149035

Dumpson, J.R. "An Approach to Antisocial Street Gangs." *Federal Probation*, 1949,
22-29.

NATIONAL YOUTH GANG INFORMATION CENTER

4301 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 730
Arlington, Virginia 22203

1-800-446-GANG   ●   703-522-4007

NYGIC Document Number: JO I O 𝓛

Permission Codes:

FEDERAL

PROBATION

A Quarterly Journal of Correctional Philosophy and Practice

Volume XIII	December 1949	Number 4

IN THIS ISSUE

CONTENTS FOR DECEMBER 1949

This Issue in Brief

"*Relation of the Court to Probationers During the Period of Probation.*"—"It seems clear that the probation officer's report to the court concerning the conduct of the probationer should not be limited merely to reporting violations of probation or bad conduct." This is the pronouncement of Federal Judge Henry N. Graven of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Iowa. The granting of probation, he declares, constitutes the beginning and not the end of the court's responsibility for the probationer. Judge Graven believes that a judge should receive periodic reports from his probation officers about the personal and social adjustment of probationers. Keeping in touch with them during their period of probation, Judge Graven concludes, not only gives the court a better understanding of what to do about continuing, extending, or revoking probation, but also helps to make the probationer more than merely a case number.

"*On the Rehabilitation of the Offender.*"—Punishment of the offender, according to Professor Bruno Bettelheim of the University of Chicago, does not serve any rational purpose. It is not a deterrent, he contends, and has very little or no corrective value. He believes, on the other hand, that a sense of guilt can be a crime deterrent and

that a guilt feeling is more painful to most offenders than punishment. In his scholarly and informative article Dr. Bettelheim explains why society is more interested in punishment than reform and is willing to pay more and suffer more as long as the offender is punished. He offers some fundamentally sound priciples for understanding the personality of the offender and aiding him in his rehabilitation. His discussion of the role of punishment is challenging and provocative.

"*The Respective Roles of Laymen and Professional Workers in Social Work.*"—A team relationship between the layman and the social worker is absolutely essential, according to Joseph P. Anderson, executive secretary of the American Association of Social Workers, if the social work profession is to make its maximum contribution to the welfare of society. Mr. Anderson reviews the part played by the layman in the development of the social work profession during the past 25 years, discusses the influence of expanded public social services and voluntary agencies in bringing the layman and the social worker closer together, and summarizes the role of the layman and the professional worker in agency administration and community planning. Probation and parole officers who are interested in strengthening the quality

of their work and professional standing in the community will benefit from Mr. Anderson's analysis and interpretation of the kind of working relationship that should exist between the layman and the social worker.

"An Approach to Antisocial Street Gangs."— During 1945 and 1946 violence among "conflict gangs" in New York City reached an all-time high. In one 9-day period three youngsters were killed in "gang" warfare in one neighborhood of the city. The Welfare Council of New York City was called on to cope with the situation and to formulate a definite program of action. In this account of one phase of New York City's method of dealing with antisocial street gangs, James R. Dumpson, consultant on delinquency and correction for the Welfare Council, describes the organization and activities of the average street gang, explains the approach in winning over the gang, and outlines the worker's role in directing and guiding the "reformed" gang's activities. All who are interested in the prevention and control of delinquency and crime will want to read about this apparently successful experiment in shaping antisocial street gangs into wholesome natural-interest groups.

"New Goals for Juvenile Detention."—This is the first of two articles on juvenile detention by Sherwood Norman, detention consultant for the National Probation and Parole Association. In his first article Mr. Norman interprets the underlying philosophy of detention, comments on the types of facilities used for detaining children, discusses the control of admissions, outlines the advantages of state-operated regional detention centers, and considers basic principles in relation to personnel and program. He asserts that a different concept of juvenile detention is gaining momentum in this country. It is based on the fact that a child cannot be held in suspension and that detention may be more destructive than helpful unless the "storage-only" concept is abandoned in favor of beginning the process of rehabilitation at the point of arrest.

Detention home design and construction will be the subject of Mr. Norman's second article.

"What the Probation Officer Can Do for Special Types of Offenders."—One of the perplexing questions in the field of human behavior, according to Psychiatrist Manly B. Root of the United States Penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pa., is "how a normal baby with all potentialities for good grows into an individual whose lax moral standards, thoughtless hedonism, callous conscience, and rebellious aggressiveness make of his character and personality a person who has to be locked up by society for its own protection." A psychiatrist at state and federal penal and correctional institutions for more than 23 years, Dr. Root is well qualified to tell the probation officer how to recognize and how to help such special types of offenders as the alcoholic, drug addict, psychopathic personality, sexual deviate, neurotic, and psychotic. Dr. Root's article is *must* reading for all probation officers.

"Family Casework in Probation."—In the professional field of social work it is almost impossible to speak of treating an individual without recognizing that a family also is being treated. This is the premise on which David Crystal, executive director of the Jewish Social Service Bureau at Rochester, N. Y., bases his article. The basic concepts of family casework as applied to probation and parole are explained and the way a voluntary agency and an authoritarian agency function in a specific situation involving delinquency is illustrated. Mr. Crystal concludes that casework, whether in an authoritative or voluntary setting, involves the same basic elements and that helping an individual implies consideration of relationship within the family setting.

"Are You Planning to Build?"—This graphic presentation is a preview of some of the highlights of the Federal Bureau of Prison's 311-page Handbook on design and construction of correctional institutions ranging from small jail and short-term detention facilities for juveniles to the maximum-security type prison. In his realistic treatment of the subject Robert D. Barnes, senior architect for the Bureau of Prisons, calls attention to a few of the many considerations which should be taken into account in the planning, designing, and construction of penal and correctional institutions.

All articles appearing in this magazine are regarded as appropriate expressions of ideas worthy of thought, but their publication is not to be taken as an indiorsement of the views set forth, by the editors or the federal probation office. The editors may or may not agree with the articles appearing in the magazine, but believe them in any case to be deserving of consideration.

An Approach to Antisocial Street Gangs

By James R. Dumpson

Consultant on Delinquency and Correction, Welfare Council of New York City

ONE OF THE concomitant phenomena of the social and economic disruption of the recent war was the marked rise of delinquent behavior on the part of teen-age youth in this country. Particularly in our urban communities, a dramatic and disturbing series of outbreaks of warfare was observed among teen-age groups or clubs disdainfully called gangs. During 1945 and 1946 in New York City, violence among "conflict gangs" reached an all-time high. From September 10 to September 19, 1946, a 9-day period, three youngsters were killed in gang warfare in one neighborhood of the city.

Action was deemed imperative to protect the community and its members. The Prison Association of New York called on the Welfare Council of New York City as the central planning and co-ordinating social agency in New York to "formulate a definite program of action" for the amelioration of antisocial activity by gangs. Despite considerable discussion about the causes of juvenile delinquency, few efforts had been made to examine empirically the methods being used to prevent and control delinquency. The Council called together a committee of experts in the field of youth services, and after months of careful analysis and study, the committee recommended the operation of an experimental project with street gangs designed to formulate methods for developing and extending suitable programs of treatment. The project was to operate for a 3-year period in two of the most seriously affected areas of the city. Limitation of funds finally confined the effort to one area, and in the spring of 1947, the Central Harlem Street Clubs Project was set up.

In reporting on the Central Harlem Street Clubs Project, the writer, at the outset, wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the entire staff of the project in the presentation of the material on which this paper is based. However, the writer personally takes responsibility for the form in which it is presented, and particularly for the evaluations that are set forth.

Basic Assumptions and Objectives

There are multiple causative factors underlying individual delinquent behavior, and an examination of causation of antisocial group behavior similarly indicates many contributing factors. The degree to which any one factor contributes to antisocial behavior, whether individual or group, may be negligible. As stated by Shulman, "It is the cumulative impact of a large number of these factors that constitute the multiple causation pattern and, at the same time, the complex treatment problem of the delinquent situation."[1] The aggression and hostility of the delinquent reflects his neglect, his lack of affection, his rejection by his family, neighborhood or community. Devastating economic and social conditions play a major role in the breakdown of the family which in turn results in emotional deprivations and frustrations that drive the individual to behavior which we call delinquent. Racial, religious, and class prejudice, topped off by a stereotyped and depersonalized school experience, contributes further to his feelings of rejection and to the influences of unsatisfying interpersonal relations in a home that frequently is emotionally demoralized.

The Committee on Street Clubs, in its analysis, defined the following as causal factors in the antisocial club behavior which they studied: (a) The glorification of violence and "commando" tactics during the war years; (b) The tension resulting from an intensified emphasis placed on racial differences; and (c) The deep-seated frustrations as the result of political, social, and economic discrimination on racial, religious, or nationality basis in our country or city.

The recreation and leisure-time agencies in the area were not equipped, either by stated function or structure, to cope with the street gang situation. A survey revealed that not more than 10 percent of the total adolescent age group in the area studied were participating in adult-sponsored leisure-time activities. Even where attempts had been made to reorganize programs in an effort to attract a greater proportion of the teen-age group, it has not been possible to integrate into total agency programs those autonomous street gangs

[1] Harry Manuel Shulman, "The Family and Juvenile Delinquency," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Service,* January, 1949, p. 21.

which already had developed patterns of aggressive antisocial behavior. The complex cultural and socioeconomic factors underlying the street gang pattern dictate that an approach to the situation cannot be anchored in a recreation program. No amount of adaptation of services on the part of leisure-time agencies alone can prevent or control juvenile delinquency. To seek the answer in recreation is to deny the subjective meaning of antisocial behavior. The prevention and treatment of delinquent behavior requires the utilization and co-ordination of *every* available and known resource in the community. It must use effectively the knowledge and skills of every discipline that relates to man in society. It must be a total community approach.

We have learned that punitive and repressive methods will not control the street gang situation. Such methods on the part of the police and other community agents have tended to heighten existing tensions and to increase hostile activity. Authority has its proper place in treatment and control, but must be used as part of a total plan which is geared to the individual and his needs. Brutality and ruthlessness on the part of the police merely fan the flames of hostility of gang members and serve to strengthen the unity of the group out of its felt-need for protection and retaliation.

The committee agreed that existing approaches were not meeting the needs of street gang members. Experimentation with an approach that would involve in a positive manner the total community and all of its resources seemed indicated. The approach used recognizes that the street gang is a normal expression of the needs of adolescents to emancipate from adults and to establish themselves as independent individuals. By its very nature, the street gang has constructive potentialities. It is a medium through which the adolescent can gain a security which arises from acceptance by one's social group and also one through which capacities for group loyalties, leadership, and community responsibility can be developed.

The objectives and goals of the project as set forth by the Committee on Street Clubs may be stated as follows:

1. Reduction of antisocial behavior among street gangs through redirecting antisocial behavior into socially constructive channels.
2. The development of a local area committee composed of persons having an active interest in the area and concerned about our problems. The purposes of this committee would be to sponsor the project at the area level, be responsible for developing and utilizing local resources for meeting the needs of the street gangs, and to stimulate further community action toward the removal of forces acting as hindrances to wholesome living in the neighborhood.
3. The determination of the validity of the project method as an approach which may be adaptable for use by other areas.

In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to structure a process that provides a dynamic relationship between the boys and the workers. The project must help the people of the area to focus their interest and constructive efforts on the problems which adversely affect wholesome living, and to provide them with skill in finding ways of solving these problems. Finally, if the project method is valid, the techniques employed should be defined for use by other areas and communities faced with the street gang problem.

Working directly with the various street gangs in the neighborhood are five area workers, one of whom is a woman, who are responsible for direct contact with a gang and who, through the skills and understanding of casework, group work, and community organization, attempt to help the gangs and their members to find satisfaction in socially acceptable club activities. The research director has the responsibility of recording the operations and of evaluating the results of the project. The area director, working with the Council's Consultant on Correction and Delinquency and the Committee on Street Clubs of the Welfare Council, provides the administrative direction of the entire project. The woman worker devotes her skills and efforts to the girls who are directly related to the boys in the clubs.

The Street Gang Structure

During the 2 years of the project's existence, relationship has been established with four of the area's most aggressive, antisocial gangs and contact has been established with the girls related to them. Each of these gangs has a history of violent gang warfare, weapon carrying, stealing, rape, and the use of narcotics. Truancy, drinking, and tangles with the police have been prevalent among the boys, whose age group is from 11 to 23, and many of whom have been in one or more correctional institutions.

Except during mobilization for gang warfare, the structure of the gangs is generally loose and organized for a face-to-face relationship and the protection of its members. The largest gang has approximately 100 members; the smallest about 35 members. However, the boys travel in groups

of two or three and it is unusual to see more than 10 or 15 members together at any one time or place. Basically autocratic, the gangs can be divided into two distinct groups: leader and leadership clique consisting of five or six boys, and the members. The gang is broken up into various special interest groups for activities, and while membership in these gangs varies, there is a tendency for the leadership clique to play a dominant role in them and to determine the nature of most of their activities. The gangs also have what the boys call "divisions." These usually are based on age groupings, have their own organizational structure, and serve, by a kind of vertical mobility, to perpetuate the gangs. The club officers' titles are functionally descriptive and seem to indicate the roles their holders have in gang warfare. Usually there is a "president," "vice-president," a war counselor, assistant war counselor, and occasionally a "light up" man. This latter boy usually carries the pistols and initiates the war by "shooting up" the rival gangs.

Newspaper and magazine articles and recent glorified films on the gang have given a distorted picture of the frequency of the groups' participation in antisocial behavior. The experience of the project indicates that only a small part of the boys' time is spent in such activities. Participation in sports, attendance at the movies, parties, dances, "be-bop" sessions, and "bull sessions" take up a much larger part of their time. Just "hanging around" and visiting their girl friends are important activities of all the gangs.

The so-called "street gang" may be one of three types: (1) A group whose principal activities are antisocial. This is the "criminal gang" whose sole function and activity is antisocial in nature. (2) A group which occasionally engages in antisocial activities. This is a normal social unit of adolescents. Under appropriate external stimuli, it may engage in antisocial activity. (3) A group which, as a unit, does not engage in antisocial activities although individual members of the gang may follow a confirmed pattern of delinquent behavior. Although our experience during the 2-year period has been with four of the city's most notorious gangs, it is my judgment that the so-called "street gang" is a combination of the last two types.

The Project Area

The section of New York in which the project is working is one of the most depressed, underprivileged areas in the city. It is an area of inade-
quate health, educational, and recreational facilities; overcrowding; poor housing; and low economic status. The people, for the most part, react to segregation and racial discrimination with hostile and tense feelings which underlie many of their attitudes toward the value system of the community at large. The violation of conduct norms among adults is an ever-present reality. Charges and countercharges of bribery by the police and of police brutality are part of the daily flow of events. The setting for the average child is one of poverty, value conflict, bitterness, anxiety, fear, and antisociality. However, there has been no evidence of any sympathetic attitudes on the part of adults toward interclub warfare among the teen-age groups. Indeed, in most instances, many of the adults have characterized the boys involved in gang warfare as "trouble-making hoodlums," and this has been of real concern to many of the boys. As the boys have come to engage in constructive social activities, there has been an increasing measure of co-operation on the part of the adults. Their mixed feelings about the conventional institutions and values of the larger community, and the realities of segregation and discrimination present a real problem for effective organization for local community action.

Relations With Street Gangs

The operation of the project began officially with the appointment of the area director on April 14, 1947. For the first 3 months, the director's work consisted largely of a survey of the cultural, ethnic, economic, and social aspects of the neighborhood; charting the movement and respective areas of operation of individual gangs; and establishing a relationship with the leadership of the gangs and the indigenous adult leadership in the neighborhood.

The approach in establishing a relationship has been informal and no attempt has been made to interfere with the boys' accustomed ways of carrying out their activities. In fact, identification was built up through able participation by the area workers in those activities which had special meaning for the boys. It was found helpful to have an extra package of cigarettes on hand as the boys were always "bumming" them from each other. Acceptance of the director by the gang can be noted by the following type of incident which is quoted from an area worker's process record:

When one of the boys would ask if he got the cigarette from the director, frequently the answer would

be "Yeah, man. He is a citizen," or by the statement, "No, man, he ain't no cop . . . we cased him."

The relationship with the first gang, the Royal Counts,[2] was sufficiently established to enable the director to obtain their co-operation in fixing up the project office. Throughout the cleaning period, questions were asked of the director as to how the place was to be operated. The presence of office furniture seemed to have motivated many of these questions. They were answered frankly and directly, and the aims and purposes of the project were discussed freely. After the confidence and interest of this group had been secured, the boys were transferred to the first area worker at the end of 3 months. Through utilization of similar techniques, another area worker was able to establish a relationship with the Lords. In this case, the worker formed a close relationship with the janitor who cleaned the project office and who had been purposely selected to do this job because of his thorough knowledge of the neighborhood. Through the janitor, the worker was introduced to a key member of the Lords. Their interest in the Dodger baseball team, a picture at the neighborhood theatre, and invitations by the worker to accompany him on errands, laid the foundations for at least a beginning relationship. It paved the way for casual visits by the worker to their hang-out. Here he usually found the boys either boxing or sparring. He decided that their expressed interest in baseball was an attempt to please him or may have been a reflection of his anxiety to rush the job of acceptance. In order to extend the relationship, therefore, he attempted to use the medium of boxing instead of baseball.

A third worker made his contacts in a block where the existence of a street gang had been established. The worker was in need of housing and asked many people on the block for help in finding a place to live. In this way, he became acquainted with people of all ages. As was the practice with the previous workers, after just "hanging around," drinking coffee, playing the juke box, this worker became known as "one of the boys." He was included in conversations and challenged to pitch pennies, and to play football with the boys. Through these contacts, which were purposefully initiated by the worker, he gradually gained the acceptance of the members of the street gang. The following excerpt from his process records

gives a picture of the background and atmosphere in this particular situation:

Edward (the candy-store proprietor) has a small juke box in his store, and I have played it quite often, frequently as a means of extending my stay. On four occasions, I asked the fellows to help me choose some decent numbers. After that they changed the numbers I punched to play records of their own choice. They don't do this secretly, but openly and with good humor. They stand around the juke box and talk about dates and dances—but I seldom, if ever, see them with a girl. They are usually together. Even on Saturdays and Sundays. When they enter the store and I am there, they greet me along with anyone else in the store whom they know. On the several occasions that I have entered the store to find them there, they continued talking or doing whatever they were engaged in. On one occasion, one of the fellows asked me for a cigarette and on another occasion they approached me en masse and asked if I did not want to hear "Let Me Love You Tonight,"—I laughed and played the record for the umpteenth time.

The workers experienced numerous frustrations and anxieties in developing relationship with the boys. Although constantly assured that there were no "deadlines" to meet and no rigid schedules to which they must adhere, they always looked eagerly for the first signs of real acceptance. But these signs, at least in the minds of the area workers, were painfully slow in appearing. Sometimes, in the midst of a conversation which had all the opportunity to deepen the relationship, the boys suddenly would move away leaving the worker alone. The worker might approach a group hoping to join in the conversation, and the boys would become silent. Months later, the boys would tell the workers that they originally suspected them of being policemen or similar representatives of the law. They had watched carefully for any clues that might confirm their suspicions. Finally, through real acceptance of the boys and their group, a conviction about the constructive potentiality of the club,[3] and through his understanding, warmth, skill, and unending patience, the worker was able to establish a relationship in varying degrees with the members of the club.

Worker's Role

What to do with the relationship has presented one of the most difficult questions in the project, for we are learning that this relationship has been structured differently from the usual casework relationship. We are only now beginning to define the quality of this relationship and to distill the area worker's role in its dynamics.

In working with the boys, the workers usually follow the initiative of the boys. They participate in games, bull sessions, block parties, "be-bop jumps," card playing, or just "hanging around."

---

[2]Pseudonyms are used in all references to the names of gangs and gang members.

[3]The term "club" is used hereafter in reference to the street gang with which a working relationship has been established by the area worker.

Recently, boys of several former conflict groups have gone on weekend camping trips, and other similar intergroup activities are planned. The workers see club members almost every day, usually in the afternoon and evening, and spend from 15 to 25 hours a week with them. Usually, they see from 4 to 12 boys in a contact. Sometimes they see only one boy in a contact; sometimes as many as 50. The contacts take place wherever the boys hang out—the street, the candy store, the pool room, at the boys' homes, and now, with growing frequency, at the project office.

We do know that the area worker's role varies with the needs of the group. At times the boys ask them to arbitrate a dispute, to give help in securing a job, or advice on personal problems. The worker's word is not law and the boys freely accept or reject the worker's opinion as they see fit without being rejected by the worker. In a discussion of antisocial behavior, the worker's role also varies. Frequently the worker will listen without expressing approval or disapproval. Sometimes he will ask questions to learn more about the boys' attitudes or behavior. At other times he will disapprove openly of their behavior and give his reasons. If the total situation warrants, the worker may initiate a group discussion and utilize group interaction. Or he may await an opportunity to discuss the situation with an individual boy in terms of that particular boy and his ability to use more intensive help. The area of antisocial behavior is the most difficult to handle. The worker must use great skill in defining his difference from the boy and at the same time maintain a horizontal relationship with him. Skillfully, he must determine the motivations of the boys' behavior, determine the leadership in the situation, and manipulate the situation so as to provide substitute satisfactions for the real goal of the antisocial behavior. In all of this, however, his identification with the boys and their needs must never blind him to his responsibility to the larger community. While he can never betray the confidence of the boys, he constantly must interpret to the schools, the police, and to the entire community constructive ways of meeting the needs and frustrations and hostility which their behavior represents. The worker must recognize and accept his own limitations in the helping process and assist a boy to move on to the use of specialized services in the community when the need is recognized and the boy is ready to use it. Gradually, very gradually, he must help the boys make the fullest use of the facilities in the community and at the same time help the agencies understand and accept this boy. Many of the leisure-time agencies are having to accept the hit-and-miss kind of participation by the boys as they test and retest the realness of their place in the agency after they have accepted the worker's suggestion that they use the agency's facilities.

The worker is called upon to assume responsibilities which other club members are unable or unready to assume. When the boys show an interest in some project, the worker usually helps in the planning and takes on responsibilities just as any other club member. He helps get equipment, permits for block parties, and secures tickets and passes from the police for events that the boys previously had rejected. Gradually the worker transfers responsibilities to individuals in the group, and himself takes on fewer and fewer responsibilities. To illustrate, one area worker writes in describing a second block party:

> A significant change that is apparant is the contrast between the amount of responsibility that the boys took upon themselves at the first block party and at this block party. At the first block party I had to get my hand into a great many things and the boys waited for me to do things before they would start. This time they took on responsibilities without waiting for me. I just had to carry out my duties as a member of the group rather than as the supervisor.
>
> At this block party, Fred took the responsibility for running the record machine; Leon asked the fellows not to shoot fire crackers; he had signed the permit for the party and therefore felt a keen responsibility for conducting it without unhappy incident with the law. Harry took chief responsibility for drawing up a list of the refreshments to be purchased, making the purchases, and supervising all of the boys who helped to prepare and sell the refreshments. Spike's feeling of responsibility was exhibited in his helping out where needed and checking up on all phases of the activity. Jim, an older boy, got a number of his friends to assist the boys in selling raffle tickets and took the responsibility for borrowing a large lamp from the owner of the barber shop and setting it up to provide light for the party.

The worker suggests new ways of doing things that are leading to a greater democratization of the clubs. The boys are experiencing the satisfactions of successful efforts and cherish the "rep" they are achieving in the community, which gives them the status they previously sought in daring and dangerous antisocial activities.

Community Self-Help

One of the unique objectives of the project is to offer assistance to the community in dealing with the problems of the area and meeting the needs of the boys. Chiefly, this involves the development of resources and the stimulation of local community action toward the removal of hin-

drances to wholesome living in the area. Not only has it been necessary for the staff to gain the acceptance of the boys in the clubs. The adults in the community were as suspicious and mistrustful of the area workers as the boys were. During the first 18 months' operation, the staff had to build the kind of relationship with the people in the area that would allow them to use the skills it has in community organization. Efforts are being made to develop an area committee—parents, interested local citizens, and representatives of the four clubs with which the project is in contact. The area committee will attempt, on a local level, to engage in social action designed to effect changes in the neighborhood that contribute to juvenile delinquency. It will attempt to create an atmosphere in which the boys and the potential constructive value of the street club are accepted. It will set in motion the creation of a spirit of co-operation between the boys and the adults and a feeling on the part of the boys that they are "somebody," that they are valuable as individuals and in groups and have a worth-while contribution to make to the local community. The area committee receives guidance and direction from the staff using, however, whatever indigenous leadership there is in the neighborhood. It will receive the full support of the influential Committee on Street Clubs as programs are developed in matters of housing, police activities, health and welfare facilities, employment opportunities, educational facilities, and the elimination of adult criminal activity in the neighborhood. Progress in this area is painfully slow and considerable interpretation and support is necessary.

A professional advisory committee, made up of representatives of agencies and organizations in the local community, is attempting to supply services that are needed and to assist the agencies in meeting the needs of the boys and community as defined by the project staff. Plans are being considered by the committee as to how the techniques developed by the project may best be used by existing agencies after the project has terminated in 1950. The regional division of the Welfare Council of New York is working with the project staff, the area committee and the professional advisory committee in an effort to achieve the fullest co-ordination and the best arrangement of existing services, and to identify areas of unmet need.

Research

Space does not permit a detailed exposition of the research plan. The answers to two basic problems were assigned originally to the research director: (1) Is the area project effective? (2) Why is the project effective or ineffective?

Evaluating the effectiveness of the project involves a determination of the extent to which desired changes occurred in club members and the extent to which these changes can be attributed alone to the project's influence. Determination of the answers to the second question involves the formulation of the methodology developed in working with street clubs during the 3-year operation of the project. It will be necessary to define the methods which were followed by positive change, negative change, or no change at all. We shall want to compare those club members who change most with those who change least. It is hoped that research will indicate the extent to which such environmental influences as the socioeconomic conditions of the area, police practices, etc., seem to influence club members. And finally, we hope to be able to define the personal qualities and professional equipment necessary for an effective area worker. The area worker records his contacts by means of chronological process records. Following this, he answers an interpretation questionnaire designed to help him think through the significance of his experience in preparation for the next contact. He also prepares a review of his records each month as an aid to judging his progress, the effectiveness of his methods, and the most appropriate procedures for the future. Volumes of process records are being analyzed by the research director in order to provide an analysis of various change categories, an evaluation of the workers' techniques, and the boys' response to them. From this material, research is able to provide a current evaluation out of which the staff is able to refine and reformulate techniques and methods of operation. Research also will allow us to state the success or failure of this approach to street gangs and help determine its usability in other communities facing a similar situation in the control of juvenile delinquency.

Preliminary Evaluation

Any assessment of accomplishments of the project must, of necessity, be tentative. Even now, we have not perfected the tools for measuring the effectiveness of this project approach to antisocial

street gangs. And when this is done, we will be faced with the limitation that is set by not having any precise accounting of the extent to which the boys engaged in various activities at the beginning of the project. Nor can we be sure that we are securing now a complete picture of their activities. Even though the boys tell the area workers a great deal, we cannot be sure that they can and do "tell all." Finally, change is a gradual process. If the workers are putting into their relationship with the boys a content that allows the boys to experience a reorganization of any part of themselves, we may not be able to measure the full effectiveness of the project for some time yet to come.

Despite these limitations, we are able to make certain tentative judgments about change in the clubs and to isolate positive results in several of the change categories:

1. The boys are spending increasingly more time in constructive and satisfying activities. Behind these activities are hours of joint planning and sharing. Through these activities, we have helped the boys release much of their potential initiative, leadership, and resourcefulness in socially acceptable and individually satisfying endeavors. They have gained some status in the group and in the community from these activities which they formerly sought in antisocial behavior. They have begun to gain a sense of individual worth and are developing an interdependent relationship with the adults in the community including the heretofore despised policemen.

2. Certain forms of antisocial behavior have decreased. Since the beginning of the project none of the clubs has engaged in interclub warfare although there have been incidents in other sections of the city. Concomitantly, there has been a marked decrease in intergang warfare among the gangs which occupy territory immediately adjacent to that of our clubs. There has been less measurable decrease in the use of narcotics, sex activities, individual stealing, truancy, and drinking. It may very well be that these forms of antisocial behavior for some of the boys are symptomatic of deep personality disorders and are not amenable to the approach of the project. However, there is evidence that the boys have a greater awareness of a new value system and, in individual instances, are consciously striving to identify with the value system of the area worker.

3. The ability of these boys to establish a relationship with a mature, warm, accepting adult has been unquestionably established. This accomplishment augurs well for their use of the only medium through which help may be offered to these boys in order to effect any substantial change.

4. Relations within the group have improved. The leaders are less autocratic and the opinions of the club members are more consistently sought. There is evidence that intragroup dynamics are beginning to operate in a broader democratic framework.

5. The boys have been helped to recognize the availability of facilities in the community which more satisfactorily meet their needs. Their use of the facilities of the Police Athletic League, the gymnasia of public schools, camping facilities, and their willingness to test their acceptance by the group work and leisure-time agencies indicates that success is being realized in broadening the boys' horizons and enriching their day-to-day experiences.

6. Here and there existing recreational agencies have been helped to accept these autonomous groups and to gear their programs to the boys' interests and needs. Considerable reorientation needs to be done in this area before the boys are ready to use the agencies and before the agencies are prepared to accept the boys.

7. Finally, several agencies in the city have begun to adopt this project's approach for their program in an effort to reach groups of boys similar to those in the project. In one instance, a group of extension workers from a group work agency is working with street gangs in the immediate area of the agency. In another instance, two recreational workers in the public schools have been released from the after-school program to work with two street gangs that recently caused the death of one boy and seriously injured another. A project in still another area of the city, under one of our regional councils, using the approach of the Central Harlem Project, has been completed successfully and the report is now being written. The program of the New York City Youth Board to prevent and control juvenile delinquency will include a group of workers who will use the approach of this project in working with street gangs in various parts of the city.

We are convinced, at this point, of the soundness of this approach. There remain many limitations to overcome and many problems to work through. As yet, we have not fully defined the function of the area worker, the specific equipment he needs to bring to the job, and the extent

to which the area worker must use the disciplines of casework and group work. There yet remains the task of isolating, in a demonstrable way, the various techniques used by the area workers, testing the effectiveness of each of these with the various types of boys in the street gangs and the motivations of their participation in the antisocial activities of the gang. Then we will need to find ways of adapting these techniques for use in existing or new agencies as a way of working with antisocial street gangs.

Finally, if we are to prevent, control, and treat delinquency, we must all find a way to use, in every appropriate setting, the knowledge and skills we have concerning human behavior. We have not begun, as a profession nor as a society, to use all that we know about mental hygiene, social improvement, and change in our efforts to meet the challenge of juvenile delinquency. More than new agencies, more than new techniques, more than greater emphasis on psychiatry and sociology, group work, recreational facilities, or additional institutions, is our need to develop a broad, comprehensive program of child welfare in every community that utilizes every bit of knowledge and skill presently at our command. We shall need constantly to test and retest the things we do in that program. As we develop research in every phase of child welfare, we shall have a valid basis for change in experience and practice. Then, and only then, shall we meet the needs of children at home, in school, and in other areas of community activity. Then we shall effectively prevent and control the individual and group expressions of juvenile delinquent behavior.

New Goals for Juvenile Detention

By Sherwood Norman
Detention Consultant, National Probation and Parole Association

OLD CONCEPTS of detention grew out of the notion that delinquent acts call for retaliation. A youngster who appears to be a tough customer must be shown that "we can get tough too." The fact that between 50,000 and 75,000 children[1] are still held annually in county jails and police lockups, most of which are substandard for adults, is evidence enough that the old concepts persist. But further evidence can be found in detention homes where life is a deadly adult-controlled routine and conformity is secured by deprivation of privileges or threat of isolation. These detention homes have little concern for the development of the child's personality. "The children are with us too short a time," we are told. Physical care and custody are the primary objectives in the county jail, in the typical detention boarding home and in the detention institution whose purposes seldom reach beyond spotless linen and lifeless routines. The idea is to hold the child in suspension and do nothing until an investigation is made and the court decides on the treatment. No wonder detention has been referred to as a necessary evil!

A different concept of juvenile detention is gaining momentum in this country. It is based on the fact that a child cannot be held in suspension; that detention may be more destructive than helpful unless the "storage-only" concept is abandoned in favor of beginning the process of rehabilitation at the point of arrest. The new detention offers individual and group therapy and, where available, clinical diagnosis. In the new detention each child finds acceptance regardless of his behavior and thus his attitude toward authority is reinterpreted.

From the standpoint of the court the prehearing period is an investigating, fact-finding period. Therefore the detention home should have much to contribute regarding the nature, needs, and potentialities of the child. To the youngster the prehearing period is a suspense period which represents society's retaliation for his behavior. Anxieties, bitterness, and resentment either burst forth or are driven within the child where they may strike back at society later. Probably at no time in life is a boy or girl in greater need of *an intensive period of skilled guidance, constructive activities to replace periods of idleness, and good physical and psychological care.* At no one time is

---

[1] No figures are available on the extent to which jails are used for children. However, it is conservatively estimated that annual jail admissions of children under juvenile court jurisdiction would fall between these figures. Jail admissions of all youngsters under 18 would, of course, be considerably higher.