
STUDY BY THE STAFF OF THE U.S.

General Accounting Office

Observations On Correctional Programs And Policies In Selected European Countries

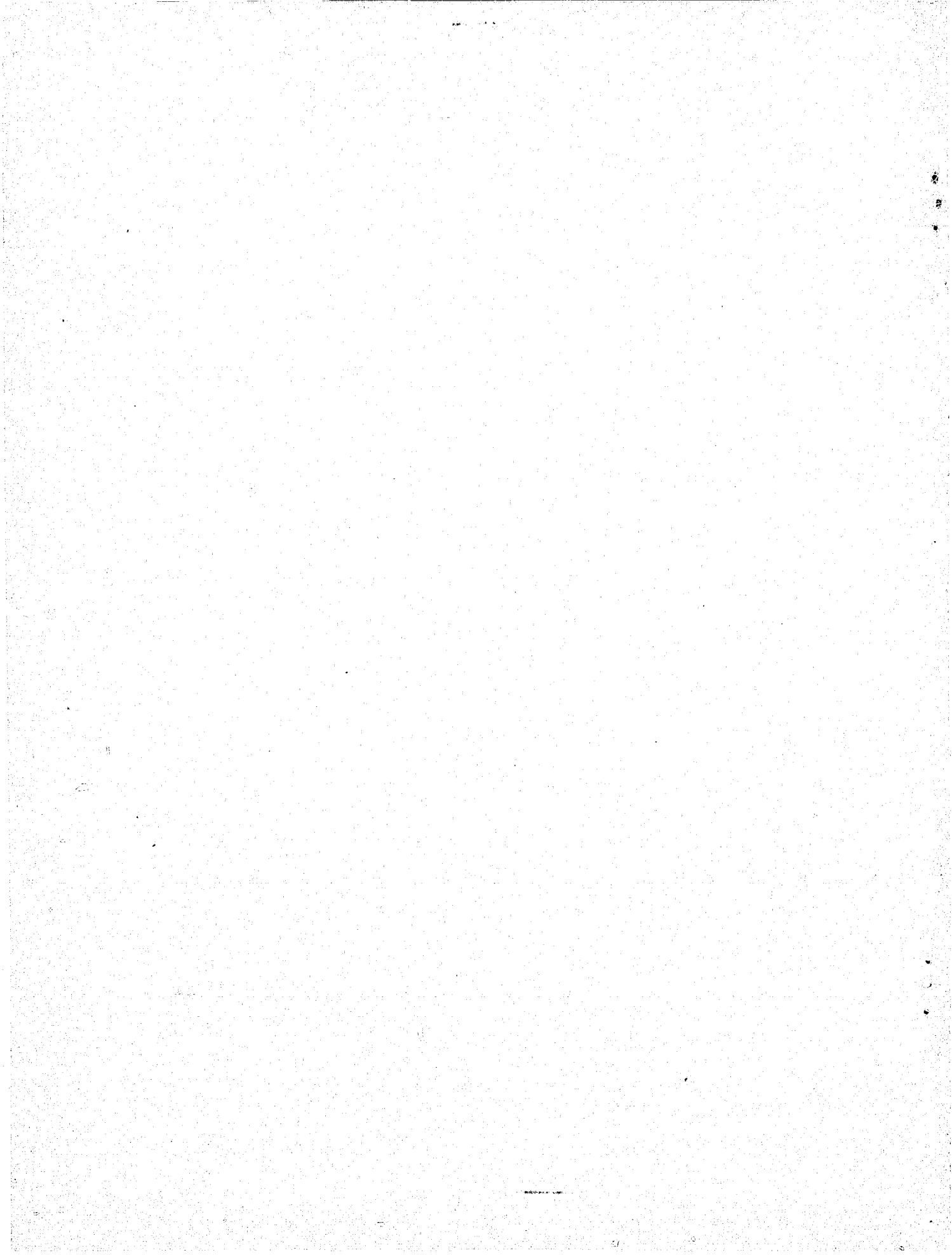
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FOREWORD

We are reviewing various ~~aspects~~ ^{4 G} of corrections systems and are currently examining programs for offender employability and health care and for female offenders. We recently issued two reports on inmate grievance mechanisms, 1/ and plan to look at corrections staff development programs soon.

To assist in our review of U.S. programs, we briefly visited corrections officials in five European countries--Denmark, The Netherlands, Sweden, England, and the Federal Republic of Germany--during November and December 1977. Our purpose was to identify some policies and programs used in these nations to

- develop alternatives to imprisonment;
- minimize the adverse effects of imprisonment;
- improve offender employability; and
- address various issues currently receiving attention in the United States, such as programs for female offenders, staff development, health care delivery, and inmate grievance procedures.

We recognize that differences exist between U.S. and European criminal justice environments, and that these differences may impact on the transferability of certain European approaches to the United States. Some differences are:

- A relatively small number of Europeans are incarcerated. For example, Sweden, Denmark, and The Netherlands each have total incarcerated populations of roughly 3,000 and Germany and England about 53,000 and 41,500, respectively, as opposed to over 500,000 offenders incarcerated in the United States.

1/ "Grievance Mechanisms in State Correctional Institutions and Large-City Jails" (GGD-77-63, June 17, 1977) and "Managers Need Comprehensive Systems for Assessing Effectiveness and Operation of Inmate Grievance Mechanisms" (GGD-78-3, Oct. 17, 1977).

- Some countries extensively use shorter sentences. In Sweden and Denmark prison sentences are generally less than 4 months; only 3 percent of all sentences in The Netherlands exceed 1 year. By contrast, Federal offenders in the United States were serving average sentences of 101.2 months at the end of fiscal year 1977.
- European prison systems have high staff/prisoner ratios, with some having more staff than prisoners.
- Northern Europe has a generally lower incidence of violent crime than the United States.
- European prison systems are centrally controlled, with national prison laws governing major aspects of correction policy and administration.

These differences, as well as the short time frame in which we performed our work, often made it impractical to verify data provided to us. Furthermore, in Europe as in the United States, controversy exists over certain programs' effectiveness in combating crime and reducing recidivism. There is disagreement on criteria for measuring program success; followup studies have been limited; and some studies that were performed have not conclusively demonstrated the advantages of the programs described in this study. For example, a British Government report concluded that:

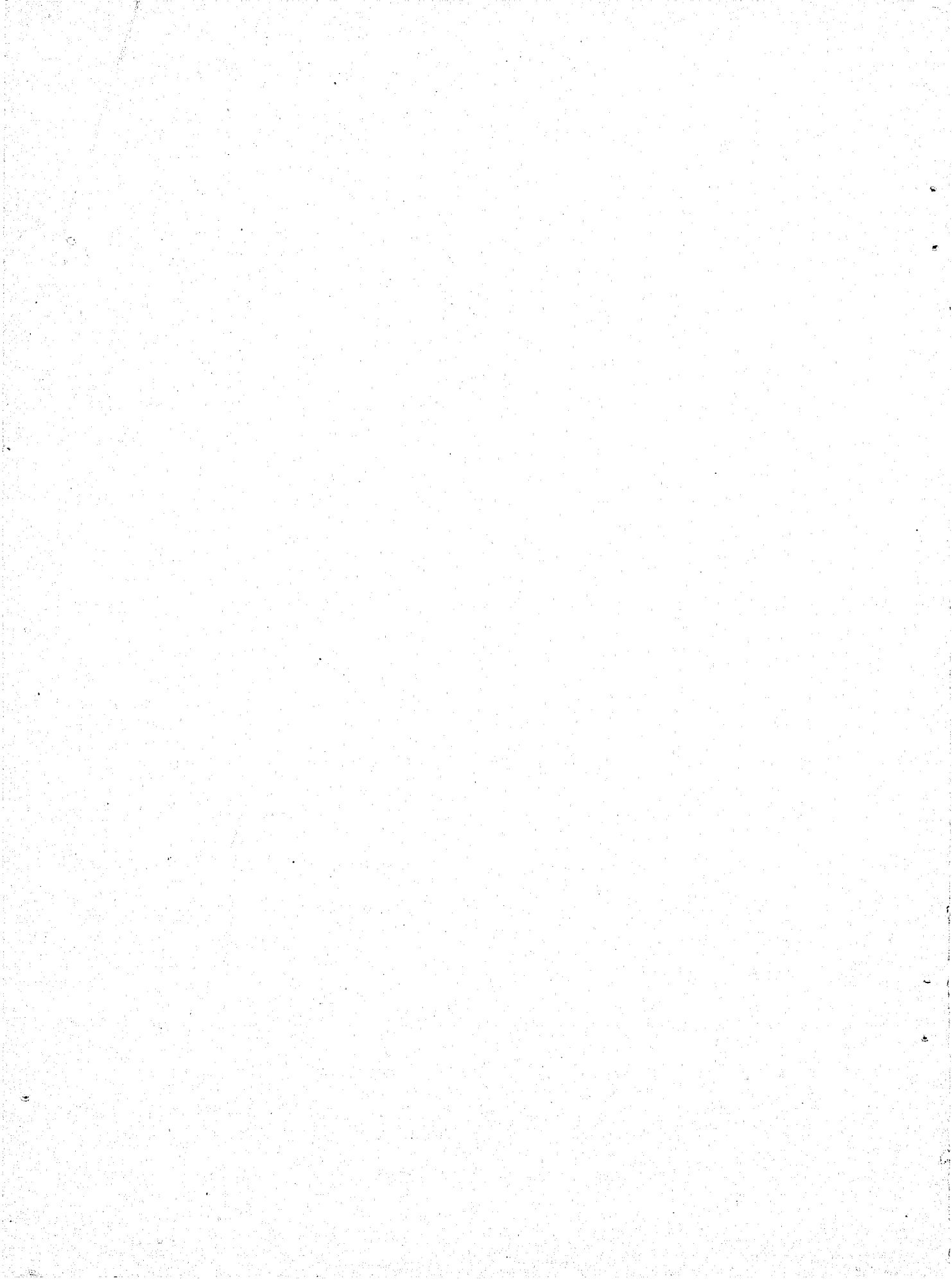
"Longer sentences seem no more effective than short ones, different types of institutions appear to work about equally as well, and rehabilitative programmes--whether involving psychiatric treatment, counselling, case-work, or intensive contact and special attention, in custodial or noncustodial settings--appear overall to have no certain beneficial effects. The comparative advantages of other types of sentences remain largely unproved."

Despite any differences over methods, the goals are quite similar in the European countries we visited. Overall, the purpose of the criminal justice and prison systems is to protect society while providing a humane and constructive environment for offenders. We describe some of the

approaches being used or tested in Europe 1/ to meet these goals.

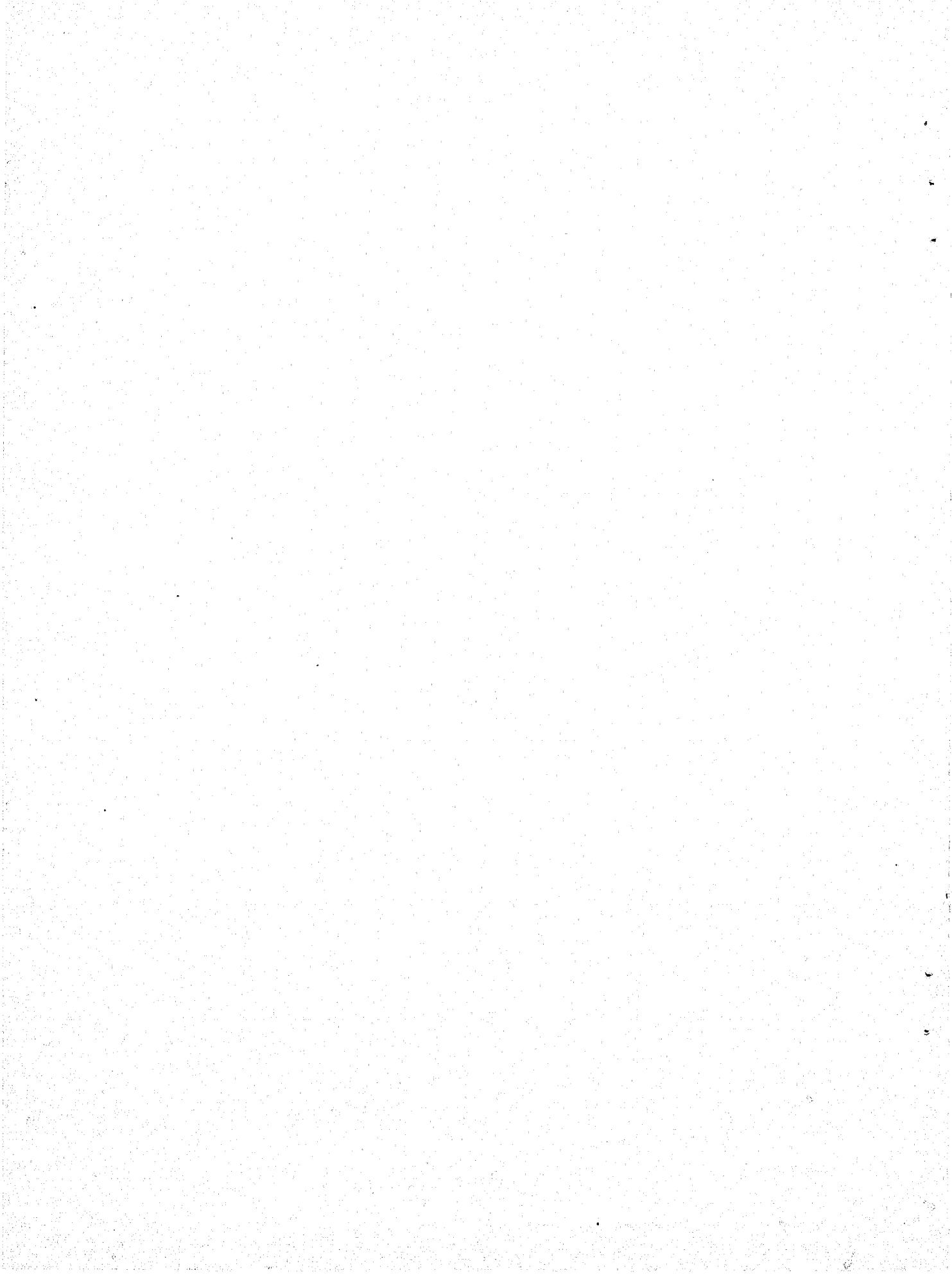
Victor L. Lowe
Victor L. Lowe
Director

1/Throughout this study, references to European systems and comments by European officials reflect information obtained in only the five countries we visited.



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CHAPTER 1

ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

Many European corrections officials believe that imprisonment has largely failed for many offenders as an effective treatment. Given this philosophy, as well as overcrowding in some prisons, all countries are using alternatives to imprisonment.

Widely used alternatives to imprisonment involve various forms and combinations of fines, probation, and conditional sentences. Two particular approaches not common to the United States are England's community service order and the day fine system used in several countries.

ENGLAND'S COMMUNITY SERVICE ORDER PROGRAM

Over the last decade England has experienced a significant increase in indictable crime resulting in serious prison overcrowding. To reduce prison populations and provide a more constructive approach to dealing with offenders, England initiated its community service order program. Under this concept an offender is sentenced to a specified number of hours of unpaid work in community projects--work which is intended to be done during an individual's leisure time (usually evenings and weekends). The purpose of this program is to deprive the offender of leisure time, but not liberty, and at the same time involve the offender in tasks which can help create a positive self-image.

Since the program's inception in 1973, over 3,000 persons have been given community service orders. The average sentences usually range from 40 to 240 hours and must be served or completed within a year.

Types of offenders

To receive a community service order, an offender must be at least 17 years of age and have been convicted of a crime normally punishable by imprisonment. Additionally, an offender must voluntarily accept community service in place of other possible penalties. Once a judge issues an order, local probation authorities evaluate whether the individual is likely to benefit from the program. An estimated 18 to 20 percent are rejected, mostly because probation authorities believe certain problems, such as those involving drugs or alcohol, could be better treated in other programs.

Individuals who have received community service orders have committed a wide range of offenses. Most have been convicted of property offenses--with the major crime categories being theft and burglary. Others were convicted of serious traffic violations, assault and criminal damage, arson, grievous bodily harm, weapons charges, and threatening behavior. In the Inner London program--the country's largest--over half of the offenders placed under community service orders have had three or more previous convictions.

Work assignments

According to English officials, much attention is paid to finding meaningful work which will contribute to an offender's feelings of social worth and sense of contribution. Most jobs are made available through local volunteer agencies which serve children, the elderly, and the handicapped. Offenders usually work by themselves or in small groups. Probation authorities arrange for work assignments and control the program, but day-to-day supervision may be accomplished by volunteer agency personnel.

A wide variety of tasks have been arranged for community service participants. Typical examples include

- painting and decorating houses for the elderly and handicapped,
- assisting staff and patients in mental hospitals,
- driving for organizations serving the handicapped,
- helping to preserve buildings of historic interest,
- making and repairing furniture and toys,
- entertaining the elderly or children in homes, and
- building a playground.

Results

Statistics for the Inner London program provide indications of program activity and results. In 4 years almost 1,800 offenders have completed approximately 130,000 hours of work. As of December 1976 about 1,300 cases had been closed, with the following results:

- 71 percent of the participants had satisfactorily completed the program.
- 12 percent, or 151 participants, committed another offense while serving the community service order.
- The remainder of the cases were terminated for a variety of reasons, the most prominent being failure of offenders to work.

Officials also report little trouble at work project sites. Furthermore, feedback from offenders has been generally favorable. In fact, some participants have elected to work more hours than required, and have stayed on as volunteers after sentence expiration.

While the overall impact of community service in terms of rehabilitation and reduced recidivism is not known, English authorities are positive about the program's benefits. For the offender, they see the major advantage being the enhancement of self-worth and social values. Officials are especially pleased that the program has proved beneficial to some offenders who had a history of alienation from society. The officials also emphasize the economic advantages of community service. By allowing the offender to remain in the community and continue regular employment, the State avoids the costs of imprisonment as well as the possible expense of supporting the offender's dependents. Furthermore, the community service order provides a source of labor to voluntary social service agencies.

DAY FINES

As in the United States, fines are commonly applied sanctions for minor offenses. Generally, fines are set amounts imposed for an offense, often irrespective of an offender's individual financial circumstances. A variation--the day fine--considers the offender's ability to pay as well as the specific infraction. Denmark and Sweden apply day fines, and Germany has recently adopted them to replace some prison sentences of 6 months or less.

In Sweden the day fine is generally applied for minor drug, property, and traffic offenses. It is based on the offender's income for a single day (after deductions for taxes and certain living expenses). Also, the value of an offender's property may increase the day fine amount. Individuals are sentenced to a specific number of day fines at the calculated daily rate according to the gravity of

the offense. The maximum fine is about \$14,000 for a single offense and roughly \$21,000 for multiple offenses; the fines usually do not exceed \$2,000.

Day fines can be paid in installments and, if unpaid, the debt may be converted to prison time. To the extent possible, however, imprisonment for debt is avoided. Some officials do question the applicability of fines for property offenses, claiming that fines create debts which in turn may lead to further crime.

CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING USE OF ALTERNATIVE SENTENCES

Although widely supported by European justice and corrections officials, the extent to which a country practices alternative sentencing will depend on a number of factors:

- The existing penal code may set minimum punishment levels for specific offenses. For example, the Dutch penal code contains a general provision which permits courts to impose a fine where the prison sentence would not exceed 3 months.
- Actions may decriminalize certain offenses, such as Denmark's recent reclassification of certain drug-related charges.
- Courts may lean toward more lenient sentencing.
- The public may accept a more liberal sentencing policy.

The experiences of certain countries illustrate a number of additional issues warranting consideration. For example, in some countries implementing alternative sentencing involves a larger role for the public prosecutor than is prevalent in the United States. In The Netherlands the public prosecutor has authority to release offenders for a number of reasons. One example is if the prosecutor believes the damaging effects of either trial or punishment would outweigh the seriousness of the crime. Under this arrangement about half those arrested in a recent year were never tried. Most of these cases were settled using conditional or unconditional discharges. Similarly, in Sweden most day fines for minor offenses are imposed by public prosecutors.

Some countries have found that shifting from imprisonment to other sentences requires allocating more resources

to agencies responsible for controlling or treating the nonincarcerated offender. For example, due to an increase in conditional sentences, Sweden doubled the size of its probation and parole staff.

In a related context, some officials believe the treatment and control roles of probationary staff need clarification. While some probationary or conditional sentences entail specific instructions for the offender, such as maintaining employment, we were told these provisions are seldom enforced. In fact, we were advised in several countries that an offender would not be imprisoned for failure to comply with sentence provisions, short of committing a second crime. However, the increasing use of alternative sentences may make compulsory control more important.

There is also a need for common understanding between the courts and the agencies operating certain programs. For example, in England there is some concern that judges may be using community service even when imprisonment was not considered an option. Thus, in some cases the community service order may not be serving as an alternative to imprisonment, but as a substitute for other conditional or probationary sentences.

CHAPTER 2

MINIMIZING ADVERSE EFFECTS OF IMPRISONMENT

Despite considerable interest in alternative sentencing, imprisonment is still considered an appropriate method for dealing with certain offenses and offenders. For such cases, the European countries we visited maintain prisons to punish and deter criminal behavior, protect society, and if possible, rehabilitate the offender.

Many corrections officials, however, believe imprisonment negatively affects individuals and hinders their successful reintegration into society. This belief, coupled with the goal to provide humane treatment of offenders, has led to programs which strive to minimize the adverse effects of traditional forms of imprisonment. Key elements of these programs include structuring prison life to approximate, to the extent practical, normal living conditions; reducing alienation by more frequent contacts with the outside world, especially family; and encouraging a degree of individual responsibility and self esteem.

Some specific steps which have been taken to promote these conditions include

- instituting liberal leave and visit policies;
- establishing less structured forms of imprisonment, normally referred to as open institutions; and
- providing prisoners with a greater sense of participation in decisions affecting their stay in prison.

Not all the policies and programs described in this section have been adopted in every country, and others have been implemented to varying degrees. Even where used, they are often experimental or limited to selected inmates or institutions.

LIBERAL LEAVE AND VISIT POLICIES

To maintain family ties and reduce feelings of alienation, certain prison systems have adopted liberal leave policies. Periods of leave vary from several hours to several weeks, with weekend leave being common. Corrections authorities may restrict leave and impose conditions as may be appropriate to protect society and to assure that prisoners comply with the terms of leave. Eligibility for leave is usually based on sentence length, with varying restrictions

imposed by law and prison authorities. While leave may be available to inmates in traditional closed prisons as well as those in open institutions, the latter generally receive more frequent leave.

The use and types of leave vary by country. Germany's recently adopted Prison Act provides for up to 21 days leave annually. However, restrictions imposed by the German States, which operate the country's prisons, have limited leave to inmates with 18 or less months to serve. In addition to annual leave, German law allows a specified number of day leaves near the end of sentences so that prisoners can look for a job or apartment or otherwise prepare for their release.

Prison authorities determine whether an inmate can take leave and may set conditions. For example, the director of one open prison in Germany told us leave would only be granted if the prisoner had a verified place to go. Additionally, local police are notified.

In Sweden weekend leave is a common practice. Long-term prisoners usually must wait 6 months before taking initial leaves, with leave frequency thereafter determined at the discretion of prison authorities. Inmates housed in open institutions receive more liberal weekend furloughs as well as opportunities to take day leaves for personal reasons, such as family problems and job interviews. With an average daily prison population of roughly 3,000, over 42,000 leaves were granted in Sweden in 1976.

In 1965 Denmark introduced an expanded leave policy which provided for leave in all types of institutions. Although prison authorities retain discretionary power, leave taking is considered almost a prisoner right. Leave may be of two types--supervised leave of up to 8 hours for such things as shopping or entertainment excursions and unsupervised leave, mostly in the form of weekend passes. In 1976 almost 17,000 leaves were granted in Denmark.

In addition to leave, some countries permit conjugal visits. Some officials credit these visits with preventing marital breakdowns and reducing homosexual attacks in prison. Such visits, however, require appropriate facilities such as private cells or meeting rooms. These facilities are sometimes lacking, placing a practical limit on the extent of conjugal visits.

Overall, prison officials are positive about the benefits of liberal leave and visits for both the well-being

of prisoners and the prison environment. Some countries maintain statistics which indicate low levels of leave abuse. For example, in Denmark crimes were committed in less than one percent of the 17,000 leaves granted in 1976; and about 7 percent of the leaves involved violations, such as late returns or intoxication. Similarly in a recent study of crimes committed in Stockholm, Sweden, less than 3 percent of those arrested were prisoners on leave. German prison officials estimate 2 percent of the prisoners on leave commit some offense while away from prison.

Perhaps one of the most significant problems is the increasing difficulty in keeping drugs out of the prisons. Several officials said that, despite precautions, liberal leave and visit programs have led to greater smuggling into prisons.

OPEN PRISONS

The primary aims of open prisons are to foster normal living conditions, maximize contact with the outside world, and build a sense of individual responsibility and self-worth by means of less structured forms of imprisonment. All countries have some examples of open institutions--some of which have been operating for at least 25 years. Denmark and Sweden have a proportionately greater number of these facilities, while prison systems in other countries are composed of predominately closed structures.

While the degree of openness also varies by country, there are some general characteristics associated with open institutions which involve basic changes in the traditional prison environment.

--Open institutions entail few security precautions and their outward appearance may bear little resemblance to a traditional prison. Often they have no walls, bars, or fences; guards are not armed or uniformed; and force is not used to retain prisoners. At one open prison we were told that its minimal security measures were more to keep outsiders out than prisoners in.

--In open prisons inmates possess a large degree of personal freedom and privacy. For example, movement around the facility is generally unrestricted; inmates may wear their own clothes and have their own possessions. Inmates have the keys to their own cells or rooms, which are usually private. House rules, which exist for discipline, vary in terms of strictness.

- There are opportunities for considerable contact with the local community. Many open institutions allow prisoners to work or study in the community. Inmates at open institutions may be granted liberal leave, to include short excursions "into town" for shopping and entertainment, in addition to periodic weekend visits with families.
- Open prisons are often used as a final stage before a prisoner is released. Generally, inmates will spend some portion of their sentences in a closed prison prior to being transferred to an open facility. The anticipated stay in open prisons is generally measured in terms of months rather than years. For example, in The Netherlands a prisoner must have a minimum sentence of 8 months and have completed half this sentence before being transferred to an open prison. Sweden likewise transfers a prisoner to less restrictive, local facilities as the release date approaches. England's open facilities, which provide prerelease employment opportunities, require inmates to have served at least 4 years of a sentence and be within 6 months of release.
- Admission to an open prison is based on judgments of corrections authorities. Prisoners considered unsuitable for an open environment can be retained in closed prisons. This may include prisoners viewed as dangerous or antisocial, or those individuals who have serious problems which may hinder adjustment to an open environment. Because many open institutions are very small facilities, specialized treatment programs may be limited. Thus, drug addicts, for example, may be better treated elsewhere.
- Open prisons, because of their generally small size and greater institutional flexibility, may be used for a variety of experimental programs. In Sweden, Denmark, and The Netherlands, some of the open prisons are used for placing males and females in the same facility, waiving mandatory work-or-study rules, and incarcerating "weekend prisoners" (those who serve short sentences through weekend detention).
- Self-sufficiency and financial responsibility are fostered in some open prisons by requiring inmates (usually those working in the community) to pay

taxes, reimburse the institution for room and board, support families, and reduce debts. If ordered, inmates may also be required to pay restitution to crime victims.

Various European corrections officials identified certain obstacles and concerns involving the greater use of open facilities:

- Many existing prison facilities are not conducive to an open prison environment, and costly remodeling hinders conversion.
- In shifting to less structured forms of imprisonment, some countries have noted a degree of staff resistance requiring new approaches to staff training.
- The pressures of living in an open institution can be greater than in closed prisons because of the less structured environment, greater ease of escape, and extensive contact with the outside world.

One director of an open prison noted that exposing inmates to closed prisons is critical to the success of open institutions. Inmates transferred from a closed facility appreciate the differences in environment, and the prospect of being returned to a closed prison serves to keep them in line.

INCREASING INMATE PARTICIPATION IN PRISON DECISIONS

Several countries have adopted practices to involve prisoners in decisions affecting their stay in prison. For example, an offender's preferences may be considered in determining prison assignments and in developing individualized treatment plans. Aside from increasing an inmate's sense of participation, these efforts provide prison authorities with information to more adequately address an inmate's needs, preferences, and capabilities.

Some prison systems publish pamphlets for inmates describing the types of prison facilities and programs available to prisoners. Complying with prisoners' wishes depends on such factors as space availability, sentence length requirements, and prisoner-related characteristics, such as suitability and the degree of security needed. In determining where an offender might best fit, some countries emphasize the offender's personality and the desire to keep prisoners close to their homes, particularly near the end of their sentences.

Also emphasized is prisoner participation in developing plans, which set forth the types of activities and services to be provided the inmate during imprisonment. Germany's national prison law requires that inmates be consulted in drawing up these plans. In Sweden, plans are prepared by the administration and staff with input from the prisoner and cover such aspects as available work and education opportunities, leave schedules, and transfers within the prison system. According to the director of Denmark's prison system, making the prisoner more aware of opportunities has had a beneficial effect. For example, in Denmark this approach is credited with increasing inmate participation in education programs.

Additional projects being tested in several countries include forming inmates into teams, thus hopefully building a sense of individual responsibility as well as responsibility to the group; providing inmates with more voice in designing and carrying out programs; giving inmates the choice of work, education, or doing nothing (a departure from the generally mandated work-or-study approach); and encouraging the formation of prisoner committees to represent inmates in dialogues with the prison administrations.

CHAPTER 3

IMPROVING OFFENDER EMPLOYABILITY

In all countries visited, national prison laws require sentenced inmates to either work or be enrolled in education or training programs. We were advised that the overall purpose of these provisions, aside from assuring that prisoners use their time constructively, is to facilitate their return to normal life.

According to European officials, prison work can assist in developing or retaining good work habits and instilling a sense of individual accomplishment. To these ends, European prison systems strive to make prison work reflect, to the extent practical, normal work conditions, including in some cases paying market-rate wages. Also, opportunities to work outside of prison (work release) are made available to selected prisoners.

Improving an inmate's employability through skill training programs is not a prominent goal in some European systems. The extensive use of short prison sentences and frequent movements between categories of prisons often preclude realistic vocational training programs.

While some special efforts are made to secure employment for ex-offenders, there was a general belief that the unemployment situation in a community can have a greater impact on offender employment after release than prison programs and after-care services do.

WORK IN PRISONS

Most prisoners in the countries visited are engaged in some type of work within the prison with only a minority participating in alternatives such as work release or training. Typical prison work assignments involve unskilled or semiskilled tasks, and some officials noted that prison work is of the type most likely available to inmates upon release. Workers in prison factories make paper, metal, furniture, and clothing products for government use or private sales. Other prisoners are employed in prison housekeeping functions such as laundries, kitchens, or maintenance shops, and in some countries, prisoners may work on agricultural and forestry projects.

According to many European officials, the major benefits from prison work are exposure to a constructive work environment and good work habits, and not necessarily

improving skills. In fact, one high-ranking, national spokesman concludes that the traditionally accepted goal of training inmates through prison jobs is unrealistic because the type of work available in prisons rarely provides any training. Other officials agree, advising us that, in terms of skills, an offender is usually no better off when he leaves prison than when he entered. In their view, prison work must be considered more a way to fill time and to enhance inmates' self-respect and sense of achievement. In this regard, officials are concerned with making prison work as meaningful as possible.

Apparently, opportunities to make work more meaningful are limited by several factors. We were told that due to short prison sentences and the generally low educational level of many inmates, prison work must be kept fairly simple--thus comprised of low-skill tasks which can be learned quickly. Also, because some prisons lack common work areas, prisoners are required to work in their cells, thus reducing exposure to a normal environment. Some officials said that released prisoners generally avoid outside work similar to that encountered in prison.

Wages for prison work

To make work conditions as close as possible to those existing on the outside--hence more meaningful--several European corrections systems are considering paying inmates the market wage for their work. At present, all inmates performing prison work receive some remuneration. In fact, in at least one country, prisoners are paid even if work is not available. Existing wage rates vary by country and by type of work, but generally are lower than prevailing market rates.

Germany's recently adopted prison reform law calls for prison wages as close as possible to normal wages. Officials in other countries visited are likewise pressing for similar action. To date, however, budget constraints have limited the extent to which this policy has been put into practice.

In 1973 the Swedish National Prison and Probation Administration established an experimental program at Tilberga prison which involved paying inmates wages competitive with outside industry. The wages correspond to what an average industrial worker makes after taxes, about \$100 per week. The goal of the program is to allow an individual to work under conditions which apply in the free labor market and give the man a chance to improve his economic and social

situation. This program is not intended to teach skills because most of the skills required at Tilberga can be learned in a few days.

The Tilberga experiment is a voluntary program, which prisoners must request. An inmate at Tilberga can only keep 25 percent of his salary. The remaining 75 percent goes toward paying for such things as his food, back debts, helping with family expenses, and savings.

A study was made comparing the recidivism rates of people released from Tilberga against those released from other prisons. For a period of 1 year after release, there was a significant difference in recidivism in favor of the Tilberga group (38 percent for Tilberga inmates versus 51 percent of the control group). However, after 2 years, the recidivism rate for both groups was practically identical at about 60 percent.

WORK OUTSIDE OF PRISON

All the countries have some work release programs which allow selected inmates to work in the community during the day and return to prison at night. The main goal of these programs is to help an inmate become gradually reintegrated into society and the work environment. Participation is usually restricted to inmates of open institutions and is generally available only to prisoners nearing the end of their sentences.

Overall, the percentage of inmates working outside prisons is relatively small--partly because work opportunities for prisoners are limited. The success of work-release programs depends largely on cooperation with employers in the community and is heavily impacted by employment conditions. In Germany, with its relatively low unemployment, we were told that employers and labor unions were generally sympathetic and that arranging work-release assignments was relatively easy. Spokesmen for other countries report difficulty finding jobs for work-release participants, thus limiting the program. For example, in England we were told open institutions offering prerelease employment are only 60 percent filled because jobs are difficult to find.

While in Sweden, we visited two small open prisons which used work release. Most of the inmates at these institutions were either working or studying in the local community. Assignments for their work are made by the prison administration before inmates are accepted in these prisons. Inmates usually spend only a few months at

these locations before final release. At both prisons some inmates were working in jobs held prior to imprisonment. We were told, however, that employment for inmates is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain.

The single largest work release program we encountered was Germany's Radbruch Haus program for "free workers." The Radbruch Haus has about 240 inmates, including about 90 free workers, who are employed in regular jobs in the community. Other inmates also work outside the institution but, unlike free workers, this group is supervised.

Free workers are usually within 1 year of sentence completion and represent the last stage in the Radbruch Haus program to gradually integrate prisoners back into society. A free worker must find his own employment, either through direct contact with employers or through the German Labor Office. Haus officials believe finding employment is a first step in achieving self-sufficiency and should be done by the inmate without prison help. The inmate receives regular wages which are administered by the Haus. Essentially, a free worker is allowed to keep pocket money, but he must pay all his own expenses, including medical expenses and room and board. A free worker is also expected to support his family and pay debts, including any required restitution. The remaining money is saved for the inmate and given to him upon release.

VOCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC TRAINING

As in the United States, many offenders enter European prisons without any appreciable work skills and with lower than average educational levels. To compensate for these deficiencies, vocational and academic education programs are provided. While the emphasis placed on these programs--particularly vocational education efforts--varies by country, training and study programs are considered alternatives to mandatory work in all countries. In fact, inmates enrolled in education and training programs are generally paid wages or a stipend--in some cases as much as the individual could earn on a job.

A minority of the prisoners in the various systems actually participate in training and education programs. Lack of prisoner interest and the fact that in some cases the prisoner could earn more by working are blamed, in part, for the low enrollment. A shortage of facilities is another limiting factor. More important constraints, perhaps, are the extensive use of short prison sentences and the practice of moving prisoners to less secure institutions as their

release dates approach. Such practices preclude complete training or break the continuity needed for realistic skill development. These factors may explain in part why some countries do not place greater emphasis on skill training and why some concentrate their programs on a specific category of prisoners such as youth or make programs available only at specific institutions.

Recognizing these limitations, some countries permit study outside prison as a means of making available a broad range of opportunities. At least one country, Sweden views its training and education programs for prisoners as "beginnings" and encourages continuation after release. As a tangible form of encouragement, the Swedish Government may provide funds for continuing training or education after release.

We were advised that inmates are usually trained in the same manner as their counterparts in the community. In England, about 6 percent of the prison population available for work is enrolled in vocational training programs. The course curriculum is prepared in conjunction with the Industrial Boards which are composed of union officials who recommend standards for vocational training in England. Trainees have done well in taking external examinations for their skills. In 1976 over 80 percent of the inmates passed their examinations. As in other countries, these prisoners received certificates identical to ones provided on the outside with no indication that training was taken in prison.

In Germany, we were told that vocational training is geared to the needs of the local economy. The Radbruch Haus in Frankfurt has a vocational training program which is unique because it is operated by a branch of the German Trade Union. Trade masters teach the men to become advanced apprentices in metal work or skilled electricians when released. The Radbruch Haus avoids the detrimental impact of short sentences by accepting as inmates only those with sufficient time (usually 8 to 15 months) to complete programs. Thus, this training is available to the relatively long termers.

Involvement of outside resources is seen as helpful to training. Sweden has a training program in cooperation with a construction union. After release, it is intended that offenders will continue on-the-job training.

Academic education opportunities vary from basic reading to college level courses. In Sweden and Denmark, about 13 and 20 percent of the inmates, respectively, were

enrolled in full-time education programs. To the extent practical, these countries use outside education institutions for teaching courses in prison. Also, inmates may be authorized "study release" to attend classes outside the prison.

In England most inmates are educated in the prisons by over 50 local educational organizations which are reimbursed by the Prisons Department. We were advised that using community teaching resources helps the prisoner accept that he is receiving education equal to that provided outside.

HELP PROVIDED INMATES IN FINDING EMPLOYMENT

Released inmates generally have access to all the social agencies and programs available to any citizen. Because most inmates are released early, usually after serving two-thirds of their sentences, they may be placed under the care of the countries' probation services. These services generally provide aid in such areas as social counseling, housing problems, and employment difficulties. We were told, however, that in most cases a prisoner must seek help; it is not forced on him. Inmates are entitled to financial assistance if they do not have a job, including unemployment benefits in some countries.

Specific aid given released offenders in finding employment takes several forms. In most countries, some prisoners may be given time off to look for employment. Also, some correction officials work with local labor offices, employers, and unions to find work for inmates. In one location in Sweden, the Labor Office has a full-time employee concentrating on finding jobs for offenders.

In most countries, however, we were told that it is difficult to arrange employment for offenders regardless of how much help is provided. Local unemployment conditions and, in some cases, the stigma attached to a prison sentence reduce employment prospects for released prisoners.

CHAPTER 4

OTHER AREAS OF INTEREST

As discussed in the foreword of this study, we were interested in obtaining information on how European officials deal with certain areas to assist us in reviewing programs in U.S. prison systems. Other areas we surveyed included inmate grievance procedures, programs for female offenders, medical care for inmates, and the development of correctional staff. The following sections briefly describe some European actions in these areas.

INMATE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

All the countries visited had procedures for inmates to register their grievances. Usually, these procedures provide for resolution of grievances at the local level with provisions for appeals to the regional or national level. Some countries have encouraged the formation of prisoners' committees to represent the inmates in discussions with prison administrators on a variety of topics relating to prison operations.

Prisoners also have the opportunity to surface grievances outside the normal prison framework. The extensive involvement of private citizens in some European prison systems facilitates this communication. For example, in England selected citizens are appointed to Boards of Visitors who inspect prisons, listen to prisoner complaints, and report to the prison warden and representatives of the national government.

In The Netherlands private citizens make up supervisory committees which inspect prisons and review inmate grievances. These committees are appointed by the Minister of Justice to aid in overseeing Dutch prisons, but they have no administrative power.

In both Denmark and Sweden the Office of the Ombudsman serves as the national focal point for grievances--all citizens, including prison inmates, can register a complaint. In addition to their investigatory authority, the Ombudsmen are also responsible for periodically inspecting prisons.

FEMALE OFFENDERS

Female offenders have traditionally constituted a small percentage of the prison population of the countries visited. Consequently, countries may have relatively few

facilities for female offenders. These limited facilities have had the effect of precluding female offenders from some of the opportunities afforded male prisoners. For instance, male offenders can be transferred to local, less restrictive prisons in an attempt to help them gradually adjust to society, whereas females may be restricted to a limited number of women's facilities. Additionally, prisons for females may not offer the range of programs available in male-populated prisons. Finally, officials expressed concern about the effect of placing all types of female offenders together (for example, repeat offenders with first-time offenders). Many European prison officials recognize these problems which, in recent years, have been compounded by an increase in female inmates.

In several countries women are allowed to keep their children with them while serving their prison sentences. For example, a closed prison in Frankfurt, Germany, offers this option to women offenders. Currently, 10 to 12 female inmates care for their children during meal times and at night. Prison staff tend the children during the day while their mothers work in the prison laundry or fold cardboard boxes. The mothers and children are housed in a newly constructed building adjacent to the main prison. Children at the prison are usually under 3 years of age but may be as old as 6. This pilot project is based on the premise that keeping preschool children with their mothers benefits both the children and the prisoners.

MEDICAL CARE PROVIDED INMATES

The goal of the health care delivery systems for inmates is to provide a level of care equivalent to that available to the average citizen. Corrections officials in all countries are satisfied that this goal is being met.

Usually, the responsibility for establishing overall medical standards, including dietary and sanitary requirements, rests with the medical section of the national prison administration. The actual day-to-day implementation of these standards is the responsibility of the prison doctors. Although these doctors are under the supervision of the prison director/warden, we were advised that they have general control and authority over the prison's health care delivery system. According to prison officials, there is no staff interference with inmates seeking medical assistance.

A significant portion of medical staff, especially physicians, serve on a part-time basis. Also, most prisons rely extensively on local community health resources. Many

prisons, especially the small, open variety, use local hospitals for all but the most routine matters.

Officials in most of the countries were concerned about the difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified medical staff. This was, in part, attributed to the low salaries or general working conditions.

CORRECTIONAL STAFF

Prison officials in some countries told us that recruiting qualified staff has not been a problem, especially due to the general unemployment situation in their countries in recent years. Also, the position of prison guard in some countries is viewed as a caretaker role. This factor, combined with the lack of violence in prisons, reduces potential staff concern over physical harm.

A typical training program for prison staff involves segments of classroom and on-the-job training as well as trial work periods and examinations before staff become permanent. In Sweden prison staff and probation officers receive some training together in an attempt to familiarize them with each other's role. Swedish officials believe training should be held in prisons so as to include all staff and allow senior staff to benefit from refresher training. Also, as a result of a recent study, Sweden is attempting to involve lower ranking staff of local prisons in the prison's decisionmaking. For example, staff may participate in such functions as budgeting.

In an attempt to foster a sense of staff responsibility for inmates, some inmates are assigned to individual staff. Guards are also encouraged to discuss individual inmates with the assigned probation officer so that there is an exchange of knowledge concerning the inmate's particular needs and problems.



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