those who care for the criminal after sentence. The qualifications and training requirements of the first group, i. e., the court and legal personnel, is a complex subject that lies beyond the province of this paper.

The second group consists largely of institutional personnel and the agents of non-institutional supervision such as probation and parole department personnel. Of the regular institutional staff, large numbers are occupied with the routine duties of keeping the institution going along the lines desired by the responsible administrative head. Thus the clerks, bookkeepers, shop foremen, school instructors, dentists, doctors, and nurses all have relatively standardized work to perform which they may qualify for as they would for similar jobs in industry or the professions. For these positions the problem is one of selection of the ablest rather than of training, as far as the institution is concerned.

Any penal institution that accepts the declaration of principles of the American Prison Association that the purpose of imprisonment is the reformation and rehabilitation of the offender must consider the problem of the proper selection and training of the specialized group of persons carrying the responsibility for diagnosis and differential treatment of the individual inmate. Case work in prisons has scarcely made more than a beginning but enough has been done to indicate that its problems to a large extent are unique and call for specialized training of the case workers.<sup>5</sup> This means,

<sup>5</sup> See: Stern, Leon: "Case Work Enters the Prison," *The Prison Journal*, published by Pennsylvania Prison Society, April-July, 1933, p. 1-12.

*Handbook of Casework and Classification Methods for Offenders.* - Edgar A. Doll, Editor. Published for the Committee on Casework Methods by the American Prison Association, E. A. Cass, Secretary, 135 East 15th Street, New York City.

in general, specialized training in each of the several professional fields interested in such case work.

There is no present agreement in regard to the functions or personnel of a classification clinic or case work unit. Psychiatrists, psychologists, vocational guidance and trade training experts, social workers, sociologists, and ordinary medical doctors have all insisted that they have a voice in this work, if not actually given the dominant role. The Committee on Case work and Treatment of Prisoners of the American Prison Association surveyed the country in 1932 and found widely varying practices called case work.<sup>6</sup> As an aid to the unification of case work procedures, the Committee then attempted to formulate a "manual" or "handbook" which would outline the principles and methods considered most desirable. After two years of discussion and disagreement among committee members, a cautious outline was prepared by the psychologist member. This was later published by the American Prison Association under the title, *Handbook of Casework and Classification Methods for Offenders*.

As a member of that committee, participating in the discussion antecedent to the published *Handbook*, the fact was forcefully brought to the attention of the writer that there is no definite recognized task or function performed by casework units that are reasonably consistent from institution to institution. There is general recognition of the need for understanding each individual's problem, or problems, and of arranging his program such that the stay in the institution will contribute to the building up of a stable adjustment of the offender to the outside society to which he will sooner or later be returned. But from the standpoint of either theory or practice, there is no consistent agreement as to how this individualization of treatment is to be brought about.

The implications of the above for the problem of training is obvious. If there is no great consistency in the practice and emphasis called prison casework, general training programs preparing for such careers are out of the question. The most fruitful avenue of approach in the present confusion appears to be through the establishment of internships whereby the young man of ability and good academic training in his speciality may acquire experience and insight into actual prison treatment casework. The internship

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<sup>6</sup> See: "Report of Committee on Casework and Treatment of Prisoners" in *Proceedings of the 62nd Annual Congress of the American Prison Association held at Indianapolis, Indiana, October, 1932, p. 147-186.*

should preferably take him to more than one type of institution and give him contact with several types of emphasis in the casework program. As the number of specialists grows who have had this background of professional training combined with a practical apprenticeship, it may reasonably be expected that they will work out the next steps in developing both the theory and the practice of individualization in penal institutions.

The problem of training for parole and probation personnel is in many respects similar. With the wide variation in present practice and procedure, no specific training program can be very satisfactory. With careful selection of individuals of good general background and high ability, specific training can probably best be supplied through the setting up of an apprenticeship or probationary period of service in the particular department where the service is to be rendered. Background training should include a well-rounded education in the social sciences with specific emphasis on the study of human behavior, both normal and abnormal. Professional training in social work is desirable but unless there is a degree of specialization not now available in problems relating to both delinquency and adult crime such professional courses can have only limited value in preparing the worker for his job.

When the conditions of such public employment become less subject to political influences, the selection of personnel can be placed on a sounder professional basis. Training courses designed to supply the broad educational and cultural background plus specific field work devoted to parole and probation practice may then be made prerequisite for appointment to these positions. Until such a time comes, a broad general course in the facts and theories of human behavior plus specific probationary apprenticeship will probably give the most satisfactory results.

### III.

The question of the kind of training desirable for the scientist who wishes to make the phenomena of crime his field of study can not well be dissociated from the question of what constitutes science or scientific research in criminology. The conclusion of the Michael-Adler study<sup>7</sup> of a few years ago that "criminological research of the kind which has been and is now being done, should not be con-

<sup>7</sup> Michael, Jerome & Adler, Mortimer J., *Crime, Law, and Social Science*, xxix + 440 pp. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1933. (\$4.50).

tinued”<sup>8</sup> carries the definite implication that the training of prospective students in research along the lines followed in the past to produce the present leaders in the field is useless and futile. Whether one agrees with this conclusion or not, the point is nevertheless pertinent that training must be outlined with reference to the desired objectives.

It is not the purpose of this paper to attempt to determine what is, or is not, scientific in the field of criminology. The position taken is simply that the development of science in any field is a process of trial and error growth and change, not a course of rational development along any previously determined line. The problem of training the scientist, therefore, is not of teaching him an accepted routine of method that is declared to be scientific—it is much more seriously one of bringing able intelligent individuals of varied background of theories and procedures into vital contact with the problems in the field, both practical and theoretical.

In practice this means that individuals with good background training in what passes for research in the respective fields of sociology, psychiatry, psychology, education, and social work should be placed in positions where they will have vital contacts with the various phases of the phenomena of crime and be left free to apply their respective types of analysis. A group of serious research workers with divergent theories and methods working on common problems with the same population perhaps provide the best available system of checks and balances against overemphasis and one-sidedness in interpretation. The research products of such a group in the course of time is likely to be much more “scientific” than will result from the emphasis of any particular training course. The essential conditions necessary then are twofold, first, individuals of good ability and background training in the present techniques and sciences of human behavior, and secondly, the opportunity for such individuals to work together freely on problems significantly related to the understanding and control of crime.

The device that will most readily make these conditions a practical possibility appears to be the research internship. The post-doctoral fellowships and grants-in-aid of the Social Science Research Council come to mind here as possible sources for such internships. A few institutions might be induced to offer quarters and the use of their facilities if some source of income could be provided to

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401.

take care of the items of daily living expense. Specially endowed fellowships and loan funds for this purpose might conceivably be developed in connection with the larger and wealthier colleges and universities.

Implicit in much of the literature of present day criminology is the assumption that the causes of crime lie in the individual or in his objective environment. The control of crime is therefore said to be effected by either treating a "sick" or "maladjusted" individual or through correcting an anti-social condition in the environment. Research in the field must recognize that in many cases the etiology of criminal behavior is identical with that of non-criminal behavior. It is frequently not a question of behavior at all in the individual sense, but a clash of codes and conflicting group definitions of what constitutes approved conduct. Groups and interests, whose codes and definitions are hopelessly diverse, are in constant conflict, jockeying for position and influence to secure the assistance and approval of the state in making their particular view the "law" of the political community (e. g., prohibition). The baffling problems of why group codes are what they are, and of why individuals are loyal to these groups and codes rather than to the larger political society have not so far been reduced to the methods of empirical science with any high degree of success. Yet the phenomena of crime are quite patently indices of this deeper underlying fact of social conflict. Successful research in the field must develop techniques for more accurate and discriminating consideration of this factor.

One further point should be noted in connection with this discussion of research methods. Most problems in criminology are also problems in social control. As such there are frequently questions of practical considerations that demand attention and may occupy the center of the stage without offering any particular opportunities for basic research. Problems of administrative routine dominate the field of police, courts, institutions, and extra-institutional practices. Decisions have to be made in terms of judgments of what is "best" or the "most scientific," etc. The administrator wants the latest available information on a given question in order to arrive at a decision. Supplying such information must not be confused with the field of research as a vehicle for the development of science.

An illustration may be taken from the field of penology. Any institution that attempts to operate as a place for the rehabilitation

of maladjusted individuals rather than as a place of punishment must face many new problems of administrative routine, quite aside from anything it may do in research on individualization of treatment. Each inmate must be diagnosed and some form of treatment prescribed which is presumed to fit his particular needs. Obviously this treatment must rest on reliable information and to secure it the institution must employ a whole technical staff, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, case workers, and so on. The minutiae of this work, however, becomes merely part of the established administrative routine.

Research under such a program is something quite different. It seeks primarily to describe and compare the various types of treatment applied to the various types of men in the hope that it may be possible to control certain conditions for set periods of time and to hold constant certain factors in such ways that tentative judgments may be made with reference to their respective merits or demerits. In this, research is not especially interested in which method is "good," or which is "bad," nor in whether the treatment is in accord with humanitarian lines or in keeping with the latest fads and fashions in psychiatry, sociology, or psychology. The research function is to stand impersonally on the sidelines and compare the various methods that may be applied by means of specialized technical devices and the most careful application of scientific methods.

In order to do this it is an essential prerequisite that the research worker himself be not too vitally concerned with the type of treatment applied. He must be technically familiar with the methods and objectives of the treatment attempted, but it must in no case be *his* treatment in the sense that his personality becomes involved in the need for justifying his own good sense in prescribing it. In such a situation research would be impossible. The most probable result would be a set of ingenious rationalizations in defense of the type of treatment which has been prescribed. As soon as that condition obtains, the research worker has become the protagonist of a cause, a propagandist seeking to justify his position, a defender of the faith and not a wielder of the impersonal tools of science.

#### IV.

These comments on the problem of specialized training in the field of criminology may be summarized briefly under the following points:

1. In the field of public service personnel (police work, courts, institutions, and welfare departments) the most important change needed is a strengthening of the conditions of tenure such that merit and competent work in the field become the basis of selection and promotion. This appears to be more important than any training program without this development.

2. Effective training in the police field will come, not from multiplying the present type of short courses, but by undertaking an extensive job and teaching analysis of the actual work to be done and then arranging the training program on the basis of inter-related courses standing in developmental relation to one another.

3. There is little present agreement in regard to either theories or practices connected with the individualization of treatment for offenders. Under these circumstances, it is suggested that internships or apprenticeships in existing establishments be provided for students already well advanced in some related specialty, in order that they may learn from the give and take of applying different theories and methods to similar problems in real treatment situations.

4. The best approach to the more definite training of the research scientist in criminology appears to be through the use of research internships on the graduate level for those already well trained in the recognized methods of related fields, such as psychiatry, sociology, psychology, education, medicine, and social work.

5. Research methodology must be developed to include an accurate and discriminating consideration of the fact of underlying conflict in the codes and standards of value of the various groups that are important in the life organization of the individual criminal.