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This Issue in Brief

The Highland Park Institute on Sentence Disparity.—Eighty-four federal judges from 14 states participated in the Seminar and Institute on Disparity of Sentences held at Highland Park, Illinois, last October. The meeting was one of the institutes and joint councils on sentencing procedures authorized by Section 334 of Title 28, U. S. Code, to provide a means for considering what sentences to impose on convicted offenders in the federal courts. Frank J. Remington, professor of law at the University of Wisconsin, and Dr. Donald J. Newman of the University's school of social work, report for us on the highlights of the Institute. Professor Remington was technical consultant to the Institute.

Sentencing in Income Tax Cases.—Disparities in sentencing are most glaring in income tax cases, according to Chief Judge Roszel C. Thomsen of the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. Sentencing practices in income tax cases, he asserts, disclose "many surprising, even bizarre sentences, most of them on the very lenient side." He shows where there is general agreement in sentencing income tax evasion cases and where there is real difference of opinion. The same sentence for the same offense is an undesirable and impossible goal, Judge Thomsen emphasizes. He contends, on the other hand, that judges should strive for a greater uniformity of approach to the problem and a better understanding of the interests of the public as well as the individual defendants.

For Whom the Chair Waits.—This is the fourth of FEDERAL PROBATION's series of articles on capital punishment. Mrs. Herbert B. Ehrmann, executive director of the American League To Abolish Capital Punishment since 1949, deals specifically with popular beliefs about those convicted of capital crimes which have little basis in fact. She comments on executions of innocent persons, the mentally ill, the poor and friendless, youthful offenders, and members of minority groups. She also discusses the delays caused by sentences and the conduct of life-term prisoners. A center to collect, analyze, and publish material is needed, she concludes, to demonstrate to the American public the "barbarities and futility of the death penalty."

Confidentiality of the Presentence Report.—The principles of confidentiality, according to Professor David H. Gronewold of the University

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of Washington and Jacob B. Barnett, federal probation officer at Chicago, have been a basic guide to all professional workers who in their practice have a close relationship with the people they serve. They point out that the confidentiality concept implies that the professional person can be trusted to use in a responsible way whatever information is secured. This principle, the authors assert, should govern the behavior of the probation officer in all his relationships with the defendant and with all persons and agencies who supply helpful information for the presentence report.

Effecting Change in Youthful Offenders: Three Case Illustrations.—This article describes how a probation officer handled the day-to-day problems presented by three young men under his supervision. The case illustrations reflect supportive casework without the officer being either a policeman or a psychotherapist. The author is Seymour J. Adler, federal probation officer at Chicago. He is not in agreement with those who would restrict the probation officer's task to that of coordinator of social agencies. Mr. Adler argues against a probation officer refusing to cope personally with some of the difficult and unpleasant responsibilities that fall within his professional competence and training.

The Essential Task of the Probation-Parole Officer.—Differing views regarding the qualifications, training, experience, and selection of persons for probation and parole officer positions arise largely from varying concepts about the job. The probation and parole officer's view of his job as he sees it often is neglected. Dr. Jane K. Ives, New York State probation examiner, delineates in her article a partial job analysis developed from data presented by practicing probation-parole officers. Her study demonstrates the complex nature of decisions made by officers in terms of community protection and the skills they exercise in reaching and helping offenders achieve a satisfactory adaptation to community living.

Group Therapy Turns Repression Into Expression for Prison Inmates.—Harold F. Uehling, veteran of 30 years as a clinical psychologist in Wisconsin's Corrections Division, contrasts for us present-day use of group therapy at the Wisconsin State Prison with the "explosive emotional climate prevailing in earlier and less enlightened years." He elaborates on the personal characteristics of the average inmate, the need for reconciling the punitive and permissive aspects of his existence, and the manner in which various group procedures are adapted to meet the prisoner's needs for self-expression as a competent and acceptable male.

Gangs Need Not Be Delinquent.—Gordon Jereczek, secretary of Greater St. Paul's Leisure Time Council, discusses a 2½-year experiment to determine whether intensive work with a group of boys 12 to 14 would help them avoid delinquent careers. The boys were selected on the basis of factors believed to be indices of delinquency proneness. Mr. Jereczek describes the type of program developed and appraises its accomplishments. He also offers suggestions for improving future demonstration projects.

The Lexington Program for Narcotic Addicts.—The Federal Government has two hospitals devoted exclusively to the treatment of narcotic addicts, one at Lexington, Ky., and the other at Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. John A. O'Donnell, chief social worker at the U. S. Public Health Service Hospital at Lexington, tells us about the institution's admission policies, treatment program, and treatment results. In the September issue of FEDERAL PROBATION we will present an article on the program at the Fort Worth hospital.

All the 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 endorsement by the editors or the federal probation office of the views set forth. 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.

fender's makeup have to be elevated. He has to realize, a step at a time, that he is not as abnormal, or as stupid, or obnoxious in the eyes of settled, conforming people as he thought.

Above all, we need to be honest and open ourselves in our dealings with the criminal offender. That means that we must all be in agreement as to what we are trying to do. If we are confused as to the proper approach, and we continue to operate inconsistently in our handling of him, we can expect no more than a perpetuation of the problem which began with the offender's early insecure standing with his parents. Naturally, we cannot act like two incompatible parents in a penal environment, one punitive and one permissive, and expect to iron out conflicts based on this very problem. We must work together as a team, the common aims of which will provide assurance for both our charges and ourselves as to how we stand in relation to each other. There is no room for constructive thinking where professional and administrative jealousies tend to exploit each other. Least of all, is there any room for the conflicting self-interests which profess to reorganize the lives of emotionally confused offenders. We must take the ego out of our approach, and dedicate ourselves to the task of expanding the ego resources of those who so sorely need it.

Gangs Need Not Be Delinquent

BY GORDON E. JERECZEK

Secretary, Leisure Time Council of the Greater St. Paul Community Chest and Council, Inc.

"HEY, ROBBIE, what happened to Chimp? His ear's almost off!"

"The Corner Gang—they tried to take over the rink from us! They got Chimp down and went for his ear with a knife. Take him home, Chick—say he was hurt in a hockey game. We'll get that gang later . . . ."

Here was the inevitable loser's threat which guaranteed a new round in the vicious cycle of battles between two rival gangs who fought for pride as well as possession of the playground facilities in a crowded St. Paul residential area. This time the losers were the *Hi-Jacks,* a group of belligerent 11- to 13-year-old boys who were destined to become "my gang" in a project sponsored by the Myers Foundation in an effort to ascertain whether antisocial behavior could be arrested by intensive social group work.[1]

In the fall of 1958 when I first became acquainted with my 13 Hi-Jacks in St. Paul's "Shacktown," their pattern of behavior indicated almost certainly they were well on the road to the juvenile court. Each one had been involved in numerous acts of antisocial behavior, and all but three had a record of apprehension by the police. Chimp had been taken to the police station six times: Twice for fighting, once each for larceny from a store, car prowling, destruction of property, and setting fire to a garage with three other Hi-Jacks. Robbie had made the trip on four occasions: The garage fire, larceny from a store, fighting, and destruction of property. Chick had been involved in each incident with Robbie, as well as one false fire alarm.

Selection of Method

Although social group work is by no means the only method available and certainly does not offer a panacea for the problems of juvenile delinquency, we concluded from current study in this area that we should select the group work method. With the poet, we agree that no person "is an island unto himself" and when we consider the individual we need to take full cognizance of the impact of group influence and environment upon him. In early life, the primary group—the family—is essential to the development of a healthy personality, but the family alone is not enough for developmental needs. Being part of other group associations—friendship groups—becomes increasingly necessary as the child grows toward adolescence, these peer group values and asso-

[1] This project was set up by the Myers Foundation with the advice of Maurice Connery, now professor of social work at the University of Syracuse; Mrs. Pearl Jewell, principal of Jefferson Elementary School; and chief probation officer John K. Donohue of Ramsey County. The Myers Foundation, which has long been aware of and interested in the problem of delinquency control, provided both funds for this 2½-year experiment and the invaluable advice and direction of Dr. Gisela Konopka, professor of social work at the University of Minnesota and consultant for the project at its conclusion.

ciations often superseding in importance those of the family.

Adolescent groups are usually small, closely knit, and intensely loyal, thus providing an ideal environment in which the adolescent may "try his wings" or "flex his muscles." Against this backdrop of peer approval or reproach, he gauges his success or failure. Obviously, then, the values and standards of the peer group determine to a large degree the developmental direction of its members, whether it be toward societal standards or away from them. Because of the magnitude of the peer group influence, it seemed logical to make maximum use of these natural group settings for the benefit of the individual, and doubly important from the prevention standpoint, to work with groups where delinquency-proneness factors appeared to be present, and where, unless redirected, group pressure and influence would be in a direction other than toward societal conformity.

Indices of Delinquency-Proneness

In the absence of more refined and tested criteria, several factors were considered to be indices of delinquency-proneness for the purposes of this project. Using the following six-point guide, the selection of this group was made to include:

1. Children from neighborhoods as well as families with low economic conditions,
2. Children from an area where little or no useable leisure-time facilities are available,
3. Children from broken or loosely-knit families,
4. Children with record of multiple social agency registrations,
5. Children with record of delinquency or crime in the family, and
6. Children with record of police contacts by members.

Our "Geographic Pocket"

Authorities generally agree that crime and delinquency are likely to flourish in blighted neighborhoods where miserable homes are common and unsavory companionship difficult to avoid. The area selected was in a geographical "pocket," isolated by two main streets and a bluff, forming a triangle into which the young inhabitants tended to be restricted. The houses and apartment buildings, in extremely old and dilapidated condition, were largely rental units, inadequately maintained by the owners. Atop the bluff is the Crocus Hill district, an upper-class section, offering striking economic contrast with the hovels below. Those in the area who were employed were common laborers at packing houses and freight lines, thus affording inadequate and seasonal income for their large families (average six children). Of the families selected, 65 percent were totally or partially maintained by public assistance grants. This was a consistant pattern, extending back 10 to 15 years.

The only public recreation facility close by, beside a fenced school ground, was a three-quarter-acre park and playground. Because of the area's dense population, these facilities were heavily used, thus offering a very limited experience for any one person, attendance being limited to those capable of conforming to the rules without special attention. This automatically eliminated boys such as the Hi-Jacks who could not conform in a mass program and whose personality needs impelled them to seek recognition through various disrupting and sometimes destructive ways, illustrating again the disturbing fact that "the most vulnerable youngsters are outside the pale of conventional community services," and that "either they are not interested or they are refused because they would disrupt the program of the entire group."[2]

Family Pattern as an Indicator

Obviously, many factors must be considered in trying to determine delinquency causation. The broken family is certainly one of them. Families disrupted by divorce, separation, or desertion frequently present a situation of psychic trauma as well as inadequate supervision and guidance for children. Studies by Professor Sheldon Glueck of the Harvard Law School and his wife, Dr. Eleanor T. Glueck, reveal that twice as many delinquents come from broken homes as from families where the parents live together.

However, even when both parents are physically present, they may be unable, because of their own problems, to provide adequate physical care, attention, and love for their children. Evidence of a family's inability to sustain itself as an independent unit in the community may be indicated by excessive registrations with social agencies. Dependence on others to manage its internal affairs connotes family breakdown.

[2] "Juvenile Delinquency: How Can We Meet the Challenge?" *Platform*, November 1954, p. 19.

Both these factors—the broken home and numerous agency registration—characterized the families chosen for this project: One third had been afflicted by divorce, separation, or desertion; a large percentage showed extreme dependence, one family recording 22 registrations, which represented 22 occasions when either financial or casework attention for various periods of time had been received.

A record of crime or delinquency in a family seems certainly to be indicative of difficulty in making a social adjustment. In the families chosen, records disclosed some 40 police apprehensions, 8 cases of probation supervision, 2 cases of commitment to juvenile training facilities and 1 case of incarceration in the medium security adult reformatory. In addition to this family record, each of the 12 boys chosen had been apprehended by the police on several occasions for offenses ranging from disorderly conduct to minor arson. In each instance, these matters had been handled by the police or referred to the parents without filing a petition in the Juvenile Court.

The "Hi-Jacks" Are Found

The final "natural" group, which was located through contacts with the local school, fulfilled the desired qualifications:

1. Members had grown up in the same neighborhood,
2. Members were well acquainted with each other, and
3. Their association was based on friendship and mutual interest.

An elementary school principal first disclosed the existence of the Hi-Jacks whose aggressive behavior had caused the school authorities considerable concern. These boys, the principal believed, were counterparts of their older brothers who had composed a similar group several years previously and most of whom had been involved in serious delinquency and crime. She predicted the same future for these boys unless "something was done." School records showed a uniform trait of gross underachievement and numerous infractions of school authority. One boy, particularly hostile and aggressive in his relations with both teachers and other pupils, had during numerous temper tantrums struck out viciously with his brace-encased leg in efforts to free himself from restraint following uncontrollable behavior.

Neighborhood merchants, who were interviewed, were well aware of the Hi-Jacks. Best acquainted with them was the owner of a dairy store which the gang had used for an afterschool hangout until boisterous and unmanageable behavior resulted in their being ousted. A filling station operator said he maintained close watch lest the Hi-Jacks "steal me blind." Focus of their pilfering was a local supermarket whose manager had caught them on several occasions with various amounts of "loot" and suspected them of other undetected forays. Candy and cigarettes were the main items taken.

Our Group Begins To Function

The initial contact with the group itself was made by the author in the school where he called the members out of classes, introduced himself, and explained informally the possibility of the boys forming a group which would give them a chance for fun as well as doing things they otherwise would not have an opportunity to do. They were informed in a frank, friendly way that the author knew a little about them, about their school and neighborhood difficulties, and hoped that the group activities would help them stay out of trouble. He explained that although he was a probation officer, he would not be working with them in an official capacity but rather as just a person interested in helping them and their families in any way possible. Their initial skepticism about someone doing something for them "for nothing" was followed by enthusiasm.

Developing a Purposeful Program

To "break bread" goes a long way toward overcoming barriers that hinder the formation of a meaningful relationship, and to "break bread" with someone who is generally an "enemy" (in their eyes still a probation officer) is of added significance. So early meetings were marked by a sharing of food such as cokes and hamburgers, not only to reinforce attendance, (which it did) but more importantly, because the giving of food is symbolic of fulfilment of basic needs.

At first, activities were selected that were highly desired (swimming, gym activities, outdoor adventures) and loosely structured, the number of rules and limitations being held to a minimum to encourage as much "naturalness" of action as possible. In this way it became quickly possible to ascertain the natural leadership within the group, the subgroup patterns in various situations, etc., in order to make an appraisal of the intragroup

relationships. Initially, the presence of the author caused some hesitance on the part of members to interact, but after a relationship was established they found added safety in his being there. Gradually they discovered that it was acceptable to relate to others; that they could express emotions of anger and frustration and still compromise a conflict; they could like someone, express the feeling and be consistently accepted; they could make decisions together while expressing diverse opinions.

Each meeting was comprised of a chosen activity, e.g., gym or gameroom activities, swimming, fishing, playing ball, cooking out, camping, etc., as well as a meeting or discussion time. The choice of program was consciously formulated to provide an opportunity for the group to have fun, to have experiences that without the group would be inaccessible to them, and to allow for the free expression of feelings and thoughts.

The unpredictable explosion of deep, underlying, unfulfilled needs was acutely impressed upon me one unforgettable weekend:

> The group had been meeting for a considerable time and there was some feeling of comfort in the associaton; the boys knew the limits required in the group meetings and were usually able to stay within them. We went on a camping weekend to a camp where program hadn't commenced and therefore we had complete use of the facilities. The meals were to be eaten in the dining hall, where I felt more control was inherent than if we had cookouts. It was bedlam! All the previously observed restraint by the boys disappeared and during each meal their behavior indicated the philosophy of "each for himself, and hunger take the hindmost." They grabbed anything they could get, ran excitedly from the grill to the table, spilled things, dropped food on the floor, etc., and they all seemed compelled to stuff whatever food possible into themselves, and the rest into their pockets for later.

This behavior was obviously not motivated by hunger or a real shortage of food, but was rather an attempt to gratify the need to take unto themselves a very tangible element in a very unpredictable environment. Coming from a neighborhood and from families where available energies are "used up" in the mundane pursuits essential to livelihood, they had received very little individual attention or affection that would tend to satisfy their dependency needs—needs which now sought expression in an almost compulsive gorging with edible pleasure. Having appraised this behavior and its underlying meaning, many situations were made available to them where they could eat to their heart's content and where simple interpretations could be made to them in order to facilitate the gaining of insight. As stated by Gisela Konopka:

> Social group workers will use in different ways . . . theoretical understanding of individuals, their development, and their relationship to others. The emphasis will depend on the group. In "growth-oriented" groups—as in most therapeutic groups, for instance—the worker will have to be aware of each individual's specific needs and will sometimes have to offer group experiences that resemble those of the primary group, the family.[3]

Similarly, in other instances, following assessment of new situations, program adjustment was made in order to provide an outlet and a meaningful experience in relation to the real need as expressed by the group through its actions.

Discussion as Part of Program

An attempt was made to establish a warm, friendly, accepting atmosphere that encouraged, not only future program planning, but the ventilation of real thoughts and emotions rather than just the exercise of defense mechanisms. How much insight an individual member could utilize and convert into more acceptable behavior is extremely difficult to ascertain; however, in addition to gaining some understanding of himself, was the new important freedom that permitted discussion of personal and real concerns in the presence of an adult. At this age, and in this type of unsophisticated group, the main objective was to obtain new standards and values through new experiences.

To assume that "he knows right from wrong" seems to the author to be fallacious thinking when dealing with delinquents and predelinquents in the lower class culture. Parents often fail to transmit very basic conceptions of standards and values: What things are worth working for; what is attainable; what, in fact, is "right" and what is "wrong." Also the life experience of these young people, as well as whatever insight they derive from the experience of their parents, points to a discrepancy between commonly accepted goals and standards and those goals which are attainable by them. As a result, the basic subcultural concepts are different than those of the common culture; to assume otherwise may lead to the imposition of standards which are meaningless. Through group discussions many of these differences were aired and the members came to understand not only why some of the limitations existed, but realistic ways to overcome them, thereby coming to a more positive and helpful understanding of the reality situation.

[3] *Journal of Social Work*, October 1961, p. 55.

Typical of this type of discussion was the spontaneous one developing from the comment that "it sure would be nice to have a lake place, big boat, etc." Someone else retorted bitterly that only rich folks could have these things. With a little direction, this led to the relation of education to higher income and the need for preparation for higher education, and finally a more logical and realistic connection was made between something previously desired from afar and the possible steps toward achievement of such a goal.

Almost any type of discussion, whether it was smoking, tattoos, police, or hot rods, led directly into meaningful areas of experience and behavior.

On one occasion, Jim said that he hadn't minded too much getting caught by the police because his mother had to come down to the police station to get him out. The author pointed out that he was apparently gratified by the attention the situation forced his mother to pay him. Someone else observed that maybe if Jim had done something helpful at home his mother would pay attention to him and wouldn't be mad at him for getting into trouble either. Another said maybe a good report card from school would get attention from his mother too. And so the group was able, after true motivation was pointed out, to offer alternative kinds of behavior to achieve even more desirable ends. Through these kinds of discussions the boys came to better understand and more realistically evaluate some of their behavior.

In addition to insight and change in attitudes, group discussion helped in the development of supportive and interdependent relationships. This goal was emphasized in all group endeavors, but during discussion it was possible to deal directly with it and bring it very consciously to the attention of the members.

Beyond-the-Group Contacts

With an eye on the total environmental context, conferences were held at the school concerning individual problems, and with workers of active social agencies. In one instance information thus gained led to an investigation by the County Welfare Board to determine the amount of family neglect, resulting in the subsequent placing of two members in foster homes and offering more intensive casework to the mother in an effort to assist her in creating a more positive family atmosphere.

Meetings with the boys' parents as a group started about 1 year after the program's inception and continued for the duration of the project. Their homes were used for the meetings and usually some recreation was planned, in addition to a discussion and a light lunch. Curiosity on the part of the parents (much like that which the boys had exhibited concerning the reason for the group and its method of operation) was punctuated by some skepticism about the need for a group at all because theirs were "good boys." With the dispelling of initial apprehensions, many reservations about discussing family problems also disintegrated, making meaningful exchange possible. Here, again, as with the boys, identification of underlying motivations and values made it possible for parents to better understand and evaluate behavior and goals, their own or their children's. For instance, during discussion of punishment and reward in relation to discipline, one father confided that he had been "too busy to be really interested in Dick" and had thought that a good beating would "straighten him out."

Involving both parents and children in this program for prevention made explicit the idea that the entire family has responsibility for problems expressed in children's behavior; it created better acceptance on the part of parents and consequently a better climate for some remedial action.

The fact that a major causative factor in delinquency is an authority conflict, exemplified by parental undercontrol or overcontrol with the resistance to it, seemed to be another major reason for a program which involved both the predelinquent and his parents, making guidance possible in the area of control and discipline, as well as interpretation of the concomitant need for independence as well as support and dependence.

Conclusions

Dale G. Hardman's observation that "a history of negative experiences with authority figures is a basic component of delinquency"[4] could well be extended to include parents of delinquents. In the light of this statement, perhaps the most worthwhile service that was provided, in terms of prevention, was a new and constructive relationship with authority, both for the predelinquent and his parents. This project proved that in an instance where delinquency and social deterioration are predictable by strong evidence, it has

[4] "The Constructive Use of Authority," *Crime and Delinquency*, July 1960, p. 60.

been possible in all cases, except one, to avoid the courts and to prevent many of the behavioral indications of social disorganization by the use of intensive social group work with boys and with their parents. During the past 2½ years when members of the group have committed some delinquent acts, the author, as part of this project and in agreement with the police department, has dealt with these infractions immediately and directly himself by discussions in the group and with the parents. Effectiveness of this method has been attested to by police officers who have been impressed by the change in attitude of these boys and the greatly reduced number of complaints by neighbors and merchants compared to a couple years ago.

Other signs of improvement are numerous and very encouraging. Truancy from school, once a tremendous problem, is now almost nonexistant. School behavior is drastically improved, and in several cases participation in the regular athletic program of the school has resulted. Two boys have paper routes and are able to manage satisfactorily. Two are members of the YMCA and attend activities regularly; three others are in the Catholic Youth Center program, including summer camping. There appears to be increased interest in and a better understanding of the feelings and rights of others in the families involved. At this point, I feel there is much greater readiness to meet and successfully deal with day-to-day conflict and frustration than previously, without considerable outside help.

Suggested Improvements

In critically analyzing the developments, the members of the Myers Foundation and the present consultant find several factors important as they relate to future prevention demonstration projects.

First, indices of delinquency proneness should be more objectively and clearly defined than they were in this project, forming a more adequate basis for documenting results.

Secondly, complete psychological testing of group members, including interest and aptitude tests, at the initial stage of a project would afford a comparative analysis with similar test results at the conclusion. Such testing would also make possible more specific planning for treatment should test results indicate such need.

And finally, in order to evaluate more fully the effectiveness of such programs, followup observation and appraisal of adjustment after an elapsed time would be necessary.

The essence of working with street clubs involves the establishment of meaningful relationships between the workers and gang members so that these relationships once established can be utilized for the redirection of the antisocial activities of gangs and their members.

McCarthy and Barbaro in *Reaching the Unreached*