

# KNOWLEDGE AND SENTIMENT IN CRIME CONTROL

by

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I am, of course, deeply grateful for having been brought back to renew friendships with scholars from my original home countries, New Zealand and Australia, but the occasion does impose on me a sense of obligation to account to you for twenty years of law teaching and research in the United States where I went, according to my early Australian mentor, Sir John Barry, "lusting after strange gods". Being thus called to account is always threatening; there seems so little to say in one's defence. The analogy is, I hope, not a good one, but I find myself remembering Lord Clive's expostulation in the parliamentary debates when he was called to account for his period in India and for his alleged venality there: "By God, Mr. Chairman, I stand astonished at my own moderation." Well, I stand astonished at the moderation of the insights I have to offer you from twenty years of diligent effort in the United States studying problems of crime and crime control, and being quite deeply involved in those problems at various levels of government — federal, state and city.

I have come to the depressing general conclusion that a criminologist is one who knows what is not so, but not what to do about it. Adapting George Bernard Shaw's aphorism about economists: if all criminologists were laid end to end, they would not reach a conclusion.

Perhaps the heart of the problem in this field is that an excess of emotion often substitutes for a dearth of knowledge. At all events, it is this overshadowing of knowledge about crime and crime control by heavy clouds of sentiment that I wish to discuss with you today.

In the frequent pre-election periods which beset us in the United States, the tensions between sentiment and knowledge in crime control have become starkly apparent to me. One is approached for advice by politicians of either party invariably convinced that the electorate cares deeply about crime and, if they have been out of office, that powerful criticism must be offered of the incumbent's failure to control crime. The

indictment of the incumbent is blended with emphatic expressions by the hopeful candidate of his determination to curb crime to the better protection of those wise enough to vote for him. So far, the role of the academic adviser is easy — respectful agreement. But as one moves to a discussion of the details of the incumbent's failures and of the candidate's proposed program, uncertainty, conflict and disagreement swirl about. The politician's worst expectations of the fecklessness of the criminologist are confirmed. It proves peculiarly difficult to say anything about crime and its control which will attract votes and which is not manifestly mendacious. Uplifting generalities about crime and its control seem to be excellent vote-getters; whereas any details of proposed improved police, court and correctional practices prove to be political lead balloons. The strong jaw and the grim threat are electoral assets; by contrast, the rounded plan for criminal justice reform is a prescription for electoral disaster, based on the certain-to-follow indictment that one is "soft on crime". So, as an electoral issue, crime and its control serves the demagogue well and seriously embarrasses the thoughtful and honest politician. This analysis may apply to many other pre-election issues, but it has special impact in relation to crime, where sentiment seems entirely to dominate knowledge.

Though the contributions of Sigmund Freud to the understanding of the human condition are still insufficiently recognised, one does not have to be a psychoanalyst to appreciate the great power of emotional and unconscious processes in influencing and directing human behaviour. For the past few weeks I have been searching in vain for a quotation, which I think is by Cardinal Newman, to decorate the point I wish to make. It is something like: "As well try to control a ship at sea by strands of silk, as by reason to control the pride and passion of man." The point made is surely powerful and of immediate application to problems of crime control. I think it also applies to much of the daily work of the lawyer; but let me talk a little about its application to crime control.

My memory crosses the years to provide one essential precautionary, protective caveat. I recall the detestation with which, when in Australia, I received so called "foreign experts" who, wonderfully ignorant of local conditions and local problems, offered a wealth of criticism and advice as they staggered, jet-lagged, off the arriving aeroplane. Nothing that I say should be construed as hinting at any information on, and certainly not any criticism of or advice about, Australian or New Zealand conditions or practices. There is an amplitude of problems of crime control in the United States for purposes of the present discussions and if there are any lessons to be learnt from my analysis of them which are relevant to Australian or New Zealand conditions, you will have to draw them for yourselves. Cowardice will preclude any hints from me.

In so far as crime control is concerned, these early years of America's third century are particularly depressing. Priorities are unsettled, resources are misallocated, myths swamp scattered efforts at scholarly analysis. Serious students of the criminal justice system remain a small and uncertain band. Crime rates, particularly rates of violent crime, stand grossly higher than in countries of otherwise comparable culture. To the student of comparative crime rates, America may or may not be the land of the free, but she most certainly remains the home of the brave!

In the United States large numbers of ill-educated youths, belonging to minorities and lacking employment, are gathered together in large pockets of desolation in inner city areas. Welfare programs contribute powerfully to the breakdown of the families of the poor and tend to criminalise their children. Governmental action fosters a drug culture that fuels crime. A plague of hand guns, unchecked by effective governmental control, escalates the injury flowing both from domestic conflicts and from other pressures towards crime. Police, prosecution and defence services remain exiguous in relation to the incidence of crime and help to keep the jails and the courts over-crowded. Continuances flourish, speedy trial is an idealistic dream rather than an achieved constitutional guarantee, and pressure of expediency compels reliance on charge and plea bargaining. The prisons are over-crowded as they have never been before; their conditions are often criminogenic rather than curative of crime. The prison finds its typical expression in the United States in cluttered fortresses of fear which impede rather than facilitate any prisoner's self-direction away from crime.

America has thus entered her third century with her criminal justice system in disarray, lacking consensus on purposes and methods, unsure both of what works and what ought to be done; and though her citizens have surely demonstrated their tolerance of crime, their patience wears thin and there is the imminent risk of the invocation of crime control methods which will threaten other more important democratic values. The criminal justice system is at the pivot of that delicate balance between freedom and authority on which a democratic society depends; the contemporary challenge of crime to freedom is not inconsequential.

These are substantial issues and it is clear that I can only tease away at a few of them today. If I am right in my view that sentiment and prejudice seriously inhibit the contribution that knowledge might make to more effective crime control, it may be useful to consider some of the strongly held beliefs about crime control, guided by sentiment sometimes called common sense, which are demonstrably false, that is to say, contrary to established knowledge. There is of course a definitional trick which will assist me in this: everything I believe is to be called "knowledge", and everything you believe to the contrary is to be called "sentiment". But, putting aside such chicanery, let me list a series of beliefs about crime and crime control which are strongly held and frequently acted upon by legislators, by police, by courts and other functionaries of the criminal justice system. Let me then dispute so many of them as your patience will tolerate and conclude by trying to draw some lessons from this conflict between knowledge and sentiment that I have, no doubt artificially, set up.

When drafting this paper I listed ten such propositions and then proceeded laboriously to their lengthy refutation. The paper went on for ever! Let me not so grossly overburden your tolerance but rather confine myself to four pervasive beliefs about crime and crime control and try to use them to illustrate the counter-intuitive quality of knowledge in criminology, the inutility of common sense and sound sentiment as guides to policy.

Here are the four survivors of my editorial scalpel:

- (1) Crime is increasing world-wide and in particular in the cities of the West.

- (2) In the United States, in the alternative  
*either* (a) Blacks suffer discrimination in law enforcement at the hands of the police, the prosecutors, the courts and correctional agencies,  
*or* (b) Blacks are excessively criminous.
- (3) Intensive police patrol, particularly foot patrol, reduces crime.
- (4) As crime increases, so the prison population increases; hence our current overcrowded prisons.

In my view, all these propositions are either demonstrably false or seriously flawed. And the list could go on and on beyond my original ten. Let me now examine these four beliefs; each merits a monograph of analysis, but brief commentary should suffice to support my present thesis.

### Belief 1

This belief holds that, owing to the pressures of increased urbanisation, profound changes in the structure of family life, the more rapid mobility and more complete anonymity of modern life, crime is increasing worldwide and in particular in the cities of the West. The reality clearly contradicts this belief.

Indices of crime — crime reports, victim surveys, self reports, longitudinal studies, historical and contemporary descriptions of life in general and the interruptions of life by crime — give no precise calibration of criminality; but the best assessments of crime over time run firmly contrary to the conventional wisdom.

We know more about violent crime and interpersonal violence than of crime against property, since definitions of crime and the categorisation of behaviour are more stable for personal than for property crime. Concerning crimes of interpersonal violence, Ted Robert Gurr has carefully examined available data from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and several Western European countries.<sup>1</sup> The pattern that emerges is clear: such crime has been steadily and substantially declining per 100,000 of population since the 13th century — which provides the earliest unclear citing on the matter. There are upturns, occasional ascents in the steadily declining curve of violent criminality, for example in the United States in the 1850's, 1900's and 1960's, but they do not long disturb the overall theme of a steady decline in crimes of violence in both rural and urban areas.

Homicide declines, of course, for sound medical reasons — as a proportion of interpersonal violence, fewer injuries are mortal — but this factor does not account for the parallel decline in armed assaults and robberies.

Gurr concludes his analysis of this not usually recognised reality by some helpful speculations as to the cause of the decline in violent crime.

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<sup>1</sup> Gurr, "On the history of violent crime in Europe and America" in Graham and Gurr (eds), *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (revised edn, 1979) 353-374.

He suggests that law and legal prohibitions have a larger role than most sociologists and historians normally allow. Let me quote a few sentences from his thoughtful summary:

"The progress of Western civilisation has been marked by the increasing internal and external controls on the show of violence. People are socialised to control and displace anger. Norms of conduct in almost all organised activity stress non-violent means of accomplishing goals. Interpersonal violence within the community and nation is prohibited and subject to sanction in almost all circumstances. The process is in essence a cultural one and like most cultural change had its origins in the changing values of social and intellectual elites. The process, so far as it pertains to violence, contributed not only to the decline in homicide and assault but also to the humanization and rationalization of social policy."<sup>2</sup>

Later he adds:

"Violence declined overall during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth because Western societies became increasingly urban and formal education became universal. The further down the class and status ladder, past and present, the more common is interpersonal violence, because the lower classes did not assimilate and still have not wholly assimilated the aggression-inhibiting values of the middle and upper classes. And the black minority in the United States has far higher rates of interpersonal violence than the white majority because the barriers of discrimination and segregation have fostered a subculture which encourages aggressive behaviour."<sup>3</sup>

Professor Gurr's conclusion about the reality which contradicts the myth of ever-burgeoning violent crime leads inexorably to the second false proposition of conventional wisdom concerning crime which I wish to discuss. This one I have stated in the alternative: either Blacks are discriminated against by the criminal justice system in the United States or Blacks are genetically and culturally more criminous.

## Belief 2

In the United States, problems of race intersect problems of class, and if, as a transient observer, I may risk the suggestion, so they seem to do in Australia. But the problems in the United States are surely severe enough to attract our attention without confusing them by local nationalistic prejudices; let me therefore confine myself to the American scene.

The beliefs, the myths, the conventional views are powerful even when they contradict one another: either Blacks suffer discrimination in law

<sup>2</sup> Ibid at 356.

<sup>3</sup> Gurr, "Historical Trends in Violent Crimes: A Critical Review of the Evidence" in Tonry and Morris (eds), *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research* vol 3 (1981) 3:343.

enforcement at the hands of the police, prosecutors, the courts and correctional agencies, or Blacks, by their very inheritance and culture, are excessively criminous. Each of these beliefs, it is firmly alleged, can be easily confirmed by a visit to the local police station, the local courts, and certainly the local gaols and prisons.

Here are some of the facts which feed these beliefs: homicide is the leading cause of death of black men and women aged 25 to 34 in the United States. Among men aged 24 to 44, the risk of homicide for Blacks is eleven times the risk for Whites. One of every nine Americans is black; yet one of every two male murder victims is black, as is one of every two people arrested for homicide. The rate of imprisonment of Blacks is over eight times the rate of imprisonment of Whites. It is clear that these facts feed powerfully into the alternative hypotheses I have offered. What of the alleged truths that I am supposed to set against them to contradict these alternative conventional wisdoms?

First, as to the alleged racial prejudice: I do not for a moment doubt that there are very many instances of individual racial discrimination in the criminal justice system in the United States. Race relations in that country remain strained and befouled by the application of stereotypes. Many arrest and punishment decisions no doubt result from those stereotypes. But racial bias cannot explain why Blacks are so disproportionately arrested, gaoled and imprisoned for serious crimes.

Racially biased decisions appear to be the exception, and do not create a system skewed systematically toward more severe treatment of Blacks. There have been countless studies of racial patterns in the criminal justice system, and most in recent years have concluded that Blacks do not have significantly worse experiences than do similarly situated Whites.

Few will doubt the fact of racial inequity and inequality in American society or indeed in Australian society. The question is whether the criminal justice system merely rests upon and reflects that social inequity and inequality or whether it makes it worse.

Extensive studies in the United States and in the United Kingdom all tend to the same conclusion. Variables other than race account in large part, but not entirely, for the statistical difference between black and white crime, arrest and imprisonment rates.

These are not easy studies to carry out, or to interpret. It is not easy to find non-black inner city areas which represent the same agglomeration of social disadvantages that beset the black areas. And even taking out all other variables, there remain immeasurably higher arrest and imprisonment rates amongst Blacks than Whites. Considering the long history of cultural adversity and its impact on the black family, it would be surprising if this were not so.

Where, then, does the argument lead us? Assume, as I believe, that disproportionate Black criminality and poverty and unemployment and so on have nothing to do with biology or cultural traditions but rather result from the social history of Blacks in America. Blacks do disproportionately commit serious personal crime and disproportionately amass serious criminal records. And the problem does not grow less severe over time.

In the past twenty years more Blacks (and an increasing proportion) have moved into the middle class. But those Blacks who have been left behind seem to have been left even further behind, and seem to be even more locked into a culture of despair and crime. Of course, those Blacks who have moved into the middle class have crime rates indistinguishable from, and if anything lower than, their white brethren.

So what emerges is that neither of the alternative conventional beliefs (either about discrimination against Blacks or about their excessive criminality, based as it is on confused notions of genetics and inherited culture) makes any sense. The social pressures over the generations swamp all else; distributive injustice here renders an effort at remedial justice between the races peculiarly difficult.

And, if I may break my self-imposed rule of silence about Australia, so would the case seem to be in this country. The black imprisonment rate per 100,000 of population in New South Wales, the Capital Territory, Victoria, and Queensland exceeds by twelve to one the white imprisonment rate, and the overall black-white imprisonment differential in Australia is of the order of 18 to one. The American racial differentials, gross though they are, thus pale into insignificance beside those of Australia; but I suspect that if the comparison were made between American Indians and Australian Aboriginals there would not be much to choose between them.

The point that emerges is clear. It would be wrong to let the conventional wisdom either of racial discrimination or of genetically and culturally based behavioural differences in criminality guide one in social planning. The reality is far from both these myths.

### Belief 3

It may be less depressing to turn to beliefs about crime control mechanisms rather than to continue to discuss myths about the etiology of crime. It is widely believed that intensive police patrol, particularly foot patrol, reduces crime. Recent studies have cast serious doubt on both elements in this affirmation.

The Police Foundation has published a study of the New Jersey Foot Patrol Programme five years after it started. Here is a recent summary of their conclusions:

"Based on its analysis of a carefully controlled experiment carried out chiefly in Newark, the foundation concluded . . . that foot patrol had not reduced crime rates. But residents of the foot-patrolled neighbourhoods seemed to feel more secure than persons in other areas, tended to believe that crime had been reduced, and seemed to take fewer steps to protect themselves from crime (staying at home with the doors locked, for example). Moreover, citizens in the foot-patrol area had a more favourable opinion of the police than did those living elsewhere. And officers walking beats had higher morale, greater job satisfaction, and a more favourable attitude toward citizens in their neighbourhoods than did officers assigned to patrol cars."<sup>4</sup>

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4 Wilson and Kelling, "Broken Windows" (1982) 249 *The Atlantic Monthly* 29.

As a crime control mechanism, it seems clear that foot patrol is ineffective. As a mechanism of leading people to a belief that their neighbourhoods are safer and are not so troubled by crime, foot patrol seems quite successful.

What of the other element of our conventional wisdom about policing? Does the intensity of police patrol have an effect on crime? At some point it must. At some point one can put a policeman on every corner, and police cars in every street, and have a quite dramatic effect on crime. But if one looks at the broad parameters of the allocation of police resources the conclusion that emerges from the Kansas City "Proactive-Reactive Patrol Deployment Experiment" indicates "no significant differences in the level of crime [or] citizens' attitudes toward police services"<sup>5</sup> among three matched areas of the city which had received varying patrol coverage for one year. Other tests in other cities have tended towards the same result.

There are many implications of these studies, all tending to a more cautious allocation of police resources and the recognition of the larger complexity of giving citizens a sense of security rather than merely trying to reduce the number of reported and recorded crimes. All that I am concerned to argue at the moment is that here too the myths and the realities are far apart.

Nevertheless, it may be useful to mention an important popular recent article by James Q Wilson and George L Kelling<sup>6</sup> which argues that citizens may properly think of their neighbourhood as "safer" even though all indices of crime indicate an increase in crime, since a sense of public order, of the absence of disorderly, disruptive, disturbing people on the streets, the absence of "broken windows" may contribute more to the public sense of security than variations in rates of violent crime. The policeman is by no means only a crime fighter; that indeed may not be even his most important role.

#### Belief 4

I now turn to the final erroneous though widespread belief about the criminal justice system: as crime increases, so the prison population increases; hence our current overcrowded prisons.

I do not have to hand the detailed statistics of the prison population in Australia and New Zealand but the broad pattern, I am informed, is of increasing overcrowding except in Tasmania (certainly Risdon Vale which I visited last week has ample space for more if any of you have a mind for crime). But it is certainly clear that in the United States the numbers and rates of increase in prison populations are higher than they have ever been before. In 1981 the United States prison population grew by almost 40,000 — by far the largest increase in a single year since data first became available in 1925.<sup>7</sup>

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5 Police Foundation, *The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment: A Technical Report* (1974), iii.

6 *Supra* n 4.

7 "The number of prisoners under Federal jurisdiction grew by nearly 3,800, or 16 per cent, reversing a 3 year decline begun in 1978 . . . The bulk of the increase in prisoners occurred in State institutions, which held an additional 36,000 inmates at year-end." — US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners in 1981* (advance report, May 1982) 1.



If crime, or at any rate the type of crime that tends to invoke imprisonment as a punishment, is stable or decreasing, how can it be that the prison population is burgeoning? Could the explanation be found in a special kind of time lag? Prison populations reflect earlier increases in imprisonable crime. The prison terms over time obviously create a log-jam. So, perhaps high crime rates produce high imprisonment rates after a time, and they will also, after a time, tend to lower crime rates because more offenders will be in prison. It all seems so sensible, the only defect being that it is not correct. Again the dull data contradict the apparently commonsense conclusions.

In an excellent paper delivered in Melbourne in November 1981, David Biles of the Australian Institute of Criminology examined the relationship between imprisonment rates and crime rates in Australia, the United States and Canada.<sup>8</sup> He found "absolutely no support for the proposition that high use of imprisonment is associated with lower rates of crime, and that was the case whether one counted all serious crime or only violent crime which may be expected to be more likely to result in the imposition of prison sentences".<sup>9</sup> Quite astonishingly, on the other side of this analysis, he found that "the data show that after reported crime goes up the imprisonment rate goes down one, two and particularly three years later".<sup>10</sup>

Biles hesitated at the obvious conclusion that there is nothing to explain; that there may be no connection between crime and the use of imprisonment; that all countries have a sufficiency of crime to allow the imprisonment rate to move quite independently of the crime rate, to move in response to community attitudes to crime and criminals, to welfare and to the State, to many other cultural pressures and emotional attitudes — not to the incidence of crime. Biles flirted with what he called the "system capacity model", and in the United States there has been an effort to develop the argument that, whatever the prison space the courts will overfill it and therefore the best course, if it is desired to reduce the prison population, is to close some prisons and certainly to build no new prisons; but recent research by a panel commissioned by the National Academy of Science reveals that too to be false.

A larger perspective reveals the reality, I think. Let me now use Australian figures. Imprisonment rates in 1981 in the Australian States per 100,000 of population range from 19.7 in the ACT to 202.3 in the Northern Territory. They are extremes, you say, with special reasons for their polar placement. True; so what of the other States? Here they are in order of increasing use of imprisonment: Victoria 44, South Australia and Tasmania 62, New South Wales 66, Queensland 73, Western Australia 104. Can anyone think these figures reflect differential crime rates in these States? Obviously not.

The same variations are to be found in the United States. I will not bore you with the entire list<sup>11</sup> but here are a few sample rates per

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8 Biles, *Modern Developments in Penology* (The Inaugural Alexander Russell Whatmore Memorial Oration, Victorian Association for the Care and Re-settlement of Offenders, 1981).

9 *Ibid* at 21f.

10 *Ibid* at 24.

11 See *supra* n 7 at 2.

100,000. They range from 37 in North Dakota to 461 in the District of Columbia. The national figure is 154. By comparison, the Australian national figure is 65, Holland 25 and South Africa around 450.

What can one fairly conclude from these data? Any connections between crime rates and imprisonment rates are tenuous in the extreme. There are clearly broad relationships between them, the larger masses of crime increasing the use of imprisonment, and, it seems reasonable, the larger use of imprisonment having some reductive effect on the incidence of crime; but, and this is the vital point, marginal variations in crime rates won't move imprisonment rates and marginal or even quite substantial variations in imprisonment rates won't move crime rates.

Again, social processes prove to be counter-intuitive: crime rates and imprisonment rates march to the beats of different drummers. For an excellent study of the processes and policies which move and should move imprisonment rates, you should consult a book recently published by an American/Australian team.<sup>12</sup>

### The Larger Myth

Perhaps there is a larger misconception, lying behind the four myths I have examined and the many counter-intuitive relationships between belief and knowledge in this field. Perhaps the inner truth is that the criminal justice system — the police, the courts and their judicial and professional functionaries, and the punishment and correctional institutions and agents of the State — do not much influence the crime and delinquency rates. Their existence does, of course; major variations in their practice can, no doubt; but the usual modulations and fine-tunings in their procedures and processes probably have effects on crime and delinquency rates so marginal that we cannot measure them and hence one may properly doubt their existence.

Suppose, then, that this dissonance I have suggested between myths and reality in four areas of crime and crime control is accepted as pervasive, what lessons does it teach? No doubt, many; but let me sketch two or three that seem worthy of comment.

I defined a criminologist as someone who knows what is not so, but not what to do about it. Let me suggest a slightly more generous assessment of the criminologist's capacities: I believe the informed criminologist is now in a position responsibly to advise on how we can do *better* in crime control though not on how we can do *well*. Sadly, the criminologist's advice, if followed, will not make much difference to the incidence of crime, though marginal reductions can reasonably be expected, but it will help to protect larger social values, namely those of decency, human rights, efficiency, and a proper concern for the needs of the victims of crime — in short, important democratic values.

Hark back to an old distinction, certainly dating from Aristotle and probably earlier used. Distinguish between distributive and remedial justice. The fundamental point of crime control and its relation to the incidence of crime is that remedial justice cannot compensate for deep-seated distributive injustices.

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12 Sherman and Hawkins, *Imprisonment in America: Choosing the Future* (1981).

Is this paper offering, then, a counsel of despair — that just as remedial justice can only weakly compensate for the consequences of distributive injustice, so reason and knowledge can only vainly wrestle with emotion in all human conflict and particularly human conflict concerning crime and its control? Surely not; surely there is more to it than that. Surely reason *does* have her victories; knowledge *does* influence and sometimes direct the settlement of human conflict, even in matters of crime control. My preachment is not one of despair; its purpose is to try to offer a more modest and long-term perspective on what knowledge and reason may achieve in crime control.

The lesson for crime control is this: a recognition that the criminal justice system and its functionaries — the police, the courts, the judges, the prison wardens, the probation officers and parole officers — all have a relatively limited role. The existence of the criminal justice system and its functionaries almost certainly influences to a considerable degree the overall incidence of criminality; but modulations in that system are relatively unimportant to the quantum of criminality. Does this mean that the criminal justice system is unimportant? Not at all. It is centrally important to society in general, but not particularly to the problem of the incidence of crime. The values to be served by the criminal justice system are those of fairness, justice, decency, and a high regard for human dignity when applying the great powers of the State. The criminal justice system provides the balance between the State and the citizen which is most often abused by all tyrannical governments, the balance between authority and freedom. Under the aegis of the criminal justice system the maximum of State power is exercised against individual autonomy. This is where social breakdown is most clearly observable.

There are no short run solutions in crime control. The fads and fashions come and go but make little difference except to those who suffer under them. But if the message of the democratic and egalitarian dream does have a clarity of purpose within the criminal justice system, it is the purpose of equality of treatment under the law, of decency of treatment, of opportunities for self-development, not of assumptions that we can remake man but of a pervading recognition that if man is not capable of perfectability he (and she) is at least with decent social organisation capable of steady improvability. And here the relationship between reason and emotion in human affairs is an important theme worthy of generalisation, the objective being the gradual expansion of informed understanding in areas heavily coloured by prejudice. Indeed, one would not be astray in suggesting that the primary purpose of the law, not only of the criminal law, is to bring reason and a gradually-shaping mosaic of knowledge to the complexity of government and the vast range of conflicts in social relationships.

Over the past fifteen years there has been a substantial increase of knowledge concerning the operation of the criminal justice system in Australia, New Zealand, Western Europe and the United States. From being an infant and neglected discipline, preoccupied with the false search for the causes of crime, criminology has developed into a relatively sturdy and promising adolescent. What is now most needed is the development of longitudinal, cohort studies of child and adolescent development and growth so that juvenile delinquency and crime may come to be seen in their proper perspective in the evolution of diverse cultural and governmental patterns. Here the Western European countries

have been in advance of the rest of us and it is time that we followed them. But otherwise, the paths that we have set out on seem to me to be sensible and likely to lead us to information of value in understanding crime and to wiser crime control provided we are not swamped by the powerful prejudices that still dominate political decisions in this field.

I sometimes think that I work in a cursed discipline. Towards the end of his life Aldous Huxley allowed that there were only two really satisfactory professional disciplines: medicine and astronomy. Medicine because with some effort the doctor can persuade himself that he is doing good; astronomy because the astronomer can be quite sure he is doing no harm! One can only hope that a determined effort gradually to expand the details of our knowledge of crime and its control may do some good and will not, and there is a very real risk, be perverted to doing harm.