

strated in an exploratory way that correctional practices and distinctive values held by the people in tinnum. Mexico, Spain, West Germany, Western United States and England were distributed in that order on such a scale. Attention has been given also to the relation between certain unique

correctional practices and distinctive values held by the people in the jurisdictions where these practices have developed. Additional studies in other political entities would help the test and sharpen these ideas.

Reproduced by permission of the author, and the Editorial Board of the *British Journal of Criminology*.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Mr. J. B. Mays in his stimulating survey on Penal After-Care and the Community makes some rather sweeping statements on which I should like to comment.

The first is his discovery that social work training is strongly controlled by the priests and high priestesses of analytical psychiatry. He goes on to endorse the suggestion that most social workers are better in practice than in theory. In truth they use the theory as a backeround but are aware that it is dangerous to try to fit in practice all the theories they have picked up in training. The general application of what are known as common sense methods will be found in most social services and particularly in probation; the theories are merely tools which can sharpen the perception.

After discussing the probation services, Mr. Mays calls for the creation of a service which will be prepared for research into its own activities, and goes on to say that social services of such a character hardly exist in this country. He suggests that many agencies act with a bare minimum of self-scrutiny, that some are even hostile towards the idea of research and will dismiss with derision any suggestion that their work is not yet perfect. I should be sorry if his readers felt that these observations applied to the Probation Service.

In its evidence to the Morison Committee the National Association of Probation Officers said:-

"The Association welcomes research by responsible bodies into the work of the probation service and noted with pleasure the indications in the *White Paper Penal Practice in a Changing Society* that a number of researches were in progress in connection with various aspects of probation. We feel that more of this is needed so that workers in the service might know the results of their labours and also so that their services might be directed to the best purposes. Probation officers are frequently called upon to assist in research projects for various universities and other bodies though they rarely hear the result of such work; they would be interested to take a greater part in this, if time allowed. We are aware of the work now in hand by the Home Office research unit and have indicated our interest and willingness to co-operate in any way possible with this".

Since that was written the Probation Research Project has developed and the Probation Service has at all points endeavoured to co-operate with it, and has enjoyed the manner in which the Research workers have gone about their business, including their attendance at N.A.P.O. meetings and conferences. This Association has constantly pressed for more knowledge which would enable its members to know where they are going, and which might show them where they could best direct their limited energies.

We have never felt able to undertake such researches ourselves because this could not be objective, but we have never resisted research and are now looking forward to the first results of the work of the Probation Research Project.

I cannot speak for other Social Services but I shall be very surprised to find that the criticism made by Mr. Mays applies to many of them.

Yours faithfully,

FRANK DAWTRY

General Secretary

National Association of Probation Officers