

1950

American Journal of Police Science: Editorial

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Recommended Citation

American Journal of Police Science: Editorial, 41 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 215 (1950-1951)

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AMERICAN JOURNAL of POLICE SCIENCE

EDITORIAL

An Experiment with German Police Officers in Promoting the Cause of Democracy Abroad

Under an experimental program sponsored and supported by the State Department of the United States, twelve German police officers from different sections of the American Zone in Germany recently attended a four months' course conducted at Michigan State College by its Department of Police Administration. The objective only incidentally involved the training of these officers in the techniques of crime detection. The main purpose was to introduce to them the advantages of a system of government which limits the authority and jurisdiction of the police and which protects the individual citizen from arbitrary police action.

Each German officer was carefully screened and selected by United States public safety officers in Germany and all were very familiar with the English language. Upon arrival at Michigan State College, they were furnished living quarters in the same large dormitory available to regular students. They then received a two weeks' course of instruction in the Political Science Department, consisting of an introductory study in American Government, so as to acquaint them with the historical roots of our democracy. The third week was devoted to a study of federal, state, and municipal law enforcement problems, and here they observed, in their own field, the feasibility of effective government in a decentralized and democratic form. They saw evidence of how our various law enforcement systems function by cooperative action. Then another week was devoted to various detailed police procedures and techniques.

During all this one month period the German officers were given full liberty to meet and visit with anyone or any group of individuals they desired. They mingled freely with other students on the campus and participated in formal discussions with various student organizations. They also spent week-ends in other cities and with various groups, traveling alone or with other members of their party. In all they saw and experienced student life as it actually exists in this country.

After the one month's instruction of the type just described, the officers embarked upon a program whereby they were separated into small groups, usually in pairs, and assigned to various small size Michi-

gan police departments, so they could obtain firsthand information about some of our police problems and police administration. Opportunities were also given them to spend some time with larger police departments and with various state police departments.

As one who had the privilege of lecturing to and also visiting informally with these twelve German officers, the writer was greatly impressed with the potentialities involved in this experiment in the art of selling democracy abroad. Upon their return home the report of these visitors, by reason of their positions as police officers, will in all probability be better received and given greater credence than the tales an ordinary citizen may tell. Moreover, as a police officer each one will have much more contact with the public and the message will be carried that much further.

This was a worthwhile project and a job well done!

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