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POLICE AND YOUTH

James B. Nolan

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Throughout the history of society, men have approached the problem of crime under the influence of different philosophies and attitudes. There was a period when "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth" prevailed. Retributive justice, often cruel and harsh, gave way in time to the concept of the Classical school, which predicated punishment on the pleasure-pain principle. The reformatory era is generally attributed to pope Clement XI, who in 1704 founded the Hospital of St. Michael's at Rome, and who inscribed over the door of that building, "For the correction and instruction of profligate youth that they, who when idle are injurious, may, when taught, become useful to the State."

Today in dealing with the problem of crime and criminals, we are prompted by the ideas of prevention, and despite the concomitant problems of the Positivistic school, we have been made aware of the need to appreciate the individual, and the many physical and social forces, that can affect him in his personal and social relations. While we need not abandon ourselves entirely to a deterministic theory, we can appreciate the force of contributing factors that make the person either socially desirable or socially undesirable. Criminologists, penologists, and those who engage in work directed to the solution of personal problems, are aware of the fact that often the courses of criminal justice do not have the effect that we like to anticipate. Not every individual sentenced to an institution becomes a desirable citizen upon his release. The amount of recidivism of which we are all aware, is ample proof of this. Yet, we realize and appreciate, the tremendous advances that have been made in our courts, our institutions, in probation and parole systems. These have all been directed toward the protection of society and the betterment of the individual.

It is within this framework of social change that I wish to present the workings of the Juvenile Aid Bureau. It represents an evaluation, a change, a progressive development that is now contributing and will in the future, contribute I believe, to the solution of our problem. Basically this Bureau represents the development of a new type of understanding of our problem, and of a new approach to its solution. Within its program is encompassed, an evaluation of the importance of the individual, of his uniqueness, of his rights, of his duties, and of

the effects of our whole culture and personal social relations on his growth.

Traditionally, police have been considered repressive agents concerned only in the enforcement of law and the apprehension of the criminal. Crime prevention, however, is one of a police department's responsibilities. In the past the interpretation of this responsibility, and the measures used to put it into effect, were really crime suppression, rather than crime prevention. It is only in recent years that police departments have come to interpret their crime prevention responsibility in a new light, in a constructive, positive fashion.

Two types of phenomena have led to this interpretation. The first I have already mentioned, i.e., the arresting, convicting and sentencing of a person does not always result in his rehabilitation. The second factor is equally obvious. Criminals are not born nor do they become criminals overnight. They grow up from juvenile delinquents—for delinquency is often incipient criminality. Based on these observations police departments began to search for new ways of approaching the problems of youth. In our own police department we began in 1910 to separate the records of delinquents from those of adult criminals. In 1914 we established a Junior Police only to disband it at the termination of the First World War. Throughout the 1920's we had Welfare Officers in each police precinct working on petty offenses of youth, and helping needy families. While these efforts were effective, they were neither organized nor guided sufficiently, to effect the type of program that was necessary.

In 1929 a committee was appointed by the Police Commissioner to study the problems of delinquency. It consisted of outstanding citizens who were representative of our various religious, social and recreation agencies. These representatives considered the many and varied efforts that had been expended throughout the years. They brought to bear on this problem their knowledge of the social science field and recognized the important part the policeman could play in the field of crime prevention. Hence, they proposed the establishment of a special bureau within the police department to handle this problem. It was to be called the Crime Prevention Bureau, now known as the Juvenile Aid Bureau.

The Juvenile Aid Bureau has definite responsibilities of planning and putting into operation programs designed to prevent delinquency and waywardness, and also securing adequate social treatment for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents and wayward minors. These are

the two broad purposes of the Juvenile Aid Bureau. Everything that is done, including the work of the Police Athletic League, is directed to meeting these responsibilities.

The Juvenile Aid Bureau is under my direct supervision. Eleven unit offices have been established throughout the city. Each unit is under the command of a lieutenant and staffed by police officers, both men and women. They handle the work of the Bureau for a designated area. Special units for patrol work operate from the Main Office, as well as the Service Unit, the functions of which will be described a little later.

The sources of our cases are many. The primary one, however, is from the police officer on patrol. Every uniformed policeman carries with him a form, known as a Juvenile Aid Bureau Form No. 2, which he uses to bring to our attention the boy or girl whose activity is delinquent or potentially delinquent. The card identifies the individual, indicates the activity complained of and the circumstances surrounding it, as well as associates involved. This card is forwarded to the Unit Office of the Juvenile Aid Bureau in which the subject lives. There a preliminary investigation is made by the Unit to determine the extent of the problem in the light of a complete and accepted social adjustment.

Where the case lends itself to correction by advice to the individual and parents and possible inclusion in a recreation program, the Unit completes the action. However, where the condition complained of is of a more serious nature and indicates the need for social treatment case work, the Unit clears with the Social Service Exchange. This provides for identifying any social agency that might be active with the family. The case is then referred to such an agency for treatment. Arrangements are made for periodic reports from the agency so that we are always aware of the progress being made by the individual in their plan of treatment.

Cases of individuals in need of social case work treatment not acceptable to agencies, are given to our Service Unit. This Case Working Unit is staffed by police officers, both men and women who have definite academic and experience backgrounds in the field of the Social Sciences. They perform, for the cases referred to it, the same complete services usually associated with social case-working agencies in their rehabilitative programs.

The work of the Service Unit involves an appreciation of all the factors that are contributing to the delinquent behavior of the individual

referred to our Juvenile Aid Bureau. Through the process of a case history we ascertain those things that are tending to influence the individual towards social maladjustment and then by using the resources of the community, such as medical and mental hygiene clinics, vocational guidance institutes, church affiliation, and others, we attempt to resolve those conditions, and effect the social adjustment of that boy or girl. Case work of this nature frequently requires as much work with parents as is involved with the child. In this area of our program we fully appreciate the need of a thorough understanding of the sociological and psychological factors involved in the individual and those with whom he comes in contact.

The work of the Juvenile Aid Bureau has been in progress now for over twenty years. In 1946, a department order was issued requiring that no arrest be made of children under sixteen years of age except for serious offenses in the felony classification or would come within the category of several serious misdemeanors. All cases, with the foregoing exceptions, must be referred to the Juvenile Aid Bureau and court action is taken only when necessary. This step is an indication of respect for the possibilities of social adjustment under the procedures we have established.

Last year the Juvenile Aid Bureau handled over 17,000 cases of delinquent and potentially delinquent behavior, and we seldom found it necessary to go into court. A decision to resort to court process is made when, having exhausted every possible media of treatment, we conclude that such action is necessary for the good of the child and for the good of the community.

A crime prevention program by a police department will only be as good as the personnel who are assigned to this work. In the application of the social sciences, we need the training and capacity that is asked for in any other professional field of endeavor.

In selecting our police officers, both men and women, consideration is given to several factors which include academic training with at least a bachelor's degree and a major in the Social Science Field.

The academic background, however, is by no means the only criterion to use in the selection of those who are to work with our growing youth. There is the important matter of personality. To be successful in dealing with children it is most important that the police officer possess that type of personality which will result in a friendly relationship with the subject for treatment. There need be no breakdown in the concept of lawful authority, and yet at the same time, the indif-

ference of poorly adapted workers can prevent that type of relationship which is so essential in case work treatment. Participation in this program of ours requires men and women to be ready and willing to make personal sacrifices in time and effort in order to successfully accomplish the objectives we have established.

In cooperation with our Police Academy and with the help of the colleges and universities of this city, we arrange annually, for in-service training programs for our people that cover such subjects as Crime and Delinquency, Social Psychology, Psychiatry and the field of Social Work. Lecturers stress those social sciences that will contribute to our workers an understanding of the individual in his total environmental structure and his learning of the techniques that will help in securing the information necessary for the constructive planning of a treatment program.

Many of the members of the Juvenile Aid Bureau hold Masters Degrees in Social work. Last year four members received their degrees from the Fordham School of Social Service on a scholarship basis granted to the Juvenile Aid Bureau. This year one member is attending the same school under the same scholarship arrangements, while a second member has received a scholarship leading to his Masters Degree from the New York School of Social Work, Columbia University.

Staff members of the Juvenile Aid Bureau lecture at the Police Academy to the probationary patrolmen who are in training prior to their assignment for general police work. We believe that these men, who will perform police work throughout the city, as well as every other member of the department, must understand the philosophy and purposes of our Bureau if our program is to be successful.

It is evident from what I have said that the Juvenile Aid Bureau is primarily concerned with identifying the delinquent, determining the contributing factors to his or her delinquency, and then using the available resources of the community, so as to bring to bear on that youngster the constructive influences that can mean so much to his or her social adjustment. It is further evident that our primary responsibility is to be a referral agency, to bridge the gap between the child in need and the agency that can help toward that child's social development. It has also been indicated that in some instances we deal with cases that agencies cannot handle. To meet this problem, to give these youngsters an equal opportunity for adjustment we have developed our own case work unit.

We all recognize the many factors contributing to delinquent behavior. I think we are also aware of the problems that have manifested themselves in personal and social disorganization. We appreciate the importance of the home, the school and the church in formulating the character and moral fibre of our boys and girls. The breakdown of these contributes in varying degrees to the problems of youth so frequently manifest in delinquency and crime.

We have found, however, that one factor asserts itself most frequently in the analysis of cases coming to our attention each year. In the early days of the Juvenile Aid Bureau, as well as today, many delinquencies referred to us are but indications of misdirected play due to lack of play facilities.

In addition to our recognition of the need for additional recreation facilities, we find that in using recreation as a means of treatment for delinquent behavior, we require a referral agency that will be concerned about the continued use of the program by the subject. We also appreciate the need for a recreation program that would concern itself primarily with the unaffiliated youngster—the youngster who ordinarily does not seek out a recreation agency in which to use leisure time under guidance.

These factors led to the formation of our own recreation program—the Police Athletic League (P.A.L.). Today P.A.L. is one of the largest recreational programs in the country. It is predicated on accomplishing certain well-defined objectives. Through it we are seeking to instill in our growing youth good character and a sense of responsibility and, so important, the development of a friendly relationship between our boys and girls and police officers; it seeks to establish respect for those who enforce the law and consequently, for the law itself.

During its early days, the P.A.L. concentrated its efforts in areas with a high delinquency rate and insufficient recreational facilities. Today the program extends to every part of the city, for I believe if this program is found to be effective in certain areas, it is a valuable asset in the prevention of delinquency in all areas. Youth Centers in congested areas house the indoor activities of the League. We operate playstreets and playgrounds during the summer months. Seasonal tournaments in all sports and special activities, such as attendance at major league baseball games, rodeo, professional hockey and football games, are also provided. Thousands of children are provided each summer with boat rides to Bear Mountain and some hundreds more are sent to our camp in the Adirondack Mountains.

Recreation to us is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, and that end is the development of the boy and girl into a good man and woman.

We are in a difficult age. Many problems confront us that must be resolved if mankind is to enjoy any happiness in the future. Problems of international relations must be left to those who handle the affairs of State and yet all of us realize that the affairs of groups, communities, states and nations represent only the collective actions of individuals.

The more adjusted the individual is to his society, the more he learns to live not only for his own selfish end but for the good of mankind—the more people learn “to live and let live” the greater are our prospects for peace at home and abroad.

The subject matter just presented has been directed toward the work of the Juvenile Aid Bureau in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Of necessity it has emphasized the need to understand the maladjusted child and to take remedial steps to bring him into conformity with the rules, objectives, the ambitions of his society. We are concerned with the growth and development of our boys and girls—of men and women—in such a way as to allow them to live a morally, socially, economically useful and full life.