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## This Issue in Brief

**Clemency Under the Federal System.**—Executive clemency is a topic of interest to offenders and correctional workers alike. Both frequently raise questions to clarify the concept of clemency and its exercise. What distinction, for example, is made between clemency, pardon, and amnesty which are used interchangeably? What are the types of clemency? Is clemency an act of grace or a matter of right? What purposes are served by a pardon? Does an unconditional pardon by the President restore civil rights? Does it erase the conviction and signify innocence of the petitioner? How does one apply for clemency? What proportion of petitioners receive clemency? These and other questions are answered for us by Reed Cozart, Pardon Attorney for the U. S. Department of Justice.

**Group Counseling in a Short-Term Institution.**—Group counseling is not to be confused with group psychotherapy, explains Dr. E. Preston Sharp, executive director of Philadelphia's well-known Youth Study Center. There is similarity in goals, but the differences, Dr. Sharp points out, are more pronounced than the similarities. The major goal of group counseling is support and re-education, whereas group psychotherapy is also concerned with personality reconstruction. Dr. Sharp demonstrates for us the feasibility of short-term group counseling as conducted at the YSC. The results, he says, have been dramatic and have far exceeded expectation. What can be accomplished by such a program? "Plenty," assures Dr. Sharp, "with results well worth the effort."

**The Role of the Volunteer in a Residential Treatment School.**—There is prevalent some mis-giving as to the place of volunteers in correctional and social agency programs. Some say volunteers create more problems than they help resolve. But Children's Village at Dobbs Ferry-on-Hudson, N. Y., has found a specialized role for the

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volunteer. The volunteer program at the Village, according to Joseph F. Phelan, Jr., executive director, brings an ingredient to residential treatment which cannot be supplied by staff. Volunteers at Children's Village are part of the treatment team.

*The Therapist's View of the Delinquent.*—The problem of distortions in mutual understanding between the treatment worker and the delinquent must be recognized if the treatment process is to show results. There are stereotypes and blindspots that prevent therapists from reaching and helping children as there are in delinquents that keep them from accepting and using help. Avel O. Goldsmith, psychiatric social worker in private practice in New York City, writes the first of two articles on the problem of communication between worker and child. Our December issue will carry the second article, "The Delinquent's View of the Therapist," by Dr. Jacob Chwast.

*He Begged That Gang Violence End With His Death.*—Through the Hogg Foundation of the University of Texas we first learned about Father Harold J. Rahm's unusual work with delinquent gangs in South El Paso, Texas. We have asked Elizabeth Zinn, a free-lance writer familiar with Father Rahm's dramatic and inspiring program, to tell us of his approach with youth gangs.

*High School Drop-Outs and Corrective Measures.*—We must be concerned about school drop-outs for two reasons, asserts Dr. George C. Brook of Chicago's public school system—the social loss from under-used student potential and the cost and problems of juvenile delinquency which are likely to arise from the drop-out group. Dr. Brook tells us what can be done to prevent school drop-outs. Social agencies must work toward improving the lot of low-income families from which most drop-outs come, he emphasizes, and schools must bring the curriculum to the pupil.

*A Critical Analysis of the Wolfenden Report.*—In 1954 Great Britain appointed a 15-member Committee, headed by the eminent jurist, Sir John Wolfenden, C.B.E., to consider the law and practice relating to (1) homosexual offenses and the treatment of persons convicted of such offenses, and (2) offenses against the criminal law in connection with prostitution and solicitation for immoral purposes. The Committee's report was presented to Parliament in September 1957.

Dr. James Melvin Reinhardt, professor of criminology at the University of Nebraska, writes for us an appraisal of the Committee's findings, popularly known as the Wolfenden Report.

*The Army's New Correctional Program at Stockade Level.*—In 1957 the Army completely revamped its traditional guardhouse system based primarily on custody and unproductive menial labor and established in its place an entirely new correctional program at local command level. The new approach has resulted in a marked decline in the rates of court-martial convictions and confinement. Colonel Raymond R. Ramsey, Deputy The Provost Marshal General for the Department of the Army, describes the new program and assesses its accomplishments to date.

*The Bail System and Equal Justice.*—The administration of bail frequently discriminates against poor persons, results in lengthy pretrial imprisonment, and in many instances denies an important civil right. These are the conclusions reached in a study of Philadelphia and New York City courts conducted in 1953 and 1957, respectively, by the University of Pennsylvania and reported to us by Professor Caleb Foote of the University's law school. The study is believed to be the most comprehensive yet undertaken on bail administration, including, for example, a survey of 3,223 felony actions in New York, Queens, and Bronx counties.

*Factors Associated With Escape Behavior of Prison Inmates.*—Do certain factors decidedly influence prison escape? Is it possible to single out factors or predispositions which will enable us to know who are good escape risks? Three staff members of Louisiana's correctional system have attempted a systematic study of escape behavior and believe they have come up with factors that can be associated with escape. Do their findings agree with your notions about escape risks?

*The University Curriculum in Corrections.*—At present there is considerable interest and some divergence of opinion as to what should constitute a course in corrections at graduate level. Dr. Vernon Fox, chairman of the division of criminology and corrections at Florida State University, outlines what he believes should be the curriculum for persons entering corrections as a career.

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.

self, so that the worker's offer of love and mothering was threatening rather than helpful.

As the worker becomes aware of *his own distortions* in perception (perhaps by comparing his impressions with the findings of a complete diagnostic study or through supervisory consultation), he will gain in self-knowledge and be able to make more effective use of himself as a therapeutic in-

strument. As the worker becomes aware of the distortions about himself that the delinquent child *wishes* the worker to believe, valuable clues to the values, anxieties, and problems of the child will become apparent. An understanding of these two areas in the interpersonal relationship can form the matrix of treatment and bring clarity out of otherwise confusing distortions.

## He Begged That Gang Violence End With His Death

BY ELIZABETH ZINN\*

**I**F YOU CAN'T beat 'em, join 'em.

That's how Father Harold J. Rahm approached the gang problem in El Paso, Texas. And that's how, after 5 years, he has finally wiped out gang warfare.

Father Rahm calls it "aggressive social work," but his methods would raise the eyebrows of many old-school social workers. For, rather than waiting in the sanctuary of his church for the gang followers to come to him, he goes to them. He meets them on the dimly-lit street corners of South El Paso and in the garbage-strewn alleys. He seeks them out in parked cars, in pool halls, and even in bars. And he approaches them neither with a tear in his eye nor with a rod in his hand.

For it takes vision to redeem these sneering, snarling outcasts; vision and great patience. And, when patience has been exhausted, it takes faith: Faith that some of these juvenile delinquents can be civilized, and that they are worth the effort.

Father Rahm's patience has been sorely tried. He has been cursed and threatened. He has been kicked in the groin and even stabbed. Worst of all, he has felt the despair of being turned on by boys whom he thought he had won to his side.

### *South El Paso's Notorious "Second Ward"*

It was not for this that Father Rahm came to El Paso in July 1952, a young Jesuit priest fresh from the seminary. He came to work as assistant pastor to the Sacred Heart Church. But the parish he came to serve lies in the heart of South El Paso,

the notorious "second ward" section of the city nearest the Mexican border.

South El Paso is an area of dirty brick tenements facing narrow alleys where tattered clothes hang on the wash lines and refuse collects in ill-smelling piles. The average 2-room apartment rents for less than \$20 a month and houses five or six persons. Leaning wooden staircases lead to the apartments, and sagging board walkways lead to the one filthy toilet or water spigot which may serve 20 or more persons.

Here the street signs are written in two languages, for the 30,000 people crowded into South El Paso are almost all of Mexican descent. Here anybody with enough cash can buy a knife or a pair of brass knuckles in a pawn shop, no questions asked. Here the streets are noisy with the clamor of thousands of voices, the blare of juke boxes, the honking of a constant tangle of worn-out cars. (Many of these cars sport garish paint jobs, but few of them boast radio aerials. Automobile antennas can be broken off and made into zip guns.)

Father Rahm soon learned that nothing could be done to improve this impoverished neighborhood with federal money, because it lies in the Chamizal Zone, land claimed by both Mexico and the United States because of erstwhile changes in the Rio Grande riverbed. The dispute has never been settled, and so the area remains a slum.

If anything was to be done, it had to be done by social agencies and social workers. Several good agencies had been set up to work with the problem, but none of them had the money or the staff to

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lick it. So Father Rahm bought a bicycle and went down into the streets to see what he could do.

Making the rounds of the neighborhood on his bicycle, calling on his parishioners in their homes, Father Rahm did what he could for the old woman who had been sick in bed for 2 years without medical attention, for the teen-age girl who was pregnant, for the boy who had broken his leg climbing on a roof that caved in, for the man who had been out of work for 5 years, for the family that was hungry but could not get relief because they had no citizenship papers, for the woman whose drunken husband beat her.

These were the people and problems that Father Rahm met by day and helped when he could. He still had not met the insolent bullies who terrorized the streets at night. But he knew they were there; even the walls testified to the existence of the gangs in the crude markings scrawled there—the signs of the 4F's, the Lucky 13's, the 7X's, the Little 9's, the Cobras.

#### *Father Rahm Moves In*

Neighborhoods that had been quiet by day became areas "owned" at night—blocks "possessed" by restless gangs of boys who knew no responsibility except the primitive call to "protect" their territory against invaders. The gangs were there, but they were not Father Rahm's problem. Not yet. He was interested in helping the neglected youngster, but he was not ready for what he now calls the "rejected youngster."

Father Rahm is a well-knit man, young and vigorous. There is an aggressiveness in his features that seems almost out of place in a face so boyish, and there is a forcefulness in his voice that commands attention. The boys talked to him on the street corners, and soon they were inviting him to join them in street football.

They admired the athletic prowess of this young priest in tennis shoes, and gradually their leaders began to accept him. Finally one youth, a high school football star, suggested to Father Rahm that he start a club for teen-agers. This was it, the opportunity Father Rahm had been waiting for, and a club was quickly formed. Softball and volley ball teams were organized; picnics and dances were planned; discussion groups were formed. Soon the membership reached 100.

But that was just the beginning. With the help of a volunteer assistant, Father Rahm set up a regular nightly schedule of activities. And the teen-agers kept coming.

As their numbers grew, Father Rahm needed more basketballs and volleyballs, more table games, more recreational equipment. He took his problem to the city recreation director, who was so pleased that something at last was being done for the youth of South El Paso that he granted all Father Rahm asked and more. He not only provided the recreational equipment, but he also put Father Rahm's assistant on the city payroll as a part-time recreation director.

Asking for something free, from a total stranger, was easier than Father Rahm had expected. And so he screwed up his courage to ask for a building to serve as a clubroom and eventually as a recreation center—free.

There was a dirty red brick building in the heart of the neighborhood, the shell of a schoolhouse long since abandoned. It had no windows, the plumbing was rotted, and the electricity was out. Boards worn almost through showed through the fallen plaster on the floor. It was littered with thrown bricks, broken whisky bottles, and the filth of 20 years' vacancy. Father Rahm asked for it.

The Knights of Columbus, who owned the building, turned it over to Father Rahm. He turned it over to the teen-agers, who cleaned and repaired it as best they could.

Father Rahm started asking again, begging materials and labor from businessmen whom he had never met. And he got most of what he asked for, although Our Lady's Youth Center still presents a crazy-quilt appearance because of the diversity of donations. The windows are a motley of plain and glazed, new and used, glass; the floors are a mosaic of linoleum and asphalt tiles pieced together from random patterns and colors.

It took months to restore the building. Then the yard was asphalted, basketball hoops went up, swings went in. A gymnasium was set up in the basement, and showers were installed. One main floor room became the library; another became the poolroom.

Father Rahm donated his own record player to the Center, but, when all the records were stolen, it was replaced with a juke box. The Center's first television set was stolen and sold in Juarez for two ounces of heroin.

But Our Lady's Youth Center, as Father Rahm christened it, continued to grow, both in facilities and personnel. A board of directors was set up which, after 5 years, has finally succeeded in buying the building. The Center has recently become

a United Fund agency. The paid, professional staff has grown to 20, and volunteer workers have given generously of their time and talents.

The membership continued to grow, too. Neglected youngsters came to take part in youth clubs and to take advantage of recreational facilities. They came to join the Girl and Boy Scouts and the City, Babe Ruth, and Little Leagues. They came to play records, to watch free movies or TV, and to dance.

### *And the Gangs Came*

Then, inevitably, the gangs came. Like moths, attracted by the light and laughter, they came swarming out of their dark alleys and into the Center. Father Rahm was expecting them. And now he was ready for them.

Although the juvenile gang members, with their duck-tailed hair cuts and their distinctive tattoo marks, were not attracted to the Center by the activities that had brought so many other youngsters, it was natural that they should make the Center their headquarters. Here they could get free cokes to wash down their goof balls; here was a softly-lit blue dance hall where they could find girls. And here they were not turned out.

The welcome they received at the Youth Center came as a surprise to them, because these boys had been rejected, or had felt rejected, all their lives. So intolerable were their homes that many of them seemed almost to prefer the relative cheerfulness of the jail tanks. Most of them had trouble staying in school or holding a job. They were used to being turned out.

Before they discovered Our Lady's Youth Center, they had spent most of their time in the streets. They hadn't done much there; mostly they had just talked. They had argued and told stories and made elaborate plans for exciting things that never happened. They had bragged.

As a group, gangs had rarely stolen or destroyed property. But individual gang members had. Even though the theft rarely benefited the boy materially, it gave him something to brag about.

Another thing a boy could boast about was sex, whether or not there was any actual experience behind his boast. Few gang members had girl friends, although occasionally the entire gang shared a girl who gave her favors to all the members. Or sometimes the gang had been able to find a girl from a rival gang or a feebleminded girl, and then they had a "gang bang." Homosexual activities had been more frequent.

Besides talking endlessly, the gang boys had amused themselves by getting high. From inhaling the fumes of a handkerchief dipped in gasoline, they had graduated to cheap wine and beer. Many had later turned to barbiturates, but few had the money to support the luxury of "joy popping" with heroin or marijuana, although narcotics of all kinds are readily available in the neighborhood because of its closeness to Juarez.

But the most notorious activity of the gang members before Our Lady's Youth Center was opened to them had been the gang fight. And the Center, even with its well-developed resources for allowing boys to let off steam in a less antisocial manner, seemed unable to quell their primitive instinct for combat.

Of course, there is no real virtue in activity as such; recreation does not, of itself, build character. But Father Rahm and his staff welcomed the gang boys in the hope that ping pong and picnics might give them new experiences for relating themselves to adults.

It wasn't easy. For one thing, gang boys are usually poor athletes. For another, they are usually too restless to enjoy TV or movies. But the greatest stumbling block was the fact that a delinquent subculture simply cannot accept the purposes of an agency program. Rejecting these purposes, the gang members brought their hate with them into the Center.

They brought liquor and narcotics, too, and, tucked into the belts of their oversized trousers, under the free-hanging tails of their loose sport shirts, they brought their weapons—chains, brass knuckles, clubs, ice picks disguised as fountain pens, or pipes, knives, sharpened beer can openers, even zip guns.

Naturally, despite the best efforts of the outnumbered staff, fighting began in Our Lady's Youth Center and on the playground. Just as naturally, the decent youngsters began slowly to disappear from the building and grounds.

But the decent youngsters weren't the only ones threatened. Our Lady's Youth Center lies in territory controlled by the Lucky 13's and their allies, the Little 9's. The Lucky 13's were a fairly large group, but, as has so often happened in South El Paso, they teamed up with a smaller gang of older, more vicious boys for mutual protection. Now they were jointly engaged in "protecting" the Center from rival gangs. If a member of the 4F's had the courage to enter the Youth Center, he was certain to be beaten, knifed, or "rolled"

on his way home. Small, less powerful gangs who had somehow offended one of the dominant gangs were excluded altogether.

### *Father Rahm's Unique Approach*

It was this situation which led to the unique plan that Father Rahm refers to as "aggressive social work." Our Lady's Youth Center had begun as a traditional building-centered operation; now it became merely the hub of operations as Father Rahm began to send part-time supervisors out into the neighborhood to work directly with each gang in its own territory. The idea was for each supervisor to gain acceptance from a particular gang and then gradually to change that gang into a social club.

But to gain acceptance from a gang whose code is defiance takes time. It takes a special kind of man to work as a supervisor, too.

There is no room for sentimentality in aggressive social work. In trying to establish himself as the link between the gang and the community, the supervisor must take care that he doesn't become simply the buffer between them. He must take care that sentimentality doesn't lead him into trying to take on the functions of court, probation, and welfare agencies; that it doesn't mislead him into overlooking illegal or immoral acts because of a misplaced concept of confidentiality.

The supervisor need not lower himself to the gangs' standards to gain their confidence. Indeed, he *must not* degrade himself; his purpose is not only to gain the respect of the boys, but to serve as an example to them of responsible citizenship. Once this is accomplished, the boys will begin to identify themselves with their supervisor as most boys learn to identify themselves with their fathers. Many of these boys have no fathers; most of the others have no way of admiring their fathers.

The supervisor is there to stand up for the boys only when they will stand up to their own obligations to society. Without ever preaching to them, he must show sincere concern for them—by getting them out of jail or into jail, depending on his own judgment in each case; by helping them to find jobs; by defending them when they are unjustly accused or attacked. Above all, the supervisor must be patient, for reversals are certain.

While the "aggressive social work" program was swinging its nets further and further into the neighborhood, Father Rahm held the Youth Center together, bending all his energies toward keep-

ing his hard-won accomplishment from disintegrating into a bedlam of unorganized, drunken activity. He kept the recreational programs going, and he delivered informal talks on teen-age problems at every opportunity. Occasionally he even succeeded in talking one of the more pliable boys into visiting the church of his choice.

He set up an employment bureau, too, and, when jobs could not be found, he created them. On the theory that a boy in a job is a boy out of trouble, he put one group to work gathering scrap paper while another group assembled and bundled it for sale. This venture was a disheartening failure; the gang members had no idea that their lives were supposed to be meaningful; they grew bored and restless. The paper selling business was abandoned when they proved to be completely irresponsible and unreliable.

This was not Father Rahm's first disappointment in trying to work with gangs, and it certainly was not his last. In the face of cold suspicion and open defiance, he was often forced to resort to extreme measures in subduing some of them. Occasionally this even meant exchanging blows with them, although one jab from his hard right hand usually was enough to fell even the biggest bully. But every beating was followed by a blessing.

Slowly, the joint efforts of Father Rahm in the Youth Center and his supervisors in the streets, allied against gang warfare, began to pay off. But not without consequences, sometimes funny, sometimes tragic.

### *A Gang Council Is Formed*

After the supervisors had succeeded in aligning themselves with the various gangs of the neighborhood, an Intergroup Council was formed. Although each gang had two representatives on the Council, one group, the Lads and Mads, held all the offices. The Lads and Mads were a group that had joined together, not for antisocial purposes, but for mutual protection; they were a "decent" gang who blamed the "hoods" for all their difficulties in gaining middle-class acceptance. Straining to keep it from becoming a "hoodlum" council, the Lads and Mads insisted on following parliamentary procedure. This antagonized the other gangs, who were made uncomfortable by such pompous orderliness. But, as much as the hoods resented the sissies, they could not help but admire their social skills.

As the Council proceeded to plan sports events, the hoods came to admire the athletic skill of the sissies, too. The slump-shouldered youths who had begun to smoke and drink as young children, who had never learned to take care of their own bodies or to cooperate with other boys, who had never learned to play, could not compete with the straight-standing boys of the lower middle class.

Still, the athletic events planned by the Council helped to work out many antagonisms. For example, there had been a keen rivalry, as the result of an earlier stabbing, between the King Gamblers and the Rhythm Devils. At a Council party held during the heat of the rivalry, the two groups sat at opposite ends of the dance floor, tense and uneasy. Neither group danced; both left early. But later they got together to protest what they felt was an unjust awarding of the sportmanship trophy, having worked off their antagonisms during the course of a touch football match.

#### *Gangs Continue in Conflict*

So the sparks of one gang war had been quenched before they burst into flame. But the traditional rivalry between the Lucky 13's and the 4F's was a little harder to handle.

This was the principal gang conflict in the neighborhood and, although the gangs were never at peace, they were rarely at war for the almost laughable reason that the 4F's were convinced that the Lucky 13's and their allies, the Little 9's, controlled both the El Paso Detention Home and Gatesville Prison! Because the 4F's were terrified of being "picked up" and sent into the enemy camp, they usually did their best to keep out of trouble. Besides, their 3-block territory was completely surrounded by Lucky 13 and Little 9 turf.

The supervisor whom Father Rahm sent out to carry on aggressive social work with the 4F's first made contact with the Lucky 13's. This was a mistake, as the 4F's saw him in their company and jumped him.

Or was it a mistake? When the 4F's realized that the man they had jumped was one of Father Rahm's supervisors, they felt shame at having "let the Padre down." And so they agreed to accept a supervisor.

This supervisor in time gained so much respect from the 4F's that he even succeeded in getting them to take their names and symbols off the walls and to repair some of the sidewalks in the neighborhood. More important, he was able to prevent them from taking revenge on the 13-9's who were

trying to bait them into a full-scale gang war. He was "in."

Because the Lucky 13's and Little 9's were the aggressors in this war and the 4F's simply defenders, Father Rahm and his workers decided to exclude the 13-9's from the Youth Center. With the 4F's now in complete control of the territory of the Center, the balance of power was upset and reprisals were quick to follow.

Barred from the Center, the resentful 13-9's wanted revenge on the 4F's. They found their opportunity in May 1956, shortly after the 4F's had begun their "social club" meetings in the Center. A Little 9'er stabbed a 4F'er. When the 4F's met on Mesa Street to discuss the stabbing with a supervisor, they were ambushed by the Lucky 13's and Little 9's, who were lying in wait behind garbage cans. More than 12 shots were fired, and a 4F'er was shot in the leg.

Although violent words and several punches were exchanged by members of the two groups during the following two months, their supervisors were able to maintain an uneasy truce until about the middle of July, when the ranks of the Lucky 13's and Little 9's had been so depleted by the exodus of members to California or to jail that there was no longer a supervisor available for them.

#### *The Youth Center Is Challenged*

One afternoon a month later, with several of their members recently released from jail, the Little 9's came to the Center. They were still barred, but there was nobody to keep them out. When they saw their rivals, the 4F's, enjoying the facilities of the game room, they gathered bottles and sticks for a fight. Single-handed, one Center worker was able to get them out before trouble began.

Two days later 226 teen-agers showed up at the Center for a supervisor's birthday party. Unexpectedly a fight broke out between the Rebels and the TPM's. The Rebels left the dance in a body and, when they tried to return, they were barred. They threatened to jump a supervisor. Tension increased, and the dance was broken up at 11 o'clock. About 40 boys gathered on the street corner, fists doubled in their pockets. Somebody called the police. About 15 boys, including two supervisors, were rounded up by the police and searched. But no weapons were found and they were released. All was quiet again, but the peace was short-lived.

A Little 9'er walked through 4F territory 2 days later. He was stopped by the 4F's, and a fight broke out. It lasted just a few minutes, but, when it was over, a 4F'er lay bleeding on the sidewalk, critically stabbed in the stomach.

The Lucky 13's and Little 9's had tasted blood and wanted more. They invaded another neighborhood where they found eight new victims for their knives, members of the Little M's and the Terrengers. According to the code of the gang, nobody spoke. Nothing could be done.

Unchecked by the police and unsupervised by the Youth Center, the rampaging 13-9's ran wild. They would not accept representation on the Inter-group Council, which somewhat threatened their existence, and the rumor spread that they planned to jump all the Council members. They set a date for a rumble with the 4F's, but, when the 4F's arrived at the appointed spot with their arsenal, the Little 9's and Lucky 13's were not there.

In August one of the Lucky 13's stabbed one of the King Gamblers. Tension ran high, and it mounted when the Little 9'er who had been arrested in connection with the earlier stabbing of the 4F'er was released on bail and was seen on the streets again. Shortly afterwards his victim, who had now recovered from his stomach wound, received two more knife wounds in the arm and chest at the brutal hands of the Little 9 gang.

Although the tension eased in early September when most of the Lucky 13's and Little 9's were jailed on drunk and vagrancy charges—three of them were stabbed in the city jail, and one died as a result—the supervisors were having greater and greater difficulty in holding the 4F's back from revenge.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the neighborhood, more violence was fermenting. The 14 gang stabbed one of the Center's boxers on his way home, and the 7X gang attacked three older men on Saint Vrain Street. Tension rose higher.

Early in October five Little 9'ers broke into the Center looking for a fight. One boy pulled a knife; one shot was fired. But nobody was hurt. Not yet.

War scimmages flared throughout the following week. Several shots were fired at the Center's supervisors, and one young tough was seen standing across the street pouring blasts from his zip gun into the Center. In late October a supervisor was brutally kicked by a Lucky 13 member. Several of the Lucky 13's were beaten and, although nobody talked, it was taken for granted that the 4F's were behind at least some of the beatings.

### *Gang Violence Comes to an End*

Gang warfare raged throughout November. Then it ended, quickly and violently, with the death of Humberto Salazar on the night of November 9, 1957.

Humberto, a dark-haired, dark-eyed member of the 4F gang, was leaning over the green felt of the Center's pool table when a member of the Lucky 13's careened into the Center, knife in hand. Tauntingly he challenged any member of the 4F's to fight. He stumbled his way into the pool-TV room. There was a sudden scuffle, then a wide-spread fight. Outside some shots were fired.

Gang fights rarely last more than a few seconds. This was no exception, but, when the melee was over, Humberto lay in his blood on the cold floor of Our Lady's Youth Center, a knife through his heart.

Humberto died 2 hours later in Father Rahm's arms, and with him might have died the fruits of Father Rahm's past efforts, his hopes for the future, his Center itself. But then a strange thing happened. With his last breath Humberto asked forgiveness for his killers. And he begged that gang violence end with his death.

Father Rahm seized Humberto's forgiveness and threw it into the faces of the revengeful gang members. Through the newspaper reports, through the Center's staff, through his two television programs and his two newspaper columns, through personal visits to the boys involved, Father Rahm echoed Humberto's plea. "See what you are doing," he cried! "Where is it to end? Humberto has forgiven. We must all follow Humberto to forgiveness."

Patiently, time after time, Father Rahm hit at the senselessness of a whole gang going to war—of a whole gang risking jail and even death—over the quarrels of its members. Over and over he argued that, if two boys had a falling out over a girl or a chance remark or a personal rivalry, these boys should be left alone to settle their differences in a personal fight.

This time the boys listened; this was the turning point. Although juvenile delinquency is still very much a fact in South El Paso, organized gang warfare was stamped out in South El Paso just 5 weeks after the murder in Our Lady's Youth Center by the formation of the gangs' own Night Court.

With a council of one member from each gang and a revolving teen-age judge, the gang boys now submit their problems for arbitration to their own

elected court. The court not only suggests solutions; it also pronounces such sentences as expulsion from the Center, submission to the belt line or to head shaving in extreme cases, and the settling of disputes between individual boys in the gymnasium.

Shortly after its formation Night Court brought together, before 60 gang members, two arch-rivals—a little 9'er and a 4F'er who had quarrelled over a girl. The judge decreed that the pair should settle their differences on the spot, unaided by their gangs. The council gave them their choice of weapons—knives, open fists, or boxing gloves. The council was taking a chance in allowing them the use of knives, but it was a small chance; boys who band together in organized gangs are usually cowards as individuals, and the bravado of the gang rings empty when a member must stand alone, face to face with his enemy, unprotected by the brute force of the gang.

The boys chose open fists, kicking allowed. With two referees insuring fair play, they punched and kicked their way through five 3-minute rounds, each upholding his dignity while the other boys enjoyed the match. When it was over, both boys emerged with their pride intact—and their score settled.

Night Court is a great victory for Father Rahm, his supervisors, and their unconventional idea of "aggressive social work." It is a great victory for El Paso, too. Captain J. M. Fuller, El Paso's chief probation officer, summed up the sentiment of the city when he said that, if more men like Father Rahm and his supervisors would work with the youth of El Paso, "many youngsters who are known to us at the probation department would never have seen the inside of a detention home."

The full story of Our Lady's Youth Center is presented in *Office in the Alley*, published by The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, University of Texas, Austin 12.