

1969

## Police Science Book Reviews

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## POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by

Rolland L. Soule\*

**BEHIND THE SHIELD: THE POLICE IN URBAN SOCIETY.** By *Arthur Niederhoffer*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967. Pp. v, 253. \$5.95.

The American police are today faced with two salient and paramount problems: the precipitous increase in crimes of violence—murder, rape, armed robbery—and the ever-deepening split in the relationship of the police officer and the minority groups—the Negro and the Spanish-speaking.

After last summer one can doubt no longer that the hostility between the police and the Negro is having a serious impact upon the stability of our cities. And, it must be noted, virtually every major disturbance in the last three years has been triggered, in the immediate sense, by an incident involving the police and a minority group.

*Behind the Shield* is a blunt and hard-hitting book about the American police in this era of civil rights demonstrations, civilian review boards, and increasing public pressure towards making the police a less punitive and more socially constructive force. The author is an ex-New York City police lieutenant and is now professor of sociology and anthropology at the City University of New York.

Dr. Niederhoffer traces the process by which the "rookie" is transformed into the policeman and examines the problems he faces along the way—ranging from bureaucratic authoritarianism, to the barriers to professionalism, to the widespread cynicism among seasoned veterans of the force. He attempts to explain why the police resent "civilian" interference ("the cynical lack of faith in the integrity of the civilian world"), why many policemen become vulnerable to corruption ("I am not hurting anyone. Everyone is doing the same thing. Most people are much worse. The public thinks a policeman is dishonest whether he is or not. Therefore, I am not doing anything wrong by taking graft."), why illegal use of force

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is condoned, and what social forces shape the "police personality."

The public image of the police officer, says the author, is constantly in a state of flux. He is a hero one moment and a scoundrel the next. Improved police-community relations are essential to the police as well as to the community. The police simply cannot operate effectually so long as they are viewed with alternating approbation and skepticism or even hostility by much of the population in large sectors of our cities.

The book ends on an optimistic note. The author has faith in the leadership abilities combined with the intelligence and integrity of the majority police officers and concludes that law enforcement indeed is moving toward the long-sought goal of true professionalism.

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**COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND RIOT PREVENTION.** By *Raymond M. Momboisse*. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas, 1967. Pp. xiii, 257. \$9.50.

Lawyer educated, behaviorist oriented Raymond M. Momboisse followed his expository opus *Riots, Revolts, and Insurrections* with this shorter treatise, *Community Relations and Riot Prevention*, which is aimed at avoiding the devastating phenomena he described under the former title. While the latter book appears to be directed primarily toward an audience of police officers, civic leaders and civil libertarians also could benefit from the ideas expressed.

Momboisse listed the needs for a program to prevent community disorder and summarized the causes of riots in the first two chapters. The third chapter contains a clear, succinct, and informative treatment of the causes and effects of prejudice. One definition given for prejudice is that it "is the bastard child of fear and ignorance." Prejudice is categorized as harmless, helpful, and hurtful. An example given for the harmless

type is preference for tastes in food. The helpful specie includes those that promote differences of opinion in partisan politics. Prejudices that foster or fester religious bigotry and racial discrimination are labeled hurtful. The following paragraph from Chapter Three approaches signal inspiration:

The man who searches his own heart occasionally in prayer knows that he, himself, reflects the glory and the beauty and the variety of God in many things which he does. Such a man does not find it difficult to recognize every other human being as a fellow reflection of God's wonders. He instinctively demands for this fellow creature all that he sees as necessary for dignified human life.

The topic of the fourth chapter is "Minority Groups." Community attitudes and attitudinal dynamics are treated, and then the effects of discrimination on the behavior of individuals and groups are traced. Momboisse's account of the reaction of members of minority groups to the various labels cinched around them appears particularly perceptive.

The remainder of the book, Chapters Five through Thirteen, deals with various types and aspects of programs to effect and enhance interpersonal, community, and public relations programs under the operation, auspices, or guidance of the police agency. Clear cut distinctions are offered between community relations and public relations programs and among the terms propaganda, publicity, and reporting. Programs intended to gear police work with other facets of community organization are described. Methods that have been successful in dealing with the purveyors of mass news are explained. Guidelines for handling complaints against police officers are given. Also included are specific suggestions on the role of the individual officer in carrying out his function as a protective public servant in an effective, positive, courteous manner.

Despite the fact that Momboisse seems to have made a relatively rare, better-than-ordinary contribution to the literature on police-community relations, the writings include a few apparent inconsistencies. For example, if a reader failed to exercise proper caution, he easily could infer from Chapter Two that governmental and social institutions are equated. The ability to make lucid differentiations which Momboisse so aptly demonstrated in other sections of the book waned

at this point. There can be little, if any, reasonable argument that our social and political institutions are interdependent and interrelated as Momboisse seems to imply, but usually they rest on different structures and often they purport to promote dissimilar objectives.

The minority relations program which Momboisse outlined included the suggestion that every officer should make a report of "all incidents involving minority group relations in his area." Then he admonished "The information should not be used against individuals nor given any publicity." Later he wrote that reports involving "antiwhite and antiminority leaders and organizations" . . . "should be suitably filed in order to give a more and more detailed picture of the prejudicial activities of intolerant and subversive white and minority leaders and groups." Then, he said a sufficient volume of these reports might be collected which would present "a picture of antisocial activity sufficiently damning to warrant legal indictment and trial." While each of these suggestions has obvious merit, there is a question as to whether they both could be followed, at least in spirit, simultaneously. This is precisely the type of apparent contradiction in police procedures that arouses and generates suspicion among the dedicated, law-abiding civil rights leaders.

Momboisse in another passage seems to have let down his guard and allowed one of his defensive prejudices to become exposed—one that law enforcement officials from every quadrant tend to be allergic to. He wrote that Hamilton Burger, protagonist of Perry Mason, and the Keystone Cops "have succeeded in cruelly smearing the ordinary policeman, in fact, the entire police service." After Momboisse explained that such a character "was just the figment of a film director's imagination" he wavered from his usual positive approach. An important point that Momboisse neglected—and one that has been overlooked by many police officials who have gone off on this tangent—is that practitioners in many occupations were made the brunt of hilarity in the Keystone films. These flickers which first were shown around 1914 and more recently have been reproduced for the Library of Congress and distributed commercially by the Blackhawk Film Company induced humor at the expense of dentists, sailors, carpenters, soldiers, clerks, postmen, hunters, nurses, and a host of others.

None of these groups seems to be so quick to bare their scars of rationalization—if any were acquired. To bring the issue into more recent perspective, do children cite Dennis the Menace as the deflator of their image? Do secretaries level barrages at Ann Southern and Lucille Ball? Do monks curse Brother Sebastian? It appears that some of the dwellers in the law enforcement camp have a great sense of humor, unless or until someone tickles their feet of clay. Some of these sensitive critics might do well to remember and to follow the impeccable example set forth by our late President John F. Kennedy when Vaughn Meador displayed his (then) amusing imitations.

Momboisse again appeared to divulge taints of preconceived notions in his arguments against civilian review boards as compared with his recipe for civilian truth squads. Both of these advisory groups have been found to have their shortcomings and their successes. In fact, some of the civilian review boards reportedly have been charged in part with several of the specific functions which Momboisse prescribes for civilian truth squads. This apparent oversight probably is due more to a lack of comparative information than to a lack of good intention.

The variety of public and community relations programs Momboisse carefully describes for a wide range of special interest groups is idealistically ambitious almost to the point of being naively utopian for any single police department to attempt in one fell swoop. For one thing, the cost in terms of manpower to establish all the necessary police committees to work with all the community groups he listed probably would be prohibitive. But the addition of one or even several of the programs proposed in *Community Relations and Riot Prevention* should reward the efforts of a heads-up police administrator. And if any community could carry out all of these programs, I would give you odds (if I were a betting man and wagering was legal) there would be no riots there. Thus police officers of all ranks could gain much from the reading of this book.

Bravo, Mr. Momboisse! Someone must dream up the plans before the concrete can be poured.

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RIOT IN ROUKELA. Edited by B. B. Chatterje, P. N. Singh, and G. R. S. Rao. Gandhian Institute of Studies: New Delhi, India. (American Distributor: Lawrence Verry, Inc., Mystic, Conn.), 1967. Pp. 144. \$7.50.

Like many other countries, India, too, has her riots. Of the two senior authors, both of them are American educated (University of Illinois and Ohio State University), and bring to their analysis of the forces behind the riots an American way of using psychological and sociological data.

In fact, the study strikes me much more as a sociological field project, in which the authors set out to examine a population sample of Muslims, Adivasis, and Hindus, their interactions, their differences in culture and religion, and so on. The authors, in their conclusion arrive at a plan of economic development, not unlike that of our city planners, following the riots in Watts and Detroit. One sentence seems to me to stand out as universal for our times: "There is violence content in each plan of development."

This small monograph does a great deal in the way of unemotionally and methodically seeking answers. It should be widely read, for its implications are far-reaching and probably applicable to our country so far as frustrations, or the social and psychological integration of the client communities, are concerned.

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HIGHWAY COLLISION ANALYSIS. By James C. Collins and Joe L. Morris. Springfield: Charles C Thomas, 1967. Pp. xv, 282. \$11.50.

This is a textbook and reference work on motor vehicle accident analysis and reconstruction. Although attorneys and accident investigators will find much of interest in the book, its primary value will be to persons with an engineering or scientific background. In textbook fashion, a number of formulas are derived from basic principles of mechanics. Numerical examples are included to illustrate the application of the formulas to specific aspects of accident analysis and reconstruction.

The book is organized into seven chapters. The first three chapters provide much of the background needed to understand the techniques of collision analysis which are covered in the fourth chapter. In the next three chapters, the authors

discuss damage interpretation and special follow-up phases of reconstruction and court testimony.

In the first chapter, the motor vehicle is discussed with particular emphasis on those elements which are likely to be involved in accident causes or investigations. Material is presented on the chasis, engine, the clutch, transmission and drive line, steering system, and braking mechanisms for both automobiles and trucks. Numerous illustrations supplement the text to provide a reasonably clear exposition of how these mechanisms operate and how potential malfunctions could contribute to accidents. Unfortunately, such important topics as headlights or the relative strength of various body and frame components are not covered. The first chapter introduces the laws of motion, including a number of key definitions which have been simplified somewhat from the form usually found in college physics books.

The second and third chapters are intended to prepare the reader for the accident reconstruction techniques discussed in following chapters. These two chapters deal principally with stopping and skidding principles and mathematical interpretations. The basic stopping process and the interpretation of skidmark evidence is covered in depth. However, the authors have omitted or treated superficially some background information on the field identification and investigative techniques that should be applied to skidmark evidence.

Although technically correct, the solutions of skidmark problems appear to be needlessly complicated by the approach suggested. The formula for estimating speed from skidmarks has been in wide use for many years, and a number of nomographs and other aids have been developed and are available. However, the authors present a somewhat obtuse approach to the calculation of initial speeds which relies on reference to a table of square roots.

This section also suffers from the authors' tendency to erroneously interchange terms which are not synonymous. For example, speed is used as a synonym for velocity and braking distance for stopping distance. (Speed is a scalar quantity whereas velocity includes both magnitude and direction; braking distance is the distance a vehicle travels in coming to a stop after the brakes have been applied whereas stopping distance

includes braking distance plus preception-reaction distance.)

Special skidding situations are discussed and methods for solution are outlined with numerous examples. Included are procedures for estimating speeds from skidmarks on two different types of surfaces and in situations where the vehicle slides on its top or side. Analytic methods are also provided for solving problems involving vehicles pulling trailers and brakeless trailers on a grade.

Useful discussions are presented on evaluating air resistance as a braking factor and the apparently rare occurrence of automobile hydroplaning. Sliding and tipping conditions on curves are also analyzed.

Chapter Four is the most significant chapter since it deals specifically with accident analysis and reconstruction. The preceding chapters are basically intended to provide the reader with the necessary working tools to enable him to understand this chapter. The usual "standard accident situations" are analyzed in some detail mathematically. Formulas and examples are used and any person able to handle the mathematics involved should be able to obtain a clear understanding of the techniques. Typical types of collisions discussed include the rear-end, the head-on, the corner-to-corner, and the side-swipe accident. The analyses include, as appropriate, both the momentum and the energy approach. Photographs and excellent line drawings help to present this material clearly.

In Chapter Five and part of Chapter Six damage caused by collisions and the possible identification of vehicle mechanical failures which may have contributed to the accident are covered. Included are criteria for identifying damage according to type (e.g., scrapes, gouges, dents, transfers) and selected parts. Fire damage is also discussed at some length. Useful check lists are included to help the investigator remember to examine significant damage and potential failures which may have contributed to the cause of the accident.

The final two sections of Chapter Six deal with cross-wind stability and factors affecting friction coefficient. The discussion of cross-wind stability is well presented and provides a clear exposition of how this phenomenon contributes to steering problems which may lead to collisions. The discussion of the relation between speed and changing

friction coefficient might well have been placed earlier in the book in the section dealing with coefficient friction. This discussion clarifies the effect that higher speed has on modifying the frictional drag between sliding tires and pavement. In skidding to a stop from a high speed, considerable heat is generated between tire and pavement, and this in turn tends to decrease the friction coefficient by as much as 10 to 15 percent at speeds between 60 and 80 m.p.h.

The final chapter discusses equipment, techniques, and aids used in accident analysis and reconstruction. Included are photographic analyses, a suggested set of equipment for the investigator, and outside aids—including experts. The final chapter also discusses the techniques for determining the center of gravity of a vehicle, the percentage of trailer weight carried by an automobile, and the moment of inertia of an automobile. Obviously, determination of these quantities would be made only by a specialist in accident reconstruction and not by the casual investigator.

The final chapter also presents suggestions for preparing collision analysis reports and for presenting expert testimony on this topic in court. The discussion of expert testimony is well done and provides a useful framework for the potential expert.

In summary, this is a useful reference work which will be of value to persons interested in accident reconstruction who possess the necessary engineering or other scientific backgrounds. This is not a book for the layman nor for the casual reader. The main criticism is that the authors tend to use a condescending tone and needlessly complicate procedures and explanations at times. The work does not have a bibliography and several data tables lack a source reference and a definition of the data limitations.

However, in general, the authors have done a creditable job with a difficult subject.

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