Federal Probation

JUNE 1988

Federal Probation

A JOURNAL OF CORRECTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

Published by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts

VOLUME LII JUNE 1988 NUMBER 2

This Issue in Brief

Systems Therapy: A Multimodality for Addictions Counseling.—Chemical dependency is a growing problem which has increased at least tenfold over the past decade. Until recent years the phenomenon was not recognized as a disease, but rather a mental health problem, and current therapies still tend to address mental health aspects rather than the disease of chemical dependency. Alcohol, although a drug, is still considered to cause separate and distinct problems from other drugs. Author John D. Whalen maintains, however, that alcoholism and drug abuse can be treated as one common problem with a set of exhibiting symptomologies. This article describes Systems Therapy, a therapeutic approach developed by the author.

Assessment of Drug and Alcohol Problems: A Probation Model.—Authors Billy D. Haddock and Dan Richard Beto highlight the increased emphasis on assessment methods in drug and alcohol treatment programs and describe the assessment model used in a Texas probation department. Major theories of substance abuse and dependence are discussed as they relate to assessment. The objectives, components, and general functioning of the assessment model are described. A counselor/consultant is used in the assessment process to offer greater diagnostic specificity and make individualized treatment recommendations. According to the authors, the assessment process facilitates a harmonious relationship between probation officers and therapists, thus promoting continuity of care and quality services.

Drug Offenses and the Probations System: A 17-Year Followup of Probationer Status.—Authors Gordon A. Martin, Jr. and David C. Lewis provide the current status of 78 of 84 probationers previously studied in 1970. Of the original group, 14.1 percent are deceased and 18 percent have had constant problems with the law. Sixty eight percent have had varying degrees of success, with one-third essentially free of all criminal involvement. The study indicates that younger probationers who used heroin and barbiturates were the population at greatest long–term risk and merit the longest periods of probation

CONTENTS

and most intense supervision. For them, marijuana did not serve as a "gateway" drug, though alcohol may have. The authors note that the original group of probationers was supervised by a probation officer who was a specialist in drug offenders. While his probation load was sizeable, it was manageable. For probation to fulfill its crucial mandate—the authors conclude—more resources must be made available to it, and caseloads must be manageable.

All-or-Nothing Thinking and Alcoholism: A Cognitive Approach.—Self-destructive all-or-nothing thinking is both a correlate of alcoholic drinking and a likely area for cognitive intervention. Author Katherine van Wormer contends that it is not the alcoholic's personality but the alcoholic's thinking that is the source of the drinking. Specific cognitive strategies are offered—strategies that should be effective both in recovery from alcoholism as well as in its prevention.

Lower Court Treatment of Jail and Prison Overcrowding Cases: A Second Look.—In 1979 and 1981, the United States Supreme Court issued opinions in which it ruled that double-bunking of prison and jail cells designed for single occupancy was not unconstitutional *per se*. It also indicated that lower courts should demonstrate greater restraint in "second guessing" the decisions of correctional administrators. In 1983, *Federal Probation* published an article in which author Jack E. Call concluded that many lower courts were still quite willing to find overcrowded conditions of confinement unconstitutional. In this followup article, Call finds that after 4 more years of lower court decisions in overcrowding cases, this earlier conclusion is still valid.

Rewarding Convicted Offenders.—Offenders can be rewarded by deescalating punishments in response to behavior one wishes to encourage. This practice has distinguished origins, has been subjected to a variety of criticisms, but is regaining ascendance. In his review of the controversy, author Hans Toch suggests that defensible reward systems for offenders can be instituted and can enhance the rationality, humaneness, and effectiveness of corrections.

Current Perspectives in the Prisoner Self-Help Movement.—Prison rehabilitation programs are usually designed to correct yesterday's problems in order to build a better tomorrow for criminal offenders. Yet the struggle for personal survival in prison often diverts inmates' attention away from these "official" treatment policies and toward more informal organizations as a means of coping with the immediate "pains of imprisonment." Prisoner self-help groups promise to bridge the gap between immediate personal survival and official mandates for correctional treatment. Drawing on historical and interview data, author Mark S. Hamm offers a typology that endeavors to explain the promise explicit in prisoner self-help organizations.

Consequences of the Habitual Offender Act on the Costs of Operating Alabama's Prisons.—Habitual offender acts have been adopted by 43 states and are under consideration in the legislatures of others. According to authors Robert Sigler and Concetta Culliver, these acts have been adopted with relatively little evaluation of the costs involved in the implementation of this legislation. The data reported here indicate that one area of costs—costs to departments of corrections—will be prohibitive. The authors suggest that the funds needed to implement the habitual offender acts could be better used to develop and test community-based programs designed to divert offenders from a life of crime.

Evaluating Privatized Correctional Institutions: Obstacles to Effective Assessment.—Institutional populations in the American correctional system have increased dramatically during the last decade. This increase has produced serious concern about both overcrowding and the economic costs of imprisonment. One proposed solution to the current dilemma involves the engagement of the private sector in the correctional process. Although it is apparent that there are a number of potential benefits to be obtained from private sector participation in the administration of punishment, a variety of potential hazards have also been identified. In this article, author Alexis M. Durham III considers some of the hazards associated with the evaluation of privately operated correctional institutions. The discussion identifies some of these potential obstacles to effective evaluation and concludes that although evaluation impediments may well be surmountable, the costs of dealing with these problems may offset the economic advantages otherwise gained from private sector involvement.

Negotiating Justice in the Juvenile System: A Comparison of Adult Plea Bargaining and Juvenile Intake.—Plea bargaining and its concomitant problems have been of little concern to those who study the juvenile justice system. We hear little or nothing of "plea bargaining" for juveniles. However, in this article, author Joyce Dougherty argues that the juvenile system itself is based on the very same system of "negotiated justice" that lies at the

heart of adult plea bargaining. By placing society's interest in "caring for its young" (translated into the doctrine of parens patriae) over the individual rights of juveniles, the juvenile justice system has created a situation where the determination of a child's "treatability" has become more important than the determination of his or her guilt or innocence. The author compares adult plea bargaining and juvenile intake in an effort to illustrate how, despite all theoretically good intentions, the "justice" in the juvenile system is no better than the "negotiated justice" that is the end result of adult plea bargaining.

Current Perspectives on the Prisoner Self-Help Movement

By Mark S. Hamm
Department of Criminology, Indiana State University

"The great thing about this country," notes American playwright Sam Shepard, "is that you can make yer own moves in yer own time without some guy behind the scenes pullin' the switches on ya." Those who study prisoner organizations seem to understand the implications of Shepard's remark. For instance, scholars have explored a wide range of organizations which provide "natural" or "spontaneous" methods of helping offenders cope with life in prison. Among other things, this literature has produced information on the operations, structure, and potential of prisoner self-help groups. This research has been possible for two reasons. First, inmates themselves have demonstrated a strong and sustained interest in self-help organizations over the course of the past two decades. Second, the prisoner self-help "movement" has captured the attention of correctional administrators and citizen groups concerned with the plight of special offender populations.

This development is not hard to explain. To begin with, the prisoner self-help movement is closely linked to a broader social movement which arises from a sense of alienation in society—the perceived failure of social institutions to provide nurturance and support for the needy. From the familiar Alcoholics Anonymous to the little-known Schizophrenics Anonymous; from Taking Pounds Off Sensibly to Women Who Love Too Much, Parents Without Partners, Mended-Hearts, Widow-to-Widow, Tough Love, and support groups for stutterers and diabetics; from the Mattachine Society and the lesbian Daughters of Bilitis to groups of transsexuals coping with their transitions and Hell's Angels seeking spiritual enlightenment, the self-help movement involves activities that reach into many areas of our social world (cf. Ellis, 1983; Katz and Bender, 1976; Liberman and Borman, 1979).

The interest in prisoner self-help groups also reflects the disillusionment of offenders with traditional approaches to rehabilitation. Historically, correctional treatment has sought to ameliorate criminality by focusing on offenders' past lives and future prospects. In short, prison programs are designed to rectify yesterday's problems in order to build a better tomorrow. However, too often the immediate struggle for personal survival in prison distracts an inmate's attention from these "official" treatment programs (American Friends Service Committee, 1971; Irwin, 1974; Johnson, 1987; Kassebaum, Ward, and Wilner, 1971; Slaikeu, 1973). As a result, prisoners have increasingly turned to gangs, religious fellowships, and self-help organizations as alternatives to state-sanctioned programming (Abdul-Mu'Min, 1985; Irwin, 1980). Finally, the interest in self-help mirrors the development of theory, research, and practice in criminology and criminal justice which has produced evidence on the importance of involving the criminal in his or her own learning and socialization (Garrett, 1985; Gendreau and Ross, 1979, 1984; Lillyquist, 1980; Palmer, 1978; Reckless, 1961).

Accordingly, the prisoner self-help movement suggests certain opportunities for inmates and administrators in contemporary corrections. For inmates, involvement in the self-help process may relieve some of the "pains of imprisonment"—the psychological and physical deprivations that are an inevitable part of incarceration. Research indicates that self-help groups provide a specific support system that meets certain social and/or cultural needs of prisoners (Abdul-Mu'Min, 1985; Irwin, 1980; Katz and Bender, 1976; Kuehn, 1969; McAnany and Tromanhauser, 1977). Some groups also provide training in leadership, prisoner-administration politics, and organizational development and management. In other words, there is reason to believe that participation in these programs can provide inmates with an opportunity for human optimism and altruism even in the darkest corners of imprisonment.

For correctional administrators, the opportunities manifest in the prisoner self-help movement are obvious. Under certain conditions, these groups satisfy a fundamental goal of corrections. When prisoner organizations meet social or cultural needs of a common-minded group of offenders, it becomes a case of prisoners helping themselves in their own reformation. As such, self-help groups promise to relieve administrators of some of the burden they carry for providing rehabilitative sanctions. Unlike prison

gangs, most self-help groups are of little threat to the administration of corrections; and because they do not rely on official resources, self-help groups do not have to be defended with the same vigor as professional treatment programs. On balance, administrators are not liable for the rehabilitative success (or failure) of the self-help effort; yet these groups often fulfill rehabilitative objectives.

The purpose of this article, therefore, is to expose the organizational dynamics that contribute to this opportunity structure.

The Organization of Prisoner Self-Help Groups

Contemporary prisoner self-help groups can be classified into four broad categories. However, all groups share several common themes. First, they all promise to relieve the "pains of imprisonment" by bringing together criminal offenders who wish to change their own lives and help other prisoners change their lives. Additionally, all programs are voluntary and there are no correctional staff involved to stimulate or guide group discussion and activities.

The first category relates to self-help groups that deal with the social stigma accompanying criminal behavior. They are usually founded by "charismatic" leaders, seek outside support, and are concerned with improving the social situations of members in prison and on parole. The second category deals with addictions and disabilities of prisoners. These groups organize around specific physical and behavioral problems, often reject outside support, and aim primarily to help inmates understand and cope with various handicaps. The third category examines ethnic groups in contemporary corrections. Ethnic self-help programs form around a clearly defined human trait, and a substantial part of the prison population with that same trait will participate in activities—sometimes supported by outside resources—designed to improve both the immediate and long-term circumstances of members. The final category relates to a "human potential movement" among today's prisoners. These groups organize around goals of self-discovery and human betterment for all offenders and society in general. They are also founded by charismatic leaders, thrive on outside support, and rely on proselytizing and mystique in recruiting members. The remainder of this article examines this typology.

The De-Stigmatizing Groups

The Seventh Step Program was the original prisoner self-help organization. Like many free world groups, Seventh Step was based on the personal experiences of a charismatic founder, Bill Sands (a.k.a. Wilber Sewell). In his books *My Shadow Ran Fast* and *The Seventh Step*, Sands claims to have been the former cellmate of Carl Chessman while imprisoned for theft at San Quentin in the 1940's. (Chessman was executed at San Quentin in 1961 where, according to Sands and others, he received a reprieve from the Governor three minutes after he died.) Upon his release from prison, Sands also claims to have won and lost fortunes as a nightclub entertainer, race car driver, yachtsman, and sales consultant. Eventually, he turned his personal story of crime and punishment—which highlighted his relationship with Chessman—into a prison self-help program designed to assist long-term, hard-core recidivists in their attempts to return to the mainstream of life.

Sands began Seventh Step meetings at the Kansas State Penitentiary at Lansing in 1963. His rehabilitative philosophy was simple.

> Such classes should be conducted by ex-convicts rather than correctional authorities. For two good reasons. One, because such a man knows what must be done, knows what it feels like to be out in the world, branded with a felony record; and two, because the men inside prisons refuse, for the most part, to take moral lessons from the so-called do-gooders (Sands, 1964:201).

Seventh Step was a spinoff of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). It provided its members with short-term goals aimed at concrete problems of living in prison. Like AA, Sands used a quasi-religious formula for self-help. Unlike AA, which lists 12 principles of rehabilitation, Sands employed only 7 and cast them so that the first letter of each step combined to form the word FREEDOM.

7 STEPS TO FREEDOM

1. Facing the truth about ourselves and the world around us, we decided we needed to change.
2. Realizing that there is a Power from which we can gain strength, we have decided to use that Power.
3. Evaluating ourselves by taking an honest self-appraisal, we examined both our strengths and weaknesses.
4. Endeavoring to help ourselves overcome our weaknesses, we enlisted the aid of that Power.
5. Deciding that our FREEDOM is worth more than our resentments, we are using that Power to help FREE us from those resentments.
6. Observing that daily progress is necessary, we set an attainable goal toward which we could work each day.
7. Maintaining our own FREEDOM, we pledge ourselves to help others as we have been helped.

Members of the group were given a card with the creed on one side and the following legends on the other: "If The 'Outside' World Only Matched Our 'Inside' Dreams, Then Not One Of Us Would Ever Return To Prison," and "Happiness Is A Direction—Not A Place." Also on the card was the phrase "Think

Realistically." Meetings were conducted in the prison chapel where participants sat in a circle and discussed the seven principles of freedom. A basic tool in this process was the "hot seat" where individual inmates were confronted about their prison behavior and its possible repercussions. Honesty, thinking realistically, and using one's "inner strength" were stressed. Sands took an "anything goes" attitude toward group discussion in which confidentiality and trust were viewed as essential. Members were encouraged to express resentments about prison life and fears about their eventual parole. In order to attract hardcore recidivists—"real cons" or "right guys"—Sands did not allow the following people to join Seventh Step: first-time offenders (known in prison argot as "do whoppers," "jitterbugs," or "fish"), social workers ("do gooders"), non-offenders, known informers ("snitches" or "stool pigeons"), and sex offenders ("rapos" or "fags").

Irwin (1980), Katz and Bender (1976), and Sagarin (1969) have richly documented the success of Seventh Step. In so doing, they have identified two primary factors which account for this success. First, Seventh Step leaders recognized that career criminals generally distrust and often hate authority figures of any kind. And those prisoners who do seek help from staff are frequently ostracized by their peers. Accordingly, Seventh Step provided a "safe" peer group support system as an alternative to state-sanctioned treatment by capitalizing on the stigmatization associated with chronic and persistent offending. Second, Seventh Step has been able to develop administrative support and outside help.[1] The program has enlisted the aid of many wardens and criminologists and has received financial contributions and endorsements from the Menninger Institute, the Stone-Brandel Foundation, and President of the United States Ronald Reagan, who on July 3, 1985 wrote as follows[2]:

> I extend my best wishes to the 7th Step Foundation and to all the men and women who come out of prison with the determination to build new lives.
>
> The decision an individual makes in turning to a new life tests the soul, for the journey is made alone. The need for meaningful help in dealing with the challenges that follow a convict's release point up the important role organizations like yours can play at such a time. You have been there and so you can extend the hand of assistance that will not be spurned. Most importantly, you have helped yourselves and you have pledged to help others.
>
> I wish you every success in your worthwhile endeavors.

Seventh Step can be considered, then, a "prototypical" self-help program that strives to "de-stigmatize" criminal offenders. In his analysis of the prisoner self-help movement nearly 20 years ago, Sagarin (1969) argued that the success of Seventh Step would serve as "midwife" to a number of other organizations. If Sagarin's prediction was correct, these programs might now include the Prison Jaycees, Man-to-Man, Lifers Group, People-to-People, Human Dignity, Old Timers' Group, Beyond the Wall, and the Fortune Society (cf. Abdul-Mu'Min, 1985; Allen and Simonsen, 1986; Mass. Dept. of Corrections, 1987; Snarr and Wolford, 1985). Each group provides religious fellowship, leisure time activities, and additional links to the community. Like Seventh Step, some of these groups were founded by charismatic individuals. The Fortune Society, for instance, was spontaneously organized in the mid-1960's by multimillionaire C. Clement Stone after he had seen an off-Broadway play about homosexuality in prison called "Fortune in Men's Eyes" (Irwin, 1980; Katz and Bender, 1976; Sagarin, 1969). Today, nearly 30,000 prisoners in the United States belong to the Fortune Society.[3]

These events suggest an organizational resilience among self-help groups that focus on the stigmatization of criminals. Indeed, this form of self-help has been documented in other countries. Inmates in Great Britain have organized the "Dead Numbers"—the numbers by which prisoners identify themselves are now dead and group members are once again persons known by names, and "Recidivists Anonymous," with the aim of "staying away from crime." In Canada, the "Johoso Club" (the name comes from the first two letters of John, Howard, and Society) has survived for over 20 years with the philosophy of inmates "relieving loneliness in prison and understanding the problems of parole."[4]

Perhaps because of this widespread appeal, the self-help philosophy has extended to other areas of the prisoner subculture.

The Addicted and Disabled Groups

While Seventh Step and its hybrids sought relief from the stigma associated with criminalization, other

[1] Irwin (1980), Katz and Bender (1976), Sagarin (1969), and Sands (1964) himself argued that this support was possible because Seventh Step was considered a "religious organization." In this vein, Rothman (1971) notes that religion has been thought of as an inherently rehabilitative force throughout the history of American penology. According to Rothman, the use of religion in prison was the earliest attempt to assist prisoners in their efforts to adapt to prevailing social norms. As many know, it was at the core of the rehabilitative philosophy espoused by Benjamin Franklin and his associates in their design of Philadelphia's Walnut Street Jail, where inmates were "compelled to reflect on the error of their ways, to listen to the reproaches of conscience, and the expostulations of religion" (Rothman, 1971:85).

[2] This information was gathered in an interview with the International President of the Seventh Step Foundation, Calgary, July 1987.

[3] This information was gathered in an interview with the Executive Director of the Fortune Society, New York City, June 1987.

[4] These descriptions came from interviews with members of the John Howard Society of Montreal, Canada, November 1987; and the officials of the British Home Office, Atlanta, November 1986.

groups have focused on quite another set of problems. Basic to this development has been the use of alcohol among criminals. Like Seventh Step, prison AA groups utilize a religious approach to rehabilitation in which alcoholism is viewed as the cause of criminal behavior. Unlike Seventh Step with its charismatic leader, AA chapters are usually led by normal prisoners who have drinking problems.

Prison AA groups are primarily organized to help members stay sober. The prisoner who joins AA agrees to go "cold turkey" and endure the pains of withdrawal and recovery in order to remain an active member. Once this commitment has been made, AA offers five prescriptions for sobriety. They are: 1) Understanding that alcoholism is a disease. 2) "Hitting Bottom." AA teaches that recovery begins only after a special experience of despair. 3) The Higher Power. AA teaches that in order to recover, an alcoholic must come to grips with a "power greater" than him or herself. Members are encouraged to think of "God as you conceive Him." 4) The Morality Inventory. AA requires a self-scrutiny after which the member is encouraged to confess his or her misdeeds and to make amends to all whom he or she has wronged. 5) "Twelve Stepping." The final step of the AA plan calls on the member to carry AA's spiritual message to other alcoholics (cf. Antze, 1979). Devices such as "sponsors" or "buddy systems" are used to enhance organizational cohesion and invite a feeling of "gain through community" (cf. Toch, 1965). Like their free-world counterparts, prison AA groups do not challenge mainstream values of American society. Instead, they embrace these values and attempt to pass them along to other inmates (Irwin, 1980; Katz and Bender, 1976).

A number of prisoner groups have emulated AA. These include Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Over Eaters Anonymous, Check Writers Anonymous, and Smokers Anonymous (California Dept. of Corrections, 1978; Irwin, 1980; Mass. Dept. of Correction, 1987). These groups often imitate the AA format—an opening prayer, a series of "steps" that must be acknowledged, followed by a series of personal testimonies about members' individual problems.[5] Often, these groups reject outside support. The AA Chapter at San Quentin makes this point clear in its bylaws.

> The purpose of this fellowship shall be for the membership to maintain sobriety, and to carry the message to other alcoholics. This group will be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions (Abdul-Mu'Min, 1985:148).

Because of their religious grounding and the apolitical nature of group activities, "anonymous" self-help programs usually enjoy positive sanction from administrators (Abdul-Mu'Min, 1985; Irwin, 1980; Katz and Bender, 1976; Sagarin, 1969). In turn, a modest number of programs for disabled prisoners has recently emerged within contemporary corrections. Epileptic prisoners have formed a support group at Leavenworth and a Schizophrenics Anonymous Program has been created within the Massachusetts Department of Correction. Also, prisoners have set up groups to deal with the exigencies of war. American Veterans in Prison, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Disabled American Veterans are organizations that provide help with disability benefits and the upgrading of discharges. Often, these groups are also interested in reducing sentences for prisoners with Post Traumatic Stress Disorders.

The Ethnic Groups

Over the past 20 years, inmates have organized themselves along ethnic lines for purposes of self-expression. These groups hope to build a prisoner's "inner strength" through confirming one's identity within a larger social structure. They adopt the premise that minorities cannot successfully compete for status in society because of stereotyped attitudes against them. Since opportunities for achievement are limited by discrimination, minority members do not attempt to attain goals they might otherwise set. Hence, ethnic groups try to improve a prisoner's identity by overcoming inferiority complexes that obstruct self-fulfillment.

Ethnic self-help groups try to accomplish this goal by establishing a "brotherhood" that builds obligations to work together with other "brothers" for group betterment (Burdman, 1974; Irwin, 1980; cf. Carroll, 1980; Liberman and Borman, 1979). This focus on "brotherhood" seems to obscure the leadership of ethnic self-help groups. Instead, each member supports the other in his or her struggle to gain confidence in his or her ability to be more effective in overcoming discrimination. In order to develop individual effectiveness, ethnic self-help groups often manage to provide other programs they consider vital to the accomplishment of this goal. Sometimes they are

[5]These observations, and many that follow, are based on my personal experience with prisoner self-help groups over a 15-year career in corrections. As a prison teacher, I was introduced to self-help groups by inmates on death row at the Arizona State Prison in 1974. My assignment was to teach "G.E.D." classes on the row, yet I soon found that my students were not interested in a high school diploma. Indeed, more important issues were at hand for these "students." Yet I also discovered that death row inmates were hungry for knowledge. While they did not want to study G. E. D. out of the box of "educational materials" provided to me by the warden, they did want to talk with other death row inmates about the moral philosophies espoused in works such as the Bible, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, *The Autobiography of Malcom X*, *Soul on Ice*, and *I and Thou* by Martin Buber. Irwin (1980) describes this type of inmate as a "gleaner." Moreover, these death row "gleaners" taught me about prisoner self-help groups. I have since followed them as a prison guard, assistant warden, deputy director, and researcher.

successful in recruiting volunteer services from the outside, yet more often they use their own members to provide the necessary labor (Abdul-Mu'Min, 1985). Literacy, language, ethnic classes, academic tutoring, vocational and family counseling, legal advisement, management development, prison-administration politics, and pre-release classes are some of the activities that have been developed by ethnic self-help groups. While these activities often duplicate services provided by prison officials, ethnic groups operate from the assumption that minority members will not avail themselves of institutional services because of distrust of or rebellion against middle-class values (Burdman, 1974; Irwin, 1980; cf. Browning, 1972; Cleaver, 1972).

This approach is used by prisoner organizations like Black Awareness for Community Development (BACDO, sounding like "backdoor" and implying a programming option for inmates), Chicanos Organizados Pintos Aztlan (COPA—a reference to "coping" with imprisonment), Afro-American Coalition, Affirmative Action Latin Group, and the Native American Brotherhood with their time-honored rituals including the use of "Sweat Lodges" (California Dept. of Corrections, 1978; Mass. Dept. of Correction, 1987). These groups seek to form strong ties with minority communities on the outside such as the NAACP, the Urban League, Chicanos Por La Causa, La Raza, and the American Indian Movement. They also try to elicit support from religious and university communities (Abdul-Mu'Min, 1985; Irwin, 1980).

Correctional administrators have often taken a dim view of ethnic self-help groups (Burdman, 1974; Irwin, 1980; McAnany and Tromanhauser, 1977). At issue has been the tendency of group leaders to provoke and challenge administrators. Fearing that "outside agitation" may lead to institutional disturbance, some prison wardens have adopted firm policies against the use of ex-offenders and community speakers for these organizations. For example, the Native American Brothers at the Arizona State Prison in Tucson were recently denied visitation privileges with community leaders because group sponsors had scheduled a "Pipe-Smoking" ceremony in their weekly meeting. The reaction of inmates to this incident was confrontational, and eventually violent. In turn, community sponsorship for the Native American Brothers was suspended by prison officials. Moreover, evidence exists to suggest that ethnic groups have been constrained in their efforts to develop and sustain a significant community support apparatus, while administrators have become increasingly suspicious of self-help programs that appear to be foreign to the operation of corrections and threatening to institutional environments (Burdman, 1974; Irwin, 1980).

The Human Potential Groups

During the 1960's and '70's, a new breed of criminal entered the nation's prison system. These offenders were strongly influenced by an emerging American ethos known as "hip." Hip was the ionization of rebellion for white middle class youth. Like many black Americans, "hippies" didn't trust society, so they determined goodness for themselves through the expression of their own feelings. Hip meant showing the utmost kindness to one's fellow sufferer in a world becoming progressively more flawed, and hippies sought their instant humanism and expanded consciousness with marijuana, LSD, and amphetamines (cf. Nicosia, 1984). A number of prisoner organizations responded to this "ideological force-field"; and in this sense, they became part of a larger, vaguely defined, human potential movement (cf. Katz and Bender, 1976).

The goal of human potential groups in prison (and elsewhere) is to provide members with a new sense of self-awareness (Liberman and Borman, 1979). Like ethnic self-help groups, they attempt to accomplish this goal by providing offenders with intense intimacy and esprit de corps. Like stigmatized and anonymous groups, human potential organizations often adopt both a creed and theology. They are also likely to be founded by charismatic leaders, and frequently rely on outside support. There are, however, three distinct features of human potential groups in prison: 1) They are fortified by the proselytization of new members. The stability of the group depends on the enthusiastic response of participants who tell other inmates about their positive experiences in the group. 2) Group members do not see themselves as deviant, sick, or inferior. Rather, they try to see themselves as kind and capable individuals, who (despite their condition of imprisonment) are able to lead fulfilling lives. 3) They attempt to establish a "subterranean legitimacy" within the prison subculture by using cultlike terms and utterances.

The first application of human potential principles within a prisoner population was conducted at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Concord in the early 1960's, where the Self Development Group (SDG) was established by Timothy Leary and associates from Harvard University. Leary proposed that SDG members (prisoners and Harvard experimenters) form themselves into a "clan-type" family. His intent was to produce an emotional involvement on the part of the prisoner, that would lessen the distance between the criminal and professional helper.

> Our strategy was exactly the opposite to the detached professional approach. The aim was to build a network of friends who would help each other. To construct a group that could perform some of the functions of the tribe. Our plan was to use the resources of our group (including middle-class know-how) to weave a web of protection for the convicts (Leary, 1968:173).

Leary was permitted to use psychedelic drugs—the "sacrament"—in his attempt to create this affiliation (Kuehn, 1969). Often, in their "altered states of consciousness," prisoners would affirm a willingness to attack not only the pains of imprisonment, but any of society's problems in order "to make the world a better place for everyone" (Sagarin, 1969:182). This goal was made explicit in the SDG creed (see principle 5 below).

SDG CREED

1. Trying to solve personal problems in an honest setting assisted by others of a similar purpose.
2. Learning to relate with each other and the world as reasonable, responsible persons.
3. Building a useful life structured on faith in God, in self, and in the ideals of the group.
4. Earning social respect and respecting society in return on the basis of mutual commitment to the objectives of the community.
5. Living as a power of example towards helping others in trouble.
6. Reviving commitment to SDG every day in compliance with the principles of the program.
7. Keeping SDG independent of ineffectual programs, yet open to assistance from any person or group who can help it in attaining its goals.

While the Harvard experimenters and their drugs eventually left Concord, SDG survived (cf. Leary, 1969, 1983:78-90; Metzner, 1965). Indeed, Sagarin (1969:182) referred to the SDG as a "momentous event in the history of Massachusetts corrections," and MacNamara (1971:127) later claimed that the program was "one of the major efforts of a group of convicts to rehabilitate themselves through a self-help voluntary association." A number of prisoner organizations have followed the self-help philosophy of SDG, including the Church of the New Song, Ring of Keys, Inward Bound, Wake Up, Discovery, New Life, Human Potential Seminars, and "est" (cf. Abdul-Mu'Min, 1985; est, 1976; Hamm, 1987; Irwin, 1980; Mass. Dept. of Correction, 1987).

Administrative reaction to these groups has been mixed. On one hand, administrators have been reluctant to note the benefit of humanism and consciousness-raising in corrections. SDG was dismissed as "nothing more than a pot party" (Kuehn, 1969:21), and recent professional meetings and publications fail to recognize the human potential movement as a viable treatment intervention. Also, many human potential groups have been organized—developing a creed, theology, and letterhead—only to disband in favor of more promising affiliations within the prison subculture (McAnany and Tromanhauser, 1977).

On the other hand, some administrators have made human potential groups a part of corrections policy. The est program with its goal of "enabling inmates to meet these times with freedom, vitality, spontaneity, and ease"; Ring of Keys with its goal of "betterment of the individual through finding keys that will open many doors for a brighter and happier future"; and Discovery which endeavors to "challenge inmates to explore alternative decision-making and life styles" are all self-help groups that are formally sanctioned in some jurisdictions (cf. California Dept. of Corrections, 1978; Mass. Dept. of Correction, 1987; Prison Possibilities, 1987). Like SDG, they have all been supported by government officials at the executive level of criminal justice who were introduced to programs by charismatic leaders.

Most notably, Werner Erhard (a.k.a. Jack Rosenberg) sold est—Erhard Seminar Training— to California Department of Corrections officials in Sacramento who, in turn, directed the implementation of groups at San Quentin (est, 1976). Likewise, Erhard persuaded Federal Bureau of Prison officials to conduct the est program at Lompoc (California), and in 1986 the Michigan Department of Corrections adopted this training at the State Prison of Southern Michigan (SPSM) (Prison Possibilities, 1987). Unlike most other prisoner self-help groups, however, the est program is not free.

Since 1971, nearly a half million people around the world have completed the est training, and many continue to financially support its expansion through the organization's "Network." The est groups at San Quentin, Lompoc, and SPSM have been expansion projects of this network. The cost of the program at SPSM, which is entitled "The Forum," is $130 per inmate—payable to Erhard and Associates—and participation is restricted (by the warden) to "short timers," those with less than 6 months left on their terms of confinement. Since 1986, 203 inmates have "graduated" from The Forum, and over 100 Network Volunteers have "assisted" in the program and have raised $30,000 to underwrite costs (Prison Possibilities, 1987). These graduates have organized a baby-sitting service for children at the prison's visitation center, raised money for terminally ill children, and have sponsored their own forum for "Youth at Risk" in Detroit. Additionally, and more important to the issue at hand, graduates of the SPSM program have formed committees to create positive media about the prison and to volunteer for institutional work assignments.

This approach to self-help is interesting because it suggests that future organizations may not be built on the experiences of prisoners or ex-offenders who struggle to heal the pains of imprisonment. Rather, self-help groups will be privatized and implemented by administrative decree. Furthermore, the approach suggests that inmates who join such self-help organizations will work in concert with administrators to improve conditions of confinement. As such, this approach brings together potentially powerful interests (business, community, and government) with prisoners who are in favor of the idea that criminals are reformable and that correctional environments should be oriented toward this task.

Conclusion

Irwin (1980) has offered two useful observations regarding self- help groups in prison. First, he argues that more inmates belong to self-help groups than any other form of prisoner organization. This is so because self-help groups tend to appeal to inmates and often draw outside support from citizens. Administrators encourage this practice, says Irwin (1980:93), "as long as self-help programs remain an alternative to other, more political groups." Second, based on his own experience as a prisoner, he emphasizes that self-help groups are significant because they offer the "first encouragement for a criminal to come out." By this, he means that "convicts learn through the self-help process that they have nothing to hide or live down." Instead, they can "unabashedly and proudly" announce their past and "open doors . . . to a variety of conventional endeavors" (Irwin, 1980:94).

To the extent that Irwin is correct, he presents a challenge for correctional administrators and prisoners: How do administrators and inmates of the 1980's and beyond choose their self-help programs? For administrators, the challenge is to understand the potential of self-help groups. How do they contribute to prison stability? To what extent do they facilitate community integration? Is there outside support? If so, who are the leaders of these groups? The immediate task for inmates, it seems, is to determine which programs best suit individual needs without threatening prison administrators.

I have argued that these questions can be answered best through reference to a typology which integrates goals of administrators and inmates in contemporary corrections. Though far from complete, this typology suggests that administrators will seemingly endorse the prisoner self-help movement only if it is convenient to do so. And, practically speaking, administrators will not tolerate threats from self-help groups, regardless of their noble intentions. Groups that serve the stigmatized and addicted/disabled prisoner are usually perceived as nonthreatening by administrators. Meanwhile, ethnic groups are viewed as threatening and administrators are ambivalent about human potential groups. In sum, I have argued that non-threatening organizations embrace a religious ideology, do not engage in activities foreign to the operation of corrections, and cultivate strong administrative and outside support. In particular, I have argued that these activities be allowed to flourish in modern prison communities.

References

Abdul-Mu'Min, E. M. (1985) "Prisoner power and survival." In R. M. Carter, L. T. Wilkins, and D. Glaser (eds.), *Correctional Institutions*. New York: Harper and Row.

Allen, H. E. and C. E. Simonsen (1986) *Corrections in America*. New York: Macmillan

American Friends Service Committee (1971) *Struggle for Justice*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Antze, P. (1979) "Role of ideologies in peer psychotherapy groups." In M. A. Liberman and L.D. Borman (eds.), *Self-Help Groups for Coping with Crisis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Browning, F. (1972) "Organizing behind bars." In B. M. Atkins and H. R. Glick (eds.), *Prisons, Protest and Politics*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Burdman, M. (1974) "Ethnic self-help groups in prison and on parole." *Crime and Delinquency* (April).

California Department of Corrections (1978) *Manual of Procedures*. Sacramento: California Department of Corrections.

Carroll, L. (1982) "Race, ethnicity, and the social order of the prison." In R. Johnson and H. Toch (eds.), *The Pains of Imprisonment*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Cleaver, E. (1972) "On becoming." In B. M. Atkins and H. R. Glick (eds.), *Prisons, Protest and Politics*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Ellis, G. (1983) *Inside Folsom Prison*. Burlington, VT: Accord Publications.

est (1976) *Nothin' This Good Ever Happened to Me Before*. San Francisco: est.

Garrett, C. J. (1985) "Effects of residential treatment on adjudicated delinquents: A meta-analysis." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* (November).

Gendreau, P. and B. Ross (1979) "Effective correctional treatment: Bibliotherapy for cynics." *Crime and Delinquency* (October).

———. (1984) "Correctional treatment: Some recommendations for effective intervention." *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* (Winter).

Hamm, M. S. (1987) "The human potential seminar." *Journal of Correctional Education* (March).

Irwin, J. (1974) "Adaptation to being corrected." In D. Glaser (ed.), *Handbook of Criminology*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

———. (1980) *Prisons in Turmoil*. Boston: Little Brown.

Johnson, R. (1987) *Hard Time*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Kassebaum, G. G., Ward, D. A., and D. M. Wilner (1971) *The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Katz, A. K. and E. I. Bender (1976) *The Strength In Us.* New York: New Viewpoints.

Kuehn, W. C. (1969) "The concept of self-help groups among criminals." *Criminologica* (May).

Leary, T. (1968) *High Priest.* Cleveland: World Publishing.

_____. (1969) "The effects of consciousness expanding drugs in prisoner rehabilitation." *Psychedelic Review* (May).

_____. (1983) *Flashbacks.* Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher.

Liberman, M. A. and L. D. Borman (1979) *Self-Help Groups for Coping with Crisis.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lillyquist, M. J. (1980) *Understanding and Changing Criminal Behavior.* Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

MacNamara, D. E. J. with E. Sagarin (1971) *Perspectives on Corrections.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Mass. Department of Correction (1987) *Program Descriptions.* Mass. Department of Correction.

McAnany, P. D., and E. Tromanhauser (1977) "Organizing the convict: Self-help for prisoners and ex-cons." *Crime and Delinquency* (January).

Metzner, R. (1965) "A change program for adult offenders using psilocybin." *Psychotherapy* (July).

Nicosia, G. (1984) *Memory Babe—A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac.* New York: Grove.

Palmer, T. (1978) *Correctional Intervention and Research.* Lexington: D. C. Heath.

Prison Possibilities (1987) Newsletter from the State Prison at Southern Michigan. Lansing: Prison Possibilities.

Reckless, W. C. (1961) "A new theory of delinquency and crime." *Federal Probation* (December).

Rothman, D. J. (1971) *The Discovery of the Asylum.* Boston: Little Brown.

Sagarin, E. (1969) *Odd Man In.* Chicago: Quadrangle Books.

Sands, B. (1964) *My Shadow Ran Fast.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Slaikeu, K. (1973) "Evaluation studies of group treatment of juvenile and adult offenders in correctional institutions." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* (January).

Snarr, R. W. and B. I. Wolford (1985) *Corrections.* Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.

Toch, H. (1965) *The Social Psychology of Social Movements.* Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill.