

A Tribute to Professor Jean-Paul Brodeur 1943-2010

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Canada, and the Western world of academic criminology, has recently lost one of its brightest stars. Jean-Paul Brodeur, the son of a Quebec police officer, came to criminology by a somewhat unusual route. His formal academic education was in philosophy, a discipline which he continued to feel was rather more intellectually and analytically rigorous than that of criminology, to which he eventually gravitated. Indeed that fastidious intellectual rigour was probably the characteristic of Jean-Paul which most impressed itself on the minds of the many fellow scholars and students who had the privilege of scholarly exchanges with him.

Becoming after a relatively short while the Directeur of the Centre International de Criminologie Comparée at the Université de Montréal, Jean-Paul established himself as a leading figure in Canadian and Francophone criminology. A tireless workaholic, who nevertheless found time to practise (oh, so well!) the gourmet culinary arts, the breadth (both in terms of topics, and geographically) and depth of his contribution to criminological understanding and knowledge was remarkable. His first major published work in this field - a study of the history of commissions of inquiry into police in Canada, 1895-1970 - remains a key source on the politics of policing in Canada. Jean-Paul's interest in commissions of inquiry, however, was not just academic; he served as research director to many of Canada's most important commissions of inquiry throughout his career. These included the Canadian Sentencing Commission, the Keable and Duchaine Inquiries into the F.L.Q. crisis in Quebec, the Malouf Inquiries into the Stanley Cup riot in Montreal in 1992 and into the role of Montreal Community Police Service, and the Commission of Inquiry into the Conduct of Canadian Military Forces in Somalia, to name only some. In addition, he headed up several research projects commissioned by the Law Reform Commission of Canada. In 1990 he became a member of the Royal Society of Canada.

Jean-Paul's first and foremost criminological interest was police and policing. His most well-known theoretical contribution in this field is undoubtedly his seminal article "High Policing and Low Policing: Remarks about the Policing of Political Activities" published in the journal *Social Problems* in 1983, and inspired by his experience as research director for the Keable and Duchaine Inquiries. He published an updated paper on this topic in light of post-9/11 events in 2007 in *Policing - A Journal of Policy & Practice*. He wrote eruditely on many other policing topics, including police deviance (informed by, and informing, his work as a member of the Comité d'examen des plaintes de la Sûreté du Québec), undercover police work and, most recently, the use of force by police, in which he interrogated Egon Bittner's ideas, and in particular his claim that access to the use of force is *the* key defining characteristic of police. He organised some important international conferences in the 1990s, bringing together a wide range of scholars to discuss comparative policing issues, and police effectiveness and reform. These papers were edited and published by him as *Comparisons in Policing: An International Perspective* (Aldershot: Avebury 1995), and *How to Recognize Good Policing: Problems and Issues* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1998).

Jean-Paul also played an important role in the development of policing policy in Canada's First Nations communities. Working with Carol LaPrairie and Roger McDonnell, he undertook critical research into the policing of remote Cree communities in Quebec's James Bay region during the early 1990s which has had a lasting impact in these and other First Nations communities in Canada.

His most recent book, *The Policing Web*, is happily in press with Oxford University Press, and is due to be published in August. This is a major contribution to the study of policing, and an outstanding scholarly achievement. It is a pioneering attempt to synthesise and offer a theoretical analysis of the huge volume of research on policing that has accumulated around the world, but mainly in North America and Britain, since the beginnings of empirical research on the subject a half century ago. It offers a theorization of policing that is derived from the seminal conceptualization offered by Egon Bittner in the 1970s, refining it and using it as an organizing principle for an encyclopaedic exploration of policing history and current practices and variants. The Bittner definition in terms of the police capacity to deploy legitimate force is expanded to encompass the broader idea that the police are authorized to use a variety of means to achieve order that are ordinarily illegitimate for citizens. This combination of sophisticated theory and a wide knowledge of policing in many countries (but mainly the US, UK, Canada and France) makes the book a major achievement both as a text for study and an original, provocative contribution to understanding and knowledge.

Quite apart from his prodigious published output, however, Jean-Paul was an inspiring mentor to a generation of up-and-coming criminologists in Quebec and around the world. For all these reasons, he will be greatly missed, by policing scholars in particular, and by criminologists more generally. But we can be grateful that he has left us a legacy of exceptional scholarship which will be an inspiration for generations of scholars to come.

References

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