3-1-1974

Prison Riots as Agents of Prison Reform; A Sociological Study of Violence and Change

Robert R. Jorgensen
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/2180
PRISON RIOTS AS AGENTS OF PRISON REFORM
A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF VIOLENCE AND CHANGE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Sociology
and the
Faculty of the College of Graduate Studies
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Robert R. Jorgensen
March 1974
Accepted for the faculty of the College of Graduate Studies of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

Wayne White
Chairman

Graduate Committee:

Mark D. Paaske
Name

Sociology
Department

Harvey M. Martin
Name

Public Administration
Department
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to thank the directors and commissioners of the state departments of correction for their cooperation in providing specific information on certain prison riots and disturbances. Had it not been for their support, such information would have been difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. A special word of thanks is due Dr. Wayne Wheeler, Professor of Sociology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Without his teaching, astute criticism, and friendly advice and consultation, this study could not have been written. Appreciation also goes to Mr. Gaylon Kuchel, who was especially helpful at the beginning of the study by pointing the author in the right direction and putting him in contact with some of the nation's top penologists and authorities on prison riots. The writer is particularly indebted to his wife, Marlene, who in addition to looking after a home and two active sons, spent countless hours typing and retyping draft copies of the manuscript. During many trying and humiliating moments, she always had words of encouragement to offer, and these were often the inspiration and motivation needed to see the thesis through to completion.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF TABLES</th>
<th>viii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter

1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE ........................................ 1
   THE PROBLEM ................................................................. 1
   Statement of the Problem ............................................... 1
   Importance of the Study .................................................. 2
   THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM ................................ 3
   RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES .................................... 5
   DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED .............................................. 7
   Prison .......................................................... 7
   Prison Riot ....................................................... 7
   Violence .......................................................... 10
   Change and/or Reform ................................................. 11
   A PREVIEW .......................................................... 11

2. SOME PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE AND CHANGE .......................... 13
   LEGITIMACY OF VIOLENCE ............................................... 14
   COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE AS A CATALYST OF CHANGE ...................... 16
   Internal War (Revolution) ............................................. 16
   Social Conflict ...................................................... 18
   Mass Movements .................................................... 19
   Social Movements ................................................... 21
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOME OTHER FUNCTIONS OF VIOLENCE</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence as a Social Response</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence as a Danger Signal</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence as a Safety-Valve Mechanism</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence as a Form of Therapy</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. SOME CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF PRISON RIOTS</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRISON RIOTS: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESULTS OF DATA COLLECTION</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon State Penitentiary</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina's Central Prison</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State Correctional Facilities</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho State Penitentiary</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana State Penitentiary</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State Correctional Facilities</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont State Prison and House of Correction for Men</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine State Prison</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee Prison for Women</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas State Penitentiary</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Binh Stockade</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. THE RIOT AT ATTICA: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTICA BEFORE THE RIOT</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prison</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Inmates</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Correctional Staff</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison Life in General</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reforms Sought</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTICA DURING THE RIOT</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spark: Wednesday, September 8, 1971</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Explosion: Thursday, September 9</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Riot Spreads</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudimentary Inmate Society</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Demands Drawn Up</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiations Develop</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Assault</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Toll</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Excessive Force</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTICA AFTER THE RIOT</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility Gap</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment of the Wounded</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reprisals</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison Reforms Instituted</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF PRISON VIOLENCE</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOME THEORIES ON THE CAUSES OF PRISON RIOTS</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOME BASIC CAUSES OF PRISON RIOTS--PAST AND PRESENT</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Causes</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Causes</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Causes</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Functional Consequences of Prison Violence</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison Reforms Introduced</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Reforms Announced</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Theoretical Perspectives on Prison Riots</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Deprivation</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Lag</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cyclical Nature of Prison Riots</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison Riots as Balance-Maintaining Mechanisms</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Summary and Conclusions</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Retrospect</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. A Note About the Study and Its Author</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Listing of Proposed Demands at Attica</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Causes of Contemporary Prison Riots by Category</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Main Cell Blocks and Exercise Yards</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attica Correctional Facility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aspirational Deprivation</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Decremental Deprivation</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Progressive Deprivation</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Prison riots have long been recognized as persistent and pervasive problems in American society. However, the general orientation of prison administrators and correctional organizations has led them to view the riots as dysfunctional and disruptive, and to disregard their positive functions.

In reviewing the literature on prisons, it became increasingly clear to the writer that an adequate science of prison violence must depend heavily upon the research skills and theoretical insights of sociologists who will bring them to bear on the prison community. Perhaps no more compelling evidence can be found of the failure of sociologists to take advantage of the rich research potential of the field of corrections than the nearly total disregard by sociological investigators of the series of prison riots that occurred in correctional institutions throughout the United States during the years 1968 to 1971. Yet these riots were among the more striking phenomena of collective violence which have occurred in the nation.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Of special interest to the writer are the functional, as contrasted to the dysfunctional, consequences of violence. Accordingly, the present study examines some of the functions of violence in terms of the changes which it brings about in social structure. Since the
terms violence, change, and social structure subsume so much, attention will be focused on prisons as a special type of social institution and structure, on prison riots as a major form of violence, and on prison reform as a specific type of change. The purpose of the study, then, is to identify and analyze some of the functional consequences of prison riots in terms of the changes or reforms which result therefrom. Concomitantly, the study is an attempt to relate violence as a causal factor in terms of the kinds of changes it brings about in the social structure of the prison. In linking violence and change, they will necessarily be treated as contingent factors, for it is obvious that violence may be a result as well as a source of change.

Importance of the Study

No one engaged in thought about history can remain unaware of the role violence has played in human affairs. It is at first glance rather surprising that violence has been singled out so seldom for special consideration. In fact, it did not even rate an entry in the 1968 edition of the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. A cursory examination of the contemporary work of American sociologists indicates that violence has been a very much neglected field of inquiry. As a result, much less is known about the causes and consequences of violence, and especially the consequences, than about the scope, intensity, and duration of violence under various circumstances. Moreover, the literature that does exist has not been noteworthy for attempts to relate violence and change, although a number of studies on conflict (e.g., Coser, 1956; Dahrendorf, 1959) have tried to do this by explaining structural change in terms of group conflict.
The American Correctional Association points out in its Manual of Correctional Standards (1966) that no complete and definitive survey has been made of the effects of riots on the prisons in which they occurred or, for that matter, on prisons in general. Many of the studies (e.g., Flynn, 1953; MacCormick, 1954; Conrad, 1966; Fox, 1971) which have been done on prison riots have dealt with the causes, rather than the consequences, of the riots. The importance of these studies notwithstanding, research into the causes and consequences of collective violence in correctional institutions has, for all intents and purposes, been ignored or at least passed over with little consideration. The present study will serve to illustrate the need for more research concerning the relationship between violence and change in correctional institutions because, at best, it forms only a small, visible segment of a phenomenon which lies largely beneath the surface of official recognition.

THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

Although much of Lewis Coser's work is concerned with the wider subject of social conflict rather than with the narrower topic of violence, it will nevertheless serve as a convenient springboard from which to launch an investigation into the functional consequences of violence. Implicit if not explicit in some of Coser's works is the notion that violence (which he calls social conflict) is not only inevitable, but may actually have important functional consequences. Somewhat in line with this, Conrad says: "... there is no denying that mass violence in prison sometimes gains objectives which inmates
could not otherwise hope to achieve" (1966:116). Or, as Loveland writes: "It is frequently true that desirable and necessary improvement in prisons comes about as the result of disturbances, riots, and mass escapes" (1966:6). As many advocates of change will no doubt agree, it often takes the unusual event, with loss of life and property, to stimulate the thought processes of men. Thus, it will be the thesis of this writer that prison violence can be functional to the extent that it brings about certain types of desired change in the social structure of the prison.

To focus on the functional aspects of violence is not to deny that other aspects of violence are destructive of group unity or that they lead to disintegration of specific social structures. One need not look far for examples.

An article in Life magazine has been entitled, "A Riot Is An Unnecessary Evil" (1952:138). The theme of the article is that prison riots are evil, horrendously so. They are economically wasteful. They are destructive of life, limb, and property. They destroy the morale of inmates and prison employees. They destroy public confidence in penologists and prison systems. One could further trace the far-reaching extent and character of the evil that these disturbances create.

But, are riots unnecessary? The answer depends, perhaps, on how one looks at the question. For example, as one author writes: ". . . without riots our prisoners would be treated with the barbarity of uncivilized tribes; or the cruelties of the dark ages" (Wallack, 1953:7). According to this point of view, riots can be considered an
antidote against the maltreatment of prisoners and, hence, a necessary evil. One could, of course, counter this theory by saying that prison riots should not be necessary to bring about humane conditions in penal institutions in a civilized society. However, as Wallack says:

... none of us who have observed the situation could be so smug as to discount the effect riots have had in improving the shameful and inhumane conditions that often prevail in penal institutions. They have served this purpose more than once (1953:7).

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study takes the form of a secondary analysis of qualitative data. The data were gathered from a variety of sources, the most important of which are as follows: (a) correctional journals, reports, and monographs; (b) informal discussions with prison officials, correction officers, and former inmates; (c) newspaper and magazine accounts of prison disturbances; (d) direct communication with forty-three state departments of correction; and (e) to a limited extent, nonparticipant observation. These, of course, were supplemented by a review of other relevant literature, particularly that dealing with violence and change.

Attention is focused almost exclusively on state penal institutions as distinguished from federal institutions. Intermingling of state and federal institutions was purposely avoided in an effort to hold the number and types of variables to a minimum. Further, the writer concentrated primarily on those riots which occurred during the period January 1, 1968 to December 31, 1971. This period was considered particularly appropriate for study as it not only encompassed a series
of contemporary prison riots and disturbances, but also an era of considerable unrest in the larger society.

Although prisons tend to isolate inmates from the larger society, prisons themselves are among the institutional complexes of society and, like other social institutions, are caught up in the currents of time and place. For this reason, it was felt that certain of the prison riots which occurred during the period covered by this study would reflect some of the unrest which prevailed in the free community—"the outside world"—and would therefore provide a clearer conception of the sociology of the prison community.

There are at least two methodological difficulties involved in this study: reliance on official statements and overcoming the biases of other writers. In Chapter 3, there is a tendency to rely more heavily on official statements than on public documents or special commission reports. This stems from the fact that the latter sources were simply not available or readily obtainable in the majority of cases. The official statements must therefore be used with a certain degree of caution and weighted accordingly.

The writer is also well aware that a valid picture of prison riots can be uncovered only by remaining completely objective. Many writers, however, have had a tendency to include their own values in their discussions of prison violence. They often assume, at least

---

1 The writer attempted to obtain special reports on prison disturbances from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, American Correctional Association, state departments of correction, six different universities, and several notable penologists. However, with few exceptions, these efforts met with negative results.
implicitly, that prison riots are bad. This infusion of personal values has undoubtedly colored and limited a good deal of the literature on prison riots. Although occasional doubt may arise, the writer has attempted to guard against becoming partisan, either consciously or unconsciously.

If it turns out that the present paper strikes the reader as being rather controversial, a further word of explanation concerning this unusual approach can be found in Appendix A.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Prison

The term "prison" is used as a convenient overall designation for adult correctional institutions above the level of the county jail and city workhouses. Included under the general heading "prisons" are penitentiaries, reformatories for men and for women, road and forestry camps, farms, and such special institutions as those for insane and mentally defective criminals (Manual of Correctional Standards, 1966: 33). Today, prisons are commonly referred to as correctional facilities, thus suggesting that their goals at least are corrective or rehabilitative in nature.

Prison Riot

When a disturbance becomes a riot is, of course, a matter of definition. Unfortunately, the literature on prison riots has been

---

2 The term "penitentiary," which derives from the Latin, is widely used as a synonym for prison "and suggests a place where a man may be sent to do penance for his sins against society" (Leinwand, 1972:24).
more descriptive than definitive. There is, it seems, no universal agreement on a definition of prison riots. As Gary Marx points out: "The number of attributes to be used in characterizing riots is large, and we lack a generally-agreed-upon set of concepts or measures for classifying them" (1970:24). It is also difficult to say whether or not a riot has occurred in a prison because many revolts defined as "minor" disturbances by prison officials are probably viewed by the public as full-scale riots depending upon the amount of publicity they are given by the mass media.

In an attempt to arrive at a definition of prison riots which can gain acceptance by prison officials, the following definition is taken from the American Correctional Association's manual on the Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Prison Riots and Disturbances:

A riotous situation may be declared in the event of a group of inmates assaulting any constituted official, destroying state property, banding together to resist authority, refusing to return to cells and wards, or any overt act which would be detrimental to the orderly routine of the institution (1970:87).

While this statement is more a working definition than a legal definition of a prison riot, it is important to this study and will serve as a useful point of departure. As will be noted, the definition is quite general and in need of further amplification.

Of particular significance in the American Correctional Association's definition of a riot is the use of the word "group," which is suggestive of collective action or behavior on the part of members of the inmate community. In offering a legal definition of a riot, both the Encyclopedia Americana (1962) and American Heritage
Dictionary of the English Language (1970) state that a riot is a breach of the public peace by an unlawful assembly of three or more persons for a common purpose. Similarly, Charles Fricke, in his Criminal Definitions, Terms, and Phrases, defines a riot as "the assembly of three or more persons who disturb the public peace by using force or violence to any other person, or property" (1968:68). These definitions all have one thing in common. They imply that collective action is a necessary ingredient in riotous situations. If prison riots are outgrowths of collective behavior, and it appears that they are, they offer a rare opportunity for a systematic analysis of the dynamics of collective violence.

By way of further clarification, an assault is "an unlawful attempt or threat to injure another physically" (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1970). Assault nearly always implies physical contact and the application or attempted application of force or violence.

A constituted official may include anyone from the prison warden or superintendent down to the guard or correction officer.

Taken alone, destruction of property is a rather nebulous term for it gives the reader no indication how much destruction of what kind of property there must be before it reaches riotous proportions. An inmate who breaks a chair in his cell and sets fire to his mattress has most assuredly destroyed property. However, this would hardly be labelled a riot. On the other hand, if a group of prisoners break chairs and set fires in their cells, a riotous situation begins to take form. The amount of destruction done during prison riots varies widely and, as might be expected, it is difficult to apply a rule of
thumb in those cases where destruction of property is the only criterion used in determining whether or not a riot has in fact occurred.

Slowdown and sitdown strikes might be considered examples of inmates banding together to resist authority. Refusing to return to cells or wards is another means of resisting authority, for it represents willful disobedience of orders, as well as prison rules and regulations.

The catch-all phrase, "or any overt act," could include almost anything—from an inmate yelling that there is salt in the coffee to the taking of hostages.

Conceivably, prison riots can cover a wide range of acts, and many prison disturbances can be properly classified as prison riots based on the American Correctional Association's definition.

Violence

The term "violence" will share a prominent place in this study and will be used frequently in referring to prison riots. "In the social context violence may be defined roughly as the illegal employment of methods of physical coercion for personal or group ends" (Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, 1934). Group violence, or collective violence as it will more commonly be referred to in this paper, is defined by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence as "the unlawful threat or use of force by any group that results or is intended to result in the injury or forcible restraint or intimidation of persons, or the destruction or forcible seizure of property" (1969:59).
Change and/or Reform

The terms "change" and "reform" will be used interchangeably throughout this study and will be interpreted to mean any significant alteration in the prison's social structure, i.e., its administrative organization, communication network, rules and regulations, classification procedures, etc. In other words, any deviation in the social structure of the prison at a given point in time \( (T_2) \) from that of a preceding point in time \( (T_1) \) shall be considered structural change. It should be emphasized that the study will be concerned primarily with those changes which can be related or attributed directly to the riots.

A PREVIEW

In the succeeding chapters, an attempt will be made to show some of the causes and effects of prison violence, with special emphasis on the positive functions of riots. This will be accomplished by drawing examples from available research literature and data collected from various state departments of correction.

Chapter 2 will cite some perspectives on violence and social change which have been gleaned from the literature and can be generalized to correctional institutions. This chapter will attempt to show that violence can and sometimes does serve positive functions. Chapter 3 reviews a series of prison riots which have occurred in the United States in recent years. The discussion in this chapter will be largely descriptive in nature, but will identify some of the causes and consequences of prison riots as reported by penologists in the field. Since it has such far-reaching importance in any study of
prison violence, the riot at New York State's Attica Correctional Facility in September, 1971, will be singled out for special examination in Chapter 4. This is intended to provide a microcosmic case study of a riot so that the reader can look more closely at the dynamics of collective violence at work in a major penal institution. In Chapter 5, the author will analyze some of the causes and consequences of prison riots. Attention will then turn to an examination of some theoretical perspectives on prison riots in Chapter 6. Finally, Chapter 7 will be devoted to a summary and a discussion of some of the conclusions reached during this study.
Chapter 2

SOME PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE AND CHANGE

To better understand violence and change in contemporary American society, it is necessary to place the subject in perspective, both socially and historically. In this chapter, some of the social functions of violence will be discussed in capsule form—the purpose here being to show that violence is not of necessity dysfunctional as some of its prophets may lead one to believe. The discussion which follows represents an attempt to explain some of the rationale behind violence by briefly examining the role it has played in bringing about social change. The latter half of the chapter will be devoted to a discussion of some of the lesser, albeit important, functions of violence. Some of the perspectives discussed herein will prove helpful in analyzing and explaining the dynamics of prison violence in later chapters.

One of the things that seems to stand out in much of the literature on violence is the notion that many movements of social revolt which have proved successful have been compelled to use violence at some point in time. In his article on "The Ordeal of Change," Hancock writes: "In every age since the beginning of man, we have experienced recurrent periods of excessive lawlessness and violence" (1969:17). He goes on to say: "We were born in violence, we opened up the West in violence, our labor movement was conceived and nurtured in violence" (1969:22). Although considerable evidence can be mustered to document the contention that violence is a persistent characteristic
in American social life, only a few observations will be made in this chapter.

LEGITIMACY OF VIOLENCE

Violence constitutes a significant and recurring theme in the American value structure. It runs like a thread through the fabric of social life. To many people, violence means illegitimate behavior—behavior that is contrary to the mores or against the legal codes, behavior that exceeds the limits of tolerance of the society at large. However, as the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence points out in its report on violence in the United States:

Historically men have not acted on the principle that all violence is to be avoided. Our nation is no exception. Like all others, our society has recognized some uses of violence as necessary and legitimate and some as unacceptable and illegitimate (1969:233).

In discussing some of the perspectives on violence in America today, Dr. Walter Menninger states: "Indeed, a major function of society is the organization and legitimation of violence in the interest of maintaining society itself" (1969:10).

The acceptability of violence can be conceptualized as being on a continuum ranging from fully legitimate at one pole to completely illegitimate at the other. To cite a simple example, the parent who spanks a child may be engaging in legitimate violence, but the parent who breaks a child's arm would be engaging in illegitimate violence. With respect to the rationality of violence, Arendt has this to say:

Violence . . . is rational to the extent that it is effective in reaching the end that must justify it. And since when we act we never know with any certainty the eventual consequences of what we are doing, violence can
remains rational only if it pursues short-term goals. Violence does not promote causes, neither history nor revolution, neither progress nor reaction; but it can serve to dramatize grievances and bring them to public attention (1970:79).

Whether various forms of violence are considered legitimate or illegitimate is a function of perception; that is, it depends on how they are perceived in the eye of the beholder.

A great deal of violent behavior in America is legitimate or positively sanctioned. Many occupations—e.g., policemen, boxers, wrestlers, bouncers, soldiers—allow for and even require violence in one form or another. Each has a mandate to use violence under certain conditions. Hans Toch, however, says that "no form of violence is more accepted and more damned, more ignored and more feared, than collective violence" (1969:195). War may be taken as an example. Until recent years, warfare has been an almost noncontroversial feature of the human condition. With few exceptions, societies have condoned the violence of war and rewarded and decorated those who distinguished themselves in battle by inflicting death and destruction.

In battle, violence is committed because the individual's military vocation demands it. The soldier is instructed to follow destructive routines, and, for the most part, he complies because he has learned to do so, and because he accepts his role as defined. Typically, he may gain no satisfaction from violence beyond those of discharging his obligations efficiently and of participating in the collective destruction of a consensually defined enemy. To be sure, there are soldiers who seek out "blood" and "gore" beyond the call of duty and who gain considerable reward and personal satisfaction from
the administration of death and destruction. There are those who volunteer for elite "killer units" that operate behind enemy lines; there are others who prize assignments as snipers or scouts; and there are persons with a penchant for heroic stature in defiance of "sensible" odds. As Dr. Menninger so aptly put it: "Man is an animal, one of two species in nature which indiscriminately kills its own kind. (Rats are the other!)" (1969:6).

COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE AS A CATALYST OF CHANGE

Although violence has been a disagreeably persistent characteristic of American social life, the theme of violence has taken different forms in response to America's changing social organization and value system. Historical analysis suggests that while much of the American violence has been prompted by environmental conditions that no longer exist, many of the social tensions that produced violence in the past are recurrent and remain relevant. Some forms of collective violence, although by no means unique to America, are discussed below.

Internal War (Revolution)

The sanctioning of violence on a national, as opposed to an international, level can be seen in the case of internal war. "Internal war," says Eckstein, "is practically the essence of contemporary

---

1 An example of this occurred in March, 1969, when a platoon of American soldiers passed through a Vietnamese hamlet called My Lai and left more than a hundred Vietnamese civilians, including small children, lying dead. The "massacre at My Lai" was by no means the bloodiest in American military history, however. One even bloodier occurred at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1890, when more than 200 Oglala Sioux Indians were killed by United States cavalrymen.
political life" (1964:3). Broadly speaking, internal wars are attempts to change by violence, or threat of violence, a government’s rules, policies, or organization. Regardless of who wins them, internal wars always succeed in changing societies, even though the changes may not correspond with original intentions.

Revolution (using the term internal war in a somewhat narrower sense) is not the same thing as social change, but is a form of it (Johnson, 1966:5). However, in order to understand its occasional attractiveness as an alternative, it must be studied as part of the general phenomenon of social change. The concept of revolution in political analysis refers specifically to the form of change that occurred, for example, in France in 1789, in Russia in 1917, and in China in 1949. While there may be some room for disagreement, many authorities contend that the United States, itself, is of revolutionary origin.

As a special kind of social change, revolutionary change involves the intrusion of violence into social relations, and is an acceptable means of change only when purposive policies of change are not forthcoming. As Lerone Bennett points out: "Revolutions are usually the last link in a long chain of events, and they are usually preceded by a long period of social unrest" (1965:2). In short, "revolution ... is the acceptance of violence in order to cause the system to change when all else has failed, and the very idea of revolution is contingent upon this perception of societal failure" (Johnson, 1966:12).
Social Conflict

In his *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, Ralf Dahrendorf writes:

...all that is creativity, innovation, and development in the life of the individual, his group, and his society is due, to no small extent, to the operation of conflicts between group and group, individual and individual, emotion and emotion within one individual. This fundamental fact alone seems to me to justify the value judgment that conflict is essentially good and desirable (1959:208).

"Change and conflict," says Dahrendorf, "are equally universal in society" (1959:210). Similarly, Eckstein (1964) acknowledges that all social systems contain persistent social strains that generate social conflict and provoke social change. Once conflict groups get organized, they engage in conflicts that effect structural changes. The more importance the individual participants in a conflict attach to its central issues, the more intense is the conflict. "The more intense conflict is, the more radical are the changes likely to be which it brings about" (Dahrendorf, 1959:236). It may be argued, then, that the degree of change varies directly with the intensity of conflict.

Lewis Coser, another leading proponent of social conflict theory, states that there are occasions for conflict in every social structure (1956:152). In his opinion, a certain degree of conflict is an essential element in group formation and the persistence of group life. He claims that "engaging in conflict with another party means that a relationship with that party has been established" (1956:121). Once relations have been established through conflict, other types of relations are likely to follow. Borrowing from Karl Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy*, Coser has written: "...conflict leads not only to ever-changing relations within the existing social structure, but the
total social system undergoes transformation through conflict" (1967:25). A certain amount of group conflict is therefore considered necessary, as it not only establishes new relationships, but helps to relieve previously existing tension within a given social structure.

Whether given forms of conflict will lead to changes in the social system or to ultimate breakdown and formation of a new system depends largely on the system's rigidity and resistance to change. On the one hand, conflict tends to be dysfunctional for a social structure in which there is insufficient toleration and institutionalization of conflict. What threatens the equilibrium of a social structure is not conflict but, rather, the rigidity of the structure itself. A flexible society, on the other hand, benefits from conflict because such behavior, by helping to create and modify norms, assures its continuance under changed conditions. A rigid system, by not permitting conflict, will impede adjustments and, by so doing, will maximize the danger of breakdown (Coser, 1956:128-157).

Mass Movements

Mass movements are another conspicuous instrument of social change for, as Eric Hoffer points out: "... mass movements are often a factor in the awakening and renovation of stagnant societies" (1951:149). They are preoccupied with the future and, as such, come to change the present. Like other types of social movement, mass movements breed

---

1 In his book, The True Believer, Hoffer examines mass movements from Christianity in its infancy to the national uprisings of our time. His analysis of mass movements is a brilliant study of the mind of the fanatic—the man whose personal failings lead him to join a cause—and is a genuine contribution to social thought.
enthusiasm and excitement, and generate a proclivity for united action. They draw their adherents from many types of humanity, but largely from the ranks of the discontented and the frustrated. As Hoffer says:

For men to plunge headlong into an understanding of vast change, they must be intensely discontented yet not destitute, and they must have the feeling that by the possession of some potent doctrine, infallible leader or some new technique they have access to a source of irresistible power. They must also have an extravagant conception of the prospects and potentialities of the future. Finally, they must be wholly ignorant of the difficulties involved in their vast undertaking (1951:20).

The frustrated are particularly attracted to a mass movement's call for action, for they see in action a cure for all of their social ills. People with a sense of fulfillment are satisfied with the status quo, whereas, the frustrated favor radical change and are quick to join a cause. A rising mass movement, suggests Hoffer, attracts and holds its following by:

... the refuge it offers from the anxieties, barrenness and meaninglessness of an individual existence. It cures the poignantly frustrated not by ... remedying the difficulties and abuses which made their lives miserable, but by freeing them from their ineffectual selves--and it does this by enfold ing and absorbing them into a closely knit and exultant whole (1951:44).

An active mass movement seeks to instill in its followers a propensity for united action and self-sacrifice "by stripping each human entity of its distinctiveness and autonomy and turning it into an anonymous particle with no will and no judgment of its own" (Hoffer, 1951:79). Stripped of his autonomy, the individual turns into a highly reactive entity and, like an unstable chemical, hungers to combine with whatever comes within his reach. In due course, he finds himself a part of a homogeneous plastic mass that can be transformed more or less
at will. "The human plasticity necessary for the realization of drastic and abrupt changes seems, therefore, to be a by-product of the process of unification and of the inculcation of a readiness for self-sacrifice" (Hoffer, 1951:79).

Social Movements

While this chapter has thus far dealt with one set of elements in collective behavior, a few additional comments concerning social movements as agents of change are in order. Herbert Blumer observes:

Social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living (1969:8).

Outstanding instances of specific, as opposed to general, social movements are reform movements and revolutionary movements. "A specific social movement," reports Blumer, "is one which has a well-defined objective or goal which it seeks to reach. In this effort, it develops an organizational structure, making it essentially a society" (1969:11). A social movement of the specific type does not come into existence with such a structure and organization already established. Instead, its organization is developed in the course of its career (Blumer, 1969:11).

It should be pointed out that agitation is of primary importance in a social movement. It is a prime mover so to speak. For a movement to begin and to gain impetus, it is necessary for people to be jarred loose from their customary ways of thinking and believing (Blumer, 1969:13). Agitation is therefore a means of arousing the interest of people while at the same time jarring them loose from their traditionalistic views. The necessary agitation may come through the
discrediting of the prevailing order by men of words with a grievance. According to Hoffer, "the man of words undermines established institutions, discredits those in power, weakens prevailing beliefs and loyalties, and sets the stage for the rise of a mass movement" (1951:120). He goes on to say: "... the faultfinding man of words, by persistent ridicule and denunciation, shakes prevailing beliefs and loyalties, and familiarizes the masses with the idea of change" (1951:127).

SOME OTHER SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF VIOLENCE

Violence as a Social Response

History has shown that people often turn to violence as a last resort. Lerone Bennett was quoted earlier as saying: "Revolutions are usually the last link in a long chain of events, and they are usually preceded by a long period of social unrest" (1965:2). The step-by-step process leading to violent behavior may look something like this: A person has problems--he seeks relief--he obtains no satisfaction--he becomes bitter. When solutions to his problems are not forthcoming, he is forced into protest-oriented action. Bienen claims that violence can be "attributed to a failure to solve problems which arise under a number of objectively specifiable conditions" (1969:75). It comes about, for example, when groups cannot obtain a hearing or when they feel they have a vested interest in suppressing voices being raised. Toch reasons that violence arises "as a reaction against unmet aspirations and consists of retaliation against the symbols of perceived unresponsiveness" (1969:233). It follows, then, that the objects of violence are often those persons and agencies who remain unresponsive to group aspirations.
The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence spent eighteen months deliberating the broad subject of violence in American society. In the course of its deliberations, the Commission identified some themes of challenge for the American people. One of these themes is particularly worth noting as relevant for continuing the discussion on violence:

Historically, when groups or individuals have been unable to attain the quality of life to which they believe they are entitled, the resulting discontent and anger have often culminated in violence. Violent protest today—from middle-class students to the inhabitants of the black ghettos and the white ghettos—has occurred in part because the protestors believe that they cannot make their demands felt effectively through normal, approved channels and that "the system" for whatever reasons, has become unresponsive to them (1969:287).

Still another factor contributing to violence today is the notion that the only way one can be heard is by making a loud enough noise to attract the attention of the news media. Increasingly, certain groups come to feel that they are listened to only when they become violent, or they find violence to be the primary means of getting attention. Menninger quotes William James as saying:

... no more fiendish torture could be devised than when you speak, no one answers; when you wave, no one turns; but everyone simply cuts you dead. Soon, ... there wells up within you such hostility, you attack those who ignore you ... (1969:9).

A vivid illustration of this plea to be heard was the slaying of eleven Israeli Olympians by Arab terrorists during the Olympic games.

---

3 When members of the American Indian Movement seized the village of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in February, 1973, they correctly assumed that the news media would be attracted to the dramatic possibilities of the event (Schultz, 1973:48).
in Munich in September, 1972. The attack on the Israeli Olympic team, which was promulgated as a means of gaining the release of 200 guerrillas being held captive in Israeli prisons, is symptomatic of the currents of violence in the world today. As it turned out, the terrorists failed in their attempt to gain the release of the imprisoned guerrillas, but succeeded in temporarily disrupting a world sports event and, in so doing, drew the spotlight of international attention to their cause.

Violence as a Danger Signal

In his article on the "Social Functions of Violence," Coser (1966:12-13) acknowledges that violence serves as a danger signal. For example, "if the incidence of violence increases rapidly, be it in the society at large or within specific sectors of it, this can be taken as a signal of severe maladjustment" (Coser, 1966:13). This signal is so loud and drastic that even those who are not otherwise noted for their sensitivity to social ills can perceive it. Along these same lines, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence reports:

If we are wise—if we listen carefully and watch closely—we will realize that violence is a social bellwether: dramatic rises in its level and modifications in its form . . . tell us that something important is happening in our political and social systems (1969:2).

Much as one might deplore the violence in prison riots, it is possible that they, too, constitute effective signaling devices to prison officials for, as Caldwell notes, "prison riots have from time to time dramatically revealed serious weaknesses in our prison system" (1965:545). To be sure, violence can be seen as a manifestation of underlying conditions. Yet perhaps because of this, those persons in high-ranking positions may feel compelled to effect changes in these conditions.
Violence as a Safety-Valve Mechanism

In an article in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1970:32), Gary Marx comments that some evidence of strain can be found in any complex body of riot data. Leinwand (1972), comparing life in prison to living in a pressure cooker, says: "There are tensions between prisoners and those who guard them. There are tensions amongst prisoners themselves as hatreds mount and competition for minor privileges grows" (1972:35). Others (e.g., Wallack, 1953; MacCormick, 1954) have suggested that life in prison is like living on top of a powder keg about to explode. If it can be concluded that all social systems contain persistent social strains as Eckstein (1964) suggests, then it is conceivable that violence serves as an outlet—a safety-valve mechanism if one insists—for the release of strain or tension.

In a series of propositions distilled primarily from the theories of Georg Simmel, Coser writes:

Social systems provide for specific institutions which serve to drain off hostile and aggressive sentiments. These safety-valve institutions help to maintain the system by preventing otherwise probable conflict or by reducing its disruptive effects. They provide substitute objects upon which to displace hostile sentiments. . . . Through these safety valves, hostility is prevented from turning against its original object. But such displacements also involve costs both for the social system and for the individual: reduced pressure for modifying the system to meet changing conditions, as well as dammed-up tension in the individual, creating potentialities for disruptive explosion (1956:48).

In those cases where safety-valve institutions exist for the displacement of strain and hostility, violence, if and when it occurs, is likely to be less intense, as some of the pressure will have already been drained off. In the absence of such safety-valve institutions,
however, violence itself must logically serve as a safety-valve mechanism for the release of pent-up feelings of hostility.

**Violence as a Form of Therapy**

"Rioting is Good for Some People," says an article in a February 9, 1972, edition of the *Manhattan Mercury*. This was the conclusion reached by Dr. H. A. Lyons, a consultant psychiatrist at Belfast's Purdysburn Hospital, after completing a study in Northern Ireland. Dr. Lyons found that a man who acts out his aggressive feelings, by throwing a brick or a punch, is less likely to suffer from depressive illness or to commit suicide than a person who represses his frustrations. The study revealed that the number of suicides in Belfast declined fifty percent as street riots intensified there several years ago.

Dr. Lyons studied figures showing the number of suicides in Belfast and the number of people with depressive illness, a serious mental disorder. He compared the average for relatively quiet years, 1964-1968, with figures for the year 1969-1970, which was characterized by numerous riots in and around Belfast. As the riots increased, he reported that "'there was a significant decrease in depressive illness in Belfast in both sexes and all age groups'" (*The Manhattan Mercury*, February 9, 1972:6c). On the average, the decrease worked out to about thirteen percent, but depressive illness was down as much as sixty-seven percent in the worst riot areas. For purposes of contrast, Dr. Lyons also studied figures for the same years in a relatively non-violent area, County Down. There he found both suicides and depressive illness on the increase in 1969-1970.
SUMMARY

The preceding discussion has identified and examined a series of instances in which violence may perform important social functions. The approach was meant to be exploratory and tentative rather than exhaustive and systematic. Enough has certainly been said, however, to show that violence is far from being totally dysfunctional as persons are often led to believe.

It was pointed out early in the chapter that violence is a persistent characteristic of American social life and that it takes different forms in response to its changing social context. Some forms of violence are legitimate or positively sanctioned. In discussing the place of violence as a catalyst of change, various types of collective behavior with a propensity towards violence have been cited. Generally speaking, collective violence has its inception in a condition of unrest, and derives its impetus from dissatisfaction with the current form of life and the wish for better things. Based on the preceding discussion, it can be inferred that violence is a correlate of change. Finally, some ancillary social functions of violence were discussed. Here it was seen that violence may serve as a (1) social response, (2) danger signal, (3) safety-valve mechanism, and/or (4) form of therapy.

In the next chapter, a number of prison riots will be selectively discussed. An attempt will be made to identify some of the causes and consequences of the riots in an effort to better show the correlation that exists between violence and change.
Chapter 3

SOME CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF PRISON RIOTS

Violent and disruptive behavior is by no means novel to correctional institutions. Penal history has documented numerous incidents of open and violent rebellion in prisons across the United States. Just as the trend on college campuses and in the community at large has been one of protest over national issues and for social reform in recent years, so the tendencies in correctional institutions appear to follow similar patterns.

PRISON RIOTS: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Historically speaking, there were riots and mass escapes in the old Simsbury, Connecticut, copper mine as early as 1774. The same happened in the Walnut Street Jail\(^1\) in Philadelphia, at Newgate Prison prior to the establishment of the Auburn Prison in New York, in the early Maine and Massachusetts prisons, and, in fact, almost everywhere from the beginning of prisons in the United States (Teeters, 1953:14). Further, Caldwell reports:

During 1929 and 1930, serious prison riots broke out in many institutions throughout the country . . . . A series of investigations followed and produced some sweeping prison reforms, one of which was the reorganization of the federal prison system and the establishment of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (1965:545).

\(^1\)Built in 1775, the Walnut Street Jail "was regarded as the first true penitentiary of the Western Hemisphere" (The Kansas City Star, August 13, 1973:2).
The year 1951 is an appropriate point of departure for a review of modern prison riots because a major wave of prison violence occurred during the years 1951-1953. MacCormick (1954:18), for example, lists thirty-nine riots, strikes, and other serious disturbances in prisons and reformatories for men in the United States during the period May, 1951, to December 31, 1953, more than had taken place in the preceding quarter-century. In just eight short months, some twelve different states had twenty-one riots varying in length and intensity (U.S. News & World Report, December 19, 1952:19). The riots of greatest magnitude and importance began in April, 1952, when violent and destructive revolts that occurred almost simultaneously in the New Jersey Prison at Trenton and the Michigan Prison at Jackson were followed by a series of disturbances in prisons throughout the country.

There was a relative calm in correctional institutions until 1955, when another series of riots began in the State Penitentiary at Walla Walla, Washington, and spread across the country. Although Utah, in 1957, and Montana, in 1959, experienced what were termed serious incidents because of the number of hostages involved, another major episode of prison violence did not occur until 1968, when a riot resulting in extensive property damage occurred in the Oregon State Penitentiary at Salem (Time, March 22, 1968:22). That same year, two other disturbances occurred at San Quentin. These disturbances were characterized by coordination with members of the community outside the correctional institution and consisted of work strikes and refusals to participate in weekend recreational activities.

The series of riots that occurred in correctional institutions in 1968 prompted the American Correctional Association (previously known
as the American Prison Association) to revise its official position paper entitled, *A Statement Concerning Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Prison Riots and Disturbances*, which was originally published in 1953. The revised version, similarly entitled, was completed in October, 1970, and is the result of work by a specially selected committee headed by William D. Leeke, Director, South Carolina Department of Corrections. It identifies the major causes of riots and disturbances in correctional institutions and recommends methods of preventing and controlling riots. A comparison of the causes identified in the Association's two versions of prison riots will be presented in Chapter 5.

There has been little relative calm in prisons since the riot in the Oregon State Penitentiary in 1968. During recent years, prisons in many parts of the nation have been the scenes of a succession of riots and lesser disturbances. Some of these disturbances have resulted in bloodshed, many have caused property damage, and most of them have produced sensational headlines. As an aftermath, boards of inquiry have been appointed, witnesses questioned, reports made, etc. But in all this, the general public has seldom gotten more than a glance at the reform measures which have been precipitated by the riots.

**RESULTS OF DATA COLLECTION**

As part of the data collection effort in this study, letters were sent to the heads of forty-three state departments of correction requesting information on the incidence of riots in their institutions during the period January 1, 1968 to December 31, 1971. In all, replies were
received from thirty-one states. Fifteen states reported incidents within their correctional system during the period mentioned above, eleven replied that there were no incidents in their systems, three hinted that they had had disturbances but had not conducted any studies and were therefore unable to provide any "meaningful" information, two completely evaded the questions asked of them, and twelve did not respond. The affirmative replies represented information on thirty-five riots throughout the United States. The following discussion is based on a sampling of the incidents as reported by prison and law enforcement officials.

**Oregon State Penitentiary**

As mentioned previously, a major disturbance occurred at the Oregon State Penitentiary at Salem on March 9, 1968. Although the Oregon Corrections Division did not make any reference to prisoner demands or underlying causes of the riot in its correspondence with this writer, the changes resulting from the riot seem to be large in both number and variety. Some of these changes are discussed below.

**Unit team case management system.** The penitentiary adopted a unit team approach to its case management procedures. The plan involves the delegation of decision-making authority to middle management and line staff members—the persons who are in most frequent contact with the inmates and, therefore, most knowledgeable of their total situation.

**Psychiatric services.** A psychiatric security unit became operational in September, 1969. The purpose of this unit is to house emotionally disturbed individuals and provide therapy programs which
will assist in their return to regular status at the earliest possible time. Since the unit's inception, the Oregon Corrections Division reports that there has been a noticeable improvement in the morale of the general population with the separation and treatment of obviously maladjusted individuals whose behavior is personally distressing and disruptive to those around them.

**Educational program.** A wide range of educational programs is now being offered at the institution. This includes adult basic education classes for nonreaders, elementary and high school courses, and a variety of college level courses for which formal credit may be obtained. General Educational Development (GED) examinations, achievement and aptitude tests, civil service examinations, and a "free school" with courses organized, developed, and moderated by students are also available.

**Vocational training.** A new vocational training facility was completed in the fall of 1971, and vocational training is now available for men who desire to learn a trade or wish to further their skill and knowledge in the craft or trade which they now possess.

**Activities program.** A widely diversified activities program has been established within the institution to serve the many and varied needs of individual inmates. It is reported that organized activities have decidedly improved the overall morale factor, provided inmates with a certain sense of achievement, and have directed interest toward socially acceptable leisure time activities.
Medical services. The medical facility underwent extensive remodeling and now consists of a twenty-bed general hospital, with general medical, contagious, and intensive care units. Offices and medical facilities were relocated to enable better services and supervision.

Pay incentive program. In 1969, an experimental pay incentive program raised the opportunity for maximum pay from $1.00 to $3.00 per day. Key positions were identified and a pay scale established. According to the Oregon Corrections Division, success of the program was evidenced by improved morale, less sick time lost, and greater production by a reduced work force.

New construction. In addition to remodeling the hospital facility, an extensive remodeling of the visiting room was accomplished in the summer of 1968. Visitors are now permitted to embrace at the beginning and end of each visit, and wives may visit four times each month. Relocation of the furniture factory was accomplished in accordance with the recommendations of representatives from the Federal Bureau of Prisons and other experts called upon during 1968. The previous furniture factory was converted into an indoor recreation area.

Inmate speaking engagements in the community. Increased emphasis on community involvement has resulted in both citizen participation within the institution and inmate participation in the community. This program has reportedly received widespread acceptance in the community and has provided an opportunity for the growth and maturity of the individuals involved.
Institutional ombudsman. In February, 1971, the position of Institutional Ombudsman was established on a trial basis. This provided an avenue of direct communication between inmates and the prison superintendent and top management staff.

Temporary leaves. Legislation passed in 1969 permitted the institution to add temporary leaves as another therapeutic tool in its rehabilitative program. Such leave opportunities were designed to assist offenders in time of family death or serious illness, to participate in constructive community-based activities, and, in some cases, simply to solidify family and/or other relationships deemed beneficial to the reform and rehabilitation of the prisoner (Based on personal correspondence between Mr. Robert L. Wright, Executive Assistant of the Oregon Corrections Division, and the writer).

South Carolina

South Carolina experienced four prison riots during the period April 1, 1968 to October 5, 1968, three of which occurred in the same institution. The Central Correctional Institution and Maximum Detention Retraining Center at Columbia each had a riot on April 1, 1968. The cause of the riot at Central was not given; however, the riot at the Retraining Center is said to have spread from an adjoining facility. The Central Correctional Institution saw two more riots on October 1 and 5, respectively. Again, the exact causes were not reported. The disturbances which hinted at the need for reforms were those that occurred in October, when prisoners listed employees and food among their grievances. Food has reportedly improved since that time, with
the cafeteria serving almost twice as much meat as before. With regard to employees, the treatment staff, medical staff, and warden's staff were all increased. A psychiatrist was employed on a full-time basis, and an "open door" policy between staff and inmates was emphasized. Also, the ratio of black officers to white was increased, and certain physical changes to the prison complex were made to enable a disturbance to be isolated to one area (based on personal correspondence between Mr. William D. Leeke, Director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections, and the writer).

North Carolina's Central Prison

Central Prison at Raleigh, North Carolina, had a riot on April 16, 1963, which resulted in the shooting deaths of five inmates, as well as a number of other casualties. The riot had as its basis the presentation of essentially six demands by the prisoners. In substance, these demands were as follows: (1) The inmates wanted increased visiting time. (2) All inmates who had been locked up in the A, B, I, and J blocks were to be returned to the general prison population. (3) A grievance committee composed of at least five inmates was to be established to meet with the administrator at least once a month. (4) A system for compensating inmates from the Prison Enterprise Fund was to be initiated immediately. (5) The practice of serving cold cuts and salads during the noon meal in warm weather was to be discontinued; all three meals were to be served hot throughout the year. (6) Television

---

The significance of this demand is not clear. The writer can only speculate that the prisoners locked up in A, B, I, and J blocks were considered troublemakers and, in an attempt to avoid a major incident, were segregated from the general inmate population.
sets were to be placed in the H and E sections of the west wing cell blocks. Additionally, the inmates threatened not to eat, work, or move until the commissioner of the state department of correction came to the prison yard with representatives of the two Raleigh newspapers and, in their presence, promise to meet the prisoners' demands.

In response to the riot, the following actions were taken:

(1) The sheet metal and stainless steel fabrication industry was moved from Central Prison to Blanch Prison. (2) The building which had been used for education classes at Central was converted to Central Youth Center. This facility now houses approximately 150 felons under twenty-one years of age. (3) Central Prison inmates working in the highway sign shop, the license tag plant, and the print shop were replaced by youthful offenders from Central Youth Center. (4) Two medium custody institutions, Odom Correctional Institution and Caledonia Correctional Institution, were upgraded and reclassified as close custody units; many inmates involved in the riot were then transferred to these two units. (5) In order to house some of the rioters at Odom and Caledonia, it was necessary to transfer inmates from these two institutions to other medium custody units. Two additional field units had to be upgraded and reclassified as medium custody (Based on personal correspondence between Carolyn H. Wyland, Administrative Assistant, North Carolina Department of Correction, and the writer).

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania had two riots during the period covered by this study. The first occurred on May 22, 1968, at the State Correctional
Institution at Camp Hill and was precipitated by attacks on white inmates by black inmates. During the racial confrontation, approximately twenty white inmates were injured. This disturbance led to the initiation of the following reform measures: (1) Additional black personnel were hired. (2) The regulation of black literature was relaxed. (3) Black studies were introduced into the prison. (4) Permission was granted to hold Black Muslim services within the institution.

The second riot took place on July 23, 1971, at the State Correctional Institution at Graterford. A spontaneous eruption between two inmates who had been confined to the maximum security block provoked a disturbance which resulted in injuries to one inmate and eight correction officers. Reform measures, though vague, included some minor internal changes in operating procedures within the maximum security block, and the processing of cases in the institution on a temporary or transitory basis pending classification and permanent assignment or placement (Based on personal correspondence between Mr. Allyn R. Sielaff, Commissioner of Correction, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the writer).

New York State Correctional Facilities

New York State experienced frequent riots and lesser disturbances in its correctional institutions during the period January, 1969 to September, 1971. With few exceptions, the New York Department of Correctional Services failed to acknowledge the introduction of reform measures in its correspondence with the writer. However, some of the predisposing causes of the riots were identified and are
considered important to the discussion. Following is a listing of occurrences by institution.

**Auburn Correctional Facility.** On November 2, 1970, a general work slowdown took place in the plate and tailor shops at the Auburn Correctional Facility. Later in the day, several inmates took possession of a yard microphone and urged other inmates, both black and white, not to go to work in honor of Black Solidarity Day. Advised of the tenseness of the situation, the superintendent of the prison declared a half holiday.

A second disturbance at Auburn occurred on December 20, 1970, and involved approximately thirty-four inmates in a special housing unit. After being released from their cells for the purpose of exercising outdoors, they refused to return to their cells or go out for their exercise period.

**Elmira Correctional Facility.** Approximately twenty inmates created a disturbance in their block over the locking up of a militant at the Elmira Correctional Facility on July 16, 1970. The disturbance was contained without further incident.

**Glenham Correctional Facility.** A Spanish-speaking inmate at Glenham Correctional Facility was observed piercing his ear on July 11, 1970. When instructed to go to the hospital ward, he refused to do so and began cursing and shouting. Later that day, other Spanish-speaking inmates turned up the television and began smashing chairs and windows. Considerable damage was done to two wards of the facility, and three
officers were treated for injuries resulting from blows by broom handles and chair legs.

Great Meadow Correctional Facility. Over a period of twenty months, the Great Meadow Correctional Facility at Comstock experienced five different disturbances.

On April 21, 1969, some 335 inmates refused to come in from the exercise yard for the evening meal. When the deputy superintendent promised to discuss their grievances with them the next day, they reluctantly returned to the mess hall and to their cells. On October 4 that same year, twenty-three inmates, who had been transferred from the Clinton Correctional Facility the day before, refused to eat breakfast and twenty-seven refused to eat supper. Eventually, all returned to their routines, although seven held out for almost a week. On November 19, 1970, inmates in the carpenter shop struck, apparently in protest over having to make billy clubs, and attempted to gain the support of other inmates. Leaders were locked up, and the situation returned to normal. This incident was followed by a sitdown strike in the mess hall on December 29, 1970. The superintendent addressed the inmates and they decided to return to work, but not without the approval of a militant leader. On January 11, 1971, approximately fifty inmates refused to leave the mess hall. Prison officials, to include a large group of officers, entered the mess hall and ordered the inmates to fall in, to which they responded without resistance. The following day, the entire prison population refused to leave the yard for work and school, but gave in shortly because of cold weather.
Green Haven Correctional Facility. A disturbance erupted in the mess hall of the Green Haven Correctional Facility on March 5, 1970. The disturbance was precipitated by a black inmate who threw his tray of food and stood on the table and attempted to make a speech urging other inmates to rebel. When officers attempted to remove the agitator from the mess hall, fifty other inmates began to yell and run around the mess hall throwing trays and utensils. The disturbance subsided quickly, but not before several inmates and officers were injured.

New York State's Attica Correctional Facility. The Attica Correctional Facility had a work stoppage in its metal manufacturing shops on July 29, 1970. The disturbance involved approximately 450 inmates and resulted from agitation on the part of a group of Black Panthers and white militants demanding higher wages, lower commissary prices, and more yard time. The following day, the inmates again refused to work, holding out for higher wages. Prison authorities decided to call in the state commissioner of corrections, who talked with inmate representatives and "agreed to increase wages from the previous 6 to 29 cents per day to 25c to $1.00 per day" (The Official Report of the New York State Special Commission on Attica, 1972:129). Further, an evaluation of the commissary operation resulted in an order from the state department of correctional services indicating that no commissary would operate at a profit in excess of five percent.

A state of unrest prevailed again on November 2, 1970, when a report was received that there were over 100 black inmates who stated that, because of Black Solidarity Day, they would not leave the recreation yard at the appointed time, nor would they obey any white
man's orders. Five leaders were identified, taken from the group, and placed in segregation. After the seizing of the leaders by prison authorities, the remainder of the inmates filed into the mess hall when ordered to do so (Based on personal correspondence between Mr. Edward M. Carroll, Executive Assistant, New York Department of Correctional Services, and the writer).

Because of its significance, the riot that occurred at the Attica Correctional Facility in September, 1971, will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Much information concerning the causes and consequences of prison violence can be gleaned from the Attica riot. It therefore lends itself particularly well to the subject at hand and is worthy of special consideration in a separate chapter.

Idaho State Penitentiary

The Idaho State Penitentiary had a disturbance on August 10, 1971, during which two inmates were stabbed and approximately $15,000 in property damage was incurred. A special investigating committee identified the following causes: (1) The month of August was unusually warm with temperatures exceeding 110 degrees in the cell houses much of the time, making it almost impossible for the inmates to sleep. (2) Just prior to the disturbance, an underground tunnel was found in a separate housing unit for long term offenders. Some of the inmates believed that an informant in the institution supplied the administration with the whereabouts of the tunnel. (3) An inmate, who had been sentenced to the penitentiary on a morals charge, was stabbed to death. At the time of the stabbing, the inmate was being housed on a tier where there was strong inmate resentment toward the offense.
(4) Agitation by a group of inmates prevailed. (5) Rumors of inmate complaints concerning unsanitary conditions relative primarily to food and water spread throughout the institution.

The investigating committee found other predisposing causes for the disturbance. One of these centered around the fact that, prior to March, 1969, the penitentiary had been primarily custodial-oriented. However, as a result of a study by the American Correctional Association and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, many rehabilitative changes were recommended. As new programs such as counseling, psychiatric, educational, and medical services were implemented, there appeared to be some resentment on the part of the officer staff to the changes.

Some of the other predisposing causes cited by the committee are as follows: (1) Security personnel had failed to follow and/or read orders pertaining to their respective posts. (2) There was no on-going training program in effect. (3) There was a shortage of personnel and a high personnel turnover. (4) The prison facilities were outmoded. (5) Prison officials were preoccupied with a forthcoming move to a new site—the state had a new correctional facility under construction at the time. (6) There was a conflict between custodial and rehabilitative philosophies which was accentuated by rapid implementation of new programs. (7) The inmate population was characterized by an influx of assaultive, aggressive, anti-authority, drug-oriented, young inmates. (8) There were insufficient facilities to segregate the young, assaultive inmates and the older, hard-core inmates from the general population.

From all indications, the disturbance was a spontaneous eruption augmented by many of the problems confronting the institution during a
period of change. According to the state director of corrections, inmate grievances could have been achieved through legitimate grievance procedures if an appropriate report had been made. Inmate demands included the following: (1) The monthly commissary allowance was to be increased from $25.00 to $40.00. (2) Two additional visits per month were to be authorized for approved visitors. (3) Certain personnel on the hospital staff were to be replaced. (4) The kitchen food supervisor was to be removed. (5) Ventilating fans were to be installed in the cell-houses. (6) The inmates demanded that food preparation and sanitation facilities be improved. (7) Finally, it was demanded that communication between staff and inmates be increased (Based on personal correspondence between Mr. Raymond W. May, Director of Corrections, State of Idaho, and the writer).

Louisiana State Penitentiary

A riotous situation involving most of the black prisoners at the Louisiana State Penitentiary occurred on August 13, 1971. The disturbance took the form of an organized, planned protest attributed to outside agitation. No reforms or changes resulted from this situation, as the prisoners' demands were considered unrealistic. Some of their demands were reportedly already being met and the others were for things over which prison officials had no control or jurisdiction (Based on personal correspondence between Mr. J. D. Middlebrooks, Chief of the Louisiana State Correctional Services Division, and the writer).

California State Correctional Facilities

As in the State of New York, California has experienced frequent outbursts of mass violence in its prisons during recent years. Three
black inmates were killed, and a white inmate was wounded in January, 1970, when a tower guard fired his weapon to break up a fight in an exercise yard of the maximum security unit at the Soledad Correctional Training Facility. Several days later, a correctional officer was murdered by three black inmates at Soledad. A second officer was murdered at Soledad in July, 1970, a third in March, 1971, and a fourth in May, 1971. A strike took place at the California State Prison at Folsom in November, 1970. This was followed by an unsuccessful strike effort at the California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo, in March, 1971. While standing outside the hospital cell of a prisoner who had been stabbed two days earlier, an officer at San Quentin was murdered by two or three unidentified inmates in July, 1971.

These incidents culminated in an escape attempt at San Quentin in August, 1971, during which three correctional officers and two inmates were murdered, and another inmate was killed while attempting to escape. The latter was George Jackson, a self-avowed revolutionary, who was facing murder charges as a result of the killing of the correctional officer at Soledad in January, 1970 (Report to Governor Ronald Reagan on Violence in California Prisons, 1971:4-12). Shortly after the escape attempt at San Quentin, Governor Reagan directed the Board of Corrections to review the incident, along with other incidents of violence which had occurred over a two-year period in California correctional institutions, and to make recommendations to him regarding ways and means of halting the increased tempo of violence while providing for the safety of inmates and correction officers alike.
In its report to Governor Reagan, the Board suggested that many of the incidents resulted from the unlawful activities of self-proclaimed revolutionary forces operating both inside and outside prison walls. At one point the report states: "Information from several sources alleged that some outside attorneys had encouraged disruptions in prisons, such as hunger strikes and riots, as a means of generating unfavorable publicity" (Report to Governor Ronald Reagan on Violence in California Prisons, 1971:10). In fact, one attorney was charged with murder and conspiracy in connection with the escape attempt at San Quentin. Moreover, radical groups and underground newspapers were thought to take advantage of the January, 1970, tragedy at Soledad to launch a campaign against the California Department of Corrections and its programs. Reputed false and inflammatory reports were circulated concerning the incident, the operation of Soledad, and the prison system in general (Report to Governor Ronald Reagan on Violence in California Prisons, 1971:4).

In response to the violence and agitation in California prisons, the state department of corrections has made a number of program changes and reforms, some of which are as follows: (1) It is now generally accepted in California that costly long-term lock-up in state prisons should be reserved only for those persons who cannot be safely controlled in the free community. This is a broad reform of considerable significance. (2) For the first time in the history of the department of corrections, double celling (the practice of assigning two men to a cell designed for only one) has been eliminated. (3) The department of corrections has started the nation's largest program of family visitations.
in which wives, children, and parents of inmates may visit in privacy for two-day periods. This privilege is extended only to married prisoners, however. (4) The community re-entry process has been strengthened with the establishment of three-day passes for men and women nearing parole. Such temporary leaves are designed to facilitate the resocialization of the inmate into the free community. (5) The department has embarked on an intensive minority recruitment campaign aimed at attracting additional blacks and Chicanos (Mexican-Americans) to the payroll. (6) The department has expanded "work furlough" in which inmates are permitted to leave institutions during working hours in order to hold jobs in the community.

Other significant reforms include the following: (7) New vocational training courses, i.e., deep-sea diving, computer programming, and animal psychology, were added to the list of job training classes. (8) Academic programs were expanded to include junior college classes and black and brown studies programs. (9) The state's pre-sentence diagnostic program was expanded. (10) A number of changes were made to head off criticisms of the indeterminate sentence. (11) An employee safety committee was established and represents three main employee organizations—California Correctional Officers' Association, Teamster's Union Number 960, and the California State Employees' Association. Representatives of these organizations are designated to survey correctional institutions on a regular basis and to make recommendations to the warden for improving employee and inmate safety (Report to Governor Ronald Reagan on Violence in California Prisons, 1971:14-20).
Approximately seventy-five inmates at the Vermont State Prison were engaged in a major disturbance which began on September 29, 1971, and ended on October 3, 1971. While the general unrest which prevailed in prisons throughout the country at that time may have been a precipitating factor, the immediate cause of the uprising was attributed to the removal of wooden lockers, shelving, and other combustible materials from the cells. Specifically, the inmates indicated that the order was carried out without sufficient lead time to permit them to send excess personal items home.

A list of demands similar to those presented at Attica and elsewhere was submitted to State Corrections Commissioner Kent Stoneman. It was, however, admittedly prepared hastily by inmates who agreed that some of the demands did not actually apply to Vermont. For example, one demand was for special food for Black Muslims when there had never been more than one or two blacks at any given time in the total correctional system and no one had professed to be a Muslim.

Changes made as a direct result of the disturbance included initiation of scheduled inspections of the prison kitchen by the state health department, establishment of an uncensored inmate magazine, and installation of metal storage lockers to replace the wooden lockers. A committee had already been appointed to review existing rules and regulations for possible reform. Some of the changes made as a result of the committee's efforts include an end to mail censorship and elimination of restrictions on correspondence, greatly liberalized visiting privileges, and the complete revision of disciplinary procedures. Commissioner Stoneman points out that these latter changes would have
occurred in any event, but he admits that the speed with which they were accomplished was hastened by the fact that there had been a disturbance (Based on personal correspondence between Mr. Kent Stoneman, Commissioner, Vermont State Department of Corrections, and the writer).

Maine State Prison

There was a disorder of some magnitude at the Main State Prison on October 12, 1971. Tension and unrest in the prison had been increasing since the early part of September. This was attributed to disorders in other prisons, along with the highly publicized concessions made as a result of strikes, violence, and disorders. Another important factor was the widespread emphasis on the civil rights of prisoners, advocates of which tend to regard prisoners as a deprived minority unjustly oppressed by prison administrators.

It is also believed that discontent had been intensified by the medium of group therapy sessions conducted by a visiting psychologist employed by the vocational rehabilitation program at the prison. For instance, it is believed that the therapy group discussed inadequacies of the prison and its management, and that the discussions led to proposed changes which were later incorporated into a list of inmate demands. Prison shortcomings discussed by the therapy group, had they been known to the prison administration, might well have been resolved and unrest thereby avoided. But the psychologist apparently regarded these matters as privileged communications and felt that he had no other type of responsibility to the prison as such.

The inmate council met with the warden on October 10, and reported that inmates assigned to work in the kitchen were planning a
work strike on October 12. The main complaint of the kitchen inmates was that they wanted one of the officer chefs removed, apparently because of his sometimes abrasive and authoritarian personality. Removal of the chef was not considered feasible, however, under pressure from the inmates.

On October 11, prison officials met with the inmate council, during which the latter presented a list containing twenty-seven demands. Although many of the demands were considered reasonable and could have been resolved, others were not thought by authorities to be as reasonable. With the list came a demand that, unless the matters were resolved immediately, the kitchen inmates would not work on October 12, and a general strike would take place the following day. The meeting reached an impasse and the inmates scheduled to go to work in the kitchen on October 12 refused to do so, thus indicating that a general strike would occur the following day. In anticipation of the work strike, the warden decided to keep all but the kitchen inmates locked up and was therefore able to maintain control over the immediate situation.

Shortly after the warden announced that inmates were not to be released from their cells, the disorder began. It grew steadily worse and continued until the instigators could be separated from the rest of the inmate population. After considerable property damage, noisemaking, and threatening remarks from the inmates, the warden made an appeal through the inmate council, but the council failed to respond and was suspended a few days later.

Following is a listing of some of the changes that were made subsequent to the disturbance: (1) There were several changes in prison
regulations, the nature of which were not specified. (2) Prisoners were granted permission to draw $10.00 worth of canteen tickets twice weekly. (3) Permissible income from inmate craft work was raised from $1,800 to $2,400 annually. An inmate who agreed to deposit $300 each year in his prison account, and further agreed not to withdraw it until his release, would be permitted to earn up to $2,600 per year. (4) Funds with which to install hot water plumbing in the cells were requested from the state legislature. (5) Although the inmate council was suspended, an inmate legislative committee was to be formed to work with the staff regarding proposed laws. (6) Plans were being made to establish a college level study program through the University of Maine. (7) An "exit" program designed to assist men being released was underway (Based on personal correspondence between Mr. R. D. Kennedy, Acting Warden, Maine State Prison, and the writer).

Tennessee Prison for Women

The State of Tennessee had a riot in its women's prison at Nashville in November, 1971, that resulted in an estimated $4,000 damage. Some of the factors which led to the disturbance are as follows: (1) The inmates wanted censorship of mail banned. (2) They thought that they were not getting the same privileges as male inmates at other institutions. (3) They wanted better educational facilities. (4) They wanted better recreational opportunities. (5) They wanted to be treated as adults and not as children alleged to derive from "Mickey Mouse" rules.

In response to the grievances, the following actions were taken: (1) Other than checking for contraband, the censorship of mail was
banned. (2) Visitation privileges were improved. (3) The educational program was upgraded with college-level courses being offered by the University of Tennessee and taught behind the walls. (4) A better recreational program was developed, and a full-time recreation director was appointed. (5) The so-called "Mickey Mouse" rules were abolished (Based on personal correspondence between Mr. William B. Hodges, Director of Information, Tennessee Department of Correction, and the writer).

Kansas State Penitentiary

The Kansas State Penitentiary at Lansing had a minor disturbance on September 27, 1971, when prisoners assigned to food service details refused to go to work. In an article in the Topeka State Journal, Warden R. J. Gaffney was quoted as saying: "... the work stoppage apparently was over 'Petty grievances.' He mentioned low incentive pay for working in the prison industries and said prisoners objected to being fed too much pork" (September 28, 1971:2). In a personal conversation between the writer and several inmates who were at Lansing at the time of the strike, it was brought out that there was a lack of communication between staff and inmates. Further, the inmates mentioned that, prior to the strike, the prison's athletic teams were comprised entirely of blacks and that some remarks in the dressing room one day led to a minor clash between blacks and whites. The inmates suggested that this incident may have had something to do with the strike in September, 1971.

Warden Gaffney, a retired military police officer and a reformist in his own right, is quick to boast that his institution will
never have a riot in the strict sense of the word. He attributes this to a number of factors, but namely the prison's "no hostage" rule. That is, officers would shoot to kill any convict who took a hostage within the prison, even at the risk of killing the hostage.

Functionally speaking, the Kansas State Penitentiary is operated along military lines. The rank and file resemble that of a military organization and, in fact, consist almost entirely of former military personnel, many of whom have retired from the military service. This has certain advantages as the majority of the employees have had correctional experience in the military service and, in many cases, their salary serves to supplement their retirement pay, or vice versa. On the average, the Lansing Prison has employees who are both better paid and more experienced, and this would seem to lend itself to a more professional and, hence, more effective correctional program.

Based on personal observations, the Kansas State Penitentiary appears to be making progress in terms of penal reform. Warden Gaffney has a wide variety of programs underway and others under study. These include programs aimed at giving prisoners training in occupations in which there is a shortage of workers outside prison. At present, the programs concentrate on such things as auto mechanics, drafting, welding, machine shop, woodwork, leatherwork, barbering, and even horseshoeing. There are also private industry-sponsored courses including a Philco-Ford motor repair course and a Radio Corporation of America (RCA) course in computer programming. Depending on his job in the institution, a prisoner can earn as much as thirty cents a day in incentive pay. At last report, this amount was expected to increase to sixty-five cents
per day. Prisoners can earn additional money through the blood donor program at the rate of $5.00 per week. The 1970 legislature authorized prisoners with excellent records to work outside the walls during the day. The prison is also experimenting with a home visitation program whereby well-behaved inmates can be allowed to go home three times a year for up to ten days at a time. In another incentive program, prisoners can accumulate "good time" to be deducted from their sentences at the rate of three days per month. This amount exceeds the usual "time-off-for-good-behavior" concept.

Long Binh Stockade

In spite of advanced policies of the United States Army in the field of corrections, it has not remained immune to prison violence. For example, the author personally witnessed what has emerged as perhaps the worst prison riot in the modern history of the United States Army at the military stockade at Long Binh (or L.B.J. for Long Binh Jail, as its inmates called it) in South Vietnam during the summer of 1968.

Although the stockade was built to accommodate a maximum of 400 prisoners, at the time of the riot it was overcrowded with approximately 700 military prisoners whose crimes ranged from going AWOL or smoking marijuana to theft and murder. As it turned out, however, overcrowding had little to do, at least directly, with the trouble at Long Binh.

The riot began with a disturbance between a relatively small number of blacks and whites in the medium security section of the stockade. Military policemen armed with nightsticks entered the compound to separate the prisoners, but were overpowered and relieved of their keys. Moments later the riotous prisoners, their behavior
reinforced by their initial success, unlocked the gates of the medium security area and rushed into the stockade's central courtyard. There, led by a group of blacks, the rioters overpowered the guards on duty, leaving some of them beaten and bloody on the ground. The prisoners then proceeded to unlock the maximum security cell block and to set fire to a number of tents and buildings, several of which, including the administration building, burned to the ground.

About an hour after the riot started, military police reinforcements arrived at the stockade. Thus bolstered, the tower guards ordered the rioters to "cease and desist." Many obeyed. About 250 hardened prisoners, the majority of them black, refused and shouted obscenities at the guards. When a force of military policemen advanced with fixed bayonets, throwing tear gas grenades as they approached, the blacks fought back with sticks, rocks, and metal rods. In the melee, a number of military policemen, including the confinement officer, and a large number of the rioters were injured. One white prisoner was killed, reportedly clubbed to death by black prisoners.

When order was restored, military police sorted the prisoners into "cooperatives" and "uncooperatives." The uncooperatives, all black except for several Puerto Ricans, were locked in an enclosed part of the stockade. With this action, stockade officials assumed that the rebellion was over. This, as it turned out, was a premature conclusion. Secure in the knowledge that their records had been destroyed along with the administration building, the black militants gave false names and service numbers. Many of them shed their uniforms and donned white kerchiefs and African style robes fashioned from Army blankets.
Keenly aware of the sensitivity of the civil rights issue at the time, military officials decided not to take the uncooperatives by force, but, rather, to wait them out. Each day, cases of C-rations were tossed over the fence into the area in which the uncooperatives were confined. Army investigators and stockade officials questioned the "prisoners" about their grievances. Many of them indicated that they wanted out of the Army and out of Vietnam. Besides expressing the customary stockade grievances, some of the blacks asserted that white guards had abused them verbally and had given white prisoners far better treatment. By military standards, the handling of the holdouts was permissive and, to a degree, the policy of restraint worked. Three weeks after the riot broke out, only thirteen prisoners were still defying stockade discipline.

The riot at Long Binh would seem to have importance both for the Army and American society as a whole. Since the late President Harry S. Truman integrated the armed forces in 1948, the Army has been proud of the opportunities it offers its black soldiers. For the most part, relations between white and black troops in Vietnam had been good, especially in combat areas where they shared common needs and common dangers. In the Long Binh Stockade, with these bonds dissolved, black soldiers felt they faced the prejudice that they had faced in the ghettos of the United States and rediscovered their resentment of authority. In the end, the riot seemed to suggest that the egalitarianism of the Army cannot, by itself, erase the tensions that exist between black and white Americans.

As in most incidents of this nature, there was no single, identifiable cause. The compound in which the riot started was predominantly
Negro, and racial tension was certainly a factor. The racial problems did not appear to be directly related to stockade operations. Rather, they were a consequence of society's ills, the environment, and the often observed phenomenon of minority members grouping together against a common enemy, real or imagined. Discipline had apparently been lax in some instances and unjustly administered in others. Because prisoner grievances are unique to a given environment and tend to fluctuate with the mood of the prisoner population, specific grievances, other than those already mentioned, could not be identified.

Reform measures evolving from the riotous situation at the Long Binh Stockade included replacement of the confinement officer with a "no nonsense" military police officer whose basic philosophy was control, fair discipline, and meaningful work. Work programs were selected to insure productivity and effective utilization of the prisoner's time. Last, but not least, the basic plant itself was reconstructed.

SUMMARY

This chapter has represented an attempt to identify some of the causes and consequences of prison violence with a view toward establishing a general cause-effect relationship between violence and change in penal institutions. One of the more obvious conclusions that can be reached from the preceding discussion is that the causes and effects of prison riots are not always readily apparent. This problem will be addressed in Chapter 5.

The prison disturbances represented in this chapter occurred in state institutions of varying age, size, and quality: the oldest,
Vermont's 164-year-old State Prison and House of Correction for Men; the newest, South Carolina's Maximum Detention Retraining Center at Columbia, opened in 1968; the largest, the 3,834 man California Men's Colony; and one of the smallest, the 100-inmate Tennessee Prison for Women (Directory: Correctional Institutions and Agencies, 1970:4-81).

Riots in the Maine State Prison and the South Carolina Maximum Detention Retraining Center are believed to have spread by knowledge of disturbances in other correctional institutions. In at least two prisons, i.e., the Idaho State Penitentiary and the Vermont State Prison and House of Correction for Men, the causes of the riots can perhaps be traced to changes in the prison system, thus reversing the cause-effect relationship. At the Louisiana and California State Prisons, it was believed that the riots may have been provoked by agitation or revolutionary forces outside the prison. A number of persons were convinced that the riot at Attica in September, 1971, was the result of a long-planned revolutionary plot. The New York State Special Commission on Attica found no evidence to this effect, however.

Complaints concerning food service were made in at least five of the prisons examined. Also, it will be noted in Appendix B that better food service was among the demands submitted by the inmates at the Attica Correctional Facility in September, 1971. The monotony of prison diets can be a major source of discontent, and the dining room has often been the focal point of prison disturbances. Therefore, good food, plentiful and well prepared, would seem to be important in maintaining harmony within the prison. Although food may occasionally
become a substitute target for other complaints, it also becomes a primary source of pleasure to men deprived of many of the comforts of normal life.

While racial tension is known to exist to varying degrees in prisons, only two of the riots discussed involved direct confrontations between blacks and whites. These occurred in the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution and the Long Binh Stockade. Several other disturbances, e.g., those which occurred at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in August, 1971, and the Attica Correctional Facility in March 1970, and September, 1971, respectively, had what might be considered racial overtones, meaning that racial issues may have been involved. However, there is no indication that these uprisings involved overt racial conflicts between blacks and whites. This is not to suggest that interracial conflicts do not occur in prisons. Quite the contrary. Based on the evidence presented, however, race riots, in the usual sense of the term, would seem to be more the exception than the rule in penal institutions.

The positive consequences of prison riots are diverse and cover a wide range of reforms and innovative programs. Throughout this chapter it can be seen that these reforms do not always emanate from prisoner demands or grievances. In short, the causes and consequences of prison riots are both complex and varied, thus making a systematic analysis of these phenomena extremely difficult.

The next chapter will be devoted to a detailed discussion of the riot that occurred in the Attica Correctional Facility in New York State in September, 1971. This discussion will develop a profile of a
major prison disturbance which will shed light on the dynamics of prison violence.
Chapter 4

THE RIOT AT ATTICA: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION

This chapter will concern itself with a critical examination of the riot that occurred at New York State's Attica Correctional Facility between September 9 and 13, 1971. The purpose here is to indicate some of the social forces that come to bear on the prison and provoke violent behavior.

Following the riot, a special fact-finding team, known as the New York State Special Commission on Attica, was appointed by Chief Judge Stanley Fuld of the New York Court of Appeals and asked to reconstruct the events that occurred during the rioting and to determine why they had happened. The Commission was comprised of nine members, including a former inmate, and was headed by Robert B. McKay, Dean of the New York University School of Law.

Much of the information contained in this chapter is based on the Commission's official report, which was published in September, 1972. The report is germane to this study for several reasons. First, to the writer's knowledge, it is the most completely documented report compiled on what actually happened at Attica and has general application to other prisons. Second, it documents in considerable detail almost every aspect of the life and structure of the prison as a major social

1Except where otherwise noted in this chapter, the term "Commission" will refer to the New York State Special Commission on Attica.
institution. Third, and most important, it is a thorough study of some of the causes and consequences of collective violence in a correctional institution.

Although the conditions at Attica may not have been identical to those in other prisons, it is felt that the problems in that institution at the time of the riot are sufficiently representative of the prison universe to justify some generalizations. As the Commission itself points out: "Attica is every prison; and every prison is Attica" (The Official Report of the New York State Special Commission on Attica, 1972:xii).

For the sake of clarity and convenience, this chapter will be divided into three sections: Attica Before the Riot; Attica During the Riot; and Attica Following the Riot. Accordingly, the following chronology of events will help to explain what happened before, during, and after the riot.

ATTICA BEFORE THE RIOT

The Prison

Attica Prison, as it was formerly called, was opened in 1931, and had the capacity to accommodate 2,370 inmates (Directory: Correctional Institutions and Agencies, 1970:52). It is said that Attica was to have been the answer to the problem of prison uprisings which occurred in the late 1920's. When it opened, for example, "it was widely hailed as the ultimate prison" (The Official Report, 1972:14).

Hereafter designated as The Official Report.
In July, 1970, it was redesigned a "correctional facility"; however, security, rather than rehabilitation, is said to have been the dominant theme.

A total institution, Attica is almost completely self-sustaining. It has its own powerhouse, commissary, hospital, laundry, chapel, bake-shop, and kitchen-mess hall complex. The main housing area consists of four cell blocks, lettered A through D (See Figure 1). Each block, which holds about 500 inmates, is divided into cell groups called "companies." Inmates live on three floors in each of the four cell blocks. A central hallway divides the floors into two cell areas, each containing two rows of cells called "galleries." Narrow corridors (tunnels) run from the middle of one block to the block opposite it and divide the central area into four exercise yards, also lettered A through D. The tunnels intersect at a juncture called "Times Square."

![Figure 1. Main Cell Blocks and Exercise Yards Attica Correctional Facility](image-url)
The Inmates

There were 2,243 inmates confined in Attica when the riot began on September 9, 1971. Fifty-four percent of these were black, thirty-seven percent white, and nine percent Puerto Rican. Almost eighty percent of the inmates were from urban ghettos, and nearly forty percent were under thirty years of age. Sixteen percent of the prisoner population had completed high school or its equivalent. Only twelve percent of the population had no prior police record, and almost seventy percent had served time in a state, federal, or local prison before coming to Attica. More than half of the inmates had a maximum sentence of seven years or less. Murder, robbery, burglary, felonious assault, and dangerous drugs head the list of criminal offenses for which committed (The Official Report, 1972:490-493).

After conducting extensive interviews with inmates, correction officers, observers, and prison experts and administrators, the Commission concluded:

... the Attica rebels were part of a new breed of younger, more aware inmates, largely black, who came to prison full of deep feelings of alienation and hostility against the established institutions of law and government, enhanced self-esteem, racial pride, and political awareness, and an unwillingness to accept the petty humiliations and racism that characterize prison life (The Official Report, 1972:105).

The Correctional Staff

At the time of the riot, the correctional staff consisted of 398 correction officers and supervisors. Oddly enough, there were no black officers and only one Puerto Rican on the correctional staff. Unlike the inmates, correction officers were drawn largely from rural
communities in western New York State and, therefore, were unfamiliar with the life-styles of the inmates under their control and supervision.

There was no formal training program at Attica for correction officers between World War II and the late 1950's. "More than one-third of the officers at Attica on September 9 began their jobs during that period" (The Official Report, 1972:27). Those who started after that were given two weeks training, but many reportedly found the instruction useless. As a result, most of the correction officers were not properly trained to communicate with the inmates, nor did they consider it their duty to understand or resolve inmate problems.

Beginning in April, 1970, correction officers were allowed to "bid" for job openings on the basis of seniority, and many took advantage of this system to transfer from posts involving inmate contact. Written examinations, rather than job performance and ability to relate to inmates, were the key to promotion among correction officers.

Prison Life in General

Life in prison was generally monotonous and routine. Prisoners were required to spend fourteen to sixteen hours (eighteen to twenty hours in the case of new inmates) alone in their cells each day. For many inmates, weekends signaled increased idleness in their cells. Inmates left their cells at the same time each day for meals, recreation in the yard, and for work or school. They could talk until 8:00 P.M., but then had to read, write, or study until lights went out at 11:00 P.M. This routine varied very little through the entire term of their sentences.
Work programs. "In theory, work was not compulsory at Attica. But inmates had the choice of working or being keeplocked without pay until they changed their minds" (The Official Report, 1972:36). In reality, there were too many inmates for too few jobs at Attica. For example, there was work for only 250 of the 450 inmates assigned to the metal shop. The metal shop was considered by inmates to be the worst assignment at the institution and it became a sort of "dumping ground" for new inmates and those without job assignments. The vast majority of those assigned to the metal shop were black and Spanish-speaking, and they saw in their assignment merely another form of exploitation of minority labor. There was considerable racial discrimination in job assignments with white inmates dominating the more desirable jobs. Although he was aware of charges of racial discrimination, the deputy superintendent claimed that he had introduced a quota system to insure racial balance in jobs and that racial discrimination no longer existed in the institution. The Commission found evidence which would tend to indicate otherwise.

Educational program. Twelve percent of the inmates were enrolled in the prison's school program. Those "inmates who scored below 5.0 on the Stanford Achievement Test administered during the reception period were compelled to attend school until they reached at least that level" (The Official Report, 1972:41). Students received a fixed wage of twenty-five cents a day. Such a meager wage

---

3 As the term implies, "keeplocked" simply means that an inmate is kept locked in his cell.
discouraged some inmates who might otherwise have been interested in furthering their education and increased the resentment of those who were forced to attend school. Since the number of inmates in a class could be increased without affecting security appreciably, the school, like the metal shop, was used by the administration as a "dumping ground" for inmates who could not otherwise be employed.

Recreation. Recreational opportunities at Attica were limited. There was no gymnasium and no trained recreation director on the staff. Virtually all recreation took place in the yards. Unfortunately, the yards were crowded and chaotic, and baseball players often collided with basketball players. Inmates were free to spend an hour to an hour and a half in the yards on weekdays, and about six hours on weekends, weather permitting.

Clothing and personal hygiene. Prison uniforms were coarse, drab, and ill-fitting, and were reissued to inmates until they wore out. The clothing, made in the prison tailor shop, was too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. Toilet articles, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, and razors and blades had to be purchased at the inmate's expense or sent to him by friends or relatives. There was no hot water in the cells and the majority of the prison population could shower only once a week.

Meals. "In his 1971 annual report, Superintendent Mancusi wrote that Attica provided 'meals which are tasty, possess eye appeal and contain the necessary nutritional ingredients to provide a balanced diet'" (The Official Report, 1972:47). In sampling the food,
however, the Commission found that it did not meet Mancusi's description. Although the ingredients were of good quality, the preparation rendered some food virtually inedible. Muslims were forbidden by their religion to eat pork. However, frequent recourse to the prison's swine herd for main dishes and cooking fats was a means of holding down food costs. It was once rumored that pork products were being described as beef on the menus.

Reading material. Although the prison library contained approximately 50,000 volumes, the law library collection was limited. For security reasons, inmates were not permitted to go to the library and browse. Instead, they had to make selections from a catalog kept by another inmate. There were no newspapers available in the library. Seventeen different magazines were received by the library, but there was only one copy of each issue for over 2,000 inmates. Prior to March, 1971, all publications were censored by the prison's director of education. In March, 1971, a media review committee was established to insure that incoming material was acceptable reading for inmates.

Visitations. As a rule, inmates were allowed to receive visits from their wives, children, parents, brothers, sisters, attorneys, clergymen, and certain others with special approval. However, for many, the right to receive visitors was illusory. Most inmates were poor and from New York City. Transportation from New York to Attica was prohibitive, both in terms of travel time and money, for many families and relatives. "When visitors did come, the experience was degrading for both visitors and inmate" (The Official Report, 1972:61). The inmate,
for example, was subjected to a thorough body search before and after the visit. A mesh screen between inmate and visitor prevented all but minimal contact. Throughout the visit, inmates and their visitors were under the watchful eye of two correction officers positioned at one end of the room.

Medical care. According to the Commission, "medical care was one of the primary inmate grievances" (1972:63). The medical staff was headed by two doctors who were also engaged in general practice in nearby communities. When queried by the Commission, both doctors expressed strong negative feelings, even antagonism, toward many of the inmates. Little time was spent with a patient, and the normal doctor-patient relationship was missing. If an inmate took issue with "the doctor's disposition of his complaint, he was often threatened with commitment to the psychiatric ward . . ." (The Official Report, 1972:66). Jerry Haleva, a consultant for a legislative committee investigating prison conditions in California, says:

In most prisons, doctors' attitudes are little better than the facilities. "Medical care is dispensed with a different standard in prisons than it is in the community" . . . . "Inmates are thought of as prisoners first and patients second" (Time, July 9, 1973:36).

Dental care. The prison had two full-time dentists. When inmates were examined upon admission to the institution, their teeth were found to be in generally poor condition. Since their schedules did not allow for extensive restorative work, little effort was made to save teeth. Many prisoners refused all but emergency dental work for fear of the pain involved.
Psychiatric care. A large portion of the psychiatrists' time was spent evaluating inmates for parole hearings, transfers to other institutions, and in response to special requests from agencies outside the prison. Therefore, psychiatrists were unable "to provide other than an occasional consultation and direct supervision when a true crisis occurred" (The Official Report, 1972:70). Even when inmates had appointments, they sometimes had to wait months to be seen by a psychiatrist. Inmates with possible mental or emotional disorders were sometimes given tranquilizers and other supportive drugs in hopes that these would help avert serious or repeated episodes of uncontrollable behavior. Lacking proper treatment during the early stages, some inmates became worse than they would have been otherwise, and this led to increasing numbers of highly disturbed inmates. In this regard, the Commission points out:

... the build-up of emotional tension, the increased number of emotionally disturbed inmates, and the lack of effective means of defusing the increasing pressures as these were generated were all anticipated and identified by the supervising psychiatrist before the uprising and he had expressed his fears and misgivings about the rising tension and disturbed climate within the prison on several earlier occasions to the prison authorities (1972:71).

Religion. Only fifteen percent of the prison population attended church services regularly. Those who did, did so because it gave them the opportunity to leave their cells and socialize. The prison was without a minister for the Black Muslims, although efforts had been made to obtain one. As a consequence, no meeting place or organized services were available to the Black Muslims. Instead, they took advantage of recreation periods in the yard to worship and engage
in physical fitness activities as encouraged by their religion. The Commission determined that:

The administration and officers never understood the Muslims. They were never given information about what Muslims believed, and Muslims saw no reason to explain themselves to hostile officers. Officers, ignorant of Muslim beliefs, assumed that a black group which conducted itself with an internal, almost military, discipline and conditioning was committed to violence (1972:73).

Prison rules. The rules at Attica were selectively enforced and poorly communicated. After November, 1970, rule books were no longer distributed to inmates upon their arrival at the institution, and there were no other provisions for communicating the rules to inmates or, for that matter, correction officers. In the absence of generally understood guidelines, new officers were instructed essentially as follows: "Until you are familiar with what is allowed, tell inmates 'No' when they ask for any special permission" (The Official Report, 1972:74). Accordingly, correction officers had great discretion in interpreting and enforcing the rules. This made favoritism, discrimination, and harrassment by officers easy. Inmates were kept off balance not knowing what to expect from day to day, and often learned the rules only when they broke them. Although the administration was aware that this situation existed, little or nothing was done about it. Many rules were senseless and served no useful purpose. As the Commission reflected in its report:

... Inmates at Attica, but not at other prisons, were prohibited from chewing gum, because discarded gum had created a housekeeping problem; they were required to march to the mess hall and to their jobs with their hands at their sides, to stand up in their cells when they were counted, to avoid loud conversation in the halls, to turn out their lights at a prescribed hour; they could
not wear hats indoors, grow a mustache, or have sideburns of more than a prescribed length (1972:75-76).

Although the prison commissary sold items which required heating, i.e., coffee, tea, and soup, "droppers" were prohibited in cells.

**Inmate security.** Inmates had little sense of security at Attica, particularly during the first weeks of imprisonment. The unwary were subjected to sexual advances and often had to choose between fighting or submitting. If the inmate submitted, he was likely to be labelled a "homo." Thereafter, "his only hope of companionship and protection from frequent assault was in continuing submission" (The Official Report, 1972:78). The apprehension of being sexually assaulted caused many of the younger inmates to carry homemade knives for self defense. Because of the low officer-inmate ratio, correction officers could not maintain the degree of surveillance necessary to preclude sexual assaults. As a result, inmates had little confidence in the ability of the officers to protect them.

**Racism between officers and inmates.** It was reported that "the relationship between most officers and inmates was characterized by fear, hostility, and mistrust, nurtured by racism" (The Official Report, 1972:80). Although segregation was supposedly abandoned at Attica in the mid-1960's, the Commission found that it still pervaded the prison in varying degrees. Except during their military service, many Attica officers had never been exposed to blacks before. Some officers

---

4A dropper is a homemade immersion coil used by inmates to heat water or other liquids in their cells.
actively discouraged black-white relationships by threatening to withhold certain privileges. The Commission acknowledged that "racism among Attica officers may be no greater than what is present in society at large, but its effect is more intense at Attica" (1972:81). It was also noted that racism existed among the inmates, most of whom carried prejudices with them to Attica. "Racial attitudes," reports the Commission, "were an undeniable factor among the tensions leading to the uprising" (1972:82). The Commission made the following additional observations:

...Aggressive responses to racial bias are increasingly common outside prison, and this trend exists inside as well. Inmates today feel that they have the right, even as prisoners, to rebel against being further put down on the basis of race. Racism has always been an unsettling force in this country. The openly rebellious reaction to it developed gradually, but by now must be recognized as an explosive reality, within prison as well as "outside." While it is a microcosm reflecting the forces and emotions of the larger society, the prison actually magnifies and intensifies these forces, because it is so enclosed. In prison there is no possible escape from oppression (1972:82).

Parole practices. "In practice, the Parole Board--not the judge--decides how long an inmate will serve time," says the Commission (1972:93). Inmates, parole officers, and corrections personnel all agreed that the parole system was a primary source of tension and bitterness within the walls of the Attica facility. Under existing laws, offenders can be sentenced to minimum and maximum terms of imprisonment. After serving the minimum sentence, the inmate becomes eligible for release or parole. Occasionally, the decisions of the parole board are arbitrary. For example, some inmates with a long record of offenses may receive parole, while others, including first offenders,
may be denied parole. The Commission points out in its discussion:

"Inmate frustration is probably inherent in any system which can make a determination to deny him freedom, but procedures in effect in New York have the result of magnifying the frustrations" (1972:95). Parole conditions were well known by the inmates at the time of the uprising at Attica. The Commission observes:

... These conditions were a major factor in the pervasive discontent of those who awaited parole with eagerness despite what they knew to be the frustrations. Even a substantial improvement in conditions inside the prison walls will not alleviate anxiety and frustration among inmates unless the system which opens the gates not only is--but appears to be--equitable (1972:101).

Inmate discussion groups. Prior to the uprising, there was a growing tendency for inmates in the exercise yards to get together in groups and discuss their problems. In addition, an inmate-instructed sociology class was organized in the prison's school. Although the class was developed for the purpose of discussing a wide range of sociological topics, it became a forum for the interchange of information about what was happening in the prison and among the different groups. Discussions turned to analyses of general prison conditions, the status and rights of prisoners in the institutions and society, and the various techniques of protest to effect change in society. No program for action was ever developed by the class, however, and the class was recessed at the time of the riot.

Reforms Sought

Russell G. Oswald, who became Commissioner of the New York State Department of Correctional Services in January, 1971, inherited the
responsibility of restructuring the entire prison system in New York. This included converting the penal system from a purely custodial to a rehabilitative system. As Oswald put it, his job "was 'to give the whole system a new flavor'" (The Official Report, 1972:20). Giving priority to those areas which had already come under attack in the courts, Oswald's first reforms granted:

- mail and visiting privileges to inmates' common-law spouses; revised censorship procedures to permit inmates to correspond with attorneys and public officials; and allowed greater accessibility of news media to prisons to increase public knowledge of conditions (The Official Report, 1972:131).

In July, 1971, a group of five inmates, who called themselves the "Attica Liberation Faction" and claimed to represent all races and social segments of the prison, sent Commissioner Oswald a letter containing a manifesto setting forth a series of demands. These demands centered largely on improving conditions of imprisonment. More specifically, they demanded:

- legal representation before the Parole Board; improvement in medical care, visiting facilities, food and sanitary conditions in the mess hall, personal hygiene, clothing, recreational facilities, and working conditions in the shops, a uniform set of rules in all prisons, adjustment of commissary prices; and "an end to the segregation of prisoners from the mainline population because of their political beliefs" (The Official Report, 1972:134).

The inmates emphasized in their letter that they were trying to present demands in a democratic fashion and wanted Oswald to be aware of their needs, as well as the need for prison reform. Other letters followed, but promised that the inmates would continue to strive for prison reform in a democratic fashion. Commissioner Oswald responded by assuring the inmates that changes had been made and would continue.
to be made. But he also acknowledged that complete change takes time. In spite of their peaceful lobbying attempt, inmates were unsuccessful in effecting "such simple changes as clean trays from which to eat in the mess halls, or more than one shower a week during hot summer months" (The Official Report, 1972:138). Thus, tensions at Attica continued to mount and culminated in the riot on September 9. Following the riot, guards and inmates alike commented: "'The tension was so thick around here you could cut it with a knife'" (The Official Report, 1972:141). All that was needed was a spark to set it off.

ATTICA DURING THE RIOT

The Spark: Wednesday, September 8, 1971

The initial disruption came on Wednesday, September 8, in reaction to an incident in A yard which provoked anger and resentment among inmates in two companies in A block. Several correction officers observed what they thought was a fight between two inmates when, in actuality, the inmates were merely engaging in friendly horseplay. When the inmates ignored instructions to stop what they were doing, two of the officers went across the yard to summon them. The refusal of one of the inmates to leave the yard led to an unusually intense confrontation between officers and inmates, during which a lieutenant was struck by an inmate. Surrounded by a large group of inmates, the officers were forced to back down and leave the yard. That evening, the two inmates who had engaged in horseplay were removed from their cells and taken to housing block Z (HBZ), or "box" as it is commonly

^Housing block Z is a special disciplinary housing unit for troublesome inmates. In effect, it is a prison within a prison.
called in prison jargon. This precipitated angry name-calling, hurling of objects from cells, and vows of revenge along the two galleries.

Many inmates were convinced that the two inmates were beaten on the way to HBZ (though in fact they were not) even though officers in the yard that afternoon had promised them that this would not occur.

The Commission discovered that:

... There is a widespread belief among inmates at Attica that when a man is taken to the box, especially if at night, he is brutally beaten on the way, in the elevator going up to HBZ, and in the segregation center itself. Because inmates have no way to verify the facts, rumor becomes a dominant fact of life in prison, and when the rumors are repeated often enough, they are believed (1972:149).

Hans Toch makes the observation that "persons who tend to interpret situations as threatening, or goading, or challenging, or overpowering can turn harmless encounters into duels, purges, struggles for survival, or violent escapes" (1969:189).

The Explosion: Thursday, September 9

The following morning, uneasiness lingered on in Five Company, one of the two companies from which the two inmates had been removed the previous evening to segregation. This company of forty inmates was used as a repository for men considered to be troublemakers. The members of Five Company included numerous men with long disciplinary histories and an unusual concentration of what the Commission referred to as "that new breed of inmate: young, politically active and aware, avowedly defiant in thought and rhetoric" (1972:151).

An inmate who had been locked in his cell for throwing a full can of soup at an officer the previous evening was released from his cell by fellow inmates. A decision was made to return Five Company to
their cells after breakfast and, when the inmate was again confined to
his cell, to release the rest of the company to the exercise yard. The
door to the yard was locked and a lieutenant, who had assured the
inmates the day before that nobody would be beaten, approached the
company as it was lined up in A tunnel awaiting word as to why the
door to the exercise yard was locked. As he reached the column of
inmates, he was attacked before he had a chance to speak, and the
uprising was underway.

Three correction officers came to the lieutenant's rescue, but
were immediately attacked by the inmates. Relieving one of the
officers of his keys, the inmates began opening cell doors on A block
and freeing fellow-prisoners. Approximately 100 prisoners were already
in the yard and, when they heard the commotion, succeeded in joining
the rioting inmates by overpowering two officers and unlocking the door
separating the yard and tunnel. The inmates then began equipping them­
selves with football helmets, baseball bats, rakes, pipes, sticks, and
an assortment of homemade weapons.

The Riot Spreads

After the initial outburst of chaotic violence, the inmates
regrouped and set upon the locked gate at Times Square, which separated
A block from the rest of the institution. The gate gave way allowing
the rioters access to the center square and the keys which unlocked the
gates to the B, C, and D blocks. From Times Square, inmates spread
throughout the prison with little resistence, attacking officers,
taking hostages, and destroying property. As the rebellion spread,
other inmates were urged to go to D yard where the riot was to
culminate. Some inmates joined actively, but the majority tried to escape to secure areas, or were simply caught up in the tide. On one gallery, inmates took a vote to determine whether or not they should join the rioters. Only three voted to go to the yard. However, the vote was ignored, and armed inmates surrounded them and ordered them to D yard.

A group of rebellious inmates also broke into E block which housed selected inmates who were part of an experimental DVR (Department of Vocational Rehabilitation) program. Many of these inmates were invalids or otherwise suffered from physical or emotional handicaps. Nevertheless, they were moved through the tunnels to D yard along with the other inmates.

The authorities were slow in responding, due largely to the absence of a riot control plan, the lack of available manpower, and an antiquated communications system. Connected with other parts of the prison only by single-line telephones, those officials in the administration building could not immediately appreciate the full extent of the trouble nor summon help. A steam whistle located in the powerhouse was the only means of sounding a general alarm; however, it was not sounded until approximately one-half hour after the riot began.

Within two hours, the inmates had control of four cell blocks and all of the yards and tunnels, and 1,281 inmates had gathered in D yard with over forty hostages. The Commission reports that "32 Attica employees were injured during the uprising on September 9" (1972:187).

During the four-days, a total of fifty persons, including civilian employees, were taken hostage by the inmates.
Seven correction officers were injured seriously enough to require hospitalization and were released by their captors. One of them was struck on the head when inmates first broke into Times Square and later died as a result of his injuries. Numerous inmates who had resisted or gotten in the way of the rioters were also injured.

Rudimentary Inmate Society

During the early hours of the riot, leaders of various factions in the prison were vying for authority or, as one inmate put it, "'playing king of the mountain'" (The Official Report, 1972:198). Eventually, however, a self-professed inmate lawyer emerged as a leader and started issuing instructions and urging the inmates to pull themselves together. Shortly thereafter, inmate spokesmen began calling for the presentation of demands for reform. One of them laid down some ground rules, e.g., hostages were not to be harmed, the use of drugs was forbidden, homosexual relations were outlawed, fighting among inmates was prohibited, etc.

Another development during the early stages of the riot was the formation of a unified internal police force or security guard among the inmates. One of the primary functions of the security guards was to keep the nearly 1,300 inmates within the confines of D yard. After the riot, a number of inmates testified that they would have left the yard if it had been possible to do so. The inmate security force also broke up fights between inmates, organized a fire detail to put out fires they had set earlier, collected and stockpiled weapons, and even set to work making new weapons.
Immediate Demands Drawn Up

After the initial rhetoric had subsided in the yard, a small group of inmates began drafting a list of immediate demands. There were only six demands at first and these were addressed to President Nixon and Governor Rockefeller. The demands included: (1) complete amnesty for the rioters; (2) speedy and safe transportation to a non-imperialistic country; (3) intervention by the federal government; (4) the reconstruction of Attica by inmates or under the supervision of inmates; (5) negotiation through a group of outside observers; and (6) the conduct of all communication within the inmates' domain.

Negotiations Develop

The tradition in correctional institutions is not to negotiate with inmates holding hostages. Based on this tradition, the staff at Attica expected that the prison would be retaken immediately, regardless of the danger involved. However, thinking that he could reach a peaceful solution, Commissioner Oswald decided to negotiate with an informally elected inmate committee. The negotiations were not planned—they just developed. When the Commissioner first arrived at Attica, the police were not prepared to retake the prison. By the time sufficient assault forces had been summoned, the negotiations were under way and the Commissioner, reluctant to undertake any action which would imperil lives, chose to continue the talks. Before the day was over, Oswald was to depart from other long accepted norms. For instance, he decided to admit newsmen and television cameras to D yard, and to negotiate with the inmates through an observers' committee as the inmates had demanded.
Commissioner Oswald had little control over who became an observer, and many observers merely invited themselves. The observers were placed in the position of acting as intermediaries between the inmates and the state. The observers' committee was not constituted to serve a mediation function, however. It was unwieldy in number—consisting of over thirty members—and was characterized by marked ideological differences. Some observers were affiliated with organizations which were openly identified with inmates and their demands. Others identified with the administration and were largely unsympathetic to inmate complaints. Still others "were more concerned with bringing about a peaceful solution on any terms than with seeing the uprising become a catalyst for penal reform" (The Official Report, 1972:235).

When Oswald first entered D yard, he was immediately presented with a number of preconditions which inmates demanded be met before they would begin to negotiate. For example, they demanded that food, water, and radios be provided. Oswald acceded to each of these demands without hesitation. "Before leaving the yard, Oswald was presented with a new set of 15 'Practical Proposals' . . . ." (The Official Report, 1972:222). The proposals (demands) were prepared at the suggestion of one of the outside observers who considered the list of immediate demands impractical. According to the Commission, "the new proposals dealt with specific internal conditions which had long been among the grievances voiced by inmates: wages, religious freedom, censorship, parole, medical care, food, education, and recreation" (1972:222). In responding to the proposals, Oswald let it be known that he agreed in principle with most of them since they were consistent with his own plans for prison reform.
On Friday, September 10, a group of observers entered D yard to obtain a complete list of inmate demands. After gathering their impressions of the inmate demands, the observers set to work developing a list of proposed penal reform measures which they hoped the state and inmates would accept. Oswald agreed to twenty-eight of the thirty-three proposals. The Commission comments that "many of the principles embodied in the 28 Points were major advances in penal reform" (1972: 257).

Saturday evening, the observers entered D yard to discuss the twenty-eight points with the inmates. Much to their disappointment, however, the inmates attacked the proposals as trickery, stating that they were inadequate and that criminal amnesty, which Oswald did not agree to, was a necessity if negotiations were to continue. With the rejection of the proposals, the negotiations were, in effect, dead. The observers placed their remaining hopes in a plea to Governor Rockefeller to come to Attica. Some of the observers felt that the Governor's presence would not only buy time, but would lend credibility to the twenty-eight proposals by showing that the state was genuinely concerned. Believing that no purpose would be served by his appearance, the Governor refused. After the inmates rejected a last minute appeal on Monday morning to accept the twenty-eight proposals, Oswald, with the Governor's concurrence, ordered the assault.

A verbatim listing of the reform measures proposed by the observers to Commissioner Oswald and the twenty-eight to which he agreed is contained in Appendix B of this study.
The Assault

Sensing that an assault was imminent, inmates led eight hostages, blindfolded and their hands bound, to the A and B catwalks where they were fully visible to members of the assault force. Each of the hostages was held by at least one inmate, most with knives at their throats or torsos. Also, a number of the hostages in the yard were held with knives at their throats. At 9:44 A.M., September 13, the electricity in the prison was shut off and, at 9:46 A.M., a National Guard helicopter dropped CS gas on Times Square where the hostages were standing. As the gas descended, inmates on the catwalks began to move downward, pulling hostages with them. After the first downward motion, state troopers commenced firing.  

The Toll

Although the shooting lasted only six minutes, the assault took the following toll:

... 10 hostages and 29 inmates were dead or dying of bullet wounds inflicted by the authorities; 3 hostages and 85 inmates had suffered non-lethal gunshot wounds, and one trooper ... suffered leg and shoulder wounds from shotguns fired by troopers trying to protect him. No hostages were killed by inmates on September 13 ... .

Almost 10 percent of all persons in the yard were struck by bullets or shotgun pellets, and 13 of the 38 hostages were

8CS (OrthoChlorobenzalmalononitrile) is an irritant chemical agent which was adopted by the Army in 1959. A white crystalline powder, it is generally dispensed as an aerosol from burning or bursting type grenades, or from bulk irritant agent dispersers. It is immediately effective and physically, but temporarily, incapacitating.

9State troopers had been instructed to fire only at inmates engaged in overt, hostile acts against hostages and troopers. However, there was no explanation of what constituted a hostile act, and each trooper was left to use his own discretion in determining whether a situation warranted the use of firepower.
killed or wounded by the gunfire (The Official Report, 1972:373-374).

Four of the hostages on the catwalks, two of whom were killed by gunfire, suffered neck or throat lacerations. Shortly after the assault, the two surviving hostages reported to authorities "that they heard the gunfire a split second before they felt the knives across their throats" (The Official Report, 1972:377-378).

Use of Excessive Force

State police participating in the assault used the weapons available to them. For the most part, these included high-powered rifles with telescopic sights, sidearms (.38 caliber pistols), and .12-guage shotguns. While the rifles and handguns were considered appropriate for their intended use in the assault, the shotguns, loaded with "00" buckshot pellets10 which spread in flight and hit unintended targets, created a high risk of injury and death to unresisting inmates and hostages.

Individual members of the assault force provided detailed explanations of hostile or threatening inmate activity which, they claimed, occasioned their fire. However, other accounts and objective evidence--i.e., photographs--were inconsistent with many of the explanations offered by the assault forces. From an analysis of all of the available evidence, the Commission concluded that there was much unnecessary shooting. Troopers shot into tents, trenches, and barricades without looking first. In addition, even where the firing may have been

10"00" buckshot cartridges contain nine or twelve pellets, each of which is approximately 0.33 inch in diameter and a potentially lethal missile.
justified—as in the case of a state police lieutenant assaulted by an inmate in D yard—the use of shotguns loaded with buckshot in the heavily populated areas of D yard led to the killing and wounding of hostages and of inmates who were not engaged in any hostile activity (1972:335).

ATTICA AFTER THE RIOT

Credibility Gap

The aftermath of the riot began with a credibility gap created when prison officials, without any authoritative verification, informed the public what had happened on the morning of September 13. Relying on exaggerated accounts of troopers and correction officers, Attica officials announced that several hostages had died of slit throats and that others had been stabbed and beaten with clubs and pipes. Although some of the dead hostages bore the marks of beatings, autopsy findings revealed that all had died of gunshot wounds. The first reaction of some officials was to search for ways to dispute or discredit the autopsy reports. They even went so far as to accuse the medical examiner of being a "radical left-winger" (The Official Report, 1972: 460). Once it had been established that all nine hostages died from the gunfire of peace officers during the assault, Oswald confirmed the findings to newsmen.

Treatment of the Wounded

The authorities were well aware that the assault might result in a large number of casualties. However, they failed to make adequate provision in advance for the evacuation and treatment of the wounded.
When the shooting stopped, there were over 120 dead and wounded inmates and hostages. Yet there were only ten medical personnel inside the walls, and only two of them were doctors. A National Guard unit capable of evacuating casualties and rendering immediate first aid had been mobilized, but had not yet reached the facility when the shooting stopped. Doctors at local hospitals, who possessed the necessary expertise, professional assistants, and equipment to perform emergency surgery, were not asked to come to Attica until after the assault. In short, no one assumed responsibility for making the necessary medical arrangements.

Reprisals

State officials expected physical reprisals against inmates in the aftermath of the riot, but did nothing to prevent them. A federal court order consented to by Commissioner Oswald, as well as the twenty-eight proposals to which he agreed, contained provisions against reprisals. Nevertheless, correction officers and, to a lesser extent, state troopers and sheriffs' deputies engaged in frequent and systematic acts of retribution against inmates.

Physical reprisals, accompanied by verbal abuses, began as inmates were moved out of D yard to be stripped and searched, continued as the inmates were run through a gauntlet to cells in A block, and did not subside even after they were locked in their cells. Reprisals were especially severe in HBZ, where suspected leaders of the uprising were taken. Eight days after the assault, doctors assigned to make a physical inventory reported finding bruises, lacerations, and broken
bones among forty-five percent of the inmates who had been in D yard (The Official Report, 1972:441).

Prison Reforms Instituted

In the months following the riot, Attica underwent many changes. Some of the reforms demanded by the inmates in D yard were instituted, others were not. After the uprising, the Commission quoted Oswald as saying "that he did not consider himself bound by the twenty-eight points, since the inmates had not released the hostages unharmed. However, he said he would not be deterred from continuing his plans for improvements" (1972:467). Although there were changes yet to come when the Commission completed its report, some of the changes which had already been implemented are enumerated in the following paragraphs.

The officer-inmate ratio improved with the reduction of the inmate population and the hiring of new correction officers, including twenty black and Spanish-speaking officers. A number of female nurses were also added to the staff. A shipment of new, well-fitting lightweight olive-green summer clothing was distributed to the inmates to replace the drab prison uniforms. New gun towers were constructed in the yards to improve physical security. A new inmate rule book was in the process of being prepared at the time the Commission made its report. New internal communications equipment was on order to replace outmoded equipment. A new commissary had been built and, when opened, would reportedly offer soft drinks for the first time.

Within nine days after the uprising ended, 947 inmates, sixty-five percent of them black, were transferred to other prisons. When the Commission last visited Attica in August, 1972, the population was 1,308.
Major changes were made in the visiting rules at Attica. Inmates could now receive visits from almost anyone without obtaining prior approval. Women, both married and single, visit married or unmarried inmates. Former inmates may now visit after gaining the approval of the superintendent and, if applicable, their parole officer. There is no longer any restriction on the frequency of visits. The screen in the visiting room has been removed and inmates may embrace their visitors at the beginning and end of visits, and hold hands during the visit. Visiting children may sit with inmates during visits. Finally, inmates may examine photographs and pass notes, provided they are first read by the officer in charge.

Inmates are now permitted to go to the yard for evening recreation until dark two evenings per week. Black and white television sets in the yards were replaced with color sets. Inmates are allowed to take two showers per week instead of one. Telephone booths were installed for use by inmates to make one collect call per month. The new superintendent granted inmates approval to leave lights and cell radios turned on all night. Inmates now receive a gratuitous issue of toilet articles, to include toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, blades, etc. Prior to the uprising, visits to the commissary were scheduled in the order of inmates' admission to the prison. Inmates now go to the commissary according to job assignments. A liaison committee was elected by the inmates to establish a formal channel of communication with the administration concerning grievances and common problems.

A number of changes were also made in job assignment procedures. Prior to the riot, inmates were assigned jobs based primarily on two
criteria—job vacancies and the inmates' skills and preferences. However, inmates were often unaware of the vacancies that existed and were therefore unable to express a preference. Even the job assignment board did not always have current information on job vacancies. The assignment board is now kept abreast of job openings, and all inmates are interviewed by the board before being placed.

Inmates can now visit the library two days a week. They have also been given access to the Wyoming County Library which absorbs the mailing costs of books sent to inmates. The department of correctional services has started circulating "a list of acceptable literature containing 360 periodicals, including Black Scholar, Playboy, and the Amsterdam News, and 40 books on black studies" (The Official Report, 1972:57-58). Publications on the approved list are passed on to the inmates without review. As a result of a federal grant to the department of correctional services, the law library collection was updated and expanded.

Inmates' correspondence rights were broadened. For example, the new rules require only that a correspondent be willing to receive mail from an inmate and that the permission of the superintendent be obtained in those cases where an inmate wishes to correspond with "unrelated minors, married women, co-defendants, inmates in other institutions, and parolees" (The Official Report, 1972:60-61).

**SUMMARY**

The uprising at Attica has major significance in any study of prison violence because it provides considerable insight into what
occurs before, during, and after a major prison disturbance. A review of the literature on prison riots indicates that many of the conditions that existed at Attica exist to a greater or lesser extent in other correctional institutions. Therefore, some of the lessons learned at Attica help to explain why riots occur in other prisons and, in this instance, are much more fully documented.

A society in microcosm, Attica magnifies the forces and emotions of the inmate society, as well as the larger society. Many of its inmates, for example, came to the institution bitter and angry as the result of their experiences in the ghetto streets and were therefore little different than those who walked the streets as free men. For the most part, the so-called new inmate was shaped by the same experiences, expectations, and frustrations that culminated in the urban ghetto disturbances of the 1960's.

Contrary to popular views, the Attica uprising was not planned or organized in advance by a group of militant inmates. Rather, it began as a spontaneous burst of violent anger and was the product of frustrated hopes and unfulfilled expectations after efforts to bring about peaceful change had failed. While there was racial discrimination and considerable racial tension within the walls, the disturbance was not a race riot. Blacks and whites remained solidified.

In the following chapter, some fundamental causes of prison riots will be analyzed in detail. Also, some of the problems involved in determining a causal relationship between prison violence and prison reform will be considered, followed by a presentation of some of the major reforms that have arisen as a result of contemporary prison riots.
AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES
OF PRISON VIOLENCE

It is evident in the preceding chapters that the exact causes of prison riots and disturbances are sometimes difficult to determine precisely. This is partially because, as with other upheavals in social structure, there is no single cause. Rather, the causes are exceedingly complex and emerge from a welter of factors which differ somewhat in their importance from one institution to another. The riots themselves are complex phenomena for which simple explanations do not exist.

Prison riots resemble a jig-saw puzzle of many and varied pieces. Imagine, if you will, spread before you some 500 or 600 small pieces, awaiting your experienced hand to fit them together. The finished picture—in this case a four-walled institution housing several thousand men—is clear in your mind. This same picture, however, cannot be complete, nor the puzzle solved, until every single piece is considered in relation to the whole. Large or small, each piece is of equal importance to successful completion of the picture. So it is in the case of prison riots. Only when all pieces are considered together can an understanding of why riots occur be reached.

SOME THEORIES ON THE CAUSES OF PRISON RIOTS

Authorities in the fields of penology and criminology have advanced a number of theories which purport to explain the causes of
prison riots. Ruth Cavan (1962), for example, points out that riots, when they do occur, are likely to come in series. According to this contagion theory, "a riot in one prison is likely to be followed by a series of riots in other prisons" (Cavan, 1962:435). Frank Flynn (1953:74) hypothesizes that rumors of substantial concessions gained by riots spread from institution to institution. Wallack (1953:7), on the other hand, believes that the basic cause of prison riots lies almost wholly within the social body. "They are caused," he says, "because our citizens do not demand nor are they willing with their present outlook to pay the cost of a modern, humane penal system" (1953:8). In his book, The Prison Community, Donald Clemmer theorizes that prison riots are usually "caused by a long series of 'abuses,' which, over a long period of time, are brought to the attention of the inmate body by leaders" (1958:148).

In assessing twenty-four disorders in twenty-three cities that took place during the summer of 1967, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968) found that disorders did not erupt as a result of a single triggering or precipitating incident. Instead, they were generated out of an increasingly disturbed social atmosphere, in which a series of tension-heightening incidents over a period of weeks or months became linked in the minds of many persons in the Negro community with a reservoir of underlying grievances. This conclusion is particularly relevant in assessing and understanding the causes of prison violence. To elaborate further, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence states:

Violence has usually been the lava flowing from the top of a volcano fed by deeper fires of social dislocation and
injustice, it has not been stopped solely by capping the top, but has usually subsided when our political and social institutions have managed to make the adjustments necessary to cool the fires below (1969:17).

Inmate demands, which are frequently included among the underlying causes of prison riots, are many and varied. Some typical demands, mentioned by both Flynn (1953) and Cavan (1962), include such things as better food, removal of unpopular personnel, cessation of harsh disciplinary practices, and better parole systems. Flynn also mentions demands for more adequate medical facilities, segregation of sex offenders, and more recreation. Lloyd Ohlin (1956) points out that the demands of inmates are often made up after riots have started. He feels they show "little conscious awareness of the underlying causes of tension and unrest in the institutional community" (1956:24).

SOME BASIC CAUSES OF PRISON RIOTS--PAST AND PRESENT

Stimulated by the mass violence that occurred in American prisons during the early 1950's, the American Prison Association (hereafter referred to as the American Correctional Association) released a study of the causes and preventive measures and methods of controlling prison riots and disturbances in June, 1953. The beginning of a new series of prison riots and disturbances in 1968 prompted the Association to revise its official position paper in 1970. Although the Association identified some fundamental causes of prison riots in both papers, it prefaced its remarks in the original paper by stating:

The immediate causes given out for a prison riot are usually only symptoms of more basic causes. Bad food usually means inadequate budgets reflected in insufficient supplies, poor equipment, poor personnel and, often, inept management. Mis-treatment of prisoners, or lax discipline, usually has behind
it untrained employees and unwise or inexperienced management (A Statement Concerning Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Prison Riots and Disturbances, 1953:7).

A comparison of the basic causes identified by the Association in its two papers is shown in Table I below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes as reported in 1953</th>
<th>Causes as reported in 1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Financial Support</td>
<td>Inadequate Finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-standard Personnel</td>
<td>Inept Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforced Idleness</td>
<td>Insufficient Constructive, Meaningful Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Professional Leadership and Professional Programs</td>
<td>Inadequate Personnel Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive Size and Overcrowding of Institutions</td>
<td>Inadequate Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentencing Practices</td>
<td>Inequities and Complexities in the Criminal Justice System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Domination and Motivation of Management</td>
<td>Unnatural Institutional Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antisocial Characteristics of Inmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insufficient Legitimate Rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic Social Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unrest in the Larger Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of Meaningful Rewards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: American Prison Association Committee on Riots, 1953:7; American Correctional Association Committee on Riots and Disturbances, 1970:1.
The causes enumerated in Table I are by no means all-inclusive, and some of them overlap. For the sake of convenience and discussion, these causes will be divided into three basic categories—general causes, internal causes, and external causes. Also, attention will be centered primarily on the causes in the revised list, for it is felt that they have greater contemporary relevance. These causes are shown under their respective headings in Table II below.

**TABLE II**

**Causes of Contemporary Prison Riots by Category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unnatural institutional environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Personnel Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient Constructive, Meaningful Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient Rewards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Causes**

*Unnatural institutional environment.* The Executive Director of the American Correctional Association was quoted in a newspaper article as saying: "Zoos nowadays strive for a more natural habitat for their
animals and prisons should do the same for inmates" (The Leavenworth Times, August 14, 1973:12A). Cut off from the larger society by physical barriers, a prison is an unnatural environment which almost invariably contributes to the emotional stress of those incarcerated. This unnatural environment is best described by Erving Goffman in his discussion of the characteristics of total institutions:

First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member's daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution (1961:6).

The removal of man from society and the attendant loss of freedom and independence, as well as the strict routine of everyday living, and the loss of privacy, result in a depersonalized human environment. It is not difficult to imagine that in certain inmates the combined depersonalization of human and physical environment can result in emotional stresses which seek release, and sometimes this release takes the form of violence.

Characteristics of the inmate population. The characteristics of the inmate population must not be overlooked as a basic cause of riots and disturbances in correctional institutions. The correctional institutions in the United States are heavily populated with inmates from the lower socio-economic strata of society. "They are overwhelmingly the poor, the black and the young," say Bagdikian and Dash
Although nonwhites in America are approximately thirteen percent of the total population, they are forty to fifty percent of the prison population (Bagdikian and Dash, 1972:152). Inmates are frequently the products of broken homes, poorly educated, unskilled, and have unstable work records. Also, they are likely to have a prior criminal record, low self-esteem, and lack meaningful goals in life. "Material failure is the most common denominator of offenders" (Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions, 1970:3).

As mentioned previously in this paper, the New York State Special Commission on Attica concluded that the inmates in that facility were part of a new breed. According to Bagdikian and Dash, "the most noticeable new kind of prisoner in the United States is the black militant" (1972:153). Black militants frequently refer to themselves as political prisoners rather than as criminals. They see themselves as martyrs of the cause of racial justice and social equality. Some of those who make news for allegedly having committed certain crimes, such as George Jackson and Angela Davis, stir sympathy among less newsworthy convicts. Black militants act to organize their fellow inmates. A polarization along racial lines gives modern prison riots deeper undercurrents as in the case of race riots that occur outside prison.

Although the vast majority of prisoners are poor, a number of affluent middle-class Americans have found their way into prisons as a

---

1At the beginning of 1971, approximately fifty-six percent of all inmates incarcerated in New York State correctional institutions alone had served prison terms before (The Official Report, 1972:16).
result of civil protest, drug offenses, draft evasion, etc. Middle-
class Americans expect to be treated civilly and justly. "When con-
fronted with primitive prison conditions, cruelty and capricious
handling, they are not so likely as a ghetto veteran to accept it as
the inevitable harshness of a harsh world" (Bagdikian and Dash, 1972:
160). Some middle-class prisoners are committed to varying degrees of
social reform or revolution, and have attempted to dramatize prison
conditions with strikes, fasts, and passive resistance.

Prison riots may occur because there are more hardened criminals
in prison in proportion to the number convicted of a crime. In the
past, the retributive and deterrent aspects of punishment were pre-
dominant factors in sentencing a convicted criminal to prison. Today,
some judges prefer to avoid incarcerating first-time offenders if they
can possibly do so. Probation attempts to keep the less hardened
criminal out of prison, and parole, in some cases, offers the prisoner
an incentive for good conduct and thus a shorter term. With the in-
creasing use of probation and parole, the percentage of "hardcore"
offenders who are prone to violence will increase. "Hardened criminals
with long prison records and long sentences are inclined to feel that
they have little to lose by starting a disturbance or participating
in a riot" (Leinwand, 1972:40).

Internal Causes

Poor management. There is an old saying that prisons operate
the way the prisoners want them to operate. Despite this partial truth,
a prison, as with any other social institution, must have competent,
professional management if it is to operate successfully. Some of the symptoms of poor management practices which may precipitate a riot or disturbance are:

... Vague lines of authority and administrative responsibility, absence of clearly defined and easily understood rules and regulations, poor communications, partiality in dealing with inmates and staff, and indecisive action on legitimate grievances (Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions, 1970:3-4).

Vague lines of authority and administrative responsibility are a basic symptom of poor administration and can result in staff conflicts, inefficient management of the correctional institution, a lack of credibility in the administrator's ability, and, above all, inmate frustrations and hostility. The effective correctional administrator must not only develop clearly defined lines of authority and administrative responsibility, he must also insure that inmates and staff understand and follow the chain of command (Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions, 1970:4).

The lack of a well-defined chain of command has been one of the outstanding characteristics of prisons in which major disturbances have occurred. To gain the support of his staff and the cooperation of the inmates, the correctional administrator must demonstrate professional competence as an organizer and leader. A correctional institution that is poorly organized and administered is likely to create disharmony among both staff and inmates. As the American Correctional Association comments in its report:

... Discord between administrative and line personnel within a correctional institution, ... , will diminish the
effectiveness of treatment programs as well as increase the level of emotional stress and discontentment among the inmate population (1970:4).

Either of these results can strengthen the power base of inmate dissidents and precipitate a riot within the correctional institution.

Poor communications within the correctional institution is another indication of poor management. Several writers point out that communications between staff and inmates are likely to be poor. Erving Goffman, discussing total institutions in general, says:

In total institutions there is a basic split between a large managed group . . . and a small supervisory staff . . . . Each grouping tends to conceive of the other in terms of narrow hostile stereotypes, staff often seeing inmates as bitter, secretive, and untrustworthy, while inmates often see staff as condescending, highhanded, and mean (1961:7).

The American Correctional Association's Committee on Riots recommends that a concerted effort be made to insure that staff and inmates alike are kept informed of matters affecting their welfare. It is also important that the prisoners know from official sources, and not from rumors, what the management is doing or planning which affects their welfare. To accomplish this, it is essential that open channels of communication, both formal and informal, exist between the correctional administrator and his staff, between the staff and inmates, and between correctional administrators and inmates. Staff and inmates are likely to have a higher state of morale and better working relations if they are kept informed (Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions, 1970:4).

The American Correctional Association says "it is important that the correctional administrator communicate to the staff and to the
inmates his understanding of their needs and their areas of concern or grievances" (1970:4). When administrative action is warranted, it should be taken as quickly as possible and the individuals concerned notified. In those cases where no action is merited, the administrator should explain his reasons for not acting. This is perhaps one of the errors made by Commissioner Oswald at Attica prior to the riot in September, 1971. He had promised that certain reforms would be forthcoming; however, when they failed to materialize according to the inmates' expectations, Oswald merely explained that he needed more time. Thus, the inmates began to question his credibility.

Both staff and inmates should be properly prepared for forthcoming changes. Conceivably, riots caused by a change in institutional policy can be prevented if effective channels of communication exist between inmates and officials. When the necessity for the changes are clearly understood before they are initiated, the likelihood of hostile reaction to these changes will be significantly reduced. It will be recalled that the inmates at Vermont State Prison rioted when lockers and shelving were removed from their cells without first notifying them of what was to happen. Unaware of the basis for the relaxation of rules and discipline at Attica, correction officers felt that their authority was being undermined and that their superiors were not supporting them. When it is necessary to make immediate changes, the correctional administrator should provide explanations at the earliest possible date to alleviate the anxieties which the changes produce.

Reed Cozart (1955:122) advocates the use of inmate advisory councils, primarily as a means of communication. Since the council's
prime functions are airing inmate complaints and identifying for all the factors leading to official decisions, they might prove useful in easing inmates into a new disciplinary system. Organization of an inmate council (liaison committee) was, of course, one of the innovations that came about as a result of the riot at Attica.

Poor administration is frequently reflected in partiality being shown to members of the staff, as well as to members of the inmate population. To show favoritism to either staff or inmates means that others are, or feel that they are, being discriminated against. This discrimination can produce discontentment which may erupt into rebellious behavior. Inmates are acutely aware of any unfair treatment and, naturally, resent it. According to Sanford Bates:

A warden who rules his prison with fairness, firmness, justice, and partiality can usually maintain discipline even among the most incorrigible of men. But the minute he begins to show partiality for one inmate over another a vital element of control slips from his hands (1955:108).

The impartial treatment of inmates and staff may not prevent grievances; however, if the staff and inmates feel that they are being dealt with impartially, their grievances are less likely to result in a disturbance within the correctional institution (Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions, 1970:7).

Inadequate personnel practices. The quality of prison management depends heavily on the training, experience, professional standards, and morale of the personnel who work within the walls. The American Correctional Association observes that:

... Many of the causes for riots and disturbances in correctional institutions stem directly from lack of staff
training and experience, inadequate professional standards, and conflicts of philosophy and goals of the overall staff of the institution (1970:8).

To obtain qualified personnel, a well-structured recruiting and hiring program is needed. Personnel must be recruited and hired on the basis of realistic standards and qualifications, and all should be screened by competitive examinations. In order to attract quality personnel, heavy emphasis must be placed on salaries. Low salary scales result in low standards of recruitment, heavy turnover rates, and in excessive temptations to dishonest conduct, such as the acceptance of bribes.

According to an article in The Christian Science Monitor, a breakdown of the salaries for prison guards shows that "36 percent earn less than $6,000 a year; 43 percent earn between $6,000 and $8,000 a year; 16 percent earn between $8,000 and $10,000; and 5 percent earn more than $10,000" (December 17, 1971:7). The annual starting salary for correction officers in Missouri is approximately $5,100. One correction officer, who has worked at the Missouri State Penitentiary for more than eight years, makes only $5,900 a year. The low pay scale has resulted in a high turnover rate in guard personnel "and a work force in which half of the employees are working at at least two jobs" (The Kansas City Star, August 22, 1973:1B). In order to obtain capable men to administer correctional institutions, it may be necessary to pay more than the wages such men could receive in jobs outside the prisons.

In addition to attracting and retaining qualified personnel, Cavan (1962) and Bennett (1952) indicate the need for in-service training of personnel. All too frequently, correctional personnel
have had little or no prior training in corrections. The American Correctional Association explains that "this lack of training together with no prior experience can be a volatile combination in a correctional institution" (1970:8). A comprehensive, well-organized training program is a must at every correctional institution and should include pre-assignment training, as well as in-service training. One of the lessons learned at Attica is that the ability to act and react immediately and appropriately to problems can mean the difference between preventing a disturbance and quelling a riot.

Staff and line personnel should share the basic goals and philosophies of the institution. There seems, however, to be some disagreement among correctional administrators concerning the precise functions of prisons, particularly as to whether they exist to protect society, to rehabilitate or reform offenders, or to punish persons who have broken the law. According to the Manual of Correctional Standards, the basic goal of a correctional system is:

... to provide public protection by aiding in the prevention of crime.

The primary methods employed to realize this objective include control of offenders, correction of offenders, coordination of programming with other public and private resources, research and evaluation and participation of citizens (1966:1).

In theory, the routine at Attica was intended to rehabilitate criminals. In practice, however, rehabilitation gave way to custody, and the prison's staff became preoccupied with security. Whatever the basic goals or philosophies of a correctional institution may be, they should be shared by staff and line so as to reduce staff conflict and insure uniformity in the treatment of inmates.
Inadequate facilities. Many correctional institutions today are outmoded, poorly designed, and overcrowded. The irritations and frustrations which arise from such conditions encourage prisoners to riot. Riots do not always occur in outmoded facilities. Obviously, they can and do occur in some of the most modern penal facilities. For example, a newspaper article in July, 1973, stated:

The Lucasville [Ohio] prison, so new it still has not been officially accepted by the state from the contractors, has been the site of successive episodes of trouble. There have been guard strikes, inmate fasts, inmate strikes and a multitude of difficulties with the physical plant that is costing the state $32.5 million (Des Moines Register, July 25, 1973:7).

In any event, the physical inadequacy of an institution is a contributing factor which can lead to disturbances.

Ruth Cavan (1962:437-438) cites four chief causes of correctional institution riots which are directly related to institutional design. First, many correctional institutions are too large to enable individual treatment of inmates. As institutions increase in size, the ability to control the inmate population is often decreased. Large populations require regimentation, impersonal management, and cause perpetual crises in control. Second, the institutions are frequently overcrowded. The Missouri State Penitentiary, which opened in 1835, has a normal capacity of 1,800 inmates, although it reportedly housed 4,000 inmates at one time (The Kansas City Star, September 13, 1973:3). Further, the 121-year-old California State Prison at San Quentin, which has a normal capacity of 2,743 inmates, had an average population of 3,605 inmates in 1969 (Directory: Correctional Institutions and Agencies, 1970:4). Overcrowding makes it impossible for the prison to
conduct required activities since space and equipment will generally be inadequate. Further, the more congested the conditions under which inmates must live, the more conducive is the situation to the moral degeneration and the mass development of frustration and anger. Third, correctional institutions are outmoded. Approximately twenty-five of the nation's state and federal prisons are over 100 years old; a few are more than 150 years old (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:39). Fourth, inmates lack work. Obviously, they cannot work if shops and schools are not provided for them.

**Insufficient constructive, meaningful activity.** In analyzing the fundamental causes of prison riots, Austin MacCormick (1954:24), an astute observer of prison conditions, cited enforced idleness as the biggest single factor in prison unrest. Similarly, the American Prison Association's Committee on Riots acknowledged that enforced idleness "is one of the direct causes of the tensions which burst forth in riot and disorder" (1953:10). Enforced idleness of able-bodied prisoners is certainly one of the great anomalies of modern prison administration.

"A successful prison," says the American Correctional Association, "must be a prison filled with 'purposeful activity.' Any compromise with this objective will be punctuated with periodic episodes of 'destructive activity'" (1970:12). Not only does purposeful activity provide an alternative for enforced idleness and the resultant rise in tension, but it helps to relieve the financial burden on the taxpayer. Constructive programs, for example, can substantially reduce the cost of prison operations. More importantly, some programs allow inmates to
learn marketable skills which enable them to earn an honest living once they are released from prison.

Interesting and satisfying work is a basic factor in maintaining emotional stability. Much prison work, however, is repetitious and boring, and does not bring with it the satisfactions that come from performing a socially useful task. The work is sometimes unskilled, and poor prisoners, lacking in skills and education to begin with, leave prison as unprepared to lead honest lives as before entering the institution.

In a newspaper article, an inmate at the Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, referred to the prison's factories as "employers of 'slave labor' and contended that no one can learn a skill in the factories useable on the outside" (The Kansas City Star, August 1, 1973:8A). This statement, though somewhat exaggerated, contains a certain element of truth. Consider the production of license plates, for example. While this has been a major source of employment for many inmates during their incarceration, there is little demand for such a skill outside prison.

The absence of constructive work does not necessarily mean that hundreds of prisoners are assigned to idle groups. For the most part, they may be dispersed about the prison doing maintenance work, making minor housekeeping repairs, or doing work in the scattered, greatly overmanned productive industries. At the time of the uprising at Attica, approximately sixty percent of the inmates worked at jobs related to the maintenance of the prison (The Official Report, 1972:36).
Insufficient rewards. The lack of a legitimate system of rewards in a correctional institution can result in a lack of motivation and a sense of hopelessness and despair. This, in turn, can result in a heightening of tension and can turn into a breeding ground for riots and disturbances. Constructive program planning should include a viable system of rewards for inmates who participate in various programs. Inmates who are otherwise faced with enforced idleness may find participation in planned treatment programs rewarding in itself. The opportunity to continue their education may be a reward to some inmates, while the opportunity to learn a useful skill may be sufficiently rewarding to others. "If participation in programs is used as a reward for good behavior this constructive activity will serve as a stronger deterrent to disturbances in the institution" (Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions, 1970:12).

External Causes

Basic social attitudes. The American Correctional Association observes that: "Underlying many inmate grievances about correctional institutions are social attitudes which are basic to men both in the institution and in the outside community. One of these attitudes . . . is apathy" (1970:12). If the overall treatment plan within a correctional institution is to be effective, the staff must not be apathetic about its roles. Yet staff members often receive little support for their position from the community at large. The general public is often more concerned about having an offender incarcerated, thus removing the "disruptive" agent from society, than it is with the
policies and treatment methods of the correctional institution. This apathy often pervades the institution, and the inmates react to this feeling in a variety of ways. The result is often apathy within the inmate population, with little motivation or enthusiasm on the part of either inmates or staff to participate in treatment programs (Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions, 1970:12). Gresham Sykes states that what correctional institutions need most is a public interested in supporting "an enlightened penal philosophy" (1959:401).

The punitive attitude of a large segment of society is a basic prepossession that permeates the correctional institution and underlies many major disturbances. Often line personnel reflect this attitude of punishment as opposed to treatment. Some criminologists (e.g., Caldwell, 1956; Tappan, 1960) hold that punishment has three main purposes: retribution, deterrence, and rehabilitation. There is considerable controversy about which of these purposes will best serve the needs of society. However, punishment as retribution seems to be a dominant element in American society. Retributive punishment is based on the theory that society has a right to get even with those who have broken the law and is society's way of retaliating against the criminal. Although criminals are supposedly sent to prison as punishment and not for punishment, a prison is nevertheless a punitive institution. Its environment is rigid, hostile, and designed to inflict punishment in various ways.

Unrest in the larger community. During the early 1950's, prison riots were attributed largely to conditions which existed inside the
prison. However, during the 1960's and early 1970's, it is beginning to appear that prison riots might also be a reflection of conditions outside the prison, namely social unrest. In its revised report, the American Correctional Association states: "Today, as never before, the correctional institutions are feeling the impact of unrest in the larger community" (1970:15). Even though an institution may be remote, it cannot isolate itself completely from the larger community. Parole violators and newly admitted inmates are constantly bringing community attitudes to the institution, and this, coupled with news media coverage, keeps the inmates well informed about unrest in the general community. The New York State Special Commission on Attica noted that "the young inmate was conscious of the changes in attitudes in the black and Puerto Rican communities, on the campuses, in the churches, and in the antiwar movement" (1972:106).

The report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968) showed how pervasive discrimination and segregation, black immigration, and white exodus have been in aggravating problems in black ghettos "where segregation and poverty converge on the young to destroy opportunity and enforce failure" (1968:10). The Commission reports that "crime, drug addiction, dependency on welfare, and bitterness and resentment against society in general and white society in particular are the result" (1968:10).

The civil rights movement of the previous decade left frustrated hopes, feelings of powerlessness, and a climate tending toward approval and encouragement of violence as a form of protest. The Commission on Civil Disorders found that "a new mood has sprung up
among Negroes, particularly among the young, in which self-esteem and enhanced racial pride are replacing apathy and submission to the 'system'" (1963:11). Student protests, civil rights movements, and anti-war protests seemed to many alienated members of society to have accomplished what the democratic processes had not accomplished—to have focused attention on the need for basic change.

The moods and attitudes discussed above seem to be finding their way into prisons and may well be the ingredients of the mixture which has exploded in some state penal institutions during recent years. The nation's prisons are by no means insulated from these changing social moods.

**Inadequate finances.** Inadequate financing of prison facilities and programs is an underlying cause in many, if not most, prison riots. Lack of money affects almost every other cause of riots. Personnel problems are caused largely, although not entirely, by lack of money. As the American Correctional Association points out, "correctional administrators must often face problems of inadequate facilities, poor salaries, lack of treatment personnel, and too few correctional personnel because of inadequate finances" (1970:15). These problems can be, and sometimes are, directly related to prison riots and disturbances. In the larger, overpopulated institutions, inmates may be confined in dormitory-type housing units rather than individual cells. When this occurs, the propensity to violent behavior increases considerably. In some instances, the initiation of constructive treatment programs can serve as a possible countermeasure for overcrowding. However, if adequate finances are not available, the treatment programs cannot be
properly staffed. "The result is a system in which there is very little constructive treatment and a potential for the eruption of violence and disorder" (Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions, 1970:16).

Inequities and complexities in the criminal justice system. Today's criminal justice system is very complex and contains a number of inequities. "The most frequent target of attack," says the American Correctional Association, "is the disparity of the sentencing practices of various courts" (1970:16). Frank Flynn (1953) acknowledges that variations in the length of sentences for various crimes creates discontent. An article in The Christian Science Monitor (December 14, 1971:9) illustrates some of the disparities that exist in sentencing practices. A house painter in New Orleans, for example, was sentenced to fifty years in prison for selling a matchbox full of marijuana to undercover agents. In March, 1971, a jury in Odessa, Texas, found a man guilty of selling $10.00 worth of heroin to an undercover agent and sentenced him to 1,800 years in prison. The following month, a jury in Dallas, Texas, sentenced a man with a previous record to 2,500 years in prison for armed robbery and murder. The problem of disparity of sentences is further complicated by the folk wisdom that money buys a good attorney, which often means that the rich man goes free and the poor man goes to prison. The sons of TV personality Johnny Carson and the late Robert F. Kennedy, for example, did not go to prison when they were arrested for possession of drugs.

Another possible inequity of the criminal justice system has to do with parole. Flynn says: "Despite its emergence in the guise of a
reformative influence, parole is a major cause of unrest in a large number of states" (1953:83). He goes on to say that "the process of parole selection is fraught with numerous difficulties which may have reverberations in the prison community" (1953:83). In a matter of minutes, the parole board must determine whether the prisoner has sufficiently reformed to be entitled to release prior to expiration of his sentence. Decisions are sometimes arbitrary and regarded as harsh and unfair by the inmate. The prisoner seldom has any recourse in case of an adverse decision. Nor does he always know the basis upon which the board made its decision or whether he has been fairly treated. A denial of parole may bring about discontent, resentment, and frustration in the individual, thus encouraging violent behavior.

According to an article in the Kansas City Star (August 26, 1973:33A), 17,600 parole cases were decided during fiscal year 1971; however, reasons for denial were not given. Under a reorganization plan announced by Maurice H. Sigler, Chairman of the United States Parole Board, prisoners would not only be given written reasons for denial of parole, but "would have the right to be represented by attorneys at parole hearings and would have a means of appeal" (The Kansas City Star, August 26, 1973:33A).

Lack of meaningful rewards. A less obvious external cause of riots in correctional institutions is the lack of meaningful rewards. The restrictions imposed on the correctional program by the basic social attitudes of the general public may deny the offender of any reward. An example of this is the difficulty some ex-offenders face when attempting to find legitimate work following release from prison even
though they may have completed a comprehensive training program while incarcerated. Another example is the restriction placed on the prison industries program by the community. For instance, institutional industries can be utilized only for specified purposes, and the marketing of commodities produced in prison is severely limited so as not to compete with civilian enterprise. "These restrictions . . . impair the efforts of the correctional system to offer meaningful rewards in the form of either financial remuneration or meaningful work opportunities" (Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions, 1970:16).

It must be reiterated that the foregoing causes of prison riots are not all-inclusive and, in some cases, may merely be symptoms of more basic causes. Nonetheless, it should be clear that prison disturbances can be precipitated by factors or conditions which exist both inside and outside the prison. Although the prison administrator may have little or no control over outside influences, he must not overlook their importance as potential causes of prison violence. Having now discussed some of the underlying causes of prison riots, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a general discussion of some of the positive effects of prison disturbances.

**SOME FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF PRISON VIOLENCE**

Based on the data presented in Chapters 3 and 4, there appears to be sufficient evidence to support the contention that prison riots can and do have functional consequences. As in the case of causes, however, the functional consequences of prison riots are somewhat
elusive and difficult to assess. This is because a cause-effect relationship is not always easily determined. In one or more of the cases discussed in Chapter 3, it was reported that certain prison reforms were in the process of being instituted before the riot occurred; the riot merely expedited the process. In the case of the riot at the Vermont State Prison in September, 1971, changes were found to be the basic underlying cause, rather than the result, of the disturbance, although additional changes were introduced following the riot.

Another consideration that complicates the relationship between prison riots and prison reforms is the fact that some reforms take time to implement. As Flynn points out: "Any consideration of prison reform must take into account the fact that progress is going to be slow" (1953:85). Although some reforms are a direct result of prison violence, they often take weeks, even months, to effect. Some riot-related reforms, for example, were still being instituted at Attica more than a year after the September, 1971, riot occurred. In those cases where reforms are not immediately forthcoming, the cause-effect relationship can become obscured by the passage of time.

The positive consequences of prison riots rarely receive as much public attention as the negative consequences. On the one hand, the mass destruction of property, the taking of hostages, and the infliction of injury or death by a society of captives all have particular appeal to the news media. On the other hand, the changes which result from prison riots are rarely as glamorous as their causes, and, therefore, arouse little or no interest on the part of the media.
The writer recalls the enormous amount of press coverage given to the riot at Attica, but he is unable to recall any publicity being given to the reforms which were introduced following the riot.

While it may be speculative on the writer's part, there are perhaps several other reasons why prison reforms receive so little attention. First, once the violence has subsided, the public quickly falls back into a pattern of indifference and forgets that the riot and, for that matter, the prison, ever existed. The New York State Special Commission on Attica wrote:

"... The worrisome reality is that prisons, prisoners, and the problems of both are essentially invisible in the United States. We Americans have made our prisons disappear from sight as if by an act of will. We locate them mostly in places remote from view, and far removed from the homes of the inmates; ... and we manage to forget inmates and custodians alike by pretending that the prisoners will not return to our cities and our villages and our farms (1972:xii)."

Second, by drawing attention to prison reforms, particularly those resulting from prison riots, public attention is drawn to the inadequacies of the prison system and, in some cases, to the administration, which may or may not prove embarrassing to the latter. Third, poor relations between the prison administration and the news media may have a less than positive effect on the positive consequences of prison disturbances. In its revised report, the American Correctional Association states:

"The news media ... are important means by which the public is informed about the institutions their taxes support. Correctional institutions should acquire and maintain good press relations. The press should be informed of significant events of both a positive and negative nature. An air of secrecy lends credence to irresponsible inmate allegations (1970:20)."
Elsewhere the Association reports:

The news media have a responsibility to keep the public informed of newsworthy events and correctional administrators have a responsibility to keep the media informed of the activities within their institutions. Regrettably, many correctional administrators have overlooked this administrative responsibility. The correctional administrator should be diligent in his efforts to establish an honest and constructive relationship with members of the mass media. . . . the news media can be invaluable allies to the correctional administrator in his efforts to gain public support for his institution and its programs (1970:7).

There is yet another possible explanation concerning the lack of attention devoted to prison reforms emanating from prison riots. Because few people condone violence as a legitimate means of bringing about change, the dysfunctional consequences of prison violence have had a tendency to overshadow the functional consequences. As a result, investigators have focused their attention almost entirely on the causes of prison riots, and on ways and means of preventing them. While some contemporary authors (e.g., Leinwand, 1972; Bagdikian and Dash, 1972) have recognized the need for prison reform, their suggestions and recommendations along these lines have received little public recognition and support.

Prison Reforms Introduced

In addition to the reform measures discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, many other changes have evolved from the series of prison riots which occurred during the late 1960's and early 1970's. Some of these reforms may be enumerated as follows:

1. As part of a major prison reform movement, the United States Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) has begun to funnel larger sums of money into state and local prisons. For example, grants
to state and local prisons have been increased from two million to 250 million dollars over a three-year period. Federal aid is being used by prison officials to implement a variety of reforms, some of which are:

a. Prisons in California and Mississippi "are experimenting with allowing inmates to have conjugal visits with their wives as a deterrent to homosexuality" (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37).

b. Officials in Arizona have devoted over a million dollars to establish probation services for persons convicted of misdemeanors so that they may be placed on probation in lieu of going to prison. Arizona has also constructed a number of halfway houses "where convicts coming out of prison can live until they can find jobs and rejoin society" (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37).

c. In Indiana, LEAA money is being used in part for work-release programs that allow convicts with good records to work at jobs outside the prison as they approach the end of their prison term. While in a work-release status, "the prisoners live in minimum-security centers near their jobs" (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37).

d. Eight million dollars in LEAA money is going for a wide range of reforms in New York, "including new clothing, vocational education, improved food and law libraries for inmates and statewide training programs for employees" (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37). Further, the 1971 riot at Attica "led to the establishment of a medical review board within the state department of corrections and increased salaries to attract qualified physicians to
the institution" (Time, July 9, 1973:36).

e. One of the projects being pursued in Maryland aims to improve the education of those state prisoners (about thirty-eight percent) who have less than a fifth-grade education (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37).

2. At the direction of President Nixon, the United States Department of Justice "has embarked upon a comprehensive, 10-year plan to make the federal prison system a model for reform" (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37). As a result, the budget of the Federal Bureau of Prisons was doubled over a three-year period.

3. A staff training center has been established at the Federal Reformatory at El Reno, Oklahoma. The center offers "two weeks of intensive orientation for new prison employees" (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:38-39).

4. Federal and state courts have begun to develop a code of prisoners' rights. Additionally, "prisoners' rights projects have been developed by the Legal Aid Society of New York, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the law schools" (The Official Report, 1972:xx).

5. In addition to the expansion of prisoners' rights, prisoners' unions have been formed outside the prison walls to act as collective bargaining agents for inmates within the walls. One of the leading prisoners' unions in the country was founded in California in the spring of 1971, by a group of former inmates headed by John Irwin, an ex-inmate turned sociologist (The Christian Science Monitor, December 15, 1971:9).

6. The American Bar Association "has undertaken a major study of correction problems through a Commission on Correctional Facilities
Proposed Reforms Announced

A national conference on corrections, called by President Nixon in December, 1971, proposed some additional reforms, five of which are briefly described below.


2. The Federal Bureau of Prisons will build a national behavioral-research center in an effort to find out why criminals violate the law and how they can be stopped or prevented from doing so again (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37).

3. To help improve educational programs for prisoners, the LEAA is funding a clearinghouse on correctional education (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37).

4. In an attempt to reduce racial tensions between inmates and guards, prison officials have been urged to hire more blacks and Spanish-speaking Americans. "The Bureau of Prisons has set a goal of one-third minority employment in all new hiring" (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37).

5. Under the Omnibus Correctional Reform Act, some of the nation's older and larger penal institutions will be replaced with smaller, community-based institutions (U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 1971:37). This will bring inmates closer to the community from which they came and make prisons as they are presently known obsolete.
There is no denying that prison riots, either singularly or collectively, have had certain positive effects as evidenced by the preceding discussion. Many of the positive effects which accrue are often offset by negative effects, however. Although riots have drawn attention to some of the inadequacies that exist in penal institutions, prison reform has been slowed by a lack of public support and financial assistance. For these and other reasons already mentioned, inmates have often been hampered in their attempt to bring about certain reforms through the use of violence. Accordingly, not all prison riots produce the desired results.

SUMMARY

The causes of riots and disturbances in correctional institutions are varied and complex. It is not possible to identify a cause or set of causes, the presence of which will always precipitate a riot and the absence of which will always prevent a riot. Conditions which exist or incidents which occur in a particular institution may precipitate a riot. In another institution, these same conditions may exist or the same incidents may occur without appearing to have any significance. Therefore, the causes must be viewed as complex, interrelated variables which contribute to the total problem.

The underlying causes of prison riots may be related directly to the unnatural institutional environment, the typical characteristics of the inmate population, the management practices of the correctional administrator, or some policy or procedure within the institution which promotes dissension. At times, however, riots may result from
what has here been referred to as external causes or variables, i.e.,
basic social attitudes, unrest in the larger community, inadequate
financial support, etc. The importance of internal causes notwith­
standing, the author is of the belief that external causes, particularly
those having to do with social unrest in the larger community and
inadequate finances, have taken on added significance in recent years.
The fact that a series of major prison disturbances occurred during a
period of social unrest and turbulence in the late 1960's cannot be
dismissed as mere coincidence. Furthermore, many of the other funda­
mental causes of prison riots can be traced to a lack of sufficient
funds with which to establish and maintain adequate facilities and
meaningful programs and activities.

The positive functions of prison violence are sometimes difficult
to trace for several reasons. First, it is not always easy to distin­
guish those reforms which were in process prior to a riot from those
resulting directly from a riot, thus obscuring the cause-effect relation­
ship. Second, the passage of time between the occurrence of a riot and
the implementation of reforms becomes an intervening variable which
further complicates the understanding of direct causal relationships.
Third, prison reforms receive little publicity, thereby all but
escaping public awareness and leaving a dearth of information in the
research literature.

Attention in this chapter has been focused on some of the funda­
mental causes and consequences of prison violence. In the next chapter,
attention will be turned to an examination of some theoretical perspec­
tives on prison riots and reform. The purpose of this examination will
be to provide a somewhat different approach to the study of prison dis-
turbances and, in this connection, to further illuminate the complex
subject of violence and change as it relates to penal institutions.
Chapter 6

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PRISON RIOTS

This chapter will be taken up with some generalizations and an attempt at an analysis of prison riots in terms of a number of theoretical perspectives. While these perspectives may appear to be oversimplified in certain instances, they nevertheless provide several alternative approaches to the study of prison violence. The first of these perspectives suggests that prison riots may occur as a result of relative deprivation within the inmate population. The second proposes that there is a cultural lag between correctional progress and technological progress. The third perspective states that prison riots are cyclical in nature and form a reasonable step in a pattern of repeated prison reform. Finally, the fourth perspective proposes that prison riots serve as equilibrium-maintaining mechanisms, and, as such, help to re-establish and maintain stability within the prison.

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

In his book, *Why Men Rebel*, Ted Gurr (1970) develops a number of hypotheses and theoretical models which help to explain some of the underlying causes of collective violence. A brief description of several of these models will be useful in further analyzing and discussing the causes of prison violence.

According to Gurr, the "potential for collective violence is a function of the extent and intensity of shared discontents among
members of a society . . ." (1970:8). These discontents are said to be
the result of relative deprivation, which Gurr defines as "a perceived
discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capa-
bilities" (1970:13). "Value expectations are the goods and conditions
of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled" (Gurr,
1970:13). Value expectations may also be thought of as wants, goals,
or aspirations. Value capabilities, on the other hand, "are the goods
and conditions . . . people think they are capable of attaining or
maintaining, given the social means available to them" (Gurr, 1970:13).

Further on, Gurr elaborates by stating:

The "value expectations" of a collectivity are the average
value positions to which its members believe they are justifi-
cably entitled. "Value position" is the amount or level of
a value actually attained. Value expectations refer to both
present and future conditions. Men ordinarily expect to keep
what they have; they also generally have a set of expectations
and demands about what they should have in the future, which
is usually as much or more than what they have at present . . . .

"The value capabilities" of a collectivity are the average
value positions its members perceive themselves capable of
attaining or maintaining. Value capabilities also have both
present and future connotations. In the present, value capa-
bilities are represented by what men have actually been able
to attain or have been provided by their environment: their
"value position." In the future, value capabilities are what
men believe their skills, their fellows, and their rulers will,
in the course of time, permit them to keep or attain: their
"value potential" (1970:27).

Gurr identifies three patterns of relative deprivation which
can be cited as causal or predisposing factors for violence. One of
these patterns, the aspirational deprivation model, is shown graphically
in Figure 2.

According to this model, men's value expectations increase with-
out a corresponding increase in value capabilities. The perceived
discrepancy (aspirational deprivation) between expectations and
capabilities gives rise to frustration and discontent. The deprivation-induced discontent incites action and, when shared by a collectivity of persons, provides a general impetus to collective violence (Gurr, 1970:13-50). Propositionally, the greater the divergence between value expectations and value capabilities, the greater the propensity toward violence.

![Value Expectations vs. Value Capabilities](source: Gurr, 1970:51)

**Figure 2. Aspirational Deprivation**

Ghetto dwellers are particularly good targets of aspirational deprivation. Surrounded by a highly visible, affluent society, they come to share some of the value expectations of the society around them. Deprived of legitimate means of attaining these expectations, however, ghetto dwellers have sometimes found it necessary to resort to illegitimate means of attaining the conditions in life to which they feel they are rightfully entitled. This is borne out by the ghetto riots of the 1960's. Oppressed and downtrodden, many of these same individuals find their way into prison full of alienation and
hostility against their oppressors—the established institutions of law and government—and a propensity to rebel against these institutions. The New York State Special Commission on Attica hit upon this problem in its official report which states:

Attica, like most of our prisons, had become largely a black and Spanish-speaking ghetto, and the new inmate was shaped by the same experiences, expectations, and frustrations that culminated in eruptions in Watts, Detroit, Newark, and other American cities . . . .

The new inmate came to Attica bitter and angry as the result of his experiences in the ghetto streets and in the morass of the criminal justice system (1972:106).

The foregoing not only serves to illustrate the role that relative deprivation may play in precipitating violent behavior, but points out the need to consider the effects of outside influences when studying the causes of collective violence in prisons.

The decremental deprivation model illustrated in Figure 3 is also helpful in analyzing predisposing causes of prison violence. Under this model, men's value capabilities are perceived to decline while their value expectations remain virtually unchanged. Men who find themselves in this situation may become angry over loss of what they once had or thought they could have rather than over the non-attainment of new or intensified expectations (Gurr, 1970:46).

Conditions that decrease men's value capabilities without also decreasing their value expectations increase felt deprivation and, accordingly, the intensity of discontent. Such conditions exist in the prison community. Convicts bring with them to prison the aspirations and capabilities they develop while members of the free community. Once incarcerated, however, they lose certain rights and privileges, to
include the means (capabilities) with which to attain their aspirations (value expectations). The resultant discrepancy (decremental deprivation) can be expected to give rise to discontent and the propensity to riot. The problem confronting penal administrators, if the probability of violence in prisons is to be reduced, becomes one of how to reduce the discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities. It is at this point that prison reform enters the picture. Effective vocational training programs, for instance, provide inmates with the opportunities to learn marketable skills or improve existing skills which, in turn, increase their value potential and their chances for success on the outside. Computer programming courses being offered in the Kansas and California state penitentiaries are good examples. Where these and other constructive programs are nonexistent, inmate value capabilities, both present and future, will diminish appreciably.

![Diagram of decremental deprivation](image-url)

Source: Gurr, 1970:47

Figure 3. Decremental Deprivation
A third pattern of deprivation, referred to as progressive deprivation, is shown in Figure 4. In this case, steady improvement in men's value position generates expectations about continued improvement. If value capabilities stabilize or decline after such a period of improvement, progressive deprivation results (Gurr, 1970:52-53). Gurr cites the following situation as an example of how progressive deprivation might occur:

The income of Negroes relative to whites of comparable education increased rapidly towards equality between 1940 and the early 1950's, but then began to decline, so that by 1960, half the relative gains of the earlier period were lost (1970:54).

The progressive deprivation pattern, then, is most likely to occur in societies undergoing change.

![Figure 4. Progressive Deprivation](source: Gurr, 1970:53)

Applying the concept of progressive deprivation to a hypothetical penal situation, suppose that a prison warden, who has earned the reputation of being a reformist, is succeeded by a more
conservative warden. During the reformist's tenure, there was a substantial acceleration in inmate expectations and capabilities since many of the reforms which had been introduced benefited the inmates personally and improved their value position within the prison. When the successor assumed his duties, he followed through on several reforms which were already in process and then concentrated on maintaining the status quo. Although the inmates' expectations continued to rise, their capabilities began to decline when reforms were no longer forthcoming. This led to progressive deprivation on the part of the inmate population, or major segments thereof, and a propensity to resort to violent action as an alternative means of gaining what the inmates had come to regard as justifiably theirs.

Progressive deprivation is apparently the sort of thing Eric Hoffer was speaking of when discussing the characteristics of mass movements in his book, *The True Believer*. At one point, he claims: "Discontent is likely to be highest when misery is bearable; when conditions have so improved that an ideal state seems almost within reach" (1951:33). It is the taste of better things—not actual suffering—that excites people to revolt. Accordingly, frustration is likely to be greater when people have much and want more than when they have nothing and want nothing.

It is worth noting that the riot at Attica occurred at the end of a summer of mounting tensions between inmates and correction officers and of rising expectations and improving conditions. Prison discipline had become more relaxed. The courts had responded to inmates' complaints and begun to order limited reforms. Commissioner Oswald had
liberalized rules and was promising new programs, new facilities, and a new attitude toward inmate problems. Although reforms were being introduced at Attica, at least as far as the inmates were concerned, they were not being introduced quickly enough. With their hopes set on bigger and better things, the inmates turned to violence as a means of speeding up the reformation process.

Before leaving this section, it should be pointed out that relative deprivation may also "arise when individuals compare their own situation with that of a reference group which has what they want and think they should have" (Gurr, 1970:105). For some people, mere exposure to, or knowledge of, a better way of life is assumed to raise expectations. Accordingly, expectation levels may be accelerated by the "demonstration effect" of other groups that are improving while one's own group is not (Gurr, 1970:52). Denis Brogan (1951), for example, observed that the new ways and new wealth of the Industrial Revolution impelled many intellectuals to revolutionary fervor.

The demonstration effect may help explain the contagious nature of certain prison riots. As a case in point, the riot at the Maine State Prison in October, 1971, was attributed, at least in part, to the highly publicized concessions made as a result of strikes, violence, and disorders in other prisons. In this case, it is possible that the prisoners' expectations were aroused by concessions gained (demonstration effect) in other institutions, rather than in the institution to which they were confined.
Some writers contend that prison reforms have not kept pace with technological progress in the larger society. Hancock, for one, says that "American correctional progress has not kept pace with social, economic, and industrial change" (1969:19). According to Donald Clemmer, prisons are behind times and, therefore, "have not kept step with advances on other frontiers" (1958:319). The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence points out that:

"... our political and social institutions and the programs they manage are not changing rapidly enough to keep up with the speed of change in the environment they are intended to support" (1969:86).

In effect, these authors are addressing what William Ogburn referred to as the theory of cultural lag. According to this theory, a cultural lag occurs when one of two correlated parts of culture changes before or in greater degree than another part does, thereby causing a maladjustment between the two parts (Ogburn, 1922:200-201).

Ogburn distinguishes between the two aspects of culture by referring to one as material and to the other as the nonmaterial. The material culture may be thought of as the technological culture, and the nonmaterial culture may be thought of as the nontechnological or adaptive culture. Since, at least according to Ogburn, the material culture tends to outpace the nonmaterial culture, the former becomes an independent variable and the latter a dependent variable. Because the two parts of culture are considered to be correlated and interdependent, a rapid change in the material culture requires changes in the nonmaterial culture. When changes in the nonmaterial culture fail to keep
pace with changes in the material culture, there is a lag which may last for varying lengths of time, sometimes even years. During this lag, strain and maladjustment between the two cultures occurs. Therefore, "it is desirable to reduce the period of maladjustment, to make cultural adjustments as quickly as possible" (Ogburn, 1922:201) if the stress created by the two change rates is to be reduced.

In attempting to apply the theory of cultural lag to prisons, two interrelated problems are immediately encountered. First, the idea of cultural lag is meaningless until one decides what lags behind what. Second, it is not clear, nor is it necessarily to be taken for granted, that changes in the nonmaterial culture follow, rather than precede, changes in the material culture as Ogburn suggests. There is, then, several different ways to approach the subject of cultural lag as it relates to penal institutions.

One approach might be to treat the prison as one culture and the larger society as another. Since prisons may be considered a part of the larger society, the culture of the prison reflects the culture of the society at large. Therefore, any changes in the culture of the larger society will necessarily affect the culture of the prison. When prisons fail to keep pace with these cultural changes, maladjustment occurs. In an attempt to reduce the period of maladjustment, necessary adjustments are made through changes forced by prison violence. Once this happens, synchronization between the two cultures is reached, and a period of relative calm in the prison may prevail until an intolerable lag between changes in the prison culture and changes in the culture of the larger society develops again.
The foregoing illustration is, of course, an over-generalized application of the culture lag theory. An alternative and perhaps more meaningful approach is just the opposite of Ogburn's theory and suggests that changes occur more rapidly in the nonmaterial culture than in the material culture. In this case, prison facilities—that is, the physical plants and equipment therein—are regarded as the material culture, and man's accumulated knowledge of prison reform is regarded as the nonmaterial culture. Prison facilities are therefore treated as the dependent variable and man's store of knowledge concerning prison reform the independent variable. Applying the theory of culture lag in this manner, one would expect changes in the nonmaterial culture to generate corresponding changes in the material culture. The evidence presented in this paper tends to indicate that changes in prison facilities have not kept pace with the increasing body of knowledge pertaining to prison reform.

Prisons, like other social institutions, are the creation of human intelligence and ideals, and reflect man's accumulated knowledge about himself and his environment. There comes a time, however, when man's knowledge outstrips physical monuments of an older generation, necessitating their replacement with something more relevant to the times. It is therefore conceivable that some prisons may be better adapted to the nonmaterial culture and correctional philosophy of years gone by than to the nonmaterial conditions that exist today. Some relief may be in store in this respect as, for example, plans are being made to replace the 140-year-old Missouri State Penitentiary with a series of urban treatment complexes at Kansas City and St. Louis (The Kansas City Star, October 26, 1973:4).
As noted earlier in this paper, many studies have been done by penologists and criminologists in a collective effort to determine the causes of prison riots. These studies have not only succeeded in identifying many of the physical inadequacies of prison facilities, but have given rise to the development of innovative methods and techniques of improving institutional facilities. Although these innovations have added to man's background of knowledge, many have yet to be implemented. As it stands, man's knowledge of prison reform is more advanced than the prison facilities themselves, thereby creating a lag and, hence, maladjustment between these two parts of culture.

Prison facilities have failed to keep pace with the growing body of knowledge concerning prison reform for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons have been discussed in detail in Chapter 5. At the risk of being redundant, however, several will be repeated here for illustrative purposes. There is first the problem presented by obsolete physical plants and equipment. The American Correctional Association describes the problem succinctly in its Manual of Correctional Standards:

The physical plant of all leading prisons and reformatories and of the early reform schools as well, has always handicapped, and often completely frustrated the rehabilitative ideals and methods of correctional administrators. This was true in 1830, and it is especially striking and disastrous in the second half of the Twentieth Century, for too few of the fundamental characteristics of penal architecture have changed since the building of the Eastern Penitentiary and the Auburn Prison, while correctional ideals and techniques have been and are being revolutionized. Hence, the gap between correctional ideals and correctional construction has become even greater through the years (1966:329).

Many of the existing penal institutions are poorly designed, with inadequate or non-existent facilities for treatment or training. To a large
degree, these institutions were built prior to 1900. The average age of the prisons discussed in Chapter 3, for example, is approximately eighty years. Nine of the prisons mentioned are more than 100 years old. These antiquated facilities make the introduction of constructive programs extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Coupled with the problem of outmoded structures are the congested conditions created by overcrowding, a situation certain to insure the defeat of any attempt at program planning or implementation. Cells doubled up, two and sometimes three decker beds crowded together in improvised dormitories is not an uncommon condition in some of the older prisons. The Missouri State Penitentiary formerly housed seven prisoners to a cell and, today, overcrowding in that institution precludes the proper segregation of inmates and inhibits a viable rehabilitation program (The Kansas City Star, September 13, 1973:3). Federal institutions, which have generally been considered "a cut above" most state systems, are also susceptible to overcrowding. For example, the United States Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, has been unable to convert two and six-man cells to singles due to lack of funds.

Many of the nation's prisons, to include some of the newer ones, are too large, and most of them do not lend themselves to the application of modern penological knowledge. According to the American Correctional Association, "the maximum population for a prison for adults should not exceed 1,200 . . . . Any institution operating as a single unit becomes increasingly inefficient and unsafe as its population exceeds 1,200" (Manual of Correctional Standards, 1966:341-342). Yet the average capacity of the prisons examined in Chapter 3 is about 1,700.
Millions of dollars are being invested in obsolete and decrepit prison plants that are too large to permit individual treatment. Because of costs of entirely new plants, the public is hesitant to abandon existing facilities. Instead, it spends more money to make them still larger and more unwieldy.

Although other reasons for the cultural lag between prison facilities and accumulated knowledge of prison reform could be cited, suffice it to say that prison plants have changed with changing needs and changing ideas. There has, however, been a vast change in the practical application of correctional ideas and concepts, especially during the past thirty years or so. Most of the prisons of the country were built before that time. Many of those built since then have merely been copies of those built previously, with little regard for any needed change in the physical plant to meet changing correctional philosophies.

THE CYCLICAL NATURE OF PRISON RIOTS

Penal history has shown that prison riots tend to repeat themselves. Although hardly a year has gone by in which a prison riot has not been reported, major prison disturbances seem to occur in clusters at somewhat irregular intervals. Although it has not been mentioned elsewhere in this paper, a series of riots occurred in American penal institutions in 1912 and 1913. A series of riots also occurred during the years 1929-1930, 1951-1953, and again in 1955. These were followed by yet another series of riots in 1968-1971. In other words, five episodes of major prison violence have occurred in the United States in
little more than a half century. These repeated episodes of violence seem to suggest that prison riots and attendant reforms occur in cycles and, therefore, have an aspect of inevitability about them.

Vernon Fox, Chairman of the Department of Criminology at Florida State University, claims that prison riots "tend to pattern in five stages, four during the riot and one afterward" (1971:10). These stages are generally as follows: (1) triggering event, (2) emergence of inmate leaders, (3) interaction with prison officials, (4) surrender of the inmates, and (5) investigations and administrative changes (Fox, 1971:10).

The present writer submits that prison riots tend to pattern in seven, rather than five, stages, with one stage occurring prior to and two following the riot. According to this view, there is (1) a buildup of tension and discontent inside the walls, followed by (2) a precipitating event which "triggers" the riot, after which (3) self-appointed inmate leaders emerge and (4) interact with prison officials, leading to (5) peaceful or forceful termination of the riot and (6) the introduction of reforms, followed by (7) a lapse into public forgetfulness. Once the riot has passed through all seven stages, violence incubates for a period of time and then the cycle repeats itself again.

During stage one, there is a buildup of tension and discontent which creates a predisposition or readiness to riot. This buildup may be rapid or gradual, and may result from a variety of factors. A sudden increase in discontent could come about as a result of an unannounced change in prison policy which affects the welfare of the general inmate population. Inmates at the Attica Correctional Facility,
for example, became humiliated when lists of package items which they
could receive were frequently changed without notice. On the other
hand, tension and discontent may occur gradually as a result of a series
of events felt to be humiliating and frustrating. Whatever the case
may be, Horton and Hunt (1972) claim that the impetus to collective
action is dependent on a shared belief among the actors. This belief
"identifies the source of the threat, the route of escape, or the
avenue to fulfillment" (Horton and Hunt, 1972:384).

When a predisposition to riot is present, a precipitating event
is needed in stage two to "trigger" or "detonate" the riot. According
to Horton and Hunt, "some dramatic event, or a report thereof, sets the
stage for action" (1972:384-385). This event may be planned or spon­
taneous. Frequently, planned disturbances take the form of sitdown
strikes, work slowdowns, hunger strikes, or mass escape attempts. A
spontaneous event, on the other hand, may be almost anything from some­
one throwing a tray in the dining hall, to a fight in the yard that
expands (Fox, 1971:10) into a full-scale riot. An example of a spon­
taneous riot occurred in the New Haven Correctional Facility in New
York in March, 1970, when a black militant threw a tray of food and
then proceeded to implore other inmates to rebel. Other riots have
occurred spontaneously as a result of mass contagion--that is, based on
news of disturbances in other institutions. Once a group becomes
emotionally aroused, it "may act upon the first suggested action which
is in line with its impulses" (Horton and Hunt, 1972:387). Clemmer
acknowledges that, although prison riots may be either planned or
staged, they are usually spontaneous (1958:148).
Once the riot has been precipitated, inmate leaders tend to emerge in stage three. Gresham Sykes reports that "prison riots depend heavily on the rise to leadership of the more violent, aggressive and unstable prisoners who can fuse the many dissatisfactions of prison life into an organized plan of action" (1959:401). Horton and Hunt suggest that most collective behavior is initially unstructured and without leadership. Therefore, "anyone may be able to assume leadership by simply calling out suggestions and commands" (Horton and Hunt, 1972:389) and can thus be expected to emerge during a riot.

In their discussion of collective behavior, Horton and Hunt observe that:

The leadership profoundly affects the intensity and direction of crowd behavior. Given a collection of frustrated, resentful people, a skillful demagogue can convert them into a vengeful mob and direct their aggression at any "enemy" who is included among their antagonisms. Likewise, a leader can sometimes calm or divert a crowd by a strategic suggestion or command (1972:389).

The inmate leader takes a sort of "middle-of-the-road" position where he can best moderate the extremes and maintain communication with both the inmates and the prison hierarchy. In those cases where hostages are taken, some inmates may want to kill them, as was the case at Attica. Other inmates may want to give up and surrender to the administration. The inmate leader attempts to control these two extremes in a variety of ways and, by doing so, stabilizes the inmate group (Fox, 1971:10).

During the fourth stage, interaction takes place between inmates and prison officials. This is usually the time when inmates make their demands or grievances known to the administration. This
stage also assists in identifying the alternatives available for the resolution of the riot. Although the administration is under no obligation to negotiate with the rioters, it has often done so, particularly when hostages are involved. Of course, the chances for the use of force or the threat of force are greater when the prisoners do not hold hostages. Vernon Fox points out:

When the inmate group is cohesive and their morale is good, the prisoners will maintain the riot situation, whether faced with force or negotiation. When the group cohesion begins to disintegrate by some inmates wanting to surrender, others wanting to retaliate, and the leadership wanting to maintain the status quo, the administration may manipulate it for an early surrender. This disintegration of group cohesion may be promoted by negotiation or by force or threat of force, depending upon the situation (1971:11).

An approach other than force or the threat of force is to wait for inmate cohesion to disintegrate by periods of inaction which place strain on the inmate leadership to hold the group together (Fox, 1971:11).

Prison riots normally end during stage five with the surrender of inmates either after negotiation or the use of force or threat of force. The important thing during this stage is the regaining of control by prison authorities. If the administration decides not to negotiate with the inmates and the latter do not surrender, the use of force or threat of force is inevitable if the riot is to be quelled quickly. Ten guards held hostage by 270 inmates at the Illinois State Penitentiary at Stateville in September, 1973, were released when state police threatened to flood the cell block with tear gas (The Kansas City Times, September 7, 1973:8). As indicated, out-waiting the inmates is one approach in certain situations. Following an
uprising at the Indiana State Prison in September, 1973, the warden was quoted in a newspaper article as saying that "he had only two recourses: rush the cell blocks or play a waiting game" (The Kansas City Times, September 4, 1973:1). He decided to do the latter. The use of force is a most delicate matter, for it is risky for both the assault groups and rioters. Further, the use of force is becoming increasingly effective in American society, and it invites derision from certain segments of the public. The student riot at Kent State University, not to mention the riot at Attica, was "the last straw" as far as the public was concerned in the handling of protestors by "strong-arm" methods.

Stage six is the aftermath where investigations are initiated, reports rendered, and reforms introduced. In some respects, this is the most important stage. The introduction of reform measures following the riot must help to restore order and confidence in the remaining power structure by rectifying the undesirable situation that produced the riot. Even in those cases where inmate demands or grievances are not considered legitimate, prison riots may result in changes or reforms.

During phase seven, the general public can fall back into a state of indifference, quite ready to forget the prison problem until it is reminded once more by the mass media that violence has broken out behind the walls of some prison. As Cozart once remarked: "We think about prisoners only when they rebel against bad prison conditions or when the press or some specially interested group carries on a program for reform" (1955:18).
In order to better assess the role of collective violence in the prison's transformation through time, it is perhaps helpful to look at prison riots in terms of their usefulness as equilibrium-maintaining mechanisms. As a riot progresses, the prison appears to move in a cyclic rhythm from equilibrium to disequilibrium to equilibrium. During periods of tranquility, the prison may be considered to be in a state of equilibrium or relative stability. When a riot breaks out, disorganization occurs and the disequilibrium helps to bring about changes in the prison's social structure, and these changes act to restore order and re-establish equilibrium.

Seen in this light, the function of prison riots can be compared with that of earthquakes. Lewis Coser quotes an article in the *New York Times*:

> There is nothing abnormal about an earthquake. An unshakeable earth would be a dead earth. A quake is the earth's way of maintaining its equilibrium, a form of adjustment that enables the crust to yield to stresses that tend to reorganize and redistribute the material of which it is composed . . . . The larger the shift, the more violent the quake, and the more frequent the shifts, the more frequent the shocks (1967:27).

Following this analogy, a riot is the prison's way of making adjustments in its social structure, enabling it to maintain equilibrium.

To suggest that the period preceding a riot is one of relative stability is not to deny that certain events occur which tend to reduce the effectiveness of stabilizing elements within the prison social structure. As a case in point, there was a series of nonviolent protests at Attica in the months preceding the riot in September, 1971. Some were
moderately successful in gaining concessions, but others ended with the isolation or transfer of suspected ringleaders and troublemakers. Further, the killing of George Jackson at California's San Quentin Prison in August, 1971, resulted in a day of protest at Attica during which inmates wore black armbands and refused to eat. There was also some talk about organizing a prison-wide sitdown strike, but it never materialized (The Official Report, 1972:108). These events had a disruptive effect on the equilibrium of the prison's social structure by challenging custodial personnel to maintain control during a period of increased tension and strain.

Disequilibrium may come about in a number of ways during a prison riot. If the disturbance is spontaneous, there is usually mass confusion and social disorganization at the outset. Such was the case at Attica in September, 1971. The rioters were at first without leadership and a plan of action. Custodial personnel, lacking proper training and a carefully prepared riot control plan, were equally confused and disorganized. In short, the stability of the prison organization was displaced by disorder.

Another source, or possibly even an effect, of disequilibrium is the struggle for power that takes place between the administration and inmate population during a disturbance. In a riot such as that at Attica, there is a partial or temporary transfer of power or control from the rulers to the ruled. This power struggle does not end until prison officials regain control of the prison.

There may also be a power struggle within the inmate population itself. As suggested previously, the occurrence of riots in the prison
depends heavily on the emergence of influential prisoners into positions of leadership. However, there may be a shift in the elements exercising leadership as the riot progresses. That is, inmates may compete with one another for positions of power and authority. This occurred at Attica when members of various factions within the prison vied for positions of authority. Such struggles lead to a temporary disruption of stability as the inmate society goes through a series of adjustments or transformations.

Many types of informal relationships among inmates, and between inmates and authorities in the prison system, remain hidden during the course of normal prison operations. However, the importance of such relationships comes more clearly to light when their normal operation is disrupted. In one of his works on social conflict, Lewis Coser comments:

> When changes in the equilibrium of a society lead to the formation of new groupings or the strengthening of existing groupings that set themselves the goal of overcrowding resistance of vested interests, through conflict, changes in structural relations, as distinct from simple "maladjustment," can be expected (1967:34).

Thus, out of the struggle for power during a riot, whether it be among inmates or between inmates and prison officials, emerges a new set of relationships, and these relationships may very well carry over into the new social structure following the riot.

Disturbances to the equilibrium of the prison brings about changes which act to restore the social order and re-establish equilibrium. In those cases where inmate demands are considered legitimate, they may be accommodated through the introduction of various innovations and reforms which seek to correct the conditions that precipitated the riot. Until these conditions are corrected, the prison's equilibrium
will remain tenuous. A state of balance will be maintained only so long as changes in the prison system are commensurate with changing social needs and expectations.

SUMMARY

This chapter has been an attempt to analyze prison riots in terms of four different theoretical perspectives. The first of these dealt with the theory of relative deprivation which, stated in its simplest terms, is a perceived discrepancy between what a person has and what he thinks he should have. Three different patterns of relative deprivation were distinguished—aspirational, decremental, and progressive. Aspirational deprivation is most likely to occur in the free community, whereas the decremental and progressive deprivation patterns may occur to a greater or lesser extent in the prison community. Although the patterns of deprivation occur under somewhat different circumstances, they all have the same potential effect; they may each result in varying degrees of frustration and discontent. In brief, as the gap between what a person has and what he wants increases, there may be a corresponding increase in the intensity of discontent and the propensity to resort to violent behavior.

A second perspective is based on Ogburn's cultural lag theory which holds that changes in the material or technological culture tend to outpace changes in the nonmaterial or nontechnological culture. Under some circumstances, however, changes in the nonmaterial culture may occur at a faster rate than those in the material culture. That this may be so was demonstrated to some extent in this chapter by treating prison facilities as the material culture and man's accumulated
knowledge of prison reform as the nonmaterial culture. Substantial evidence can be brought to show that prison facilities have progressed at a slower rate than man's store of knowledge concerning penal reform. It was generally concluded that prison riots may occur as a result of the stress created by the two change rates and, further, that these riots may aid in reducing some of the stress by forcing adjustments in prison facilities so that they might become better adapted to new non-material conditions.

A third perspective focused on the cyclical nature of prison riots. Here it was proposed that the cycles of prison riots and reforms take place in recurring patterns. More specifically, riots and reforms in prisons are seen in seven different stages labelled as follows: (1) buildup of tension and discontent, (2) precipitating event, (3) emergence of inmate leaders, (4) interaction with prison officials, (5) termination of the riot, (6) introduction of reforms, and (7) lapse into public forgetfulness. The sixth stage is considered the most important for purposes of this thesis, as it is during this stage that reforms are introduced with the intention of rectifying the undesirable conditions that precipitated the riot.

Finally, a fourth perspective suggests that prison riots may be viewed as equilibrium-maintaining mechanisms. During riotous conditions, the prison moves from equilibrium to disequilibrium to equilibrium. Although riots temporarily disrupt the equilibrium of the prison, they also bring about changes which help to restore a new order and re-establish a new equilibrium. Further, new roles and relationships among inmates and between inmates and prison officials
may develop in the prison social structure during prison disturbances. The new relationships may help to relieve previously existing tension and develop a spirit of cooperation between inmates and prison authorities.

It should be emphasized that a full account of prison riots must consider the complicated interrelationships of many factors and that an adequate theory of prison disturbances cannot be developed until more extensive and detailed knowledge of the nature of the prison social structure is acquired. Yet even if the perspectives discussed herein stand in need of more evidence and development, they have the initial, presumptive advantage of analyzing prison disturbances not as isolated, fortuitous events, but as integral to the nature of imprisonment.
Chapter 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

This study has examined some of the functions of violence in terms of change which it may bring in social structure. Because the terms violence, change, and social structure subsume a great deal, attention has been focused on prisons as a special type of social structure, on prison riots as a major form of violence, and on prison reform as a specific type of change. The study originally attempted to determine whether or not a cause-effect relationship exists between prison riots and prison reform. However, it became both more and less than that, for it turned into a broad inquiry and synthesis of prison violence and reform.

To the writer's knowledge, no study of the functional consequences of prison riots has been published. The majority of social scientific studies which have been done on prison riots have dealt with the causes, rather than the consequences, of the riots. This study, therefore, has attempted to explore, in a tentative and preliminary manner, an otherwise neglected field of inquiry.

For the most part, the study is a secondary analysis of qualitative data. Although it is based largely on public and published materials, data were gathered from a variety of sources including non-participant observation and personal correspondence with forty-three
state departments of correction. Some of Lewis Coser's works served as a general theoretical framework within which to analyze the functions of prison riots and disturbances. Attention has been focused almost exclusively on state penal institutions in order to reduce the number and types of variables that one could expect to encounter if he were to mingle state institutions with federal institutions. Further, the study concentrates primarily on those riots which occurred during the period January 1, 1968 to December 31, 1971. This period was considered particularly appropriate for investigation as it not only encompassed a new series of riots and disturbances in correctional institutions, but also was an era of considerable unrest in the larger society. Accordingly, it was felt that certain of the riots would reflect some of the currents of unrest which prevailed in the free community and thus provide a clearer conception of the sociology of the prison community.

The study began in Chapter 2 with a general discussion of some of the social functions of violence. The purpose of this discussion was to show the place of violence in bringing about social change and to point out that violence is far from being totally dysfunctional as many people have been led to believe. Attention then turned to an examination of a series of contemporary prison riots in Chapter 3. Here an attempt was made to identify some of the causes and consequences of the riots in order to show relations between violence and change.

In Chapter 4, the riot that occurred at New York State's Attica Correctional Facility in September, 1971, was examined in detail with a view toward explaining what happened before, during, and after the
uprising. This chapter is particularly important to the study, for it discusses in detailed language the social structure of the prison and the many problems confronting it. From this discussion emerges a profile of a major disturbance which helps to explicate the many social forces, both internal and external, which come to bear on the prison.

A number of the causes and consequences of prison riots were analyzed in Chapter 5. Some of the fundamental causes of prison riots, both past and present, were compared and divided into three basic categories--general causes, internal causes, and external causes--for more detailed analysis. In the latter part of the chapter, some of the complexities involved in studying the relationship between prison riots and prison reforms were discussed, followed by a synopsis of some of the major penal reforms which have undoubtedly evolved from prison riots in recent years.

Finally, Chapter 6 consists of an analysis of prison riots in terms of several theoretical perspectives. One of these perspectives hypothesizes that prison riots may occur as a result of relative deprivation among inmates. Another suggests that prison riots come as a result of cultural lag between prison facilities and man's accumulated knowledge of prison reform. A third perspective suggests that prison riots are cyclical in nature and form a natural step in a pattern of repeated reform. Still another perspective theorizes that prison riots serve as equilibrium-maintaining mechanisms and, as such, help to restore social order and maintain stability within the prison's social structure.
CONCLUSIONS

Prison riots are by no means totally dysfunctional in their consequences. Indeed, they serve a number of positive functions. Prison disturbances occur in part because the rioters believe that they cannot effectively communicate their demands through normal, approved channels and that prison administrations have become unresponsive. Thus, the riots serve to dramatize grievances and bring them to public and higher official attention. Prison riots also signal the presence of maladjustments within the prison social structure. For example, they reveal inadequacies or weaknesses which need to be remedied in the prison structure if social order is to be maintained. Further, prison riots help to relieve structural strain by draining off hostile and aggressive sentiments which have built up. Further still, prison riots often bring about changes which help to restore the prison to a state of normalcy and relative stability.

That some prisons are more susceptible to riots than others is obvious and indisputable. The fact remains, however, that no prison is completely insulated against collective violence. Available data indicate that a substantial number of the nation's prisons are outmoded and inadequate by present day standards. It cannot be stated unequivocally that antiquated facilities cause riots and that all disturbances occur in old, inadequate institutions. Obviously, disturbances occur in some of the more modern facilities, but physical inadequacy is a contributing factor which cannot be overlooked. One is brought to the conclusion that correctional administrators must therefore be constantly aware of innovative methods for improving institutional facilities.
The emphasis on physical inadequacy should not overshadow the personal inadequacies and characteristics of the inmates themselves. It must be remembered that prisons, unlike most other types of social institutions, house men who, in some cases, are mentally deficient, emotionally unstable, prone to violent and other socially deviant behavior, and who have been convicted of greater or lesser crimes. When violence-prone men find themselves in institutions which fail to respond to their needs and appeals, the socially explosive ingredients of a riot are present. Whether or not there is a new breed of inmates in prison today as the New York State Special Commission on Attica suggests is a moot point. However, one thing is certain: inmates are shaped by many of the same experiences, expectations, and frustrations which have culminated in civil disturbances outside the prison.

The factors precipitating a riot are complexly interrelated and vary in their importance from one institution to another. Despite these complexities, certain fundamental matters are clear. Of these, the most fundamental is the fact that prison riots do not erupt as a result of a single "triggering" or "precipitating" event. Instead, they are the outgrowth of an increasingly disturbed social atmosphere in which a series of tension-heightening incidents over a period of weeks or months become, in the minds of inmates, linked with a reservoir of grievances. At some point in a mounting tension, an added incident becomes the breaking point and the tension is transformed into violence.

This conclusion does not discount the fact that some riots erupt as a result of a "demonstration effect," but a greater number result from adverse conditions which exist in many American penal institutions today.
Another conclusion that might be drawn is that racism is more intense, more vicious, and more inhumane in prisons than elsewhere. What seems to be happening in prisons is essentially what is happening in larger or smaller degree throughout the greater society. Black people and other minorities have become more vocal and militant in demanding basic rights that are being denied them. Outside the prison, the "system" has given in to some degree and made changes; however, inside the prison, changes are interpreted as slow in coming, and inmates feel that they must resort to violence as a means of gaining what they feel are basic rights. While racial tension exists to varying degrees in prisons, the evidence presented in this paper does not support the notion that prison riots are typically racial in nature, although some of them obviously have what might be considered racial overtones.

A study of the aftermath of prison riots leads to the conclusion that the exact origin of prison reform is sometimes difficult to trace. For example, from the data available, a clear distinction cannot always be drawn between those reforms which occurred as a direct result of the riot and those which might have been in process prior to the riot. Second, the passage of time between the occurrence of the riot and any subsequent reforms acts as an intervening variable, thus complicating an understanding of the causal relationship. Third, the positive effects of prison riots usually receive far less publicity than their causes and have been the object of little or no empirical research.

The foregoing conclusions lead to a final and obvious one: a great deal more research is needed before the picture of prison violence
can be complete. One area requiring further exploration is that having
to do with the influence of external variables as precipitants of prison
violence. Studies to date have dealt almost exclusively with internal
variables—that is, conditions within the prison—thereby leaving a
large void in the research literature on prison violence. Another
area, the functional consequences of prison violence, must also be
investigated more thoroughly if the causes and effects of prison riots
are to be fully explained and understood. To know why men rebel is one
thing, but to know what must be done to prevent them from rebelling is
quite another thing.

IN RETROSPECT

Throughout this study, the author has acted on the premise that
to reach an understanding of the social context of contemporary prison
violence, a broad-ranging inquiry must be conducted into areas where
questions abound but simple answers and explanations do not. Aware of
an over-ambitious approach, the writer has nonetheless concluded that
this sort of inquiry is the only way to achieve an appropriate perspec­
tive on violence and change in American penal institutions.

It should be made clear that collective violence in prisons may
be functional or dysfunctional, depending on the viewpoint of the obser­
er. Although certain forms of violence in America are considered legit­
imate, the general tendency has been to regard prison violence as
illegitimate and, consequently, to disregard its positive functions.
For this reason, conventional approaches to the study of prison vio­
ence sometimes obscure rather than illuminate this important field
of inquiry.
The present study has taken on the difficult task of identifying some of the positive functional consequences of prison violence by focusing attention primarily on the reforms which have evolved after violent incidents. While the study represents only a beginning, it has succeeded, if only in small measure, in accomplishing what it set out to do; that is, to demonstrate that prison violence may serve important functions, not the least of which are the changes it brings about in the prison social structure. The nature of these changes and the direction that they take depends on many factors, but most have been aimed at making prisons more humane institutions on the one hand and more effective institutions for rehabilitation of prisoners on the other.

The negative consequences of prison violence notwithstanding, penologists and social scientists alike can be reassured by the knowledge that the key causes of such violence are remediable through constructive reforms. It would be utopian to suggest that reforms are a panacea for all that ails American penal institutions. Granted, much could be done with more money, more highly trained personnel, higher salaries, modern physical plants, and greater prestige for prison employees, but all of these factors, even if realized, probably would not offer permanent solutions to the problem of prison violence. Nevertheless, they would go a long way toward reducing or neutralizing the conditions that foster violence in prisons.

In closing, the reader is left with the following remark made by Austin MacCormick some years ago: "The lesson of the riots is that we cannot reform our prisoners until we have reformed our prisons" (1954: 27). This statement seems to remain relevant today.
APPENDIX A

A Note About the Study and Its Author

While the writer advocates change on the one hand, he does not necessarily sanction violence on the other, although he is a member of a social organization that does—the United States Army. Because of this, it is not entirely unusual that the subject of violence was singled out for investigation. What may be unusual in this investigation is the attempt to give violence the appearance of being functional or a necessary evil in a society; in this case, the special prison society. Very simply, the approach used in this paper was chosen because it was considered to be at variance with customary thinking and intellectually challenging.

Not only is the author interested in the study of violence and change, but he is also interested in the field of corrections. He received training in corrections while attending the U.S. Army Military Police School at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and has commanded a correctional training unit at the U.S. Army Retraining Brigade (formerly known as the U.S. Army Correctional Training Facility) at Fort Riley, Kansas. While assigned to the Retraining Brigade, he worked closely with members of the Seventh Step Foundation, an organization comprised of former convicts. Further, he became involved in a number of pilot programs designed to improve the training, evaluation, and correctional treatment of military prisoners in a structured environment. During his
second tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam, he had staff responsibility for the confinement of all United States military prisoners.
APPENDIX B

Listing of Proposed Demands at Attica

The following listing, taken verbatim from the Official Report of the New York State Special Commission on Attica (1972:251-257), provides a breakout of the demands proposed by the observer committee, including the twenty-eight demands to which Commissioner Oswald acceded.

Observers’ Proposals

1. Provide adequate food and water and shelter for this group.
2. Replace Superintendent Mancusi immediately.
3. Grant complete administrative and legal amnesty to all persons associated with this matter.

Proposals Acceptable to Commissioner Oswald

1. Provide adequate food, water, and shelter for all inmates.
2. Inmates shall be permitted to return to their cells or to other suitable accommodations or shelter under their own power. The observers’ committee shall monitor the implementation of this operation.
3. Grant complete administrative amnesty to all persons associated with this matter. By administrative amnesty, the state agrees:

   a. Not to take any adverse parole actions, administrative proceedings, physical punishment, or other type of harassment such as holding inmates in-communicação, segregating any inmates, or keeping them in isolation or in 24-hour lockdown.

   b. The state will grant legal amnesty in regard to all civil actions which could arise from this matter.
Observers' Proposals

Proposals Acceptable to Commissioner Oswald

c. It is agreed that the State of New York and all its departments, divisions, and subdivisions, including the State Department of Corrections and the Attica Correctional Facility, and its employees and agents shall not file or initiate any criminal complaint or act on complaints in any criminal action of any kind or nature relating to property, property damage, or property-related crimes arising out of the incidents at the Attica Correctional Facility during September 9, 10, 11, 1971.

d. The District Attorney of Wyoming County, New York, has issued and signed the attached letter as of this date.

4. Place this institution under federal jurisdiction.

4. Establish by October 1, 1971, a permanent ombudsman service for the facility staffed by appropriate persons from the neighboring communities.

5. Apply the New York State minimum wage law to all work done by inmates. STOP SLAVE LABOR.

5. Recommend the application of the New York State minimum wage law standards to all work done by inmates. Every effort will be made to make the records of payments available to inmates.

6. Allow all New York State prisoners to be politically active, without intimidation or reprisal.

6. Allow all New York State prisoners to be politically active, without intimidation or reprisal.

7. Allow true religious freedom.

7. Allow true religious freedom.

8. End all censorship of newspaper, magazines, letters, and other publications from publishers.

8. End all censorship of newspaper, magazines, and other publications from publishers, unless there is determined by qualified
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observers' Proposals</th>
<th>Proposals Acceptable to Commissioner Oswald</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Allow all inmates on their own to communicate with anyone they please.</td>
<td>All inmates, at their own expense, to communicate with anyone they please.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When an inmate reaches conditional release, give him a full release without parole.</td>
<td>Institute realistic, effective rehabilitation programs for all inmates according to their offense and personal needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Institute realistic, effective rehabilitation programs for all inmates according to their offense and personal needs.</td>
<td>Modernize the inmate education system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Modernize the inmate education system.</td>
<td>Provide an effective narcotics treatment program for all prisoners requesting such treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Provide a narcotics treatment program that is effective.</td>
<td>Provide adequate legal assistance to all inmates requesting it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Provide adequate legal assistance to all inmates requesting it.</td>
<td>Provide or allow adequate legal assistance to all inmates requesting it or permit them to use inmate legal assistance of their choice in any proceeding whatsoever. In all such proceedings, inmates shall be entitled to appropriate due process of law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Provide a healthy diet; reduce the number of pork dishes; serve fresh fruit daily.</td>
<td>Provide a healthy diet; reduce the number of pork dishes; increase fresh fruit daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Reduce cell time, increase recreation time, and provide better recreation facilities and equipment.</td>
<td>Reduce cell time, increase recreation facilities and equipment, hopefully by November 1, 1971.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observers' Proposals</td>
<td>Proposals Acceptable to Commissioner Oswald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Provide adequate medical treatment for every inmate; engage either a Spanish-speaking doctor or interpreters who will accompany Spanish-speaking inmates to medical interviews.</td>
<td>16. Provide adequate medical treatment for every inmate; engage either a Spanish-speaking doctor or inmate interpreters who will accompany Spanish-speaking inmates to medical interviews. (See point 11 above.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Provide a complete Spanish library.</td>
<td>17. Institute a program for the recruitment and employment of a significant number of black and Spanish-speaking officers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Educate all correction officers in the needs of inmates.</td>
<td>18. Establish an inmate grievance commission comprised of one elected inmate from each company which is authorized to speak to the administration concerning grievances, and develop other procedures for inmate participation in the operation and decision-making processes of the institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Institute a program for the employment of a significant number of black and Spanish-speaking officers.</td>
<td>19. Investigate the alleged expropriation of inmate funds and the use of profits from the metal and other shops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Establish an inmate grievance delegation comprised of one elected inmate from each company which is authorized to speak to the administration concerning grievances, and develop other procedures for community control of the institution.</td>
<td>20. The State Commissioner of Correctional Services will recommend that the penal law be changed to cease administrative resentencing of inmates returned for parole violation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Conduct a grand-jury investigation of the expropriation of inmate funds and the use of profits from the metal and other shops.</td>
<td>21. Recommend that Menechino hearings be held promptly and fairly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Cease administrative resentencing of inmates returned for parole violation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observers' Proposals

25. Permit other inmates in C block and the box to join this group.

26. Arrange flights out of this country to nonimperialist nations for those inmates desiring to leave this country.

27. Remove inside walls, making one open yard and no more segregation or punishment.


29. End approved lists for visiting and correspondence.

30. Remove screens in visitation rooms as soon as possible.

31. Institute parole violation changes—revocation of parole shall not be for vehicle and traffic violation.

32. Due process hearing for all disciplinary proceedings with 30-day maximum.

33. Access to facility for outside dentists and doctors at inmates' expense.

Proposals Acceptable to Commissioner Oswald

22. Recommend necessary legislation and more adequate funds to expand work-release program.

23. End approved lists for correspondence and visitors.

24. Remove visitation screens as soon as possible.

25. Paroled inmates shall not be charged with parole violations for moving traffic violations or driving without a license, unconnected with any other crime.

26. Institute a 30-day maximum for segregation arising out of any one offense. Every effort should be geared toward restoring the individual to regular housing as soon as possible, consistent with safety regulations.

27. Permit access to outside dentists and doctors at the inmates' own expense within the institution, where possible, and consistent with scheduling problems, medical diagnosis, and health needs.
Observers' Proposals

28. It is expressly understood that members of the observers' committee will be permitted into the Institution on a reasonable basis to determine whether all of the above provisions are being effectively carried out. If questions of adequacy are raised, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Commissioner of Correctional Services for clearance.
REFERENCES

BOOKS

American Correctional Association


Arendt, Hannah

Bagdikian, Ben H., and Leon Dash

Bennett, Lerone, Jr.

Bienen, Henry

Blumer, Herbert

Brogan, Denis W.

Caldwell, Robert G.


Cavan, Ruth Shonle

Clemmer, Donald
Coser, Lewis A.  

Dahrendorf, Ralf  
1959 Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Eckstein, Harry (ed.).  

Fricke, Charles W.  

Goffman, Erving  

Gurr, Ted Robert  

Hoffer, Eric  

Hook, Sidney  

Horton, Paul B., and Chester L. Hunt  

Johnson, Chalmers  

Leinwand, Gerald (ed.)  

Morris, William (ed.)  

Ogburn, William F.  

Ohlin, Lloyd E.  

Tappan, Paul W.

Toch, Hans H.

PERIODICALS

Bennett, James V.

Conrad, John P.

Coser, Lewis A.

Flynn, Frank T.
1953 "Behind the prison riots." Social Service Review 27 (March): 73-86.

Fox, Vernon

Hancock, Parker L.

Loveland, Frank

MacCormick, Austin H.

Marx, Gary T.
Menninger, W. Walter

Teeters, Negley K.

Wallack, Walter M.

SPECIAL COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS

American Correctional Association Committee on Riots and Disturbances

American Prison Association Committee on Riots

California State Board of Corrections

National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders

National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence

New York State Special Commission on Attica

MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES


Bates, Sanford, and Craig Thompson
Cozart, Reed
1955 "Our prisons need not fail." The Saturday Evening Post 228 (October 8):17-18, 122.


1973 "Illinois inmates hold guards nine hours." The Kansas City Times (September 7):8.


1973 "Low pay, high turnover of Missouri prison guards." The Kansas City Star (August 22):1B.


1972 "Rioting is good for some people, a report says." The Manhattan Mercury (February 9):6c.

Schultz, Terri

Sykes, Gresham M.


Waugh, Jack


Wilson, Donald P., and Harry Elmer Barnes

LETTERS

1972 Idaho State Board of Correction. Personal correspondence between Mr. Raymond W. May, Director, and the writer. March 1.


1972 South Carolina State Department of Corrections. Personal correspondence between Mr. William D. Leeke, Director, and the writer. August 10.
1972 Tennessee State Department of Correction. Personal correspondence between Mr. William B. Hodges, Director of Information, and the writer. June 20.