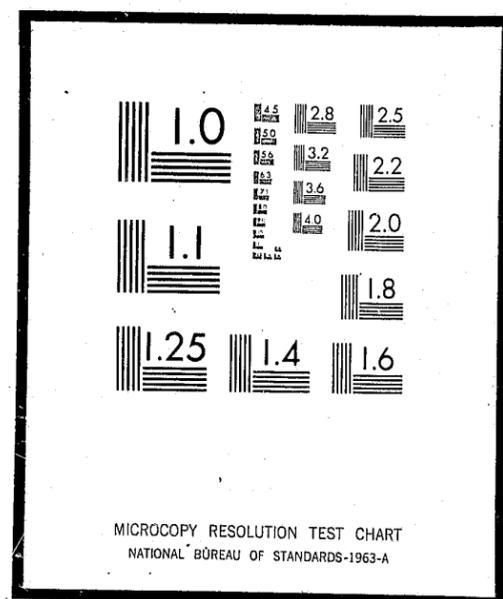


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CORRECTIONS

OHIO CORRECTIONS IN THE '70'S

INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

The stated goal of Ohio corrections is "to protect society from criminal activity by guiding a correctional system that humanely controls and/or causes offenders to change their behavior so that it is at least acceptable to society, and to accomplish this objective efficiently and effectively." ¹ Lofty as this goal seems it is certainly not new, for similar goals were set for 18th century systems.

Recent studies have made clear that we are not achieving this goal, that meaningful rehabilitation is largely a myth and that lengthy incarceration breeds hostility and hardens criminal behavior. In the existing system the irony is that "The ultimate victim of correctional failure is the citizen."² Increasing crime and widespread prison riots have forced the public to face the reality that confinement does punish, but it does not give to society the expected protection and deterrence from crime. Since as many as 98 per cent of those imprisoned will some day be released, correction leaders are working to make the public realize that the best ultimate protection is not incarceration and punishment, but rather a planned reintegration into society of offenders who have learned new skills and new behavior patterns.

The *Final Report* of the Citizens' Task Force on Corrections has provided the basis for attempts to modernize Ohio's penal system, but corrections in Ohio remains a political issue. Changes have certainly been made, more in the last two years than in the previous 50, but many recommendations have been ignored or implemented in such a way as to dilute their effect. Change filters slowly downward, so that improvements in the everyday life of prisoners have lagged far behind the initiation of these changes.

DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE

The new Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, created in July 1972 when corrections and mental

health were separated as suggested by the Task Force, has taken up the challenge of providing meaningful rehabilitation. Now totally reorganized into a more cohesive group of subdivisions under a centralized office, the department is struggling to mold an organization better able to carry out its stated goal. Each of the subdivisions is supervised by an assistant director who is appointed by and directly responsible to the department director. The four subdivisions are:

1. The Division of Institutional Services - responsible for the institutions as well as rehabilitation programs and services to inmates.
2. The Division of Parole and Community Services - responsible for administration of the parole system (including the Parole Board), probation services to counties where requested, and other community based correctional services such as reintegration centers, furlough programs and halfway house services.
3. The Division of Planning and Research - responsible for short and long range programs and development of correctional information systems and facilities planning.
4. The Division of Administration and Fiscal Operations - responsible for the general business of the entire system and for institutional maintenance and operations.

Organizational changes are still being made to centralize policy making, but this goal has not been fully realized. Those in positions of authority at major institutions tend to resist changes which mean relinquishing some of the power they have won over long years of work. Public support for correction reform is gravely lacking and, although the Ohio legislature has given the department some increased financial support, funding problems continue to severely limit new programs, recruitment of additional staff and increased salaries for all staff. The department's *Response to the Task Force Report* indicates the central office is aware of these difficulties and is evaluating ways to initiate positive change. Additional funding is being sought through federal government programs.

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OFFENDERS — RECEPTION, CLASSIFICATION, PLACEMENT

Offenders are committed to the department by common pleas courts in each of the counties. The state institutions to which offenders can be assigned are classified as reformatories and penitentiaries. The department defines a reformatory as an institution for first commitment offenders aged 16 to 30 and a penitentiary as an institution for older felons and repeaters. A reformatory inmate may be transferred to a penitentiary if his presence appears to be detrimental to the well-being of the reformatory.

Although the administration initially agreed with the Task Force recommendation to centralize reception, diagnosis, and classification, the administration now feels that decentralization is more in keeping with Ohio's thrust for community based services and the recommendations of the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals. Convicted felons may eventually be diagnosed and classified in the county jails and sent immediately to the appropriate facility.

Presently new inmates are sent to a reception center for IQ, personality, and scholastic aptitude tests. Results are noted in the inmate's "pocket" (file) and used for job assignment classification and evaluation for parole. Test results do not, however, affect work assignments as much as the needs of the specific facility to which the inmate is assigned.

Reformatory class offenders are sent to the Ohio State Reformatory at Mansfield for testing and then retained there or sent on to the Lebanon Correctional Institution. Felons over 30 and repeaters are sent to the Chillicothe Correctional Institute for testing, then retained or sent on to the Marion Correctional Institution, the London Correctional Institution or the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility. Female felons over 16 convicted by common pleas courts are sent directly to the Ohio Reformatory for Women at Marysville.

Juveniles present a special problem. Most cases involving those under 18 are heard in juvenile court, but state law permits some serious offenders to be tried as adults in common pleas courts. Although the federal court in 1973 ordered total separation of juveniles and adult offenders, those convicted by common pleas courts lose special consideration as minors and are sent to Mansfield or other adult institutions because no separate facility exists for them.

OHIO'S INSTITUTIONS

In developing its institutions Ohio has continued to follow a pattern established 150 years ago of a loosely-linked group of large, semi-autonomous facilities, each with its own firmly entrenched traditions and

practices. The Ohio Penitentiary (OP) opened in 1834, the State Reformatory at Mansfield in 1894, the Women's Reformatory at Marysville in 1916, London Correctional Institution in 1925, Marion in 1955, Lebanon in 1960, Chillicothe Correctional Institute (acquired by lease from the federal government) in 1966, and the new Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF) at Lucasville in 1972.

Institutions in the system differ, some having single buildings, some campus-like complexes, but all contain some combination of dormitories and cells as living quarters for prisoners. Marysville now holds only half of its capacity of 450 and there has been some talk of phasing it out completely. Mansfield is greatly overcrowded at 1700 in spite of the dubious distinction of having the nation's largest steel cell block, six stories of fifty cells each. Two prisoners are assigned to each six by nine foot cell which also contains two desks, two bunks and a toilet. The Task Force strongly recommended that Mansfield be razed and a new facility built, but no plans to this effect have been made. Instead the administration has pledged to pursue furlough programs and community facilities as an immediate way to decrease the inmate population.

The total inmate population declined about 25 per cent over the last decade but began to rise again in early 1974 after the new criminal code went into effect. Prisoners are now housed in all the institutions although only the honor dorm and hospital remain at OP since the opening of the SOCF at Lucasville. Although it is well-documented that smaller institutions of 300 to 400 inmates near the home communities of the offenders better serve rehabilitation and reintegration goals, the new 1500-inmate capacity SOCF was built in a difficult to reach, distant location near several small towns from which most of the staff would have to be drawn.

The Task Force recommended specializing institutions according to treatment program, but the administration favors what they call "a more flexible program" which will avoid duplication and allow placement near the offender's home. Many offenders, however, live in the northeastern part of the state and the institutions are located in the central and southern parts. The administration's response to the Task Force is to promise that all institutions will offer basic education, vocational training, and a well-qualified training staff.

DEPARTMENTAL STAFF — RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

In all institutions the key to successful management is staff. Prisoners and penologists agree that guards are the key people in corrections. Those "inside" will readily admit that the guards really run the prisons. Yet on an occupational esteem poll, prison guards scored second from the bottom, just above garbage collectors.³ Guards often have minimal education

and limited work experience. They are poorly paid and by their own admission become quickly demoralized by the disregard of inmates and other staff for their human feelings.

Corrections officers, the official designation for guards, are often rural and white while much of the population of the institutions is urban and black. The perception that each group has of the other often prohibits effective interactions. Staff are prone to see inmates as "militant, hostile, dangerous, subversive, revolutionary and not amenable to change." Inmates perceive staff as "racist, hostile, brutal, ignorant, and insensitive."⁴ That these stereotypes do not always hold true makes little difference when staff and inmates perceive them to be so.

Although prison staff levels rose about 50 per cent between 1960 and 1970 only 9.1 per cent of those employed in 1971 could be classified as treatment workers. The department has made considerable effort at recruitment, but competition for professionals is stiff and low salaries and less than ideal working conditions in the isolated locations of prisons provide little inducement. With more use of community based corrections and further development of alternatives to incarceration for "good risks" the hope is that the prison population will decrease. For community based facilities an entirely different type of staff will be needed. Realistically, however, there will always be some who need incarceration. If present trends continue, those who remain in institutions will be more hard core, more self aware, more politically aware, more crime oriented, and more difficult to manage. A better trained and more experienced staff will be necessary.

The expanding Ohio Correction Academy at Chillicothe now offers specific training for new employees and in-service training for those already working, although this has not yet been made mandatory. Plans call for moving this facility to a more central location near Columbus, as suggested by the Task Force, but no date or location has been set. During the first half of 1973, 6956 persons participated in workshops, seminars, entering and advance programs, and in-service training.

A major part of the program is a two-week, 82-hour training course for corrections officers. This includes learning to handle people and crisis situations and concentrates on understanding minority group values, practices, and beliefs. This short term course is a beginning, but it cannot completely obliterate for trainees the attitudes formed over a lifetime. An administrative regulation has already made clear that "corporal or physical punishment as a means of enforcing prison discipline is absolutely forbidden."

A mandatory seven-week pre-training program for all probation, institution, and parole workers was begun in 1973. Designed with the help of outside consultants this program consists of training at the home installation and two, two-week carefully planned

sessions at the Academy. Methods of handling people and changing attitudes are stressed.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications, long recognized as a weak spot in the system, has come in for examination and change. The written "kite" system by which prisoners communicate with staff and administration remains the same. Official communications must be on official forms, specifically addressed and sent at specified times on specific days. Misunderstandings are common. Inmate publications have served as a means of self-expression as well as a means of communication, but these make clear the general distrust and lack of meaningful communication throughout the system.

Steps to solve some of these problems are being taken. Ohio has already completed much of its conversion to a computerized information and storage bank as part of the Criminal Justice Information System to be fully operational in 1975. Developed with 80 per cent federal and 20 per cent state funds, this system will link the existing Law Enforcement Automated Data System, the Traffic Records System, the Computerized Criminal Histories from all over the state, a new Offender-Based Tracking System which follows the offender from arrest through adjudication and corrections, and a Uniform Crime Reporting System, which will provide data for evaluation and future planning.

EDUCATION

Education is a major concern in prison rehabilitation programs. The administration regards the chartering of a systemwide school district in April of 1973 as one of the significant accomplishments of the last few years. As of February 1974 full and part time programs were being provided for 2200 inmates who are paid for attending classes at the same rate as all working inmates. School attendance is considered a privilege and often other jobs must be completed first. Classes are offered on all levels from beginning reading to high school equivalency. Under several new programs a selected few may begin college work. Although the administration has designated education a top priority, it is not a separate budget item as many feel it should be.

Vocational education has been severely criticized as outdated and irrelevant. Money for modern equipment and adequate instruction is scarce. Teaching skills that will be immediately transferable to civilian jobs is difficult when inmates do not remain long enough to complete programs. Long term inmates cannot be taught today's job skills for a job market 10 to 15 years hence. State licensing regulations and many unions discriminate against ex-felons even if they have required training.

Vocational training programs are presently offered

in 22 programs from cosmetology to electronic data processing. These programs are separate from both the on-the-job training of Penal Industries shops and a federal training and development program. Those who successfully complete the federally sponsored program of remedial skills and specific vocational training are placed in jobs by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services and officials feel this aspect of the program holds the promise for success.

OHIO PENAL INDUSTRIES

Many of Ohio's inmates work at institutional or farm maintenance jobs or are assigned to one of the 23 Ohio Penal Industries (OPI) shops. Many of those working contend that too few jobs are available, that the work is not relevant to the urban life to which they will return, and that working conditions are intolerable and dangerous. Although the administration admits some of this criticism is valid, they point out that the stated objective of OPI is teaching good work attitudes and habits more than specific vocational skills.

Inmate pay of \$.10 per hour plus \$.04½ dependent's bonus is double what they earned several years ago, but it is far from the amount needed to promote a feeling of productive work. It is also of little help to inmate's families, many of whom are forced onto the welfare rolls. Both the inmates and penologists feel that pay should be increased to promote greater incentives and meet realistic needs.

The OPI is an industrial complex producing goods valued at over \$5¼ million which are sold to tax-supported agencies. Inmates with vastly differing abilities and skills must be trained to staff shops into which orders come with no predictable regularity. Profits from sales go into the state general fund, so neither the prisoners nor the Penal Industries receive any direct benefits.

Many of the shops are now being modernized, and outdated industries are being phased out or replaced. Those presently operating include the well-known auto tag shop, sewing shops, machine shops, shoemaking, a new sheet metal shop, a complete print shop, and an elaborate key punch and programming shop at Lebanon run in conjunction with vocational education.

PROBATION AND PAROLE

Probation and parole are administered by the Adult Parole Authority (APA) which includes the chief, superintendents of probation, parole, and research, and a seven-member Parole Board. All positions of the APA are filled by appointment under the classified civil service with qualifications specified by law.

The Parole Board, which is the parole granting arm of the APA, is a full-time professional board which functions as an independent body removed from direct control of the director of the department or the governor.

Once appointed members of the Parole Board can be removed only for "malfeasance, misfeasance or non-feasance."⁵ Decisions of the Parole Board are final and no provisions are made for administrative or judicial review.

Parole eligibility time for individual inmates is based on the minimum sentence as set by law and may range from five months on a six-month sentence to a full 15 years for aggravated murder. Under a special provision of the new criminal code an inmate may be eligible for shock parole at six months if he has not been convicted of aggravated murder or murder and meets the other specified conditions. An inmate may be paroled or continued (flopped) at the discretion of the Parole Board. Parole is considered a privilege and only the Parole Board determines parole readiness, so in essence the Parole Board has complete control over the life of the prisoner prior to expiration of the maximum sentence.

Although about 70 per cent of those eligible have been paroled in the last two years, the parole mechanism provokes more complaints than any other feature of the correction system. Inmates resent guards using parole denial threats as a means of behavior manipulation. They object to forced acceptance of unwanted and irrelevant treatment as a condition of parole. Inmates see the decisions of the board as unfair and capricious and claim the board acts as a second judge, resentencing them for the same crime. Suggestions made for changing the parole procedures include opening the prisoner's file, basing decisions on meaningful written criteria, and establishing written criteria for transfers to less secure status, for furlough consideration, and for early parole.

Since the reorganization of 1965, the APA has been able to provide more hearings (7500 in 1973) with help of hearing officers, give fewer continuances and more paroles, and have fewer ex-offenders return to prison. In May 1974 the APA was providing services for 3000 probationers sentenced to remain in their communities under supervision in the 54 counties where local probation services are not available. In addition the APA was providing services for 5500 parolees returned from prison to the community before completion of their maximum sentence.

These services are intended to protect the public through surveillance of the ex-offender while at the same time offering him help and guidance. Usually a single officer must act as both policeman and helper and the two roles often conflict. Those under surveillance live with the fear that they can be charged with infringement of any of the often numerous regulations and be sent or returned to prison. While they are not imprisoned, they do not have the rights and privileges of free persons.

COMMUNITY BASED TREATMENT

The current push in Ohio corrections is toward

community based treatment as suggested by both the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals and the Task Force. The goal of these programs is to divert offenders from prisons and to better prepare those already incarcerated for an earlier, more successful reintegration into society and thus keep them from returning to prison. If, as the administration suggests, as many as 80 per cent of those presently incarcerated do not belong in prisons at all, then perhaps community corrections can provide a viable alternative.

A controlled living situation is the basis for most community programs. As of February 1974, there were 10 certified halfway houses in Ohio with others being developed. The APA may also approve housing in a Salvation Army or Volunteer of America home or in a YMCA where other housing is not available. In the halfway house environment access is provided to educational, vocational, medical and counseling services, so that individuals can develop on-going ties before their release. In 1973, 945 individuals were housed in halfway house facilities, 814 of these on parole and probation and 131 on furlough.

The furlough program, operated by APA since September of 1972, makes it possible for selected inmates to work or go to school in the community setting while living at a halfway house or other approved confinement facility. Inmates may work in government employment, for tax-exempt or nonprofit organizations, or in on-the-job training programs in private industry. They cannot, by law, be employed in any position where they would compete with civilian workers. Those on education furlough may attend either academic or vocational programs at public schools or at community or state colleges. Legislation has now been passed to allow short furloughs for several reasons including arranging for a suitable parole plan or for an educational or vocational furlough plan, and for home visits, as recommended by the Task Force and favored by the administration.

The conditions for furlough eligibility are stipulated by state law, but actual selection of participants is done by a screening committee at each institution. The program accepts about 30 inmates per month, each institution having a specified number of recommendations possible, depending on inmate population. Although inmates are considered for the program when they have 12 months before parole eligibility, those who go on furlough usually have six to nine months of minimum sentence left because of the planning time necessary before they can actually be placed. As of January 1974, 350 inmates had participated in the program. Budgetary limitations and the lack of suitable housing keep the program from expanding beyond its present size, but those supervising the program seem pleased with the progress of individual inmates. Those who make a success of furlough have little trouble making parole, but then those in the program are all

"good risk" inmates.

When local communities are not consulted and not properly prepared, they tend to reject community based programs. Such was the case with the Cincinnati Community Correction Center, one of four which were abandoned in August 1973 after several years of preparation. The \$1.5 million federal grant to provide operating funds for intense treatment programs for 150 parolees with specific problems had to be returned. Such failures reflect the desire of some segments of the public to keep criminals locked up, out of sight, and out of mind.

On the success side, the small residential parole reintegration centers opened in 1972 and 1973 in Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati are now operating. Each center serves about 25 male technical parole violators at one time, most of which would formerly have been returned to institutions. The aim of the centers is to change attitudes, improve self-esteem, and raise the aspirations of residents. Although programs vary depending on resident individuals, each center is based on a distinct treatment model. Cincinnati maintains rigid control, Columbus minimal control, and Cleveland medium custody. Originally only Cleveland was to offer treatment for alcohol and drug problems, but all three centers now have incorporated some aspects of the medical model. As of February 1974, 260 male parole violators had entered the program, each remaining about 12 weeks. Of these only 16 had to be returned directly from the program to prison.

Staff at these centers is mostly young and college trained, but they are paid as corrections officers rather than as probation officers as the original plans stipulated. Low staff morale and high turnover are attributed in part to inadequate pay.

In addition to the obvious benefits to offenders and ex-offenders, these programs will actually save the taxpayers' money. The cost of individual programs varies depending on the extent of already available facilities, but is usually below the early 1974 cost of \$4500 claimed by the administration for institutionalizing one inmate for one year. This figure is exclusive of capitalization, which for Lucasville was \$21,000 per bed. The governor's 1974-75 budget message listed the daily inmate cost in 1973 in the institution as \$10.97, in the halfway house \$7.08, on furlough \$5.01, and on probation \$1.59. Predictions for 1975 place institution cost up to \$12.79, furlough up to \$13.69, and probation down to \$1.04.

Other methods being tried to bring community and existing institutions into closer contact include citizen advisory boards at Mansfield, Lebanon, and London; a young lawyers program to provide parolees with sponsors; Junior Chamber of Commerce programs to provide links with the business community; AA groups active in the institutions; an annual Resident-Employer Career Day at Lebanon; and an art work shop at Mansfield under an Ohio Arts Council grant.

PRISONER'S RIGHTS

The recent trend toward more organization and political activity among prisoners, as well as court decisions emphasizing due process and legal rights for prisoners, have necessitated many changes in policy and institutional management. Dress codes have been liberalized and religious freedom expanded. More attention is now being given to rights of individual prisoners in spite of objections by line staff that their jobs are being made more difficult. An administrative directive has established guide lines for reporting infractions and has established a Rules Infraction Board at each institution. Use of force by guards has been restricted and any use at all must be reported.

Inmate Advisory Councils have been established in response to a Task Force recommendation but have not been successful with many objections raised by inmates over selection of their representatives and the inability of the councils to do anything other than rubber stamp administrative decision. A recently initiated ombudsman program is viewed skeptically by inmates because the ombudsmen are not independent of the department.

Several programs have been instituted with varying success to meet the legal needs of inmates. There are now legal advisors at each institution and law libraries have been started, but these are open for limited hours and their resources are inadequate. Many books cannot be taken out and the short time inmates are allowed in the library is insufficient to copy relevant information.

The censorship restriction on first class mail was lifted in 1971, although inmates must pay postage on all but one letter per week. Mail is opened and examined for contraband but is not read. Visiting regulations have been standardized and slightly liberalized, although visitations are still restricted to family and four friends named on an inmate's list. Penologists and prison administrators agree that the suffering of families caused by incarceration of one member is a very real and much ignored aspect of corrections, but the ever present pressures of overcrowded prisons, inadequate funding, and difficulties in maintaining control seem to get priority consideration.

PRISON LIFE

In spite of many changes in the system, prison life for inmates remains much the same. All institutions maintain strict discipline under specifically stated and numerous rules. Inmates can be cited and punished for any infraction ranging from wasting food to attempting escape. Living in a cell under constant surveillance allows for little or no privacy. Being known by a number rather than by name dehumanizes prisoners who become "faceless people living out routine and mean-

less lives." ⁶

The challenge for concerned citizens is to force implementation of change, to re-examine personal punishment motives, and to re-educate the public to accept prisoners as ordinary human beings whose basic needs must be met. To achieve protection by reversing the pattern of criminal behavior through individualized, relevant treatment remains the goal of corrections. How far Ohio has progressed toward reaching this goal must be the yardstick by which society measures its correction system.

* * * * *

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