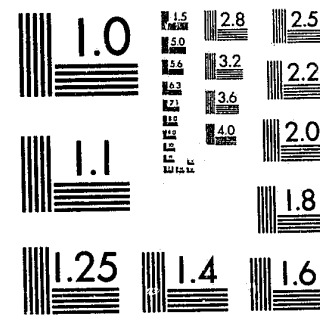


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PRISONIZATION: THE AMERICAN WAY?

By Alfreda P. Iglehart, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
The University of Michigan
School of Social Work
Ann Arbor, Michigan

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Prepared for:
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE
8121 Georgia Avenue Suite 608
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
(Thomas D. Carter, Project Director)

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Prisonization: The American Way?

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Introduction and Overview

On April 10, 1981, Attorney William F. Smith appointed eight people to serve on the Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime. These individuals were selected because of their criminal justice-related experiences at the various levels of government. The Task Force was charged "to make specific recommendations to the Attorney General on ways in which the federal government could do more to combat violent crime" (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: v). A final report was issued August 17, 1981, which included some sixty-four recommendations for the Attorney General to consider in the war against violent crime in the United States.

Few people would dispute the seriousness of the crime problem in this country. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports and other official statistics purport to document this seriousness. As official statistics may reflect either the artifacts of discretionary recording systems or the reality of crime, the accurateness of the numbers is often debated. The Task Force apparently accepted the current documentation on crime as valid and reflective of real world phenomena by stating, "The wave of serious violent crime we are now experiencing reflects a breakdown..." [emphasis added] (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 1).

In addition to official statistics, incarceration rates are frequently cited as indication of the enormity of the crime problem. The January 1, 1981, prison count showed that 320,583 adults were in state and federal correctional facilities, which represents a four percent (13,376) increase over January 1, 1980 (Krajick, 1981: 16). Soaring incarceration rates have been interpreted to be associated with soaring crime rates. Some researchers assert that such an interpretation obfuscates the spurious relationship that exists between the two rates. The Task Force, however, implicitly accepted a positive relationship between the two phenomena:

We think that the provision of more and higher quality correctional facilities will ease the problem faced now by almost all states of dealing swiftly, certainly, and fairly with convicted offenders...(U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 2).

Some have claimed that incarceration rates mirror changes in the way individuals are processed through the criminal justice system. Krajick (1981: 17), for example, notes that the boom in the prison population may be due, in part, to harsh mandatory sentencing and conservative parole practices. The Task Force explicitly rejects this notion by declaring that the current wave of violent crime "reflects a breakdown of the social order, not of the legal order" (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 1).

Finally, it is difficult to speak of prisons in a non-ideological manner. The purpose of prisons has long been debated and challenged. Punishment, deterrence, and rehabilitation have all been held as the

raison d'être for American correctional institutions. The Task Force clearly revealed its ideological base by asserting that more prisons "will help deter some would-be offenders and incapacitate other known offenders" (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 2).

The assumptions made by the Task Force are reviewed here to provide a frame-of-reference for the premise that prisonization is gaining support in America today. A frame-of-reference delimits a field of vision and conveys, either implicitly or explicitly, a set of assumptions necessary for determining the orientation taken toward the subject matter under study (see Larson, 1973: 17). The Task Force took specific positions in a number of controversial areas that reinforced the growing pro-prison movement. More prisons are advocated by the Task Force because (1) violent crimes are increasing; (2) more convicted offenders require more facilities; (3) the American social order is breaking down; and (4) prisons serve as a means of punishment and deterrence. Perhaps these positions were taken because the Task Force members were deeply enmeshed in the criminal justice system. The role of insider often suggests a certain degree of cooptation when individuals take on the perspectives endorsed by the system they represent. Perhaps, as members of various criminal justice departments, the Task Force members had a vested interest in exonerating the criminal justice arena of any responsibility in contributing to the current "crime wave."

A plausible explanation must be somewhere in the offering. Some explanation must exist as to how and why the Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime could take a stand and make over sixty recommendations

without directly addressing one of the most obvious and unique features of American prisons. Prisonization is primarily a black phenomenon. From 1973 to 1979 the incarceration rate for whites rose from 46.3 to 65.1 per 100,000 while the rate for blacks rose from 368 to 544.1 per 100,000 (Christianson, 1981: 365). The Task Force's assumptions and recommendations should be analyzed in relation to the growing blackness of American prisons. Such an analysis follows here.

Blacks and Criminal Justice

Generally, blacks have had a very limited role in the formulation and implementation of the social policies affecting their lives. Policies governing citizenship, voting, housing, employment, pay, and education are examples of areas in which blacks have had to rely on the benevolence of the dominant society for equitable treatment. In all too many instances, benign neglect or deliberate intent rendered results that were far less than equitable. Black Americans' precarious relationship with social policy has resulted in a history of distrust.

More recent years have witnessed the emergence of ameliorative policies to address discriminatory practices in America. In too many cases, such policies lacked the needed enforcement arm for successful implementation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 can be offered as examples of policies without teeth. For the most part, these acts were "good intentions" declaration because adequate means were not provided for long-term, effective enforcement and monitoring. Hence, these policies represented a partial mouth —

the tongue was there but the teeth were missing (For more detailed discussion of these policies, see Champagne and Lerner, 1973).

Other policies have been drafted with a surface intent of providing needed supports and strengths to black families and communities. In practice, many of these policies have had devastating effects on black family life. The organization of social welfare in the United States has often been criticized for promoting dependency and for breaking up families. While these effects may have been latent and unintended, they do indicate that an in-depth analysis of the structural and long-term influences of many policies on black life often goes unattended.

Criminal justice policies represent an exacerbation of black distrust. Whereas other policies may have had some limited redeeming value, a schism has existed historically between blacks and the criminal justice system. Blacks have always been more easily absorbed into the criminal justice system than whites during each of the processing stages (Owens, 1980: 4). This "easy absorption" has generated conflicting views that support either differential involvement or differential processing as explanatory factors (see, for example, Hindelang, 1979: 93-96). On one hand, blacks may be disproportionately involved in offending behavior. On the other hand, they may be victims of criminal justice system selection biases. While both camps can muster ample support, historical data on blacks and the criminal justice system provide some compelling evidence.

Owens (1980: 4) asserts that early slave codes outlined the inferior position of blacks to the legal system and provided the center of gravity

for the arbitrary justice that has followed blacks. Many of these codes prevented blacks from having rights in courts. Christianson (1981: 373) adds that the state prison as it is known today arose in part as a replacement for slavery in order to control newly freed blacks. He offers the State of New York as an example because both the emancipation of slaves and the creation of the first state prison occurred on the same date in that state in 1796.

These observations lend support to the criminal justice system as an instrument for the social control of blacks. The system thus may function to dominate blacks through the manipulation and coordination of the processing mechanisms. In this perspective, police officers' discretion to arrest results in more black arrests; prosecutorial discretion results in more blacks being brought to trial for more serious offenses; judicial discretion and other court-related events result in more convictions and prison sentences for blacks; in prison, write-ups for more black infractions result in harsher treatment; and parole decision-making results in more judgments against blacks. The criminal justice system, according to the social control position, acts as an extension of the dominant society — a dominant society that has been ambivalent in its dealings with blacks.

The dilemma of the American dream has already been well captured by Gunnar Myrdal (1944). A society that professes equality for all has had difficulty bringing blacks into the melting pot. Unmelted and unassimilated, blacks have remained on the periphery of the American dream. The criminal justice system's alleged differential processing could serve to reinforce

the unassimilative nature of blacks. Alarming high incarceration rates for blacks encourage racial alienation by isolating thousands of blacks in institutions that are beyond the boundaries of society. The removal of blacks from the mainstream may provide concrete proof to the larger society that blacks are "unworthy" of societal integration.

Numerous scholars have devoted tremendous dedication to outlining, describing, and revealing the oppressive structures of society that impede black progress. It is not the goal of this paper to review or repeat those discussions here. Rather, it is the intent of this section to stress the splintered relationship between criminal justice-related policy and the black community. This splintered relationship, coupled with the growing blackness of American prisons, should help define an appropriate frame-of-reference for articulating contemporary criminal justice policy. The Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime, however, chose to ignore these realities by accepting a frame-of-reference that defines the criminal justice system as objective, fair, and bias-free. For black Americans, this assumption of fairness is laughable and filled with duplicity that is only surpassed by hypocrisy. The Task Force is to be emphatically criticized for its omission of the race factor for such an omission strongly undermines the credibility of the group's report.

Incarceration and the Black Population

The Task Force accepted a relationship between crime rates and incarceration rates. Indeed, Biles (1979) argues that there is, in fact, a positive relationship between crime and the use of prisons. Intuitively,

this line of reasoning is alluring. More crime activity should lead to more police and court activity. Detection and punishment seem to be logical extensions of increased law-breaking behavior. Bowker (1981), however, has countered with a time series analysis of crime and the use of prisons looking at two time periods, 1941-57 and 1958-78. He concludes that crime index rates and incarceration rates are not statistically significant. He also suggests that the rates may be affected by different sets of causal variables. One of his findings corroborates the work of others in the area: incarceration is linked significantly with the percent black in the population (Bowker, 1981: 211). That is, as the percent black in a given geographical area (region, state, county) increases, the incarceration rate for that area is also likely to increase. Evidence for prisonization as a social control mechanism again surfaces.

Sociologist Edward A. Ross identified several kinds of social control: law, public opinion, ideals, beliefs (Vine, 1969: 171). Many of these opinions, ideals, and beliefs form an ideology and this ideology itself becomes a powerful force for exerting social control. Gummer (1979: 218) defines ideology as a body of systematically related beliefs that provide a problem etiology and prescriptions for appropriate action. Miller (1978: 6) states that an ideology is a set of general and abstract beliefs or assumptions about the correct or proper state of things. Hasenfeld (1982) notes that an ideology provides a normative base for justifying and rationalizing service delivery practices. Ideologies have strong emotional content and may not be based on empirical data.

According to Miller (1978: 7), ideology and its consequences exert a powerful influence on the policies and procedures of those who conduct the enterprise of criminal justice. There is an ideology surrounding blacks that has influenced the manner in which blacks are treated throughout the criminal justice system. While racism refers to individual level attitudes and beliefs, ideology refers to belief systems that are pervasive throughout a profession, a service delivery field, or society itself. Ideologies may contain traces of racism but they have become so institutionalized that their questionable features are not readily obvious.

The ideological base of crime in the United States is tied largely to crime as reflected in lower class criminality. Poveda (1970: 59) observes that the problems of crime are seen to be closely linked to lower socioeconomic status, poverty, and blacks. The ideology has a heavy foundation in stereotypic, impressionistic views. Swigert and Farrell (1977: 17) state that stereotypes not only shape public attitudes and behavior toward deviants, but guide the very choice of individuals who are to be so defined and processed. These authors assert that these stereotypes help foster beliefs that certain groups are inherently criminal and require rough treatment. Specific stereotypes, therefore, help define the service ideology operative in criminal justice agencies — a service ideology that depicts young black males as being more criminal and requiring more severe punishment.

The ideology related to blacks reflective in public attitudes and in the criminal justice system can help explain the link between percent

black in a population and incarceration rates. As the image of the common criminal is associated with black males, an increase of persons with these characteristics in the population may trigger increased criminal justice activity. The system is thereby reacting, not to real crime activity, but to a predetermined ideology of those who are thought to be more criminal. In this manner, ideology serves to control the black population by defining the treatment due blacks. Consequently, the criminal label and imprisonment are more likely to be applied to blacks because the service ideology depicts them as more criminal.

The ideology also influences the type of punishment meted out to lawbreakers. For a white, middle-class youth from an established family, probation or community service may be identified as appropriate punishment. This youth may be seen as a good risk, a good candidate for success and the court experience may be viewed as the ultimate in humiliation for the family. According to Swigert and Farrell (1977: 27), the higher status person simply as a result of arrest is said to have suffered enough.

For a black, lower class youth, probation or community service may not be viewed as enough punishment. Swigert and Farrell (1977: 27) maintain, "The lower class defendant, with minimal status in his community, little occupational prestige and a personal life most frequently described as disorganized, comes to the court with little to lose except freedom from incarceration." Negative sanctions are applied in the context of an ideology that is widely supported. This institutionalized ideology provides an arena in which criminal justice agents are free to operate.

The media often play an important role in perpetuating existing ideologies. In a content analysis of crime coverage in the New York Post, Humphries (1981: 204) found that, for the writers, violence was correlated with youth, male, and minority status. He also noted that language and mode of explanation were key to the coverage rather than the frequency of reporting of specific crimes. These explanations and language often subtly reinforce the popular image of the criminal and the use of harsh punishment for those who conform to the image. Such coverage heightens the public's fear of the "criminal" and, as the "criminal" elements of the population increase, cries of "clean up the streets!" echo throughout communities. Public fear is thus often manipulated through media reporting practices and styles.

The ideology of crime in the United States rests heavily on street crime and involves images of the criminal as a poor minority male with nothing to lose but his freedom. This ideological base is said to be operative in the criminal justice system. Because the ideology has wide popular support, the criminal justice system is free to act on it. Hence, social control of the black population can be maintained through existing ideologies that define blacks as inherently more criminal.

Existing ideologies found support in the Task Force's recommendation on prison construction.

Multiplying the Walls: A Scapegoat?

The Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime made a recommendation, which states in part:

The Attorney General should seek legislation calling for \$2 billion over 4 years to be made available to the states for construction of correctional facilities (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: xiii).

This recommendation (Recommendation 54) attempts to address prison overcrowding. The Task Force thought that space limitations may inhibit the sentencing of offenders to prison. Without needed beds, judges may be forced to release lawbreakers, thereby endangering public safety. The Task Force wrote, "Clearly, judges must feel free to use incarceration as a sentencing option" (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 76). More prisons were seen as the preferred way of dealing with the mushrooming prison population.

Few would argue the problem of overcrowding. Walker and Gordon (1980) look at the ways high density confinement affect inmates' health. Nacci (1977) looks at the relationship between population density and misconduct reports. Lack of privacy and inability to leave the environment have tremendous effects on the physical and emotional well-being of inmates. Overcrowded prisons may turn into time bombs that are slowly ticking toward the hour of detonation.

The controversy emerges around the most appropriate way(s) of responding to the overcrowding situation. Building more prisons may be a stopgap measure akin to placing a bandaid on a large, gaping wound that requires major surgery. How long will it take for the newly constructed facilities to burst at the seams with too many inmates? What is the next step after this occurs? Krajick (1981: 18), for example, noted that Louisiana recently opened two new facilities and they were immediately

filled. Other states are, no doubt, experiencing similar happenings. Prison construction represents only one very limited response to the problem of overcrowding.

The Task Force obviously approached corrections as a closed system; that is, the major concern was on the internal dynamics of prisons or with "behind the wall" factors. This closed system perspective is one of limited utility when one considers that corrections is a subsystem of the complex criminal justice system. Organizational analysis dictates that the open system perspective is more appropriate for looking at the overcrowding dilemma of many correctional facilities.

The closed system model of corrections ignores the role of external factors in shaping the flow of inmates through prisons. The interaction between courts, corrections, and parole boards is ignored as emphasis is placed on correctional facilities as depositories for court sentencing. An exclusive focus on corrections as independent of law enforcement, courts, and parole denies the system aspect of the criminal justice area.

Systems are characterized by their interdependency, that is, there is a relatedness or connectedness among system parts (Katz and Kahn, 1966). A change in one part of the system affects the other parts of the system. Clearly, the high incarceration rates reflect increased detection on the part of police and increased sentencing on the part of courts. If defendants are given longer terms and parole boards grant fewer paroles, a larger prison population results. Consequently, crowded prisons could reflect system feedback from changes in other aspects of the system.

Had the Task Force accepted an open system perspective of corrections, intervention may have been identified elsewhere. For example, questions could have been raised about the structure of sentencing or the actions of parole boards. The Task Force assumes a fairness is inherent in the criminal justice system and does not ask, "Does everyone in prison need to be in prison?" Such a question would challenge the "justice" part of the criminal justice system and may have cast the Task Force in an unpopular light. Here, again, the frame-of-reference emerges as a critical factor directing the recommendations.

The open system perspective could have led the Task Force into so many untouched areas. Can the incarceration rates be decreased? What are the consequences of early parole? What are viable alternative sentencing structures? What can be done to control the inmate population without building more prisons? The Task Force instead opted to preserve the status quo by making a rather predictable, traditional, unimaginative response.

Increasing prisons becomes an easy out for it avoids the debates surrounding incarceration alternatives. Penology is a science that has been widely practiced for decades. Custody and security are activities in which corrections officers are quite skilled. The strengths of the corrections subsystem are further strengthened with the building of more prisons.

A more innovative response could have been to recommend resources for alternatives to incarceration. Many people argue that community-based corrections and restitution programs can relieve prisons of a segment of their populations. Yet, these areas represent shades of gray; the unknown

for many criminal justice systems. Many states do not speak the language of community-based corrections. Few incentives exist to encourage states to develop sound programs for dealing with offenders outside the prison walls. Frank (1979: 8) stresses, "Financial and personnel resources used to construct and maintain custodial institutions could be allocated to the development of a diversified network of alternatives to imprisonment." This view represents a radical departure for the modus operandi of corrections. Prison construction represents one way of avoiding a serious questioning of the contemporary use of prisons in this society. By not mentioning the place of correctional alternatives in the criminal justice system, the Task Force further supports prisonization as the appropriate response to crime. Consequently, prisons remain the heart of current American penal policy.

Approaches to the treatment of offenders have taken on a closed system perspective in another way. Prisons remain virtually isolated from existing services and programs on-going in the community. According to Weiner (1981: 36):

There is no empirical evidence available to explain why rehabilitation became a closed system enterprise in the first place; that is, why correctional facilities imported programs and established specialties within their boundaries; rather than relying upon the expertise of the existing network of public and private community agencies to provide a full range of restorative services to offenders.

Interagency cooperation in corrections opens corrections to new inputs, new personnel, and new ideas. Professionals from the community are not hampered by correctional cooptation and can bring new approaches to dealing

with current issues. Again, incentives are needed to encourage correctional administrators to reach beyond their boundaries for creative solutions to major problems. A concentration on prison construction ignores creative alternatives by endorsing the status quo.

Consequently, the building of more correctional facilities is an easy out for dealing with the complex issue of rising incarceration rates and prison overcrowding. Organizations typically resist change and the criminal justice system has managed to remain relatively unchanged in its dependency on prisons. Current policies serve only to further solidify the prison's place in the criminal justice system and in the United States.

More Prisons: Some Considerations

Goals. Richard Hall (1982: 298) observes that organizations often have multiple and conflicting goals. This is certainly true for correctional facilities. Prisons were initially mandated to protect the public from the criminal elements of society, to punish the known law violators, and to serve as a deterrence for would-be violators. Eventually, the goals were expanded to include non-custody and security areas. Rehabilitation of the prisoner as a primary purpose of incarceration became national policy in 1929 when the U.S. Congress authorized the creation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (Frank, 1979: 5).

The technology associated with custody and security is stable and routine. Control and management of institutionalized population can be rendered in a systematic, defined manner. Specific data needed to maintain the population are readily obtainable (i.e., inmate/officer ratio,

population size, persons per cell). Operating procedures required for managing captive groups are also well known and well practiced (i.e., scheduling, counts, write-ups for infractions, punishment for infractions, rewards for good behavior). A predictable work flow with relatively few uncertainties characterizes the technology of custody.

Routine technologies are marked by centralized decision-making, specified job activities, less professionally trained staff, and an emphasis on efficiency and quantity of clients (Hage and Aiken, 1974). All of these are visible in the correctional institution. The military-like employee structure conforms to the pyramid hierarchies of traditional bureaucracies. While entry-level requirements for correctional officers no doubt vary from state to state, this job has very limited professional status. In addition, efficiency is a commonly accepted correctional objective.

The technology associated with rehabilitation, on the other hand, is nonroutine and unstable. Human service professionals are still grappling with the question, "How does one change or rehabilitate individuals?" The search for answers has covered years and has included numerous interventive strategies. Treatment professionals perform in a state of uncertainty without knowing which specific techniques to employ or whether those techniques produce the desired outcome (Hasenfeld and English, 1974). Cause and effect relationships have been difficult to establish in treatment, in part because treatment practitioners make up only a small aspect of the client's world with other influences coming from a myriad of sources. The variedness and complexity of human beings only add to the difficulty of identifying effective change technologies.

Custody and security technology also differs from treatment technology on the effectiveness dimension. Number of escapes and number of officer injuries from inmate attacks can easily be used as feedback for a facility's effectiveness as a secure institution. Rehabilitation technologies have no such clear indicators of success. Goal achievement becomes ambiguously and globally defined. Assessment questions have no definite, concrete answers. What factors contribute to rehabilitation? Is recidivism a valid measure of rehabilitation? How long does the rehabilitation process take? What supports are needed to maintain the positive effects of treatment? No consensus exists around the desirable, appropriate answers to these queries. Rehabilitation has thus taken a back seat to the custody and security functions of correctional facilities. Indeed, Frank (1979: 5) argues that the growing consensus among policymakers concerned with the administration of criminal justice is the sending criminals to prison to be rehabilitated has failed as an anti-crime measure. Such sentiments support a less significant place for rehabilitation as a correctional goal.

The Task Force's recommendation for more resources to be allocated to prison construction reinforces custody and security as priority activities. If rehabilitation has failed, its failure can be attributed to blatant negligence within the administration of corrections. Historically, prisons have been about the business of developing techniques for keeping secure populations secure. Rehabilitation appears as an afterthought and receives mouse-like resources to do an elephant-size job. The web of uncertainties

surrounding rehabilitation command intense efforts and sizable resources for resolution. With shoestring budgets, token commitments, ideals masquerading as goals, and the skepticism of many, rehabilitation units face formidable odds of success. Verbal support of rehabilitation by criminal justice policymakers are transparent, ineffectively hiding their cavalier attitude. True commitment is reflected in budget and staff allocations. With the Task Force's recommendation, custody and security will continue to reign as the undisputed monarchs of corrections.

To those familiar with the Task Force report, the above arguments may appear to ignore Recommendation 57. This recommendation states:

The Attorney General should support or propose legislation to amend the Vocational Education Act and other applicable statutes to facilitate state and local correctional agencies' ability to gain access to existing funds for the establishment of vocational and educational programs within correctional institutions (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: xiii).

Here, the Task Force appears supportive of potentially rehabilitative programs within correctional facilities. Their endorsement of these programs, however, provides only the suggestion of the Attorney General's involvement through supporting or proposing legislation. In the area of prison construction, the Task Force recommended direct federal support through the allocation of dollars for prison construction. This area is thought to be of a more immediate nature whereas programs seem not to be so urgent. Again, the ideological premises of the report are very apparent.

The "existing funds" that the Task Force speaks of may have a bleak prognosis for survival in light of severe program cuts at the federal level currently underway. The optimism of the recommendation is baffling because

the Task Force members are believed to be politically astute. Surely they could read the economic climate and make less naive proposals. While dollars are urged to be earmarked specifically for prison construction, no such arrangement is advocated for programs. Without strong, direct advocacy, prison treatment programs will continue to be stepchildren in the newly constructed, modern correctional facilities that are only a breath away from experiencing overcrowding within their architecturally designed walls.

Sunk Costs. Prison construction creates pressure for the utilization of the new facilities. This pressure stems from several factors and some of them will be covered briefly here.

Reliance on prisons as the core part of penology suggests that the status quo is maintained by new construction. Existing methods then serve as a guide for directing and planning current and future policy. Policy may be closely tied to the generation of new facilities because prisons represent sunk costs. According to Hasenfeld (1982), sunk costs are investments of resources that cannot be readily recovered and converted to other purposes. Hasenfeld (1982) goes on to write, "A correctional program with a big facility and large custodial staff will have difficulty shifting to a community-based group home program because it cannot readily dispose of its facility or retrain, dismiss custodial staff." Had the Task Force recommended direct federal aid for alternative programs, the legitimacy of many prisons would have been questioned. A move to deinstitutionalize segments of the incarcerated masses may yield abandoned buildings rotting

in the sun and thousands of laid-off correctional officers. Clearly, sunk costs are barriers to innovative correctional planning.

The pressures of new facilities encourage the sentencing of more offenders to prison. As was noted earlier, the Task Force believed that prison crowding would inhibit judges from sentencing individuals to prison. Bowker (1981: 212) echoes this view by observing that judges may be less likely to sentence prisoners to institutions if they know that the institutions are already severely overcrowded. Unfortunately, the Task Force does not address the reverse of this situation. Is it not, therefore, likely that available beds will encourage judges to sentence prisoners to institutions? The court, as a processing organization, relies on the correctional departments to receive the criminals they sentence. This dependency indicates that courts are sensitive to the constraints and contingencies imposed by fluxes in prison populations. (For a more detailed discussion of people-processing organizations, see Hasenfeld, 1974).

These pressures lead to the conclusion that the incarceration rate will continue to rise. Policymakers and correctional administrators are gearing themselves and facilities for the growing number of offenders who will be sentenced to serve a prison term. Prison construction strongly indicates that the incarceration rate will not drastically drop. Organizational responses are thus serving to fulfill a prophecy: Incarceration rates rise; more prisons are constructed; the rates, therefore, continue to escalate. The service ideology of the criminal justice system reveals that blacks will continue to be disproportionately represented among the growing prison population in the United States.

Training Priorities. The Task Force did address the training needs of correctional staff. With all of the ambiguities related to rehabilitation, a knowledge base for effective intervention needed to alter criminal patterns is sorely needed. Training related to rehabilitation (i.e., program planning and implementation) could have been highlighted. Training is also needed for the establishment of alternatives to incarceration. The administration of community-based programs requires a thorough understanding of the factors facilitating successful transition to a crime-free life. In this area, in-service training is a necessity for the successful administration and execution of alternative programs. Inter-agency cooperation is also a domain that requires skills and knowledge not commonly held by corrections. The use of existing community resources for the provision of programs and services calls for additional training. In-service training for facilitating inter-agency cooperation could fill an educational void now experienced by corrections staff. Weiner (1981: 38) noted that the skills and knowledge base required for corrections workers must shift significantly from primary control. The needs cited above support Weiner's assertion by identifying training needs not related to the custody and security functions of prisons. Certainly corrections staff should become competent in the areas of treatment and rehabilitation.

The Attorney General's Task Force proposed the following recommendation for training:

The Attorney General should ensure that the soon-to-be established National Corrections Academy will have adequate resources to enable state and local correctional personnel to receive training necessary to accommodate the demands on their agencies for managing and supervising increased populations of serious offenders (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 63).

The Task Force was concerned with the manner in which "poor training and inadequate supervision" contribute to the "outbreak of serious disturbances or riots." Emphasis is placed on the maintenance of a secure population.

Responses to this recommendation can already be seen. The federal prison system and the National Institute of Corrections are cooperating in a plan to provide training in areas related to institutional violence for state and local corrections personnel (Sabanosh, 1982: 36). Training will be offered in disturbance control and self-defense. Training with these focal areas also serve to highlight and reinforce the custody and security aspects of corrections.

Cohn (1980: 52) emphasizes, "Training content which leaves the daily routine and the organization structure of the service almost unaffected may not be a worthwhile and job-related training experience from the outset." Training for riot control does not visibly affect the ongoing, daily routine activities of correctional facilities. This training would be invoked as a response to a crisis. This type of training does not encourage the development and application of practices that will have organization-wide effect. Such an orientation also serves to maintain the status quo of correctional facilities.

The limited utility and validity of riot control training itself are not being argued. The point here is that, of all the knowledge voids currently experienced by correctional staff, the singling out of riot control as virtually the only area for staff training is both absurd and

lamentable. The priority of the custody and security goals is again visible while treatment and rehabilitation fall further from sight.

The Blob. Two additional recommendations made by the Task Force are worthy of mention here because they mirror an increasing reliance on prisonization as a way of coping with crime in American society. Recommendation 55 reads, in part:

...In addition, over the 4-year period, NIC would complete studies pertaining to the possible establishment of regional prisons, the feasibility of private sector involvement in prison management, and the funding needs of local jails... (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: xiii).

Recommendation 56 partly reads:

The Attorney General should support or propose legislation to amend the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 to (1) permit the conveyance or lease at no cost of appropriate surplus federal property to state and local governments for correctional purposes... (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: xiii).

The Task Force wrote, "Under a regional concept, a facility could be built to house violent, severely mentally ill or retarded, or otherwise difficult, serious offenders." Some concern about the consequences of regional facilities was mentioned. Restricted visitation by family and friends and limited access to counsel could result because of the regional facility being located in another state. The Task Force did, however, go on to encourage the study of this regional facility concept.

The earlier discussion of the ideological base of the criminal justice system regarding beliefs about the "typical" criminal and beliefs about those individual requiring harsh treatment is worthy of recall here.

The existing ideological underpinnings of the system and the dominant society lead to the prediction that, if constructed, regional facilities will house a disproportionate percentage of blacks. Regional facilities not only epitomize the increased isolation of blacks from mainstream society but add the dimension of isolation from families and friends. The regional facility approach parallels exile to a deserted island. While the Task Force may have been ignorant of the racial implication of regional facilities, this ignorance provides little justification for the proposing of such a devastating recommendation.

Perhaps the recommendation's devastating effects were masked by the Task Force's concern for the efficient management and administration of prisons. It is not altogether clear the manner in which prison efficiency is enhanced by increasing corrections to include another stratum of prisons at the regional level. Often bureaucratic expansion has been confused with effectiveness and efficiency. In essence, however, expansion only serves to justify an organization's existence. Growth is often considered a sign of health and success (see Thompson, 1967: 89). Increasing the bureaucratic structure of corrections asserts the legitimacy of prisons as the core feature of corrections. Corrections, as an organizational system, is thus experiencing rapid, widespread growth and the advocacy of regional correctional centers attests to this growth.

Another example of the health of corrections can be seen in the recommending of surplus federal land to be put to corrections use at no cost. Free land for prison construction paves a smooth road to American

prisonization. This enticing incentive cannot be overlooked by correctional administrators. Institutional support such as this for prison construction only services to accelerate the prisonization process.

The blob-like arm of corrections is reaching out to amass more federal dollars, more personnel, more facilities, more land, more bureaucratic structures, more legislative support, more public support, and more of the black population.

Some Human Costs

Numerous human costs are involved in the prisonization of American society. All too often, the ugly side of this process is casually hidden under the rug of benign neglect. Too many times individual pathology explanations are called upon to rationalize nonchalant attitudes. Worn cliches and overworked phrases are heard when the dire effects of incarceration are raised: "They should have thought about that before they broke the law." They got what they deserve." "We should be more concerned about the victims of crime." But the human costs of incarceration spread to include implications for the larger society.

The Task Force noted, "...there is a responsibility to provide practical experiences for inmates that will result in their being productive both while incarcerated and upon leaving the institution and returning to society (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 79)." Rehabilitative programs are in vogue during times of economic prosperity. As federal support for programs dwindle, these programs lose favor and dwindle in importance.

Consequently, individuals stockpiled in prisons will have an abundance of time to do absolutely nothing. These wasted days and wasted nights will yield very few rehabilitated prisoners. Productivity in the society is also severely hampered by the lack of treatment programs. Consequences of this idle time include: increased recidivism; increased alienation; increased economic dependency; increased public fear of former prisoners; more conservatism on the part of parole boards; and a growing prison population.

Absence of support for community reintegration means that the released offender has to sink or swim on his/her own. The transition from prison to community can be painful for people with few resources (education, job skills) for coping with the stresses of life. Old behaviors, old friends, old haunts are too easily accessible for people with little chance of survival. Street life may be the only life individuals have on which to depend. Increased prisonization and the absence of the rehabilitation produce crime-prison cycles that will disproportionately affect larger numbers of the black population.

Prisons will become a part of more families. Incarceration disrupts families and often takes the primary earner from the family. Families must then rely on relatives, friends, or government assistance for survival. More and more families will be faced with this type of stress as prisonization continues. In addition, trips to facilities for visitation purposes will expose more people to the prison setting. The church as a dominant institution in the lives of black people could be usurped by the prison.

Black people do not generally interpret incarceration merely as punishment for wrong-doing. Rather, prisons represent society's attempt to perpetuate the enslavement of black people. Fairness and justice in the criminal justice system are viewed as alien to the black experience. Consequently, many black communities will be even more alienated from society by overpowering incarceration rates. These rates communicate stepped-up efforts to control the black population and to render more black men as ineffective and powerless. The hypocrisy of equality is thus self-evident.

Concluding Comments

The mechanisms are being put into place for the increased prisonization of the American society. Prison expansion enjoys an ideological base that accepts incarceration as the most appropriate way of dealing with the "criminal." This individual is expected to be lower class, male, and black. Some argue that the criminal justice system is geared for the differential processing of people with these characteristics. Hence, prison construction means that more blacks will be housed behind the walls.

The criminal justice system has multiple and conflicting external and internal constituencies (Hall, 1982). Unfortunately, policy is being drafted based on the views of only a portion of those constituencies. Black communities are also affected by the system and, therefore, represent a legitimate constituency. The anti-prison construction voice needs to be more vocal and needs to gain more support. Individuals, communities,

organizations, and groups can advocate to state and federal legislatures their position on the issue. Power may not be power until it is used. The power of an alternative view may be latent because it has not been evoked. While blacks may be the victims, they need not adopt a victim mentality that inhibits struggle. A fight to combat prisonization is the order of the day.

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