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THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF RACISM IN OHIO'S PRISONS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Frank E. Fortkamp, B.A., M.A.

The Ohio State University
1971

Approved by

[Signature]
Adviser
Department of Education
PLEASE NOTE:

Some pages have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

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This Research project has afforded contact with two humanists who from their separate fields have given me hope that human beings are still more important than the artifacts of technocracy: Mr. Marion J. Koloski, Ohio Division of Correction; Professor Paul Klohr, The Ohio State University. I am happy they are.
VITA

October 30, 1938 .... Born, Columbus, Ohio

1960 ................. B.A., Pontifical College Josephinum, Worthington, Ohio

1960-1964 ........... Studies in Theology, Pontifical College Josephinum

1964 ................. Ordained Roman Catholic Priest

1968 ................. M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1964-1969 ........... Administrator, Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, Catholic Schools

1969-1971 ........... Teaching Associate, Department of Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Educational Philosophy; Curriculum and Foundations

Studies in Philosophy. Professors Bernard Mehl and John Kleinz

Studies in Curriculum. Professor Paul Klohr.

Studies in Black Education. Professor A. Donald Bourgeois

Studies in Educational Administration. Professor Hugh Laughlin
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PERCEIVED RACISM IN OHIO'S PRISONS</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE AND FURTHER RESEARCH</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

This first chapter states the problem to be investigated, why the problem merits study and the mode of inquiry to be used. Equally important in this undertaking, an extensive discussion of the various institutional settings from which the data are drawn is included.

It is increasingly being demonstrated that the context of any educational endeavor is oftentimes more important than the content of any given curriculum. For example, some "religious" schools that schedule courses called "Sex Education" for separate classes of boys and girls have already taught the students much about sex before the instructor even crosses the classroom threshold. As a consequence of this relationship between curriculum and setting, curriculum theorists often refer to the "hidden curriculum." And, sociologists describe the "institutional press" which operates to shape curricular offerings.

This subtle but pervasive relationship of context to content is truly complex in the milieu of the Black men confined to the adult penal institutions of Ohio.
As of July 1, 1971, there were 9411 men and women confined within the seven adult penal institutions of Ohio. 5008 of these inmates were white; 4403 or 46.7% of the total number of inmates were colored. These figures come from the semi-annual, official report of the Division of Correction's Bureau of Classification. (Cf. Appendix I for the complete report.) However, for the sake of accuracy, it should be noted that the Division of Correction has never been able to decide whether inmates of Puerto Rican and Mexican heritage are either "White" or "Colored." Therefore, not all 4403 "Colored" inmates are necessarily Black. Usually there are about twenty to thirty people of Puerto Rican or Mexican extraction incarcerated in Ohio at any given time. Not enough, at any rate, even if prison officials count them all as "Colored" to alter seriously the point to be made from the given statistics. That point is, of course, that at least half of the problem of educating men in Ohio prisons is educating Black adults in a prison environment.

Statement of the Problem

It is the root assumption of this research that the greatest problem facing the would-be developer of curriculum for Black inmates in Ohio's prisons is not the content of that curriculum--although that is far from being a
negligible problem— but rather the context in which any educational endeavor is to take place.

If it is given that education should take place in prison, it must also be given that a proper milieu for that process must be provided. One cannot commission a gardener to grow roses in an hostile environment and then deny him the wherewithal for reconditioning that environment to make rose-growing feasible.

Similarly, before one even begins to talk about what exactly should be the content of education in prison, one must identify the precise nature of the present context. If that context is found adequate for and compatible with a projected educational endeavor, little or no change will be called for. If, however, the present milieu is found wanting, the wants will have to be supplied prior to or at least contemporaneous with educational reconstruction.

This, then, suggests the parameters of the investigation: (1) to describe the present context in which education and curriculum development operate in the institutions, (2) to identify the conceptually "ideal" setting from a synthesis of related theory and research, and (3) to formulate guidelines for moving toward the ideal.

Nature of the Research

The mode of inquiry to be used in investigating the three parameters of the problem cited above is basically
a philosophical-logical mode. However, extensive empirical data were also obtained through a series of personal interviews (a total of 400 in all) over a period of sixteen months in the seven institutions involved in the study. The interviews, both those taped and those during which the interviewer took notes, were clinical in nature in that they were unstructured, and every effort was made to capture in an holistic manner the total gestalt of the interviewee's feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. In effect the effort was to preserve the basic "feeling tone" of each interview. A content analysis was made of these tapes and a composite profile of the prototypical Black inmate was constructed. Such a profile permits a reality check for the guidelines.

This combination of philosophical-logical inquiry with the clinical approach is deemed appropriate in describing the ecological milieu, or the institutional press, which is assumed to be crucial to the definition of curriculum development underlying the investigation. It is clearly subject to the limitations commonly associated with this kind of inquiry. That is, it does not provide a rationale to give one control over a precise set of phenomena. Rather, it permits one to raise fresh sets of questions and to project hypotheses which await further more precise field testing with tighter experimental designs.
In view of the lack of research and theory in the area under study, this effort should be seen as a beginning, heuristic undertaking designed to test out an approach to the study of these phenomena and to give decision-makers in Ohio some heretofore unavailable "benchmark" data.

Background and Organization of Participating Institutions

This section is included in order to give the background setting of the institutions involved in the study and to delineate in an overall way the specific organizational climate that characterizes each separately and taken together in the Ohio Division of Correction.

Central Office

Located in Columbus, Ohio, the central office of the entire division consists of the commissioner and a few assistants. Theoretically, this office operates the adult corrections system of the state; practically, at least in matters which directly affect the inmates, central office is largely ignored by the seven prisons. The history of institutional autonomy is in some cases over one hundred years old. The central office, though a bureaucratic step-child of the Department of Mental Hygiene, is only slightly over twenty years old. It is only within the last year,
however, that central office has tried to exercise any real centralizing, governing power.

**Bureau of Classification**

An arm of the central office, this bureau is in reality a standing committee of three to four men who have the never-ending job of classifying new prisoners and assigning them to one of the various prisons in the state. This committee also reviews the status of men already doing time and in some cases reclassifies them. The biggest factor in the classification decision is the custody-risk index of each inmate. (Will the inmate go to a maximum or medium custody institution?)

Since this bureau controls the majority of prisoner movement in the state, it also is charged with maintaining a certain racial balance in all the institutions, i.e., making sure all the Blacks do not end up in one place.

Despite the dedicated and loyal work of this committee—the three oldest members have over thirty years each in service to Ohio Corrections; all started as guards at the Ohio Penitentiary—their work is seriously hampered by having much faulty and incomplete data to work with in arriving at their decisions. Furthermore, even after they have made as careful a decision as possible under the circumstances, their decision is subject to arbitrary reversal by some lower-echelon bureaucrat in central office who has
even less information about the inmate than the committee. Naturally this situation creates much in-house tension, the ill effects of which are ultimately visited upon the hapless inmate who has no role at all in the decision-making process.

**Corrections Academy**

The Ohio Corrections Academy at Chillicothe, Ohio, is primarily designed to offer in-service training to the guard staff of all Ohio prisons. An excellent idea at its inception, heavily funded by federal monies, the Academy has suffered during its first two years of existence at the hands of a doubtfully competent consultant firm which expensively substituted slickness for sanity in curriculum and evaluation planning and also at the hands of a somewhat incompetent administration which central office has been unable to remove because of civil service regulations.

Currently, however, the Academy is undergoing reorganization and re-evaluation of its objectives, and hopefully will some day be a facility for both initial training of all guards and an in-service training facility for treatment and custody staff.

**The Ohio Penitentiary (O.P.)**

The oldest facility in the state, soon to be replaced by a new but hardly modern prison at Lucasville, Ohio, the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus is in fact two facilities
in one. It is both the maximum security facility for the entire state and the reception center for new prisoners received from the common pleas courts. There are usually about 1900 men incarcerated at the Penitentiary. Roughly 150 to 200 of these men are in the reception unit at any given time and another 150 men are assigned to the honor dormitory to perform various "trustee" duties in and around the prison and other state offices in the capital. Therefore, on the average, there are 1500-1600 men considered maximum security risks confined to the Ohio Penitentiary.

There is at present little possibility for either academic or vocational training at this facility which is thoroughly custody oriented. State corrections officials promise a reversal of this condition when the prison is moved to Lucasville.

London Correctional Institution (Lo.C.I.)

This medium security institution, located about thirty-four miles west of Columbus, is really considered a maximum security institution by its Superintendent who complains about the "poorer quality of inmate we're getting these days."

Assignment to this prison is most feared by Blacks—because of its open racism. It is widely perceived as a "Jim Crow" institution. Only recently, for example, were
the "White" and "Colored" signs removed from the separate toilet facilities still in use.

A minimal educational program for a handful of inmates is vastly overshadowed by the work oriented program of the institution. The prison operates a large farm, a soap factory, and a shirt factory, all of which are hated by a majority of inmates.

London is generally rated as the most "up tight" of the medium security institutions; it usually has an inmate population of around 1400 men.

Marion Correctional Institution (M.C.I.)

The superintendent of this institution, also struck by the disintegrating quality of inmates, likewise considers his medium security facility de facto a maximum security prison.

However, because of the best attempt in the state at an enlightened treatment program, and the highest degree of staff morale of any institution, the Marion prison is sought after by inmates in preference to any other. The treatment program is highlighted by a well-rounded academic program that meets most of the needs of the inmates and a vocational education program that is small but vigorous and cautiously expanding.

In fairness, it must be mentioned that the geographical location of Marion, about forty-five miles north of
Columbus, makes it even more attractive to inmates than any program there. More than sixty percent of the state prison population comes from northern counties closer to Marion than any other institution. Visits from home are important to prisoners.

Marion's population averages about 1200 men.

Chillicothe Correctional Institution (C.C.I.)

The medium security prison at Chillicothe is the most relaxed and the only truly medium security facility in the state. The population here tends to be much older than that of any other prison. There is little academic education available at Chillicothe and no formal vocational education. Indeed, none of the institutions mentioned so far has any chartered or accredited school facilities recognized by the State of Ohio Department of Education.

Of the 1100 men usually confined at Chillicothe, about 100 are over sixty years of age; 40% are chronic alcoholics according to the social services department of the institution; there is a relatively large number of epileptics, cripples, diabetics, poorly sighted, and hard of hearing inmates. They are kindly if ineptly treated.

There is also at Chillicothe the Division's Criminal Psychiatric Unit (C.P.U.) which houses inmates who are either genuinely pathologically disturbed or labeled as such by other institutions where they were nuisances or
disciplinary cases. There are usually about 150 prisoners incarcerated in this unit, which is viewed by inmates as a moderate version of Lima State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, which latter institution is viewed by inmates as hell.

**Note on Conviction Procedures**

It should be explained at this point that in reality there are two interrelated systems within the institutional structure of the Ohio penal authority. One may be called the "adult" system, the other the "reformatory" system. The "adult" system comprises the four institutions already mentioned—namely, the maximum security Ohio Penitentiary and the three auxiliary medium security institutions at London, Marion, and Chillicothe. The "reformatory" system comprises two institutions, one at Mansfield and the other at Lebanon. All institutions are presently administered theoretically through the central office. But what determines which inmate goes into what system? According to present Ohio law "youthful" offenders, i.e., under 30 years of age, convicted of a felony in a common pleas court for the first time, are to be sent to the reformatory, except for first-time convictions of murder in any degree, treason, or sedition. Therefore, all convicted felons over thirty, all those convicted of murder, treason, or sedition, and
all "two-or-more-time losers" under thirty are sentenced to the Ohio Penitentiary.

The "reformatory" system of the Ohio Division of Corrections, furthermore, is not to be confused with the Ohio Youth Commission, a separate state agency that deals with juvenile offenders.

The Ohio State Reformatory (O.S.R.)

The Ohio State Reformatory in Mansfield, Ohio, is the larger and older—very old—of the two state institutions for "youthful" offenders. It's population total averages about 2200 inmates.

Under an enlightened superintendent, the very best possible treatment is offered the inmates under horribly antiquated conditions. Unfortunately, these antiquated conditions coupled with a long, hard tradition of custody nullifies almost every attempt at sound treatment.

A chartered high school is available here, but the needs of many inmates are at the literacy and pre-high school level, where the academic program is weakest. Also, white inmates are de facto excluded from the high school program in the Division's most glaring example of reverse racism.

A vocational education program is also available, but it is woefully under-programmed, under-staffed, under-equipped and under-budgeted.
Inmates from the northern counties of the state are usually kept at Mansfield.

**Lebanon Correctional Institute (Leb.C.I.)**

Inmates from southern Ohio counties are usually transferred to Lebanon which has an average population of about 1400 inmates. No one at Lebanon seems to have any authority except the superintendent who is the supreme authority, and it is a very authoritarian institution. Both staff and inmate morale appear very low.

There is a chartered high school also at Lebanon as well as a full elementary program. But the school is so rigid and tightly scheduled, admitting of little or no flexibility, that it is debatable whether the school is an extension of the custody or treatment departments of the institution.

Aside from a data processing operation for very select inmates, vocational training of any worth is negligible. More so than O.S.R., the Lebanon reformatory seems work oriented. The young men here make license plates and metal furniture.

**Ohio Reformatory for Women (O.R.W.)**

The one state institution for all female felons is located at Marysville, Ohio.

O.R.W. is the exact opposite of the institutions for males. While a malaise of oppression hangs over the
other institutions because of an apparent apathy toward treatment programs, the women's prison is so over-programmed that a more severe deprivation of freedom, psychological in nature, grips the women who feel Big Sister is constantly watching.

The staff of O.R.W. is so good, so professional, so kind, and so concerned that the inmates are fundamentally confused about why they are there. At O.R.W. the plural of "mother" is "smother."

**Division of Correction Personnel**

Many dedicated people work at all levels in the Division of Correction. There are a few highly skilled professionals who work in scattered positions throughout the Division.

Because of shockingly low salaries and the general unattractiveness of the work, and the specific unattractiveness of many of the working conditions the personnel of the penal system is fairly described, in general, however, as follows: treatment and administrative positions are generally filled by second or third rate "professionals" who would not survive in a more demanding milieu; custody positions tend to be filled by narrowminded, lazy, unimaginative people who have difficulty finding employment elsewhere and are oftentimes attracted to prison-guard work because of more or less strong personality traits of bigotry.
and/or latent homosexuality and/or sadism. There are exceptions to this generalization, of course; the exceptions are notable and rare.

In Ohio, where as already noted, almost fifty percent of the prisoners are Black, less than five percent of the custody staff are Negroes and an even smaller percentage are employed in treatment positions, and a still smaller percentage of Negroes are in administrative positions.

As a point of further clarification, it should be noted that while there are maybe a few dozen people of the Negro race working throughout all levels of the Division of Correction in Ohio, it is the judgment of this investigator that there are no "Black" people working in the Division of Correction, using "Black" in the increasingly widespread, contemporary use of that term.

The white prison staff is drawn mostly from the small, provincial towns and the rural areas surrounding those towns where the prisons themselves are located. A very large segment of the custody force has its roots in the poor-white culture of the Appalachian counties of southern and southeastern Ohio, north-central and eastern Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, and northern West Virginia.

Inmates

The vast majority of white inmates in Ohio prisons
have a common cultural heritage with the vast majority of the whites who staff these institutions.

Black inmates, on the other hand, come predominantly from the urban centers of the state, from the ghettos of Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Toledo, Youngstown, Akron, and the Dayton-Springfield area.

It is false to think that there is racial tension only between the white staff and the Black inmates. On the contrary, racial tension between white and Black inmates is often most acute and is merely fueled by the staff which is quite naturally more sympathetic to the white point of view.

Racial tension is not helped by the fact that, aside from a few university-trained professionals on the treatment staff, there is not an appreciable amount of difference in the formal education base of white staff, white inmates, or Black inmates. The Black inmates, however, are often "street smart" and fuzzily cocky with the dangerous thing of a little knowledge of Black revolutionary rhetoric about political prisoners and fascist totalitarianism. This volatile and woeful combination at once makes the Black even more hated by the fearful white man (staff and inmate) and more suited to survive the violent subculture of the prison.

**Treatment vs. Custody**

The great ideological conflict that produces the
institutional schizophrenia of Ohio's prison system—and, indeed, of all American prison systems—is between the philosophies of treatment and custody. Or, simply, should a prison be a warehouse of those judged unfit to live in society at large, or should a prison be a center of rehabilitation to prepare men successfully to reenter that society from which they have been excommunicated?

In Ohio, as elsewhere, the rhetoric is all of rehabilitation, but custody commands the ship.

In reality most treatment programs are mere sops in the custody process; bones thrown to the dogs to keep them quiet in their cages. But the horror of prison officials at all levels myopically viewing this reality and continuing to prate self-indulgently about marvelous treatment programs is perhaps the greatest single cause of the overall tension present in all of Ohio's prisons. It is not surprising that Blacks and poor whites—i.e., inmates—who often, rightly or wrongly, already feel abused by society, should feel put upon by officialdom's big lie about the very nature of their place of punishment.

It is the general feeling of inmates, and a widespread feeling among candid and perceptive staff, that any rehabilitation that takes place in prison takes place in spite of the prison itself. The biggest factor in changing men significantly in prison is time. Some men simply outgrow the root causes of their criminality. Secondly,
some men change because of the development of a significant rapprochement with some staff member, with someone outside the inmate peer group. This happens, but very infrequently and in general is discouraged by the way the prison really functions.

An Ohio prison is a prison is a prison. To say an Ohio prison is a treatment center for the rehabilitation of convicted felons is not only to confuse the issue, it is to lie.

Present Status of Education in Ohio's Prisons

While the entire prison system is a group of seven autonomous institutions very loosely coordinated around a center, the schools of the system are isolated efforts with no center. The sum of Ohio's prison education system is less than the total of its individual parts.

True, there are pockets, hidden for the most part, where learning does take place; but in every instance this is due to the individual effort of some teacher or administrator. These few individual, remarkable efforts to the contrary notwithstanding, education as a whole in the Ohio Division of Correction can perhaps best be called a "disaster area."

And yet, in terms of both personnel hours and inmate hours, the various vocational and academic programs constitute the biggest part of the treatment division of any and
all institutions. Or, conversely, education programs make up the largest sop used by custody to keep the inmates quiet. In the Division as a whole, vocational and even apprenticeship programs abound on paper and in antiquated training facilities. One institution recently, for example, had fifteen apprenticeship training programs listed on its annual report. However, only one person was enrolled in a program. There is little or no attempt made, even where vocational training is operational, to determine who enters a program on a basis of either interest or aptitude. Custody factors pragmatically decide who goes where. Furthermore, vocational training, save for a few isolated instances again, is in no way related to job readiness and availability either within the prison system itself or on the streets outside the walls.

Academic programs too are universally unrelated to true inmate need. About twenty percent of the inmate population is functionally illiterate, and yet literacy training programs are mostly floundering or non-existent. Those inmates who can read and write and have a desire for further schooling are confronted with outdated curricula, textbooks that are castoffs from a local public school system, and an institutionally unbudgeted total school and library program.

Academic and vocational program guidance for inmates is haphazard at best, non-existent at worst.
General policies governing education are in no way uniform throughout the Division and are formulated at whim by local principals and teachers who are subject to review by custody staff and prison administrators.

In short, to say that the state of education in Ohio's prisons is a total mess is to be guilty of gross understatement. Prison schools in Ohio are a cruel joke perpetrated on mostly unwary inmates by unthinking personnel who blindly subscribe to a subtly vicious system.

Lack of Basic Research

In light of the foregoing account of the status of education in Ohio's prisons, one could easily be overwhelmed by the mere size and complexity of the problem. It is clearly documented that prisons have for decades been society's garbage dump, and the accumulated heap of the years is formidable indeed.

Yet there are three basic reasons for hope and these are basic to a possible implementation of some of the directions to be formulated in this investigation:

1) Federal money is now available to the states, Ohio included of course, in large sums for prison reform. The mere presence of the money has been an impetus to idealists and humanitarians in prison work to begin the formidable task of creating alternatives to the present debacle.

2) Institutions with their twelve-month school
programs have been something of an ideal draft shelter for younger teachers who have wished to avoid the war in Southeast Asia. The presence of these younger, more socially conscious teachers, plus the general ferment for educational change which has affected the individual and collective consciousness of career prison educators, has created an atmosphere that, for the first time in over a century, is open to the possibility of radical change. This openness to educational change is happily coincidental to the increasing public awareness of the urgency for reform of the total criminal justice system.

3) Complex as the problem of the reconstruction of Ohio's prison education is, nevertheless, because of the relatively small and contained nature of the system itself, coming to grips with the problem is as feasible as it is desirable.

But coming to grips with the problem must mean first of all basic research which from an educator's point of view, is totally non-existent in the Ohio Division of Correction. Data abounds, but this, like everything else, has been utilized to facilitate the custody function of the prison.

One of the purposes of this study, as indicated earlier, is to provide guidelines for the use of available data and the gathering of additional data that is imperative prior to making decisions regarding educational
planning and program development (or non-development and the de-schooling of prisons altogether.)

Organization of Dissertation

The report of this investigation is organized into four chapters. The first has stated the problem and delineated three of its basic parameters as well as identified the mode of inquiry to be employed. (This mode will be further clarified in the introduction to Chapter III.) Further, this first chapter has sketched basic background information about the institutions and the system participating in the study.

Chapter II reviews the pertinent literature and through a content analysis derives the major items to be used for the clinical interview schedule and as guidelines for the concluding recommendations.

Chapter III contains further needed background for a presentation of the composite interview with the prototypical Black inmate.

Chapter IV contains suggestions for change in the present system of Ohio corrections and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

The title of this research, "Educational Implications of Racism in Ohio's Prisons," implies a knowledge base in four general areas: Curriculum Development, Education of Blacks in America, Racism, and Penology. This broad knowledge base required the establishment of certain boundaries for the review of relevant literature and the accompanying analysis to derive items for the clinical interview schedule. As a consequence, a jury of authorities served to validate the selection of literature. Professors from the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio; the Ohio University in Athens, Ohio; the University of Southern Illinois in Carbondale, Illinois; and practicing penologists and penal educators in various state and the federal penal systems were consulted.

Twelve titles of books, articles and documents were given highest priority by the jury of professionals. These are listed alphabetically by author and then discussed individually to demonstrate their relevance to this research.

Finally a list of items derived from a content
analysis of this literature are delineated to serve as an interview schedule for the interviews with Black inmates in Ohio prisons. These items serve not only an a priori function in guiding the interviews of Chapter III but also serve as one component in the conceptual structure underlying the guidelines formulated in Chapter IV.

List of Books and Articles:


Analysis of Sources:

1) "Why Prisoners Riot" by Vernon Fox

Many Black inmates currently confined in Ohio's prisons have lived through riots, especially those that plagued the system in 1968. Mr. Fox, Chairman of the Department of Criminology at Florida State University, offers a concise but comprehensive analysis of the causes, stages, and effects of the phenomenon of the prison riot. Especially useful to this study are his observations on the value of good communications within penal systems and institutions as the prime deterrent of the prison riot.

2) Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire

It is a basic assumption of this research that Black prisoners within Ohio's adult penal institutions qualify as members of the Third World in so far as that world is present at all in America, or that Black prisoners are "oppressed" in Freire's sense of the term.

The threat obviously posed by an education system within a prison system is not at all unlike the threat posed even by literacy education within Third World countries. Further, given the high illiteracy rate among Ohio's incarcerated Blacks—around twenty percent—and the many more
Black inmates, indeed, the majority of them who are in fact little better than illiterate, Freire's theories are extremel­ly apropos for this study.

3) **The Jesus Bag** by William H. Grier, M.D., and Price M. Cobbs, M.D.

This book, essential to any understanding of the contemporary American Black scene, is a sequel, but at the same time much more than a sequel, to Grier and Cobbs' *Black Rage*. This book throws much light on the psychological, religious, and medical effects of contemporary white racism on Blacks. Written by two Black psychiatrists and based upon their field experience, this volume, along with George Jackson's *Soledad Brother*, was one of the most sought after books by the more aware Black men locked up in Ohio's prisons. By "more aware" is meant those Black inmates who were conscious and proud of their Blackness; were getting together to discuss their common frustrations behind the backs of and without the approval of prison authorities; were quite rationally militant; and were deeply involved in serious study of their dilemma—in so far as they were able under the strict rules of prison censorship of all Black literature—after the example of such self-educated, imprisoned Blacks as Eldridge Cleaver, Bobby Seale, and George Jackson.

4) **Deschooling Society** by Ivan Illich

This slim but most influential volume affords the
theory behind the more practical, methodology-oriented work of Freire discussed earlier.

Because Black prisoners are especially oppressed in Ohio's prisons, the rationale behind any serious effort at curriculum development for these people must be both radically different from that employed under more conventional circumstances and simultaneously attuned to their status of being oppressed. Illich's work affords such a rationale more adroitly than any other work today; his inclusion here as a parallel study to the suggestions of Freire is imperative.


This was, even prior to George Jackson's still mystery-shrouded death at San Quentin, the most popular forbidden book read by Black inmates in Ohio's prisons. This is due somewhat to the current trend of many Black prisoners to consider themselves political prisoners, at least in their rhetoric. Even more than this, though, it was possible for the Black inmates to identify with the fact of George Jackson's struggle against not just the prison establishment but against the whole of the criminal justice system.

Jackson's simple, forthright prose in his letters, especially those to his mother, struck a much more sympathetic note for most of the Blacks to whom this investigator
talked than did the more erudite, philosophical argumentation of Eldridge Cleaver in *Soul on Ice*.

6) "A Basic Error: Dealing with Inmates as Though They Were Abnormal" by Elmer H. Johnson

During the time of this research, this investigator had the opportunity afforded by a federal grant, to consult with several of the staff of the Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency, and Corrections at Southern Illinois University. Dr. Elmer H. Johnson, one of the foremost researchers in corrections, assisted in this and other Ohio-based projects.

In this particular article Dr. Johnson makes a most cogent and forceful argument for the point of view that prisons are excellent arenas for self-fulfilling prophecy: men treated as abnormal will become abnormal; prisoners without a deep pattern of criminality will become criminals when treated as such.

Given the poor socio-economic backgrounds from which most Black prisoners come, their chances in the prison environment for "rehabilitation" are slim indeed. For this reason, coupled with the incisiveness of Dr. Johnson's article and his excellent national and international reputation, this piece was essential in developing an adequate conceptual base for this research.

7) *White Racism: A Psychohistory* by Joel Kovel

This book is judged to be the best study available
on the causes and effects of white racism from a purely white point of view, i.e., what causes racism in whites and what are its effects on whites. Since this aspect of the problem, too, is basic to this research, this book proved to be essential.

8) "Probation and Corrections in the Seventies" by David P. MacPherson

This short but compact article was more useful in plotting the recommendations advanced at the end of this research than it was in formulating items for the interview schedule with the Black inmates interviewed in Ohio's prisons.

Nevertheless, it is a key source because of its scope and the obviously great amount of work that went into its preparation by many interrelated agencies in the Los Angeles area. The article is essentially a report for a White House Conference on Children and Youth, but the questions it raises about the complexity of corrections problems in years ahead are most valuable.

9) "Rehabilitation: Rhetoric and Reality" by Norval Morris and Gordon Hawkins

This article is actually a summary by the authors of their chapter on corrections in their widely read book, The Honest Politician's Guide to Crime Control. The co-authors are associated with the University of Chicago's Center for Studies in Criminal Justice.

This article offers some promising answers to the
most crucial problem facing corrections. Indeed, it was this problem that first started this investigator working on this research. As a new prison chaplain, naive to the true state of affairs in prisons, he was prodding a Black inmate about why he wasn't taking advantage of prison programs to help himself. His candid response was, "Treatment is the way they jerk you off, man. Rehabilitation is the biggest joke around here."

This basic sentiment was repeated time and time again. This article from the University of Chicago affords sound general guidelines for an intelligent response to the present cruel joke of prisons, or what Carl Menninger has called "the crime of punishment."

10) An American Dilemma by Gunnar Myrdal

This sociological "classic" is at the heart of the matter of this research and offers indispensable background material for understanding the plight of the contemporary American Black.

11) White Racism by Barry H. Schwartz and Robert Disch

Although much of the material in this anthology is covered better by Joel Kovel in his study, the wider dimension of the problem of white racism treated here--the subtitle of the book, "It's History, Pathology, and Practice"--makes it again invaluable as a one-source item.

Although most of the essays in this collection are
clearly related to this research, the piece by Charles E. Wilson, "Racism in Education", is especially useful. Wilson parallels many of the ideas advanced by Knowles and Prewitt in *Institutional Racism in America*, considered by many another classic in the general field. Knowles and Prewitt, however, have little to offer not already in this anthology.

12) *What Black Educators Are Saying*,
    Edited by Nathan Wright, Jr.

The Black, contemporary educators writing in this volume afford the necessary, rounding-off or balance to the work of Freire and Illich as one approaches the problem of understanding the educational implications of racism in Ohio's prisons.

The input of this volume to the task of formulating parameters for the various stages of this research has been most helpful. Further, to exclude the input of Black educators when it is readily available has been one of the weaknesses of the designers of every prison academic and vocational education program in Ohio. With the outstanding exception of a shaky and somewhat token Black studies program at the Ohio State Reformatory, Black educators have been ignored, if not scorned, in the Ohio prison system.

The essays in this anthology cover the whole spectrum of prime concerns of Black educators. Especially forthrightly faced are the necessary problems of redefinition
that must take place in education if the process is to have relevance for Blacks.

Interview Schedule Items

From a content analysis of the forenamed sources, thirty key topics were identified. These topics became interview schedule items for the clinical interviews with the four hundred Black inmates. Also they served as one component in the conceptual structure underlying the guidelines for curriculum improvement. The other component was, of course, the perceptions of the Black inmates with regard to these items.

These items are:

1. Home environment of Black inmates.
2. Formal schooling of inmates outside prison.
3. Teachers outside of prison.
4. Authority figures outside of prison.
5. Criminality of the Black inmate.
6. Contact with whites outside of prison.
7. The shock of incarceration.
8. The prison environment.
10. Authority figures in prison.
11. Academic schooling in prison.
12. Vocational training in prison.
13. Treatment in prison.
14. Treatment vs. custody.
17. Implications of prison homosexuality for the Black inmate.
18. Islam in prison.
20. Black power in prison.
22. Black distrust of prison psychologists.
23. Family contact of the Black man in prison.
24. Medical attention in prison.
25. Covert and overt racism in prison.
26. Idleness in prison.
27. Institutional court in prison.
28. Censorship in prison.
29. Distrust in prison.

This chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to the research. Through content analysis, thirty topics were identified which served as interview schedule items for interviews with Black inmates.

Chapter III reports these interviews.
CHAPTER III

PERCEIVED RACISM IN OHIO'S PRISONS

Introduction

Thanks to the help and encouragement of Mr. Bennett Cooper, Ohio's Commissioner of Corrections, (cf. Appendix II) the researcher for this project was able to spend a year formally interviewing Black inmates in Ohio's prisons. He conducted lengthy, formal interviews with two hundred and fifty inmates, and he had opportunity for shorter, less formal conversations with one hundred and fifty more men and women. Some of the interviews were taped, and during some interviews he merely took notes, depending upon the facilities and atmosphere of the various institutions.

Naturally, this year-long process resulted in the accumulation of a mass of material, too much in fact to be presented by itself to speak for itself. (A typed transcript of one interview, for example--and it is average in length--runs well over one hundred pages.) The great amount of material collected, then, presented one problem, but another is even more important. In order to get interviews with inmates--which in itself was difficult since Black inmates are reluctant to talk to non-inmates and non-Black--
the researcher had to give his sincere promise and assurance that under no circumstances would he in any way reveal the identity of an inmate. The researcher had and has every intention of keeping that promise.

Before proceeding to an explanation of how it was determined to reconcile these two difficulties of the mass of the material and the obligation to secrecy, it is necessary to elucidate two other difficulties encountered in the course of conducting this research. An explanation of these difficulties will hopefully throw light on the necessity for secrecy and likewise give additional credibility to the veracity of the content of the subsequent interview.

First of all, as already mentioned, there was some difficulty getting Black inmates to talk openly to the conductor of this research who was a white man and a member of the prison system's central office. (It should be noted here that only four inmates out of the hundreds contacted categorically refused to talk with the interviewer.) This difficulty was encountered only at the beginning of the project to a great degree and to a lesser degree as he started in each separate institution. Word soon got around via the institutional grapevine that the project was serious, that the researcher was serious, and that, most importantly, he was keeping his mouth shut. This was further helped by the fact that the researcher had something of a reputation
throughout the prison system as a champion of the Black man's cause. This reputation was enhanced by four factors: (1) his work as a Catholic priest-chaplain at the Chillicothe Correctional Institute where he took special interest in the Black inmates; (2) his work of teaching for a while—until he was removed by a timorous administration because of the "feelings" he was stirring up—a course in "Cultural Differences", (which translated means "racial problems") to the predominantly white guard staff from the entire system who came to the Corrections Academy at Chillicothe for in-service training; (3) his known job of teaching a course in "White Racism" at the Ohio State University in the Department of Black Studies Education; and (4) his known, long-standing, public and active support of the civil rights movement in this country. Given this background, then, plus the letter of Mr. Cooper (Appendix II) which he did not hesitate to reproduce and distribute widely, the researcher had hardly any difficulty in gaining the confidence of the Black inmates to whom he spoke.

Furthermore, the researcher-interviewer was associated in the minds of staff and inmates as a collaborator of one Marion J. Koloski, assistant to the Commissioner and long-time advocate within the system of humanizing reform. This association which did exist was a detriment in winning the support of most staff who very frankly viewed Mr. Koloski's idealism as quixotic at best and dangerous at worst;
but at the same time this association was a great boon to the researcher's efforts to win the confidence of the Black inmates who view Mr. Koloski as their only real chance for a "fair shake" among the top level prison administration at both the institutional and central-office levels. This sentiment was expressed to the researcher dozens of times and the only reason it is mentioned here is because from the mass of data collected, it stands out as a totally unsolicited bit of information.

A second difficulty in conducting this research came from the staff of the prisons. In general the top-level administration was cooperative but there were some incidents. For example, at one institution the chief administrator, fearful that asking Black inmates questions would provoke a riot, was at first insistent that the researcher should give separate but equal time to members of his guard force who were known members of the Klu Klux Klan. When the researcher pointed out that he was not at the moment interested in that aspect of the general problem, and that, further, there was something of a difference since some persons were Black by nature while membership in the KKK was a matter of choice, the chief administrator worked himself into a rage and forbade any interviewing. However, after a few days cooling-off period, and, no doubt, contemplation of the Commissioner's letter (Appendix II) the research was allowed to progress.
At another institution the custody staff harassed the interviewer and the Black inmates with whom he was trying to speak by following them around with crudely concealed walkie-talkies. When the interviewer made light of this to higher prison officials, pointing out that the bugging was more in the nature of annoyance than effectively concealed eavesdropping, the walkie-talkies disappeared.

Apart, though, from instances of this nature, the true difficulty came from line staff, guards, who harassed inmates after they had spoken with the researcher. The harassment was never physical so far as is known, but was verbal and psychological. This harassment, obviously, came from pique, jealousy even, that someone from central office was talking to Black inmates instead of guards to attempt to discover something about what condition the conditions were in. In short, the generally hostile atmosphere created by the guards inside the prisons where the interviews were conducted did not make the work at all times pleasant. At one institution the guards quickly dubbed the researcher, using his surname, "Niggér Fortkamp", an appellation that rather amused the guards, the Black inmates, and the researcher alike, albeit for different reasons.

Understanding all of the difficulties encountered then, and their inter-relatedness, one can hopefully comprehend why the final form of the results of this research takes the shape of a composite interview. In this case a
composite interview is simply the following: after listen­ing to all taped material several times and after several re-readings of the notes taken during other interviews, themes that were noteworthy because of their continual re­currence were isolated and then made the basis for a pro­jected interview with one fictitious Black inmate who was viewed by the interviewer as Mr. Typical Black Inmate. It is gainsaid that there is no one typical Black inmate, and whatever apologies are in order for such categorization are made herewith. However, again, in view of the necessary secrecy to prevent even the slightest reprisal to an inmate, and in view of the necessity for facilitating intelligent, comprehensible use of an overburdening mass of data, the composite-interview approach seems best.

Finally, before presenting the composite interview, note should be made of the term "perceived racism" which this research hopes to reveal.

For the purpose of discovering the subtle coloring of a milieu, the context for a possible educational content, a purely, coldly objective analysis is not only impossible, but useless.

Now, two centuries after the fact, it might be pos­sible to proffer such a cold, purely objective analysis of the motivation of the contending parties in the American Revolution. But, humanistically speaking, such analysis is stuff and nonsense beside the gut feelings of participants
at the time they were participating. What do widows and orphans, or for that matter, patriots and traitors, care for the body counts and political ratiocinations of historians?

Because education is an humanist enterprise, dealing with flesh and blood, feeling persons in a given existential, the perceptions of those persons— even if reality be distorted— is the true key to unlocking the mystery of educational context. Imagine a school staff, for example, that will be discovered years from now to have been in objective truth, in reality, kind, understanding, and sympathetic. If, however, their present students perceive them here and now as martinets in advanced stages of sadism, the objective truth of their kindness, understanding, and sympathy will be of as much use and comfort to their students as monuments to deceased prophets.

To begin to understand, then, what can and must be done to advance education for Black inmates in Ohio's prisons, the perceptions of those Black inmates regarding their operative existential is necessary to the point of being imperative.

The Composite Interview

Question: Would you please tell me something about your life at home? Where you lived, your family background, that sort of thing.
Answer: We lived in Cincinnati. It was a poor neighborhood, and almost all Black except for some whites who hadn't moved out 'cause they couldn't afford to. And also some whites who owned stores in the area.

We lived in a second floor apartment, me, my mother, one brother and four sisters. My mother and father never got together again after he was busted in '48. They said he stole a car but it turned out to be his girl friend's car, but he did six years anyway. They just never got together again. I was ten years old then.

Mama worked nights cleaning some offices and once in a while she worked days for a fancy caterer. She'd always tote some good eats home those days. I guess I was raised mostly by my oldest sister who had a baby and had to stay home. We didn't have much and there wasn't too many happy times, but we all took care of the baby.

Q. Where did you go to school? What kind of a school was it? Would you say you got a good education there? And what kind of a racial mix was in the school?

A. Well I guess the school was alright. I mean the grade school. Nobody liked it much as I remember. Somebody was always beatin' on you or hasslin' you about something. Everybody went 'cause you had to I guess. I never really thought about it much.
But I know when we got to high school and in with some white kids—my grade school was almost all Black, but there was a goodly number of whites in the high school—my buddies from grade school was all behind the white kids in things. We couldn't read and write and do 'rithmetic as well. But it was alright then 'cause they stuck us all in a special class for stupid kids and we all got to be together.

Q. Did you finish high school?
A. No. I got through the ninth grade, but then I quit. You see, I seen all these dudes who'd been graduatin' from school standing on the corner all the time when I came home from school, so I figures why should I wait three years to go stand on the corner. So I quit.

Q. Weren't you a little young to drop out? I mean didn't you get caught?
A. Well, Yeah, I was only fourteen, and I made up my mind I'd lie about my age if I ever got caught, but I never did. I don't think anybody ever looked. Black kids did it all the time and never got caught. Truancy was only a crime for white rich kids. They only bothered us about big things.

I remember once, shortly after I stopped goin' to school, I got stopped by this white cop when I was on the street in the middle of the day. He patted me down, felt my balls and all, made me turn my pockets inside-
out to see if I was runnin' policy numbers or something and when I showed clean he let me go. Never asked me once about not being in school.

Q. What kind of teachers did you have in school? Were they mostly white or Black?

A. In grade school they were all white except two. But they were all mostly so old they could barely walk. In high school they had some more Black teachers, but I never got one. Of course I didn't wait around very long either—not that having a Black teacher would have made me wait either. You see, most of the Blacks who was teachin' there had had to kiss so much ass to get to be so important as to be a teacher that they was usually whiter than Whitey anyway.

You know, just the other day about fifteen of us brothers were rappin' with one of the social workers here in the joint—we all got into the same group therapy class and they haven't broken it up yet—we were goin' on about teachers. He asked us if there wasn't some teacher somewhere in our lives who'd had a great influence on us. You know, nobody could think of even one. I know I sure couldn't. Though I didn't know it at the time, I found out later they only sent teachers who couldn't cut it anywhere else down to teach us. Looking back, I can believe it.

Q. I've heard some pretty learned and experienced
prison officials say that they feel the whole problem with all criminals is rooted in an "authority crisis." I mean, they say prisoners, criminals, are just the kind of people who've always had trouble accepting any kind of authority, and the problem just grew until they finally got in serious trouble and ended up in prison. How do you react to that?

A. Man, that's a lot of white bullshit. That authority crisis crap may say something about white prisoners and it probably says even more about the white cops who dreamed it up. But it's a good example of whites projecting their own hang-ups onto Blacks. I never had no authority crisis for the simple reason I never had no authorities, at least not in Whitey's sense of the term.

The white man's whole thing is rooted in fear and insecurity. He needs authority 'cause his hatred has made him hate himself most of all. The Black man from the neighborhood comes out of a whole different bag that the white man can't even begin to understand. Like I said before, we wasn't rich, but I learned love a long time 'fore I learned fear; and I learned how to survive long 'fore I learned how to spell insecurity. Now I admit it's a whole new ball game here in the joint from when I was growin' up on the street. But then the ball game in the joint is played by the white man's rules.
Q. How did you end up here? Tell me, if you don't mind about your criminal and prison history.

A. I don't mind. You can find it out from my record anyway. I first got picked up in '55 when I was seventeen years old. Three other dudes and me were caught bustin' in to an auto-parts store. We'd been stealing car stuff for about a year off and on and fencing it through this white guy who finally got busted himself a couple of years ago. He did a year or so and got out.

Anyhow, we all got one to ten for stealin' the tires and they sent us to Mansfield. I got flopped twice by the parole board but I never found out exactly why. I did two years at Mansfield and then a year in Lebanon which was closer to home. My family came to see me in Lebanon but they never made it but once up to Mansfield. The parole board told me I should finish high school, but I only made it as far as the waiting list. I was just about to make it in at Mansfield when they sent me to Lebanon and then I had to get at the bottom of another list an' when I got to the top of that list again they turned me out on the streets. I never did understand why.

That was '58 and I was twenty years old. I had a pretty good parole officer who never hassled me none and I got a final release o.k.
Well, I met this girl while I was on parole and her daddy had this company like that did construction work when he could get it and he gave me a job as a laborer. We got married soon as my release was final and we lived with her folks 'cause they had lots of room. We had two kids and she was gettin' ready to have the third when I got busted again.

Now I'd been clean, mind you, for four years when everything started to go wrong. We'd got a place of our own. It wasn't much but I was workin' steady and makin' the payments. Then her daddy died and the work slacked off and stopped altogether. Same time the wife gets sick with the third kid and I don't have no insurance with the company no more so things is rough with her in the hospital runnin' up bills and all.

Well--I admit I shouldn'a done it, now--but I'm feelin' sorry for myself and go down to the corner for a few beers an' starts cryin' on the shoulder of this ol' buddy of mine. He says I should rip off a few gas stations or something to get me the bread I need and he even says he's got a gun he'll give me. I said no at first, but then I had a few more beers and the idea sounded better all the time.

Anyway I took his gun and started out and got sixty dollars at the first place and twenty at the second and then I hit a carry-out for four hundred, but that's when
I got caught. Woke up the next morning in jail without a penny, one hell of a hangover and more trouble than any one man should have.

I spent nine months in jail waiting for my trial to come up since I couldn't afford either bail or a lawyer. The court appointed a public defender and he showed up on the morning of the trial and told me it would go easier for me if I pled guilty. Well I was kind of mad about doin' nine months already for only takin' four hundred and eighty dollars that everybody got back anyway and I guess I seemed kind of cocky to the judge. He said I seemed like a smart alek but that because I was black and he was white he didn't want anybody hollerin' "discrimination" so he wasn't goin' to give me the full ten to twenty-five I had comin'. Instead he gives me seven to twenty-one, but he gives me this for all three counts and says I got to serve them consecutively which means I get twenty-one to sixty-three years for stealin' four hundred and eighty dollars.

That was in '62 and I come to the penitentiary. They tell me I got so much time that therefore I am a security risk so they got to keep me here. Well, I stayed here five years and then they tell me I'm going to London but that place was worse than the penitentiary, especially for a Black man, so I faked stomach trouble and backache and got back here. But I got back just
in time for the riots in '68 and that was the worse mess I was ever in. I was scared to death and believe me I didn't do a thing but try to stay out of the way. But somebody put the finger on me for agitatin'—there was guys stirring things up, don't get me wrong, but I wasn't one of them. There was Blacks doin' it too, but we all look alike to those honky guards and there wasn't no way I could prove I wasn't doin' nothin'. Anyhow I got five to thirty-five for rioting on top of my twenty-one to sixty-five for stealing and here I am. And it looks like I'll be here for some time to come.

Been in thirteen years now on this number. My wife's remarried and hardly anybody writes or comes to visit anymore. I was bitter for a long time, but I don't feel much of anything anymore. I really don't even like talking to you about all this 'cause it just makes me think again. You know, you're makin' it very hard for me to get to sleep tonight—maybe for many nights.

Q. Let's get to something else then. Tell me about the contact you had with white people and with discrimina­tion, if you did, before you came to prison.

A. I didn't know any white people very well. I didn't have to where we lived. I had my own ideas about 'em, but mama told us to stay clear unless we had to and we did.

I realize now that there was discrimination all
around and it made its strongest impact in the ghetto. But I didn't know any of that when I was growing up. When I got to high school, there were signs in the bathroom and on the bulletin boards once in a while, things kids wrote, like "Nigger go home" and stuff like that. But on the whole I wasn't really conscious of discrimination till I got to prison. On the streets a Black man can run away from it, hide with your own people in the ghetto. There ain't no place to hide in the joint.

Q. Coming to prison that first time then must have been quite a shock. Would you comment on that?

A. Well, it was a shock in two ways. First of all there's the shock of just going to prison. That's horrible enough. It's the kind of thing that is always happening--like a death in the family--but it's always happening to somebody else. When they lead you in all chained up and you hear those steel doors up front close behind you, and you're not really sure if they'll ever open up for you goin' the other way. It's horrible, man. Horrible and lonely. I remember how bad I wanted to cry but I knew I couldn't do that in front of the guards and others they was leadin' in with me.

But in a way, a worse shock than that was being thrown into a whole white world where I'd never been before. Like I said before, on the streets you could run away from it, but here you couldn't. When we were
bein' stripped down and searched and fingerprinted and given our prison clothes and all that, believe me, it was the first time in my life I'd ever been called "Boy" and "Nigger" with such obvious hatred. Then's when I really became scared. I didn't know how I'd survive in such a world run by hillbillies. I knew I'd have to learn quick, but I really didn't know if I could. It was a very frightening experience.

Yet, to be honest, deep down I knew I would make it just like lots of brothers had done before me, were doin' now, and always will have to do in this country. I guess rich white kids get nervous when they go off to college. Well, prison is to Blacks what college is to whites: it's our most common, adult, institutional experience. Most white families I guess got some folks up and down the relationship who went to college. Most Blacks I know got a relative somewhere who did time. It's just the American way of life.

Q. How would you as a Black man characterize the prison environment as a whole? I mean, what are the strongest feelings you had once you got over the initial shock of incarceration?

A. That's kind of hard to answer, because again it's no such thing as one simple emotion. Most of all, though, I'd say it's a combination of fear and a feeling of oppression. And this tears the Black man up in here in
a way the whites don't ever seem to understand. You see, the fear—fear of doing something wrong and gettin' stomped down on twice as hard because you're Black—that fear makes you turn in upon yourself. But the feeling of oppression—I mean the feeling that the whole system and especially the prison life here has already messed you over double just 'cause you're Black—this feeling makes you bitter and makes you want to lash out. So there's your Black man in prison forced to go two ways at once. No wonder the whites don't always understand him. To tell the truth, he doesn't always understand himself, and maybe that's the biggest agony of all.

We was talkin' about this once, and one of the brothers was right on the money. He said, "In prison the Black man's got two choices. He can get on the shine box or the soap box. If he picks up the shine box he most often loses his Blackness, and that's a terrible struggle; or he crawls on the soap box and catches it from the guards for bein' too Black. So most brothers learn to live in a limbo in between. An' you gotta be dead to live in limbo."

Q. Isn't the real problem, though, the custody force in the prison? Doesn't your worst hassle come from the guards? Aren't they the ones who cause these feelings of fear and oppression?
Oh, you hear a lot of bitchin' about the guards--most of the bitchin' is about them I guess. But that's just kind of the thing to do if you're an inmate.

But you know, if you really get inside the guts of a Black man in prison, his real feeling toward the white guards is more one of pity than of hatred. I mean they are the most miserable of the miserable whites. They get to talkin' even to us and you find out they are lonely devils who hate themselves really more than the inmates do. Most of 'em don't seem to have anybody at home who really loves them, and a lot of 'em have to drink to forget they work here. You can even smell the booze on the breath of some of 'em when they come to work. You get the impression that the only reason they work here is 'cause this is the only place left in the world where they can feel important. Imagine that! Havin' to work in one of these shit holes to feel important.' But the state helps 'em by givin' 'em a badge and a club or a gun and telling them they are important. It really is sad, and I think most Blacks see right through the whole farce and even though they play the little prison game by complaining about the results of the guards' importance, they really don't take it seriously. Mostly they just feel sorry for the guards--sort of like you'd feel sorry for an idiot who thinks he's Napoleon or George Washington or somebody.
Now the Black guards, though, they're a different story. Black inmates hate them much more than they pity them—at least for the most part. 'Cause you see, the Black guard has to sell his soul to work here. He's got to work for Whitey all the way if he wants to keep his job and the best way to show he's with the Man is to clobber the Black inmates extra hard. So it ends up the Black guards—what few of them there are—are worse than the white guards when it comes to messin' somebody over. But Whitey's always pretty careful to make sure he don't hire no real Blacks anyway. He signs on some Jeffin' and Tomin' niggers—some Creos, you know—just to make sure nobody causes no trouble. An' then what really makes the Blacks in here mad is when they put some of these nigger guards on Front Street so everybody sees them and thinks what a wonderful, fair place this must be. An' them niggers go 'long with the game, shufflin' and smirkin' the whole time, and even puttin' on airs and actin' important, eatin' all that white shit up—I tell you, it makes a man sick.

Q. I asked you before what you thought about authority figures outside of prison. How do you feel about authority in general inside the prisons?

A. In general I got nothin' but contempt for them, and for two reasons. First of all, they always try to appear so understanding when you finally do get through
to them, but really they don't understand the first thing about where a Black man is comin' from. They think we all Eldridge Cleavers and Rap Browns, militants who are waitin' to burn the place up first chance we get or else they think we just harmless old darkies who can be listened to and ignored. Consequently, since they are afraid of us or ignore us, since they fail to take us as individuals, we seldom if ever get a direct answer to anything we ask. This is very frustrating and forces us to play along with their silly games of never really gettin' anything done.

The second big game they play—and we're forced into this one too if we want to survive in the joint—is to create conflict among the inmates themselves, especially racial conflict. You see—now I don't think they're smart enough to have sat down and worked this out, it just happens this way; they stumbled on it and they let it go on—you see if they can get the inmates fussin' among themselves to just the right amount inside the walls, there ain't gonna' be so many worryin' about how to get over the walls. "A little racial tension—just a little, not enough to cause a wholesale riot—is one of the best tools of custody." That seems to be one of their mottoes. And custody, after all, is what prison is all about.

Q. Like most of the Blacks I've talked to in prison,
you seem quite articulate despite the fact you do not have a lot of formal schooling. Did you go to school in prison? What do you think of the prison schools?

A. Like I told you, I tried to get in school in the reformatories, but like a lot of men I was moved around too fast to get in. In general, though, Blacks like to go to school since they feel that education may be one way out of the mess. You'll find Blacks more eager to go to school than whites in the joint. But it's hard since most of the schools inside prisons are just copies of the ones Blacks dropped out of on the streets. The teachers are white, the curriculum is white, and the overall objectives of the school are white. And even then the best you can get is the G.E.D. Most Blacks don't have enough money of their own to afford the correspondence courses to get a real diploma.

So a lot of long timers like me just do cell study. I've gotten interested in sociology and psychology and the whole Black thing. Once in a while I'll take a course at the school if it looks interesting, but a lot of times I don't finish. Some teachers help out though and bring me books and magazines to read in my cell.

Q. You've talked about the academic schools. What about vocational training?
A. For the Black man that's an even bigger joke than the ordinary school.

Most of the programs have equipment that's even more outdated than the teachers. And when they do get a good program, it's usually so small that only a very few can participate.

But the biggest problem with all the schooling is that there's no method to any of it. A brother might be taught some trade that he couldn't use when he gets out even if he wanted to. It's bad enough with some jobs and some unions being an ex-con, but when you're a Black ex-con, forget it. Or then a guy may learn some skill and then still have two, three, four years to go 'til he gets out. Meantime the prison's got him doing something altogether different so he forgets what he learned anyway. Pretty soon word gets around and everybody just feels kind of hopeless about the whole business.

I think most Blacks sign up for courses to be with other Blacks, say in automotive, even though they got no intention of ever being a mechanic. At least that way they got some place to rap with each other. But the administration always gets worried if too many Blacks get together at one place or in one course. It always seems when that happens that the teacher gets fired or transferred or the course gets dropped or
something. It's weird, man. They're really scared of us.

Q. You don't seem to think much of formal schooling in prison. Do you extend the same harsh judgment to all of treatment or rehabilitative services in prison?

A. Prisons are just big jails, man. Treatment is a joke. The only way anybody gets rehabilitated is if he does it himself.

That goes for all treatment programs as far as I'm concerned. They are just bones they throw to the dogs to keep them quiet in their cages. The cages are the important things, man, and don't you forget it.

Q. That seems kind of one-sided to me. I mean I know there's a long-standing controversy about the roles of custody and treatment in prisons. Don't you think you're kind of way to one side in the argument? Don't you think some treatment programs do some inmates some good?

A. Man, you're tryin' to slip some funky, honky white shit under me but you can't do it. I'm here to tell you like it is and that is that custody runs the show.

You say treatment does some inmates some good. What you mean, "good?" If you mean white, I guess you're right. Sure, they're always trying to make us white. Try to slip some Dale Carnegie or Jaycees or A.A. under us. But that's all basically white, man. There's nothin' for the Black. Even what they call Black
studies or Black culture got to pass the Man's approval. Who they think they're kiddin'?

And listen, even those funky programs they do have, even those will get busted or individuals in them will get busted if custody thinks it's messin' around with their program.

Ain't no way except treatment is a joke and custody is boss.

If they was serious about treatment for Blacks, they'd at least have somebody for Blacks to talk to, and they got nobody. Long as I been in, many places as I been, many brothers as I talked to, ain't but one or two people in the whole prison system of this state a Black man can really talk to. And if one does come along, they find some way to get rid of him pretty fast. So you figure it out. Nobody to talk to says no interest to me. And no interest is no treatment is no rehabilitation program. It's as simple as that.

Q. What about out-and-out discrimination, say, regarding jobs in prison? I've had a lot of inmates mention this. Does it really exist?

A. Sure it exists. The joints just reflect the thinking on the streets which is infested with stereotypes. Blacks are good for hard manual labor, working dirty jobs like with garbage and sewage, but they are bed for clerical jobs and jobs that require trust.
There's tokenism all over the place and a Black clerk-typist is paraded just like a Black captain on the guard force.

There are still jobs and even some training opportunities that are simply closed to Blacks. I don't think there's any official, written policy about this. The question is just left up to ding-a-ling guards at a lower level in the whole system and it just conveniently ends up with Blacks being allowed to do some things and not allowed to do others.

Q. What about brutality in prison? I hear a lot about that too.

A. Well I'm not going to say it never happens, 'cause it does. But it's not so frequent in the last couple of years as it was before the riots in '68. But it's bound to happen in a place like this. After all, the guards get just as uptight in a hole like this as the inmates do, and tempers are bound to fly at times.

But the real brutality is much more of a psychological kind of harassment over the long haul rather than any great amount of short-term physical brutality. For the Black man the brutality is in never being understood, or rather always misunderstood, in never having anybody to talk to.

It's the million little things like not being able to have a Black magazine or being called a militant if
your hair gets too long. It's having a guard make fun of your mama 'cause she's got a different last name than you got. It's being called "Boy" and "Nigger." It's having a guard fail to understand that "Mother-fucker" has many different shades of meaning—some of them even of affection—for the Black man.

I've only been beat on my head two times all the time I been in prison. But I get beat inside my head many times every day I'm in prison.

Q. What about homosexuality in prison? Do you think there are any special, peculiarly Black problems surrounding this issue?

A. If you're gonna have prisons like we got in Ohio, you're gonna have a homosexual problem sure as if you're gonna have a plague you're gonna have death.

Whites just think that all Blacks have a greater sex drive since we're more like animals and they also, in their own pride, think what Blacks want most is sex with a white. And then, of course, whites in general of the kind who work in prisons, are much more uptight about the whole subject than some dude coming out of the ghetto where sex is taken as much for granted as broken coke bottles.

So naturally the Black man is watched with more suspicion, he's suspected more readily of some kind of sexual activity of which the white man does not approve.
But I really don't think this bothers the Black man too much. He learns to turn Whitey's hang-ups in this area to his own advantage, and while the funky guard is watchin' him for sex, he be dealin' in pills right under his nose.

White hillbilly types is most often just pitifully funny, but when it comes to sex, they're just downright pathetic.

Q. What about Islam in prison? A lot of Black inmates seem to be turning to the Mohammedan faith.

A. There are some that are joining Islam, but not as many as prison officials think. Again, they're all excited about the wrong thing 'cause they really don't understand where the Black man is at.

The Black is turning on to his Blackness, not especially to Islam. It just so happens that since Islam is a religion they are almost forced in some but not all prisons to let it exist. So it's an all Black thing and affords a place for the Black inmate to work out his identity thing with other Blacks. If there were other places in prison where this could be done legitimately, Islam would not be nearly so popular.

But don't get me wrong. Belief in Islam has helped a lot of brothers get themselves together and a lot of them really believe and practice the faith. Some even
regulate their own diet without any help from the prison, and you can get pretty hungry doing that.

I think in general Islam is a good thing, but it's completely misunderstood by the whites who think it's some sort of militant movement. Actually the whites trying to stamp it out are the best friends Islam has in prison.

Q. You sort of play down Islam. What do you think of religion in general as a force affecting Blacks in prison?

A. Not much. Most of it again is so white-oriented that it just has nothing to say to the Black men. Of course, there are some old timers who like the spirituals and that sort of thing, but I've seen where even that is viewed with alarm if it brings too many Blacks together. Can you imagine a revolt of the Uncle Toms!

This is not to say that religion never helps anybody. Again, I've seen some remarkable changes in people with Protestantism or Catholicism, just like Islam. But for most Blacks in prison, religion is nowhere. It was never anything big for most of them on the streets, at least not when they were old enough to get into trouble, and it means even less to them in the joint.

One thing though. I said before that Blacks have nobody to talk to in prison. Probably if anyone comes close to filling that role for some Blacks in prison,
it's some chaplains. Chaplains can sort of act on the fringe of the prison establishment if they want to, 'cause Whitey has just about as many hangups about religion as he does about sex. And he's just as afraid of one as he is of the other.

But again it's kind of sad, 'cause if a chaplain, white or Black, gets too involved with Black inmates, he's given a lot of hassle by the administration and he's either transferred or fired or made to stop whatever program he's got going. There've been some nice attempts by some chaplains in the past, but nothing seems to last very long.

Q. You talk off and on as though all administration fears about Black militancy in prison are without real foundation. Is this true? Is there no such thing as a Black Power Movement in Ohio's prisons?

A. There's not a Black anything in Ohio's prisons. Man, the screws are on so tight you couldn't start a Black butterflies collectors' club in these joints, much less a Black Power Movement. As I told you, even the token few Black Culture clubs and attempts at Black Studies classes are all basically white controlled.

Sure, at the reformatories where you got younger dudes fresh off the streets, they got younger more militant ideas, but there ain't any of 'em really organized.
Most of it's just talk, rhetoric that scares the honky guards half to death when they hear it.

Among the older Blacks a lot have turned on to their Blackness in recent years, and they read a lot, whatever they can get their hands on. But most of the time, just copin' with prison life, just tryin' to pull your time as easy as possible takes all your time and energy. Of course, there are those on the soap box, and they get all the attention. And, too, most whites think that one Black who speaks, speaks for all Blacks. They simply refuse to look at us as individuals.

Me, for instance, I'm militant as hell in my head, but I honestly don't know what I'd do if I had a chance to act out my feelings here in prison. I been here too long to believe in anything but the futility of Black Activism on the part of inmates. I might as well try to run for governor.

Q. What about the current trend across the country for Black prisoners to view themselves as political prisoners?

A. Man, you're talkin' about Panther stuff outa California and New York. This is Ohio.

I mean I understand what's meant by the political prisoner bit, and I think it's true in light of the farce of the whole criminal-justice system of this country. I'd even go so far as to say a lot of Blacks in
Ohio prisons are turning on to the idea more each day.

But it's like the Black Power thing. It's mostly just talk and will never go much further than that. Most Blacks in Ohio prisons never had a chance at the kind of education that would make them politically aware of some kind of dangerous political or revolutionary force—and they sure as hell ain't gonna' get that kind of education in prison, not unless they do it themselves. As I said, there's a few that do, but most just pull their time.

Q. Let me get on to something else. Why is it that the Blacks I've talked to seem to have such a fear almost of prison psychologists? This uneasy feeling came through so many times in my conversations, I'd like you to comment upon it.

A. I think this is something in a way that affects all inmates—as really do most of the things that go on in prison—but it's just that for Blacks there is an added dimension of horror, something caused by just his Blackness, that the white man does not have to face.

I mean in this case the fear of getting a psych label put on you. You see, because the Black man is not understood, not even by the shrinks, most of whom are white and many of whom are so naive and stupid it's ridiculous, the Black inmate is much more likely to be messed over by the psychs.
Once you get a psych label it's all over. You may never get out of these places. The parole board keeps floppin' you till you get "cured", but there's no place to get cured. All the shrinks are too busy fillin' out forms to talk to inmates. And God help you if they send you to Lima or C.P.U. Ain't no man alive ever come out of those places sane. If you ain't crazy by the time you go in, you sure be hopelessly strung out by the time you leave. An' if you don't come out crazy, you'll probably come out an' addict of one kind or another. I'm told that's how they control you in those places, keep you doped up all the time. I talked to one brother was there for two years, said he didn't remember one thing about the whole time.

Thanks but no thanks! You keep me far away from those people as possible. They ain't nothin' but bad news.

Q. Do you stay in touch with your family? Do they visit you often?

A. Oh they write and I write, but it gets less and less all the time, outa sight, outa mind, I guess.

They visit though once or twice a year, but I'm gettin' so I just as soon not see 'em. I see 'em for a couple hours and it brings back all kind of memories I'd just as soon forget. No contact at all is really
easier than the kind that jars everything up again, especially when you're pulling long time.

But I know if and when I ever do get out, I'll always be welcome somewhere back home.

Q. How about medical attention in prison? Do you think there's discrimination there too?

A. Not that I know of. When medical attention is good in prison, it's good for everybody; when it's bad, it's bad for everybody. Most often, though, I've found it good.

Q. Some writers make a distinction between "covert and overt racism." Would you comment upon the hidden and open manifestations of racism as you see them in prison?

A. Well, I think I said before it was a lot worse before the riots in '68. Before then Blacks had to march at the end of all the lines; we had to eat last after the whites had picked the food over; we locked and worked separate in a lot of places; some places even had separate toilets. That's only a few years ago, and just because they got rid of some of those things don't mean they got rid of the spirit that was behind it.

When you hear some of these guards talk about "the good ol' days" you can bet your fanny the Black who's been around a while knows what he means. It's all still here. Nothin' has changed. It's just like I said
before, there's only less physical harassment and more psychological harassment.

You can't sensitize a cracker.

Q. I've observed that so many of the men in prison, Black and white, are idle so much of the time. I mean apart from those officially "on idle" who neither work nor go to school, there seems to be so much time wasted for each inmate. I would think that would be tremendously nerve-wracking after a length of time.

A. Time is the name of the game in prison. It's all you got. It's the only thing that'll get you out. It's the only thing that'll cure you if you can be cured. And it's what you'll get if you get in more trouble inside or outside the joint.

But time stands still for an inmate. He tries to believe the world out there is standin' still waiting on him, but he knows that ain't true either.

And all the idleness makes all this worse. There's not enough, even of the boring kind of jobs they got to keep everybody really busy at something worthwhile. And there's not nearly enough school or training programs for those who might use them. Half or better or every day is spent doin' nothin', killin' time, talkin' about the same old things, wishin' you was out instead of in.

It's dumb, I suppose, to let this much energy just
go to waste, but that's the way the system works. They figure if we stagnate we'll be less trouble. Of course, we'll probably come back and back and back again—but we'll be less trouble when we're here.

Q. What about institutional court, the prison's own rules-infraction court? Do Blacks have a harder time here?

A. Of course they do! And the prison officials admit this too. They've run their own studies—even using inmates to do the statistical work—on who goes to court and why.

It's a fact of prison life that more Blacks go to court than whites and, furthermore, that Blacks pull more severe sentences from the court than the whites do.

But this is understandable, natural even in the prison scheme of things.

Who writes most of the tickets? White guards. White guards who watch Blacks more carefully than they do the white inmates. Many of the tickets are write-ups for "insolence" or something like that. Most whites in prison are so stupid they think a Black man looks "insolent" no matter what he looks like. If you're not shufflin' and grinnin', then you're insolent. And who's sittin' on the court? More white guards and members of the administration. They don't understand nothin'
either. Of course Blacks get in in court—they get it goin' and comin' and sometimes in between.

Q. You mentioned you did some cell study in the area of Black Studies. Am I to take it that you have no trouble getting any books you want, or is there censorship of your reading material?

A. No, man, I've done hole time twice for having contraband literature. Sometimes and some places it's worse than others. Sometimes even things like *Ebony* and *Jet* are considered too militant. I know one dude, he was a real Tom till this happened, he got busted for havin' a book of speeches of Martin Luther King. But it's funny. The official policy of the joint may say one thing, but the guards can throw away your mail, or keep it themselves, or sell it to other inmates like they do the pornography they're always bringin' in here. The low level guards end up being the real censors and they can hassle you or even bust you for what they think no matter what the official policy may be.

But, God, they are so stupid! The last time they busted me they took two books by Cleaver, one by H. Rap Brown and my copy of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. But they left everything I had by Franz Fanon and W. E. B. DeBois. It was worth ten days in the hole just thinkin' to myself, "If they only knew!"

Q. You obviously feel you can't trust the guards or
other prison personnel very much. What about your feelings toward other inmates, Black and white? Do you trust them?

A. This is a jungle, man. You don't trust nobody. Oh, when I first came in as a kid, I thought maybe I could have a friend or two among the inmates, but I soon learned that is a false hope.

Any attempt at real friendship is immediately suspect as being a homosexual thing, especially if it's between two men of different races, and you quickly learn that that hassle is worse than loneliness, so you just forget it.

Also, of course, there's a lot of bad customers in a place like this, guys who'd shit on you at any time if it made them smell good, so you're very careful. And being very careful all the time doesn't make for much friendship. It's survival of the fittest beast, man, and a good beast doesn't need any friends. It's a very lonely place.

Q. While this has been a very revealing interview, I must say in all candor that it is also very depressing. At least I'm left with that feeling. Would you care to comment upon that, perhaps correct me if I've read you wrong?

A. You're depressed! You're depressed! Shit, man, you
should be Black and locked up in an Ohio prison, then you'd know what depression is.

When my wife wrote and told me she was gettin' a divorce, I told her to go ahead. I told her I had a new wife. Despair. I go to bed with her and I get up with her and she's by my side all the day.

I know I'm pullin' more time than many Blacks, but I'm like most Blacks in pullin' more time than I deserve for what I done. Like most Blacks I know if I was white and rich I'd never be in here. An' like most Blacks I know I'll have a harder time gettin' out and an easier time gettin' back in when I do get out. An' like most Blacks, I know I'll pull harder time while I'm here.

Depression? Despair? Man, I'm so filled up with it I can taste it. And sometimes I choke on it and I want to cry, but there ain't nobody here to talk to, and if I get caught talkin' to a brother, chances are we'll both get busted.

Despair? That's my middle name. Also my first and my last name. Can you tell me why it should be otherwise?

Synthesis and Synopsis of the Composite Interview

It will be useful at this point to review the thirty items for consideration given at the end of Chapter II. Since these items formed the basis for the interview schedule,
the results of the interviews will now be synthesized by means of synoptic generalizations upon the items. These generalizations represent, then, the general conclusions at the heart of this research.

1. Home environment of Black inmates.
   Most Blacks in Ohio prisons come from homes representative of the lower socio-economic classes in the Black ghettos of Ohio's larger cities. The family structure in these homes tends to be heavily dominated by females, but this is countered by siblinging and "gang" or peer-group influence.

2. Formal schooling of inmates.
   Few Black inmates have finished high school. Most Black inmates have a basic distrust of the white-dominated schools they did attend.

3. Teachers outside prison.
   The teachers Black inmates had outside of prison are, in general, judged by the inmates to have been disinterested and incompetent. The majority of these teachers were white.

4. Authority figures outside of prison.
   Black inmates tend to reject authority which is identified with white power structures. They tend to see the bases for authority to be different in their own families and communities.

5. Criminality of the Black inmate.
   Blacks in Ohio prisons have most often been convicted
for crimes of violence—armed robbery heads the list—perpetrated most often against other Blacks. Property offenses strongly outnumber crimes directly against persons. Blacks view this as a normal consequence of ghetto life and fail to understand what they view as the white man's preoccupation with property as opposed to people.

6. Contact with whites outside of prison.

Most Blacks in prison had little contact with whites outside of prison. The few contacts they did have were negative.

7. The shock of incarceration.

For many Blacks, coming to prison represented their first truly traumatic, permanent contact with white society.

8. The prison environment.

Blacks find prison a place of frustration, oppression, futility, and despair.


While most Blacks complained bitterly about the insensitivity and racism of the guard force, their contempt had evolved into pity. Many Blacks comment upon the fact that hatred eventually is more destructive to the hater than the hated.

10. Authority figures in prison.

Blacks tend to view prison officials as racists to be approached only warily, with much distrust.
11. Academic schooling in prison.

Although they often seek academic schooling whenever possible, since many young Blacks are convinced that education affords entrance to the white world, Blacks who stay in prison for longer periods of time become progressively more disenchanted with prison-sponsored education which they come to view as another tool of a basically racist, custody-oriented system.

12. Vocational training in prison.

Blacks become disenchanted with vocational training programs more quickly than with academic programs. They tend very candidly to view them as exercises in futility.

13. Treatment in prison.

The common sentiment of Blacks is: "Treatment is a joke." They do not feel that the prison system takes it seriously, and neither do they.

14. Treatment vs. custody.

Blacks view this as no contest. They feel that, in the final analysis, custody runs everything.

15. Existence of brutality in prison.

Most Black inmates are convinced, many of them from personal experience, that physical brutality does exist in prison, and that it is more often than not directed at Black inmates. However, they point out that the real problem is psychological harassment rather than physical brutality.

Almost without exception Blacks lament the favoritism shown whites either blatantly or indirectly by means of tokenism toward Blacks. Blacks especially feel that job discrimination is the sorest spot, the area causing most tension as a result of racial inequality in prison.

17. Implications of prison homosexuality for the Black inmate.

In general Blacks seemed relaxed talking about this subject. They felt the white power structure made too much of it in the prison context. They also saw the presence of homosexuality in prison as one more occasion for whites to vent bigoted notions about Black promiscuity.

18. Islam in prison.

While Blacks resent the subtle and not so subtle attempts of prison officials to curtail the spread of Islam in prison, most Blacks do not feel that Islam is per se a strong influence on Blacks in prison. However, Islam is a rallying point for Blacks who find it difficult to express their identity in any other way.


Blacks in prison often speak with conviction as religious people of the Christian faith. They seemed, however, to have little use for prison sponsored attempts at organized religion.

20. Black power in prison.
Most Black inmates were amused at the frightened attitude of the white power structure toward the possibility of strong Black power or Black nationalist movements within Ohio's prisons.


Although there seems to be a tendency among younger inmates to view themselves as political prisoners, the notion does not appear to be widely advanced among Black prisoners in Ohio.

22. Black distrust of prison psychologists.

This distrust seems to be widespread, largely because of a fear that prison authorities will label a prisoner who is a discipline problem as one in need of psychiatric care. Blacks fear the implications of being so labeled in the present prison system. Yet all readily admit that there are some inmates in need of such help. They feel, however, that needed help is nowhere to be found.

23. Family contact of the Black men in prison.

The Black inmate's family contacts tend to be sporadic and to diminish in frequency the longer the inmate is confined.

24. Medical attention in prison.

The Black inmates had very few complaints about the medical attention they received. Nor were there complaints about the availability of medical attention.
25. Covert and overt racism in prison.

In general Black inmates felt that overt racism had diminished considerably in the last several years throughout the Ohio prison system. They also felt, however, that covert signs of racism had increased, largely because of the frustration of guards who were as racist as ever, only now were in many ways forbidden to express themselves openly.

26. Idleness in prison.

Many Blacks took the ennui that is part of prison life as a personal affront and yet another sign of the racist context of the prison. They felt they were being made to stagnate so that they would have a better chance of returning to prison.

27. Institutional court in prison.

There exists an almost universal feeling of bitterness toward this segment of prison life. Blacks felt that it is perhaps the most blatantly racist weapon in the arsenal of the racists who run the prison system.

28. Censorship in prison.

Blacks feel that censorship, especially of magazines and other reading material, is used with special vindictiveness against them. They feel the censors have no understanding of why Blacks care to read certain material. They feel that the censors have a categorical distrust of anything Black.
29. Distrust in prison.

Black inmates exhibit as a whole little or no trust of white authorities or white inmates. Furthermore, they often come to loathe themselves because the general milieu of distrust causes them to even distrust other Blacks.


If there could be said to be one thread which ran through all the research with the Black inmates in Ohio prisons, that thread would have to be called "despair."

Conclusion

In this third and pivotal chapter of this presentation of the research, the justification and background for the composite interview was given and also an explanation of the nature of the composite interview was given. The composite interview was drawn from the interview schedule derived from the literature reviewed in Chapter II. The composite interview itself was presented. Finally, there was a synthesis and synopsis of the composite interview.

In Chapter IV recommendations based upon the data of this research will be offered.
CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

The recommendations made in this final chapter are based upon conclusions drawn from the data of Chapter II and Chapter III.

The recommendations are addressed primarily to the office of the Ohio Commissioner of Correction. This is done because this researcher has confidence in the integrity of that office when it states its active concern for positive change. These recommendations are also directed to that office since the researcher is aware of some programs already in existence which will contribute to the elimination of acknowledged evils in the system. Some of the recommendations will then be in the nature of reinforcement of fledgling efforts begun by the Ohio Division of Correction during the months of 1970-1971.

There is naturally implicit in these recommendations and indeed throughout this research criticism of the status quo in Ohio's prison system. Especially in dealing with the not so delicate charge that the system is thoroughly and overwhelmingly racist, some may feel personally
attacked and therefore be rendered too hostile to weigh the following recommendations seriously and objectively. To ward off such an irrational approach, it is well to call to mind the oft-repeated statement, the cliche almost, about prisons being the best reflection of the society that uses them. If Ohio's prisons are racist, and they are, it is only because the society that produces and uses those prisons is a racist society.

Too often, however, the reflection cliche has been used as an excuse for sitting on hands when reformation of institutions is a real possibility. Now is such a time of real possibility thanks to the advent of federal monies and the resurgence of some idealists in corrections work. The task is large but it is possible.

Recommendations Regarding Milieu

If it is granted that education should play the major role in the active effort of the penal institution to effect rehabilitative change—and this is obviously granted in Ohio where the major treatment effort is education, both academic and vocational—then the setting for that educational endeavor must be consonant with the overall educational objectives.

Furthermore, if half of the prison population is Black, it is obvious that if the educational setting is racist or perceived as racist by the Black inmate, education
of the Black man becomes a contradiction in terms. Still further, the hatred generated by the negative feeling toward the Black inmate hangs like such a heavy pall over the entire system that it seriously affects the total milieu and therefore the educational setting of white inmates as well. This latter statement needs substantiation, however, in the form of further research such as that conducted by this effort, and will so be recommended later in this chapter. The present research has established the racist nature of the prison milieu as perceived by the Black inmate. To change that milieu to a setting suitable for the education of Black inmates, the following recommendations are made.

First, the appropriate departments of some university or research institute should be hired to devise some instrument for the screening of racists. After the instrument is developed and sufficiently tested, it should be used to screen all new employees of the Division of Correction. To the extent possible, the instrument should also be used retroactively on employees already working in the Division. Hopefully such a process would at least eliminate active bigots and racists from the system. It makes as much sense to have an active racist working in a prison as it does to have an active leper working in an obstetric ward.

Secondly, while all encouragement should be given to present efforts to raise salaries throughout the Division and to recruit more Blacks, much more than a token effort
at recruitment of Black personnel must be made. The most repeated refrain heard from Black inmates is that there is nobody to talk to. So long as society continues to opt for prisons and prisons that are half-filled with Blacks, the prison establishment should feel absolutely free in working toward the goal of fifty percent Black personnel.

In this context it might be added that especially to be encouraged are Division efforts to do away with institutions as much as possible through increased, creative uses of probation and parole. Institutionalization, like power, corrupts; and total institutionalization, like absolute power, corrupts totally.

A third recommendation would be that the amount of in-service training given personnel be at least doubled and that one-half of all in-service training time be devoted to combating the problem of racism. This should take the form of promoting increased knowledge of the factors involved that are both exterior and interior to the trainee. A massive program of sensitivity training, tailored to fit the specific needs of prison personnel is in order to insure the lasting quality of any change away from racism in the prisons.

Fourthly, sessions must also be held on as regular a basis as necessary for all Black inmates to first of all increase and deepen a very healthy sense of Black pride and
secondly to afford them understanding of the phenomenon, historically and existentially, of white racism.

Fifthly, sessions must also similarly be held for white inmates to increase their understanding of Blacks and of their own racism, its origins and effects both on themselves and on their fellow inmates who happen to be Black.

Of course, this is a massive program, but just such a program is needed if institutionalization continues—and, despite noble efforts to the contrary, the institutions will be around for some time—and if racism is to be exorcised from the institutionalization process.

If such a massive program to change drastically the prison milieu from a racist to a neutral setting were not implemented, then it would be the judgment of this researcher that the prison should become a prison in the strict sense. It should merely lock men up, work them hard at manual labor, and feed them. This latter alternative would be far less cruel in the long run than playing educational and rehabilitative games at the inmate's expense; games, furthermore, where nobody wins and the Black inmate is assured of losing more heavily than others.

Recommendations Regarding Education

If the environment of the prisons is indeed substantially altered in such a way that the racist context presently there would give way to one more open to the possibility
of education for Black inmates (and for white inmates, too),
then on the basis of this research only one recommendation
seems in order.

Indeed, it would be possible to make many recommen-
dations regarding various programs in the separate insti-
tutions, and surely reasons for the soundness of the recom-
manded changes could be given. However, the complexity of
the present educational debacle due both to the spectre of
racism over the whole system and the years of neglect of
sound, progressive, educational practice make a more basic,
radical recommendation in order. To patch up or tighten up
existing programs would be to fall victim to the finger-in-
the-dike philosophy that has plagued prison educational en-
deavors in Ohio since their inception.

Therefore it is the recommendation of this research
that, given the proper milieu within the prisons, i.e., an
a-racist milieu, that the complete educational effort with-
in the prisons be given over to the control of the State of
Ohio Department of Education. This would undoubtedly entail
legislative as well as executive action, but it could be ef-
fected. All education, then, would function in the State of
Ohio prisons much the same way that health services function
within the Federal Bureau of Prisons under the separate but
cooperating domain of the U.S. Department of Health.

This change of organizational structure would primar-
ily take educational policy making out of the control of the
custody forces who necessarily run the prison qua prison. It would allow a speedy shift to individualized instruction in both the academic and vocational areas combined with objectives in keeping with the apropos philosophy of Illich and the pedagogy of Freire.

Of course, this shift to individualization and relevant philosophy would entail much further research, but the research would then be done by educators to meet known educational needs.

Furthermore, because of the reluctance of the general public to finance prisons that have become centers of training, the financing structure of the prison school system, personnel and material costs, should be handled under the auspices of the State Department of Education. A further recommendation would be that once per capita cost of the prison education system is worked out, the burden of meeting that cost should be visited on the local community school system that tried to pass its "problem" on to the prison school system. If it is impossible at this time in Ohio's history because of unimaginative planning in the past to place the prisons themselves in or near the communities that produce the crime, at least those communities should bear a fair share of the cost of the rehabilitative efforts of education and re-education.

Finally, because inmates are those by and large who have been failed by and dropped by the school systems of
the various communities of the State, if the Department of Education were in control of the penal education system, it could and would learn much that would be of benefit to those school systems in the community.

Recommendations for Further Research

As a result of this research and in light of the recommendations already made in this chapter, the following areas are suggested as most in need of further study:

1. The effects of white racism upon white inmates in Ohio's prisons.

2. The effects of white racism upon white personnel in Ohio's prisons.

3. The effects of white racism upon Black personnel in Ohio's prisons.

4. Much gathering of raw data on the inmate population, Black and white, is necessary. The emphasis should be on where the inmate is at presently, educationally, instead of merely relying on past, often faulty records for decision making.

Surely the reading of this research will suggest other areas of study to various interested parties. The four items listed above, however, are priority items in the mind of the present researcher and to list more recommendations at this writing would merely detract from the urgency this researcher wishes to impart to the items given.

Conclusion

This research set out to examine the milieu in which the education of Black inmates presently takes place in
Ohio's prisons. This was done under the assumption that the context or institutional press in which education happens is at least equally as important as the content of education.

A philosophical—logical method of research was employed and in this mode a selected bibliography was utilized to produce an interview schedule for eliciting from Black inmates their perception of their milieu. Justification for the method and the instrument of research was given. The composite interview demonstrating clearly the inmates' perceived racist tone of the milieu was presented. Finally, on the basis of that perceived tone and a careful reading of the bibliographical material, a few reasoned but very fundamental recommendations were made.

This research has been conducted with honesty and openness. It is sincerely hoped that it will be received by the Ohio Division of Correction, which aided greatly in both its inception and completion, in the same spirit with which it was conducted.
APPENDIX I

Note: Reproduced on the pages of the appendices are the data contained in the original documents. The author of this research is in possession of Xerox copies of the original documents and the original documents themselves are in the files of the Ohio Division of Correction, 65 South Front Street, Room 1201, Columbus, Ohio, 43215.
July 1, 1971

TO: Bennett J. Cooper, Chief, Division of Correction

FROM: Richard R. Jones, Supervisor, Bureau of Classification

SUBJECT: MONTHLY REPORT FOR JUNE, 1971

Transfers from O.S.R. to Leb.C.I. 97

Transfers from Ohio Penitentiary:

London Correctional Institution 63
Marion Correctional Institution 43
Chillicothe Correctional Institute 41

Sub-Total 244

Chillicothe Correctional Institute—C.P.U. 3
Lima State Hospital 0
Ohio State Reformatory 1

Total 248

Honor Status (O.P. - H.D.) 12

New Commitments to Ohio Penitentiary

Direct from Court 169
O.S.R. (Permanent) 14
Leb.C.I. (Permanent) 3

Total 186

Parole Violators Returned to O.P. 2

O.P. High Number 132-757
July 1, 1971

SUBJECT: MONTHLY REPORT FOR JUNE, 1971

Transfers to O.P. from Other Institutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Disciplinary</th>
<th>Administrative</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.C.I.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.C.I.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.C.I.-C.P.U.</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leb.C.I.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.S.R.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
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INSTITUTIONAL POPULATION, JULY 1, 1971

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</thead>
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<td>O.P.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockade</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>1746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor Dorm</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>955</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.5% Colored</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lo.C.I.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>409</td>
<td>1109</td>
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<tr>
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<td>136</td>
<td>297</td>
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<td>861</td>
<td>545</td>
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<tr>
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<td>38.7% Colored</td>
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<tr>
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<td>408</td>
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<td>124</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>670</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>1172</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>T.R.C.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>C.P.U.</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>465</td>
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July 1, 1971

SUBJECT: MONTHLY REPORT FOR JUNE, 1971

Institutional Population—Con'd.

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<tr>
<td>O.S.R.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grafton H.C.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>104</td>
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<td>Osborn H.C.</td>
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<td>Mt. Vernon H.C.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm H.C.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>127</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL H.C.</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>297</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Dorm-MYC</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>163</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
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<td>1168</td>
<td>1956</td>
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<td>1236</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leb.C.I.</td>
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<tr>
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Divisional Population Trend for Month of June, 1971

133 Loss over previous month

INSTITUTION POPULATION TREND FOR 1971 AS COMPARED TO 1970

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>July 1, 1971</th>
<th>July 1, 1970</th>
<th>GAIN</th>
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<td>O.P.</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1902</td>
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<td>1406</td>
<td>1519</td>
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<td>1172</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<td>C.C.I.</td>
<td>1141</td>
<td>1223</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>2103</td>
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<td>9649</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>DIVISIONAL LOSS</td>
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SUBJECT: MONTHLY REPORT FOR JUNE, 1971

ESCAPES: JUNE, 1971

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>O.P.</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>O.S.R.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leb.C.I.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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TRANSFER SCHEDULE FOR JULY, 1971

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<tr>
<td>O.P. to Lo.C.I.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, July 6, 1971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, July 12, 1971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, July 26, 1971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.P. to C.C.I.</td>
<td>2 Shipments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, July 13, 1971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, July 27, 1971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.S.R. to Leb.C.I.</td>
<td>3 Shipments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, July 12, 1971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, July 26, 1971</td>
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JULY, 1971 PAROLE MEMORANDUM

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O.P.</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 8, 1971</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 9, 1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 8, 1971</td>
<td>19 (out-of-state)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leb.C.I.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 22, 1971</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 22, 1971</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 24, 1971</td>
<td>9 (out-of-state)</td>
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<tr>
<td>O.S.R.</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>76</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6 (out-of-state)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 19, 1971</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SUBJECT: MONTHLY REPORT FOR JUNE, 1971

July, 1971 Parole Memorandum—Cont'd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C.C.I.</th>
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<th>M.C.I.</th>
<th>Paroled</th>
</tr>
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<td>June 29, 1971</td>
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<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 26, 1971</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 26, 1971</td>
<td>7 (out-of-state)</td>
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<td></td>
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O.R.W. Paroled 10

July 1, 1971 10

TOTAL PAROLED 304

PAROLE COMMISSION HEARING DATES

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<tr>
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<th>August, 1971</th>
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<td>2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.R.W.</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.S.R.</td>
<td>12, 13, 14</td>
<td>9, 10, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lo.C.I.</td>
<td>19, 20, 21</td>
<td>16, 17, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>21, 22, 23</td>
<td>18, 19, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.C.I.</td>
<td>26, 27</td>
<td>23, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.C.I.</td>
<td>28, 29, 30</td>
<td>25, 26, 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TO: ALL MANAGING OFFICERS
DIVISION OF CORRECTION

FROM: Bennett J. Cooper, Commissioner
Division of Correction

SUBJECT: Research Project
Mr. Frank Fortkamp

Mr. Frank Fortkamp of the Central Office staff will be conducting some educational research in the area of minority group needs over the coming weeks. It will be necessary for him to consult with your Treatment Deputy and/or Educational Staff and through them to interview inmates.

Will you please accord him whatever courtesies he needs to carry out this research.

s/Bennett J. Cooper
Bennett J. Cooper
Commissioner
Division of Correction

BJC:mjr
BIBLIOGRAPHY


