

# A History of Police Education in the United States

*Arthur F. Brandstatter gave the following address in 1967 to the Conference on Police Education, sponsored by the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance, at the University of Maryland. A well-known authority on the history of Police Education in the United States, Brandstatter focused on the contributions various universities were making to the development of future education including the relatively recent advent of the junior or community college. As Brandstatter would conclude, “If police education is to achieve the stature it seeks in the academic community, it must be considered as a part of the criminal justice process which has its own area of human experience to analyze, its own body of factual and descriptive data to gather, its own conceptual ideas to formulate and test. Our challenge is to develop police education within this context.”*

## The Growth of the Discipline

An historical account of the developments that have occurred in police education since the turn of the century and the men who gave leadership to these developments will give us new perspectives regarding the progress that has been achieved and will assist us to chart the future. As a matter of fact, it may be surprising to learn that the United States is recognized as the acknowledged leader in criminological studies and in the relatively short period of about fifty years has transcended the influence of European nations in this area of study.<sup>1</sup> Currently, the nations of the free world turn to

the United States for leadership in research that explores the phenomenon of crime.

The growth of this field of study has been spectacular, and Professor Radzinowicz of Cambridge University comments that perhaps the only parallel we can cite in the history of criminology is the emergence of the Italian School of Positivists in the last three decades of the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> The most significant developments that have occurred in police education in our country can be divided into three eras—the period before World War I, the period between the two World Wars, and the period after World War II.

## Pre-World War I

During this period, it is not surprising to find educational activities in the general area of criminal law and criminology developing around faculties of law, which is similar to what has occurred in Europe, where faculties of law generally studied the issues of crime and criminal justice procedures. However, other scientists were also involved and such topics as criminal sociology, criminal anthropology, and criminalistics were offered under the auspices of law schools or institutes which drew upon the faculties of law, medicine, and the social sciences for instructional purposes.

Thus, we find in June 1909 the first National Conference on Criminal Law and Criminology was convened in Chicago by the faculty of law at Northwestern University. This conference was significant for a number of

reasons. Perhaps foremost is the fact that the Conference brought together selected educators and practitioners from every branch of the American criminal justice system.<sup>3</sup>

At the 1909 Conference, three resolutions were passed which resulted in:

1. the establishment of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology;
2. the founding and publication in 1910 of the Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology; and,
3. the translation into English of some of the most important and significant books on criminology written by foreign scholars.

As a result of this third resolution, nine volumes were published by the Institute under the general title Modern Criminal Science Series. These volumes included:

- ◆ Criminal Psychology by Hans Gross,
- ◆ Modern Theories of Criminology by Bernaldo de Quiros, Criminal Sociology by Enrico Ferri,
- ◆ The Individualization of Punishment by Raymond Saleilles,
- ◆ Crime, It's Causes and Remedies by Cesare Lombroso,
- ◆ Penal Philosophy by Gabriel Tarde,
- ◆ Criminality and Economic Conditions by W. A. Bonger,
- ◆ Criminology by Raffaele Garofalo, and
- ◆ Crime and Its Repression by Gustav Ashoffenburg.

These books were used as references and texts in the early development of police courses at institutions of higher learning.

A few years prior to the conference at Northwestern University, a young man was elected Town Marshall of Berkeley, California. I refer to August Vollmer who was subsequently appointed as Chief of Police at Berkeley and continued in this capacity until his retirement in July of 1932. During his tenure at Berkeley and in the years that followed, Vollmer vigorously and relentlessly pursued the application of scientific methods to police work, the need for increased training for police officers, and the provision for pre-employment training comparable in quality to that provided for lawyers, doctors and the other professions.<sup>4</sup> Vollmer established a police training school in the Berkeley Police Department, with most of the instruction provided by his friends on the University of California faculty.

At the same time (1916), he prevailed upon these friends to offer courses in police subjects and criminology during the summer sessions at the university. This program continued until 1932, at which time the program was extended and similar courses were offered during the regular school year. He encouraged his police officers to attend these courses, and they were immediately called "college cops" by the press. The period before World War I, therefore, was essentially one in which Vollmer endowed his spirit and enthusiasm for scientific police work and police education to his young protégés.

## Between the World Wars

During the period between World War I and World War II, August Vollmer continued his

efforts and was the principal person who influenced an increasing number of institutions of higher learning to direct their attention to the training and educational needs of law enforcement. Many significant training programs developed at universities during this period and served to bring the police official and the university educator together.

For example, in 1929, the University of Chicago entered the field of police education by offering a limited number of police courses. August Vollmer had been employed as a Professor of Police Administration in the political science department and taught a course in Police Administration and Police Procedure. He also offered a seminar devoted to research projects each quarter. The primary objective of this program was to expose college students to police administration subjects.<sup>5</sup> This program was discontinued in 1930, when Vollmer returned to Berkeley where he accepted a professorship in police administration at the University of California. Within a year, he was offering a course in police administration in the Bureau of Public Administration. This was the genesis of the program which ultimately developed into the School of Criminology under the distinguished leadership of August Vollmer and O. W. Wilson, the latter appointed as the first Dean of this program.

Between 1929 and 1932, the University of Southern California offered police courses, both inservice and for credit, through its School of Citizenship and Public Administration.<sup>6</sup> In 1930, San Jose State College established its two-year curriculum plan and ultimately expanded it into a four-year degree-granting program. The 1932-33 brochure of the San Jose program had this announcement addressed to police officials:

In 1935, Michigan State University inaugurated a five year curriculum plan designed to prepare students for careers in the police service. Significant at Michigan State was

*TO POLICE OFFICIALS:*

*If you have local applicants for any positions on your force in whom you are especially interested, you will find their value to you materially increased by a two year course at San Jose. Just tell the young man that the day is fast approaching when college training will be required of every policeman.*

*The cost is negligible. San Jose is a public institution. Student fees amount to \$9.00 a quarter, and the cost of books and supplies is small. It is cheaper to train young men here than in your own department.*

the total commitment immediately made to academic preparation of young people for police careers. Until this program was introduced there were no police training courses offered in any form. Another significant feature of the program was the requirement of 18 months of field experience with Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The influence of the land grant philosophy was reflected in the field service training feature which was conducted at that time under the direct supervision of the Michigan State Police.

Similar to the other programs mentioned earlier, there was an emphasis on the natural sciences. Michigan State's curriculum was heavily weighted with the laboratory sciences requiring at least two years of study

in chemistry, physics, and mathematics. Little administration or organizational theory was taught. Students were paid \$1 a day during the field experience and were permitted to reside in the State Police barracks. Upon graduation, students who joined the State Police were employed at the salary level of an officer beginning his third year of service. These were attractive and very practical incentives for students to consider in the depression days of the thirties.

The current program reflects many changes:

1. A transition from an emphasis on the natural sciences to the development of a program with a liberal arts foundation.
2. Expansion of major fields of study from one to three: Law Enforcement Administration; Security Administration; and Correctional Administration. The Law Enforcement Administration curriculum continues to be regarded as our most important area of study. It has three subareas of study, namely, Police Science, Highway Traffic Administration, and Delinquency Prevention and Control.
3. Reduction from five years of study to a four year program of study.
4. The field program has been reduced gradually from a requirement of 18 months to one quarter (a ten week period) and will become optional for the student next year in the Fall of 1967.
5. A Master of Science degree program was established in 1956.
6. A Ph.D. in Social Science with an option in Criminology or Criminal Justice is under consideration for the immediate future as an interdisciplinary offering.

Before I proceed to the post World War II period, three universities should be mentioned because of their support of police training.

The University of Wisconsin developed a series of zone schools in 1927 and offered inservice courses for police officers through its extension division. These were discontinued in 1931.

Northwestern University made a significant contribution through its Traffic Institute and also offered courses in connection with the work of its Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory. The quality of the Traffic Institute's Training Program developed under Frank Kreml's leadership is well known and continues to present day.

Harvard University, under the auspices of its Law School, has offered a seminar for a number of years on "Medico-Legal Problems." Courses dealing with police subjects, such as Homicide Investigations, were included in these seminars.

These universities have always been among the most prestigious institutions in the nation. Because of their stature, they gave prestige and status to police education and training in its developmental stages.

## **Post World War II**

One additional program must be mentioned as I make the transition to the period following World War II. Indiana University must be considered among the institutions that pioneered in police education, although the Department of Police Administration was established as an autonomous unit until 1949.

Nevertheless, Indiana University offered a four year course for approximately 13 years prior to this time leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree with a certificate in Police Science. Dr. Edwin Sutherland, noted criminologist, was active in this program, as well as the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology which was established in 1935 on the Indiana Campus.

Significant to all of these universities that were blazing new trails was the fact that in every instance the enlightened and visionary practitioner of his day was instrumental in motivating these institutions to be concerned with police education. Vollmer heads the list, but others also have their place including George Brereton, Don Kooker, Frank Kreml, William Wiltberger, V. A. Leonard, Oscar Olander, and O. W. Wilson.

In the mid-twentieth century, as we approach the year 2000, we stand on the threshold of another thrust forward. The number of police education programs that have developed in the past two decades is simply incredible. I should like to mention one of these because it is different from the others.

In 1954, the City College of New York established a Police Science Program under the joint sponsorship of the Bernard Baruch School of Business and Public Administration and the New York City Police Department. It was primarily a two-year program offering an Associate degree in Applied Science in Police Science with an immediate option for students who wished to study for the baccalaureate degree. A graduate program leading to the Master of Public Administration with a major in Police Science was offered shortly after the undergraduate program was introduced.

This program was unique because it limited enrollment to those engaged in law enforcement work and was jointly administered by the college and the police department. The commanding officer of the police academy was designated as Assistant Dean of the college and a Joint Committee on Curriculum and Personnel was established with three members from the police department and the Baruch School on the committee.

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice developed from this program. It is the fifth senior college of the New York City University system with its own faculty drawn from the police department and the academic community. Although the college still serves the New York City Police Department primarily, the admission policy has been liberalized and a limited number of general students are admitted to the program.

## **Junior Colleges**

Recently, the development of new junior college programs has been accelerated. This is also true of police programs among the junior colleges. These institutions are playing a major role in meeting the educational needs of the police service and of our society. An official in the U.S. Education Office considers them to be "one of the brightest hopes in higher education" for the nation. The community college can serve as a significant training ground for skilled workers, sub-professionals, and technicians of all kinds.

Enrollment in junior colleges is keeping pace with their development. Vast amounts of money are being expended by Federal, state, and local government to continue their expansion. Thus, many educators are urging a new minimum of fourteen years of free

education. This recommendation has implications for educational standards for police recruitment.

According to the new "Directory of Police Science Programs" to be published soon by the I.A.C.P., there are 133 colleges offering the associate degrees in police education. The previous directory listed 100 programs in 1965; thus, there has been an increase of 33 1/3 percent in the number of programs in this short time.

Currently, 31 universities offer the baccalaureate degree, making a total of 164 institutions of higher learning involved in formal law enforcement education. The geographical distribution of junior colleges includes 61 in California, 10 in Florida, 9 in Michigan, and 8 in New York.

Any field of study that has developed as rapidly as police education is likely to encounter serious problems. These problems are not unlike those experienced in other disciplines. We should be alert to the conditions which can adversely affect the teaching program and the quality of instruction. These include:

1. The attempts by small colleges to imitate the university in the scope and number of its course offerings.
2. A proliferation of courses.
3. Inadequate staff resources to support extensive specialization.
4. Heavy teaching loads that can develop in academic departments. A PLS study indicates that 18 hours a week is not uncommon. Some have as many as 21-25 hours.
5. The number of different preparations for instructors. One political science study revealed that one man taught 20 differ-

ent courses, five each semester over a four semester cycle.

6. The adequateness and compatibility between the educational preparation of those selected to teach courses and the subject matter assigned.
7. In terms of organizational arrangements, the assignment of police education as a subordinate unit of study in another major teaching program.
8. Adequacy of library acquisitions. How many volumes should an undergraduate library contain in order to meet the minimal needs of the teacher in police education?

In summary, organizational arrangements, teaching or duty loads, educational preparation, scope of offerings, scholarly association, and the adequacy of library materials are important factors to be considered in developing a quality educational program.

If police education is to achieve the stature it seeks in the academic community, it must be considered as a part of the criminal justice process which has its own area of human experience to analyze, its own body of factual and descriptive data to gather, its own conceptual ideas to formulate and test. Our challenge is to develop police education within this context.

<sup>1</sup> Radzinowicz, L. (1961). In Search of Criminology. London: Heinmann. p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> Journal of Criminal Law, Crimonology and Police Science, 44(1), May-June 1953. p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> Journal of Criminal Law, Crimonology and Police Science, 52(1), May-June 1961. p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 114.