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A VIEW FROM UNDER THE BRIDGE:

PRISON INMATES' REACTIONS TO FURLOUGHS.

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Among today's daring innovations in penology, the most likely to become an accepted practice in another decade is that of furloughs for prison inmates. This forecast is based on the premise that furloughs recommend themselves both on humanitarian and pragmatic grounds. The humanitarian case for furloughs derives from the assumption that a civilized society cannot indefinitely torture grown men by withholding female companionship on a wholesale basis. On the other hand, it seems equally unlikely that public opinion would endorse female prison visitations arranged so that informal friendships could blossom into romantic intimacies in prisoners' cells.

The pragmatic argument can be built on the demonstrated failure of imprisonment as a rehabilitative tool, considered jointly with the public demand for the isolation of many types of offenders. It could also be shown that the artificiality of the prison setting precludes rational parole decisions, because it does not permit realistic tests of level of rehabilitation (which happens to be only remotely related to institutional adjustment). Further, the isolation of any person over a long time must of necessity curtail his skill for functioning on the outside, even without the added handicap of facing estranged people in a changed world.

The study I shall report below is an effort to explore the realities of furlough. By "realities" here I don't mean the prison administrator's realities, or the parole board's realities, or the public's realities, but the experience of furlough as it presents itself to the inmate himself. The assumption in this type of research is that the proof of the pudding is in the eating rather than in the cooking. In treatment, it matters little what staff think they are manipulating; it is client perceptions that determine client reactions, and hence make the difference between success and failure. Moreover, if we want to make an innovation work, it is not sufficient to adjudge it good or bad--we must understand the reasons for success or failure, so that we can intelligently manipulate the total situation to maximize satisfaction and long term results.

Inmate interviews seem appropriate when the questions being asked can not only be intelligently answered by inmates, but where the answers are of as much interest to the inmate as to the investigator. Here the interviewee is not only a research subject, but becomes a fellow-investigator. In the case of the prisoner returning from leave, we can assume that our subject will be as concerned as we are to explore queries such as "What happened?" "What good did it do?" and "What now?" To be sure, the inmate would not be "objective" or dispassionate. He has a stake both in furloughs-in-general and in his self-image as a high-quality furlough-utilizer. But these biases would be precisely those that would draw attention to the most relevant aspects of furlough. True, we obtain a picture of furlough with its best foot forward. But then, it is precisely this picture that we must explore in order to maximize the benefits of the practice. And it is furlough

at its best that must eventually be "sold back" to future generations of prison inmates.

The Setting of the Study

The study of furloughs was a cross-cultural cooperative venture. It was jointly designed and administered by the author and by Dr. Thomas Mathiesen of the Norwegian Institute of Social Research. It enjoyed the support of the directors of Norway's two major institutions for long-term confinement of offenders; and as an act of courtesy, each institution made available a highly trained professional staff member to conduct our interviews.¹ Interview transcripts were translated under a grant from the Norwegian Research Council. Later, the data were processed with the support of the Warren Fund for Pilot Studies of Harvard's Department of Social Relations.

The study took place in a three-month period in early 1964. The system studied was furloughs or leaves "for the purpose of treatment," as opposed to arrangements for pre-release job hunting, and other practical needs. Such leaves are authorized in Norway under Article 34 of the Prison Act of 1958, elaborated in 1962 Regulations for the Prison System. Article 59, 3 of these Regulations reads in part:

"An inmate serving a longer period of punishment may be granted leave for a short period of time when this is considered to be particularly expedient for his treatment and if there is no reason to assume that such leave will be misused.

¹The institutional administrators whose generosity made this study possible are Direktør Sverre Bjørnsen of Botsfengslet and Direktør Bergsveien Hov of Ila Skringanstat. We are also grateful to the Bureau of Prisons of the Norwegian Department of Justice--and to its director Johannes Halversen, for authorization of the research. Our most direct debt is to our collaborators and interviewers, Cand. psychol. Sigurd Halleraker at Botsfengslet and Inspector Rolf Myrvold at Ila. Mrs. Sylvia Backer expertly rendered the interview material into English.

"Such leave for treatment purposes may be granted by the Governor (of the institution) if the inmate has served a continuous period of punishment for not less than six months. It is a further requirement that the inmate has served at least one half of the total period of punishment to which he has been sentenced. In later stages of the execution of punishment the Governor may grant inmate leave for treatment purposes at intervals of not less than three months."

The Regulations limit the total amount of leave to 15 days per sentence, unless special dispensation has been requested from the Prison Administration (and such instances are rare). The criteria for deciding whether to grant leave are left relatively vague (Article 59.5):

"In deciding whether leave should be granted it shall be specially considered whether there is a risk of the inmate committing a new punishable offense while he is at liberty, or that he will otherwise misuse his freedom. It shall be taken into account whether the inmate has previously committed any serious punishable offense."²

Norwegian correctional administrators point out that the Treatment Leave System in Norway (and, for that matter, in other Scandinavian countries) initially moved through a phase of dispensing furloughs to practically all long-term inmates as a matter of privilege--with the result that a disturbingly large proportion of beneficiaries took unfair and illegal advantage of the opportunity. This experience has made the granting of furloughs more restrictive, and candidates for leave are nowadays all carefully selected after an exhaustive review of their case histories.

The Institutions

One of the two institutions included in our study was Botsfengslet, which is Norway's major maximum security long-term prison. Mathiesen notes that the prison--now well over a century old--carries vestiges

²These translations were kindly furnished to the author by H. Byrkjeland, Chief of Section of the Norwegian Prison Administration.

of the Philadelphia prison system according to which it was built: "Above all, and despite staff attempts to counteract it, inmates' life in the institution is characterized by considerable isolation" (Mathiesen, 1965, pp. 48-49). It must be noted that by American standards Botsfengslet-- with its population of approximately 230 inmates--is comparatively small.

The other institution included in our research is a modern psychiatrically oriented setting, intended for the indeterminate confinement of inmates classified as "mentally immature or declining" (a category midway between sane and insane). "Ila Institution for Preventive Detention" is classified as medium security, and has a high inmate-staff ratio (approximately 1:1); the staff includes psychiatrists, social workers, nurses, and medical personnel. The maximum capacity of the institution is 110, and in 1964 it contained between 75 and 90 inmates. Mathiesen points out that at Ila

"furloughs from the institution are allowed but regulated. They are granted only if the inmate gets some kind of 'invitation' for example, from his family, from friends, or from staff members. Usually three months must expire between furloughs" (Mathiesen, 1965, p. 47)

Mathiesen mentions that in 1961 the institution granted 187 furloughs. Since the maximum number of furloughs possible to an inmate is 4 per annum, at least half the inmates in the institution would have received furloughs, and the proportion is undoubtedly higher.

The Inmates in our Sample

In each of the institutions described above, an effort was made to interview over 20% of the population, amounting to 50 inmates in Botsfengslet and 20 at Ila. The total number of usable interviews was 48 at Botsfengslet; thus our total sample consists of 68 interviews. The sampling procedure consisted of talking to every inmate who was granted furlough as soon

after his return as possible. When the target number was reached, interviewing was terminated.

In terms of age and commitment offense, the two samples were very similar. The mean age of the inmates was 32.5, and the range from 17 to 57. (The median of the age distribution was 31.) This places the average age of the sample considerably above that of American inmates (and somewhat above that of the Norwegian prison population.)

Some 80% of the men in our sample had served previous prison terms. It is somewhat difficult to categorize their current commitment offenses, because many of the inmates were convicted of several (sometimes extremely varied) crimes. The most frequently listed offense was Grand Larceny (33 inmates), followed by Car Theft (13 inmates) and Petty Larceny (12 men). Other recurrently represented offenses were Swindle or Fraud (11), Driving when Intoxicated (10), Rape (9), Indecent Behavior with Persons under 16 (7), Bodily Injury (6), Theft (5), Receiving Stolen Goods (4), Homicide (3), Forgery (3), assault(2), Forced Indecent Behavior with Adult (2), and Traffic Violations (2). Other offenses ranged from Incest and Arson to Non-support and "Self-committed addict. A review of these categories makes it obvious that the nature of the commitment offense is far from the most important criterion for the granting of leave.

As indicated, the inmates at Ila were subject to an indeterminate period of preventive detention. At Botsfengslet, the range of sentences was 9 months to 15 years, with almost every inmate falling into the group of from 1 to 5 years. (The average sentence would be of two years and several months.) At the time of our interview, almost all of our inmates had spent one year or less in confinement, two-thirds of the Botsfengslet sample and half of the Ila inmates were returning from their first leaves.

A review of the marital status of the prisoners shows no disproportionate representation of persons with families. Our sample contained a total of 11 married men (only two at Ila). Two-thirds of the remaining inmates were single, and one-third of them had been divorced. These data are cited in detail, in part to show that none of the obvious categories for discriminating "good" from "bad" bets were employed by the institutional staff in selecting inmates to receive furloughs. The criteria employed would therefore have to be more qualitative ones, involving social background and personality.

The Nature of the Interview

Each inmate was requested to appear for his interview shortly after his return from leave, and the interviewer solicited his participation with the following introduction:

"Two social scientists from the University would like to know a little about leaves in the prison system, and particularly how the inmates themselves view the leave system. One of them is named Hans Toch; an American who is visiting the Univeristy. He is interested in this because leaves have not been tried to any great extent in American institutions. The other one is named Thomas Mathiesen, and he is a Norwegian. They have asked us to ask some inmates about their opinion of the leave system. The questions are few and simple. The whole thing is of course anonymous; thus names will not be given to outsiders."

With one or two exceptions, the inmates responded by indicating a more or less active interest in participating. The interviewer then proceeded to relatively general questions, so constructed as to induce increasingly autobiographical replies. The first question was "Do you think most people enjoy going on leave and benefit from it?" In the probe used with this question, the inmate was asked to provide reasons. The purpose of this sequence was to give the interviewee evidence of the fact that his role was to be that of an expert, rather than of an informant in an inquisitorial proceeding.

The second question was "What is there about leaves which you think is particularly pleasant?" The interviewer was instructed to urge the inmate to provide examples, and these almost invariably derived from recent furlough experience. The same holds for the next question which was "What is not so easy?"

At this juncture the questioning specifically turned to the inmate's recent leave. He was told, "You no doubt looked forward to leave," and was asked: "Would you say that it turned out nicer than you expected, as nice as you thought it would be, or not as nice?" The interviewer asked for reasons for the answer, and in every instance requested the inmate to provide pleasant and unpleasant illustrative incidents.

The next two questions were (1) "About your stay here: Has the leave made the thought of staying here easier or more difficult, or doesn't it make any difference?" (the probe here involved an inquiry into reasons). (2) "Do you think the leave will make things easier or more difficult after release, or doesn't it make any difference?" (Reasons and illustrations were requested.)

The remainder of the interview dealt with past and future leaves, but the responses to these questions are not included among those summarized below.

Analysis of the Data

For the purpose of analysis, the answers to the above questions were pooled. A code of "perceived benefits and liabilities" was constructed, designed to apply to every statement which represented a conclusion or cited an instance of positive or negative impact of furlough. These

themes were then coded by two coders, and a final categorization of each statement was arrived at.³

In tabulating the coded responses, all themes mentioned by each respondent are included, but any given theme is counted only once per man, even if it is repeated over and over in the same interview. The tabulations therefore list the total number of people mentioning a given theme. They do not provide the frequency with which a theme was mentioned, nor do they catalog the themes dominant in each interview.

³Miss Karen Lindsey of the Department of Social Relations, Harvard University provided invaluable assistance in the analysis of the data. She served as one of the coders, and is responsible for compiling and tabulating the coded responses.

Table 1

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF PRISON FURLOUGHS MENTIONED MOST FREQUENTLY
BY RETURNING INMATES (In Rank Order of Frequency)

	<u>Traditional</u> <u>Prison (N = 48)</u>		<u>Indeterminate Sentence</u> <u>Institution (N = 20)</u>	
	<u>Frequ.</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>	<u>Frequ.</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Restoration of Human Relationships; Rebuilding Bonds with Significant Others	38	79%	19	95%
Testing Acceptance by Community, Society, Significant Others	28	58	9	45
Relief from Pains of Imprisonment, Isolation, Institutionalization	21	44	15	75
Improved Psychological Condition; Gain in Calmness, Peace of Mind, Resources, Perspective; Learning	24	50	9	45
Tasting Life; Discharging Routine Civilian Activities	19	40	10	50
Facilitation of Subsequent Prison Time	20	42	7	35
Hope or Vision of the Future	17	35	9	45
Concrete arrangements; Groundwork for Return to Community; Solution of Practical Problems	21	44	4	20
Demonstration of Strength, of Ability to Cope; Achievement of Self-Confidence	11	23	7	35

Perceived Benefits of Furloughs

Table 1 suggests that the benefit almost universally experienced by inmates temporarily restored to the community is the feeling that their relationship with significant people is renewed, cemented, restored, revived, reinforced or otherwise strengthened. An obvious corollary of this finding is that the long-term prisoner's bonds with significant persons in his life tend to be routinely loosened by imprisonment--or, at minimum, that confidence in these bonds may be severely shaken.

The primary concern voiced by married inmates is predictably that of increasing distance from their wives and children; unmarried Norwegians--who are frequently engaged--show parallel anxiety over the status of these pre-marital relationships. The nature of the concerns, and their resolution of furloughs, is exemplified in the following interview excerpts:

My fiancee is a remarkable person . . . My fiancee was much more affectionate than before, stronger feeling for me than earlier . . . Have been afraid, while I was sitting in here, that I really did not have much feeling for my fiancee, but now I have become clear that it is much better than I thought. We got to talking about our relationship. A whole lot of things we talked over.

. . . Had not met my fiancee for a year and being together with her again was "first class." I have been so uncertain, and now it was agreed that we would get married. . . . My fiancee was nervous, but during the leave she said: "now I am so calm." In the letters afterwards, she said that she feels much better. The better you manage to get things straightened out, the easier it is to serve your term.

Nice to see my daughter and my wife. It was a year since I last saw them. . . . Looked rather bad as regards relationship between my wife and me, but I got to talk it out with her now. And it might very well be that things can go well.

If I get leaves some times, it is possible that I can keep my marriage going. It is humping along. I write seldom to my wife. She is seven years younger than I am. But if I get leaves, it is possible it will hold.

You have the advantage of renewing your marriage. Wife gets tired of constantly being alone. . . . My marriage was a bit rickety, now it looks very good.

The most dramatic benefit suggested in these illustrations is the actual resolution of impending crises--the reversal of trends that had threatened to eventuate in separation or dissolution of relationships. Thus "rickety" marriages that had been "humping along" or "looked bad", liaisons "hanging on a thread", could be restored--through temporary reunion and communication--to new stability and life. The excerpts also mention the building up--through separation and isolation--of increasing doubts about one's feelings toward one's partner or one's partner's feelings toward oneself, or about the firmness of the emotional bond still existing between the two. Apparently, the furlough can function to relieve these doubts, or to remove the grounds for them.

Under the same heading, the furlough time appeared for some inmates to provide an opportunity for free and open communication which gives the inmate a feeling of acceptance, and which provides reassurance and understanding to his family:

When you get a visit you have only that half hour. That doesn't hang over you on leave. You can talk freely. . . . I got to talk things out with closest family, mother-in-law, wife.

Uncle and I reached a completely new form of understand. That means so much. . . . I had fantastic talks with uncle and aunt, both of whom showed me great confidence.

Very nice to talk to parents again. I dreaded a little meeting my parents after that business. Have not talked to them since conviction. Easier than I was afraid of. We talked things out with each other. They were well and in good form. I was afraid that they were not. . . . I was afraid that they had washed their hands of me.

You feel that now there is a kind of hurry to get things straightened out. You can get to talk things out with people. I myself got to talk to my brother and he understood my situation better.

This last dimension of the benefit of cemented relationship is tied to the second most cited value of furlough, that of providing reassurance of acceptance by the community--or by significant members of it.

The most frequently described version of this benefit contrasts the apprehension with which the inmate embarks on furlough (ranging from **strong** fear to nagging doubt) with the experience of positive acceptance by the persons being visited. The following illustrations refer to various forms of the sequence from negative anticipation to pleasurable discovery:

I met acquaintances who wished me welcome after release. That was actually what surprised me most. . . . I had dreaded meeting acquaintances all the time but it went fine Met chums from the sports club. They wished me cordially welcome back. I also had enough courage to go to the coop and buy tobacco and went well.

Not so hard to talk with people as one might think. People knew I was sitting in prison, but did not look down on me. . . . People took it in another way than I thought. . . . It means alot to know how people react before you come out for good. Then you don't feel that everyone is looking at you. Got rid of that feeling when I came home and got to chat a bit.

Mother was friendly, wife was friendly, and buddies were friendly. You wonder a little how people react. About the same way as before I left. That everything was positive was very nice.

I dreaded a little meeting my parents after that business. Easier than I was afraid of . . . I was afraid they had washed their hands of me. They have not done that.

You discover that those you thought had it in for you are quite nice anyway. . . . Met a number of former acquaintances at the restaurant. Discovered that they like me for what I am, not for the money I could obtain by burglary and so on. . . . I used to have the feeling that people looked at me before. Not bothered by that now. Much easier to make contact with people.

In a sense, the furlough for some inmates represents an opportunity for a test or an experiment that enables them to disconfirm the hypothesis

that people will reject them, or the assumption that they will be unable to deal with people. Several inmates explicitly recognized value of this "pilot" experiment for the major experiment of release or parole. Others reported that the reactions they encountered in the community caused them to change their own outlook and attitudes in constructive ways:

Get more in contact with society, gives you inspiration for many things. . . . When others show you confidence, you don't go around and think about yourself so much. You feel good, feel like you have a bond with your superiors.

I met others also, besides my relatives. Went very well. I did not feel embarrassed. I could smile at people and they smiled back. No difficulties about going to the store. I've had great difficulties before, sweated at the mere thought of going into a tram. To get calmed down before, I had to drink. Now I was calm without a drink.

You get more desire to be with people. I am not so afraid of people any more.

A benefit of furlough often mentioned by both groups of inmates, but especially by those in the indeterminate sentence institution, was the opportunity of temporarily escaping from the discomforts of confinement. The discomfort by most frequently described by our respondents was that of tension, tenseness, strain, nervousness or inescapable pressure. Furlough was seen as offering escape, as well as of mending frayed nerves and restoring peace of mind:

Good to get out and relax from this bother, pressure on the nerves here, i.e., the locking of doors, jump up when lying and reading.

There's a constant pressure when you're in prison and it is some relieved with a leave.

Feel completely different as soon as you are outside the gate here. . . . Psychic strain to be inside.

All told, to be free without having someone around all the time to check on what you are doing.

The second discomfort often cited by our interviewees was that of the monotony and structure of prison life. Here leave was viewed as a beneficial interruption or "break" in painful prison routine:

Getting over to another milieu for a few days, getting away from the prison milieu is a great relief.

It is soothing to come out, a relaxation from the prison rhythm, and the same routine.

Coming out and getting a little change.

Just getting leave is an experience. Here you see the same tired snouts.

The relative predominance of this psychological benefit among inmates of the indeterminate sentence institution is not unexpected. Comparative studies of regular and psychiatric prisons show that the latter represent infinitely harder "time" for the inmate, given the indefiniteness of their imprisonment, the vagueness and ambiguity of release criteria, the absence of clear rules, the inequities in treatment as such, and the conflicts among staff. Thomas Mathiesen, who studied inmate reactions to Ila (our indeterminate sentence institution), thus reports that "inmates regularly find the institution under study less just than regular custodial institutions. Many claim that in regular prisons there is, despite many general deprivations, at least a 'system' in the ways in which benefits and burdens are distributed by staff." (Mathiesen, 1965, p.160)

The next most frequently mentioned benefit represents a more general and positive statement of subjective gain, inmates here claim improvement in their outlook, feelings, attitudes or perspective. The themes most commonly appearing under this heading are the claims that as a consequence of furlough the inmate feels more at ease and hopeful of the future, and that he has gained insights about himself that should prove useful upon release:

Here you go around and form your own picture of life outside but that does not correspond to the reality. . . . You get shaken out of your apathy and sluggish state that you get into here.

. . . Has given me a completely different view, has shaken me out of my apathy and the thought I had about life outside. The last year and a half I have come into a period where I did not think, have been stagnating, have not dared to think about the future. . . . Now I have begun to write letters to arrange things for release.

You get into a better mood and so on. On Monday I went and bought yarn for my hobby work.

I have got an answer to all the doubts that I was sitting with.

If one is released after several years without a leave, one does not know how it is. . . . Life outside is different after some time has gone. If one has had leave, one has some idea of what one is going to.

The next category of benefits mentioned by our interviewees relates to satisfactions obtained from discharging routine civilian activities not available in prison. Although probably "eating a decent meal at a decent table" was the most frequent pleasurable experience mentioned, a wide range of other actions and situations was cited:

I had a great time being out and picking flowers together with a dog and 17 year old cousin. Sat all of Saturday, seeing TV and discussing with uncle.

Went duck-hunting with my brother. And just sitting home and chatting is fine. . . . Great to sit in the train and see the landscape.

Nice to go to a cafe, order sandwich and look at people.

We were at the Salvation Army, where I also like to go. Sunday we were at the "Animal Park", and our boy was wildly enthusiastic.

Somewhat distinguishable from the subjective benefits listed above (the relief from pain, and the gain in well-being and broadening of perspective) is the facilitating effect of furloughs on subsequently served time. Our interviewees described this benefit in fairly stereotyped fashion. They referred to the time period after (between) furloughs as "shortened":

When you have leave and come back the time is shorter. You don't have the feeling of sitting so long.

When I have four years and can be at home a few days, it is not four years. Six or seven days leave in all can mean a lot.

Feel also as if the stay gets shorter. Divide it up in parts.

The time after feels shortened when you have a new leave to work toward. Easy to make four months go.

A more long-term gain cited by the inmates was that of being provided with new hope for life beyond the institution, or at least a greater desire for a new life:

When you have been out and got a little taste of that, you long to come out again naturally.

Was an experience to see people and colors. That way you get more desire for living. . . . Got a real taste for freedom . . . I have gotten a reminder of what freedom is like. . . . Got a fresh breath of air, a reminder of how it is to be free.

The notion is strengthened maybe that it is better to be out than in.

Following in frequency this "taste of honey" theme was the discussion of concrete provisions for the future that could be made during furlough, or of information that could be secured relative to post-release arrangements:

I sold my motor saw, bought a new one. Will continue with work in the forest when I get out. I visited the welfare committee and the social office--they knew me at both places and promised to help me with a parole.

. . . Made arrangements for a job in a half hour. Went out at 9:00 and had a job by ten.

On leave I have arranged for a place to live. When I am released, there will probably be work for me. I have got, or at least got full use of a scooter which is my cousin's. Was at the social office . . . I took up the question of a driver's license.

There are several things I've gone around thinking about. Several people in the family have built a house together. I'll live there too. I've got the answers to a number of questions in that connection.

Although in most of these instances the benefit referred to related to the inmate's own future, in a few instances furlough proved beneficial because of an opportunity for aiding dependents (instead of worrying about them in prison):

I know that I have got things fixed up at home where there was need. . . . Got done at home what I should. I fixed up the electrical things and chopped 34 sacks of wood.

The last of the benefits of furlough frequently mentioned is the opportunity to test one's ability to cope with the world after prolonged isolation from it:

You get to test yourself. No one stands over you with anything now. . . . You can get to show that you still have your balance even if you have sat a long time. . . . You get more self-confidence, test yourself. You have to give a bit yourself too. Have to seek out the difficulties and try yourself out.

Important to come out among people before you come smack out into the street. Feel freedom a little in advance. . . . You don't get so overwhelmed when you come out. The mistake with a prison is that there is such a big difference between prison and civil life. You sit in a little cell. Important to have contact with someone outside.

You are nervous, afraid of going to pieces. So you manage to leave and that helps. You feel personal confidence. . . . If something happens wrong during a leave, it would certainly happened after release.

In this section we have tried to reproduce the multi-dimensional picture of the benefit of furloughs that we have pieced together from the recollections and introspection of our returnees. Despite the succinctness and verbal economy characteristic of Norwegian inmates, and the somewhat short-hand style of our interview recording, the case is an eloquent one.

The strongest element in the plea (argued by nine out of ten of our interviewees) is for constructive, restorative, reassuring human contact in renewed face to face communication. We see that in bedroom whispers,

after-dinner conversations, excursions to the zoo or the countryside, in city apartments and in remote farms, the bonds that have loosened with time and distance are restored, doubts are resolved, and new pledges and understandings are once more exposed to the test of distance and time. Although sex is undoubtedly a hidden theme in the contacts referred to, they clearly contribute to the more general benefit of cementing social links and stabilizing the self.

"Reassuring feedback" is a heading that also accommodates some of the other themes we have outlined. Thus, it is obvious that inmates do build up over time various unrealistic fears about community reception to them. This occurs because inmates have no data about concrete reactions of concrete civilians to their concrete presence. And prolonged institutionalization may in fact help to produce the negative community sentiment which is thus feared. The unconscious inference in the community may be that if society has found it necessary to secrete an individual for many months or years he must in fact be dangerous or unfit for civilized life. The tangible presence of an inmate on furlough may serve to disconfirm this premise of unfitness.

But we have seen that other doubts and fears are also built up in the inmate (and in some cases, in his outside contacts) over time. For one an absence of testing situations for social skills brings a loss of self-confidence; more subtly, the lack of opportunity for the experiencing of "normal", civilian emotions and psychological reactions may generate self-doubts about sanity and normalcy. The ability to function free of prison pressures for a short time may thus provide evidence of continued latent capacity for adequate adjustment.

Some of the benefits of leave clearly transfer to the prison situation. The inmate is less involved in the destructive battle for survival that takes place in the highly competitive microcosm of the institution, because

he can now take the outside world into account as a real part of his life. First, he knows he will return within a foreseeable future, and does not have to place all his psychological eggs into the steel-encased basket of the yard; second, he can use the balm of his normal contacts to soothe the wounds of past and present prison demands. These two benefits are related, because the concretizing of the prospects of return (and the enhancing of the desirability of return) reduces the importance of institutional problems to lessen perspective. This fact is vital, not only in terms of our concern for the individual's psychological survival, but also as an aid to the institution's rehabilitative goals. If an inmate mobilizes all his resources in the fight against the pains of imprisonment, his willingness and capacity to cooperate with therapeutic programs must of necessity be minimal. But if he can afford a calmer stance to the prison situation, and if--moreover--he is oriented to the problems to be faced upon release and during his presence in the outside world, it follows that he should become more amenable to intervention and more sympathetic with its goals. In summary, since experience has shown that effective rehabilitation can only originate with the inmate himself, the furlough can be both an incentive and a facilitator to this effort.

Perceived Liabilities of Furlough

The data in Table 1 suggested that furlough is largely assessed as a valuable experience. The liabilities of furlough mentioned by our respondents (which are listed in Table 2) don't materially change this picture, since they are--comparatively speaking--in the minority. And it is noteworthy that the chief liability relates not to furlough as such, but to the termination of furlough, and to the painfulness of the trip back to the walls.

Table 2

PSYCHOLOGICAL LIABILITIES IN PRISON FURLOUGHS MENTIONED
 MOST FREQUENTLY BY RETURNING INMATES (In Rank Order of
 Frequency)

	<u>Traditional</u> <u>Prison (N = 48)</u>		<u>Indeterminate Sentence</u> <u>Institution (N = 20)</u>	
	<u>Frequ.</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>	<u>Frequ.</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Prospects of Returning; the Trip Back to the Walls	15	31%	8	40%
Hard to Readjust to Institutional Life Upon Return	14	29	7	35
Antabus Administered Prior to Departure	14	29	1	5
Careless Behavior or Superficial Experience; Improper Use of Opportunity	14	29	1	5
Difficulties with Particular Persons; Human Relations Problems; Inability to Help or Provide Reassurance or Establish Contact	4	8	9	45
Pressure of Time Limitations	11	23	1	5
Non-acceptance by Others: Estrange- ment; Negative Attention	10	21	1	5
Strangeness of the Outside Worlds after Long Isolation	8	17	2	10
Concrete Practical problems, Inadequate Resources	8	17	2	10

The description of the return trip by those who found it difficult ranged from a moderate majority position ("it was hard, but ultimately manageable") to the extreme feeling that the need to return spoiled the entire furlough:

Sat in the park and dreaded it before I went in again, but it went well.

It is good to have leave, but hard to come in again. I will not take leave again. . . . It was hanging over me that I soon had to go back again.

Hard to come back. . . . My feeling can be compared with that of a child when a peice of candy is taken away from it.

Coming back was the hardest. If I had a longer time to serve, it is quite doubtful whether I would have come back.

The next most frequent complaint was that furlough presents readjustment problems after return. In most instances, these were described as mild and temporary difficulties, but in one or two cases the problems were depicted as extremely acute:

The first three days after I came back, I was a bit depressed, was prepared for that.

After I came back, I felt restless for a while, but then I calmed down again.

Sat for the first two days. Wife is also left with a feeling of loneliness . . .

When you come back again you have to begin from the beginning in a way. You get out of the groove. . . . It takes a couple of days before you get into gear again.

I did not think much of it. . . . When came back . . . felt so closed in. . . . It is almost like beginning again.

Since the remaining complaints each derive from 15 or fewer of our 68 respondents, it may suffice to review them relatively cursorily:

a) The institution frequently administers antabus (aversan) to inmates prior to departure on furlough. Some inmates ascribe a variety of somatic reactions to the drug; others feel that the administration of this medication represents an unfair exercise of arbitrary authority:

I did not feel like eating. I bought myself a good dinner at the railroad station. I wanted to eat decently, but got completely nauseous. Did not manage to sleep. Must be that antabus. Was droopy. Not nice to go on leave when you are not in good form. Did not eat in the morning since I had thought of getting a good dinner.

I felt bad because of the antabus, for two days, tired and listless. Lay in bed before I left and was also tired during the leave itself.

Antabus is just nonsense. Felt I was treated like a drunk they had to force antabus on. There was really danger I would go on a drunken binge for spite. Act of revenge from the administration because they knew I was against it. . . . Ought to be an individual decision. . . . Did not look forward to leave so much because of aversan.

b) Some inmates see little benefit in the furloughs of some of their comrades, because the experience is being taken too lightly:

I have seen people who come back with more problems than they had when they left. There are some who go right out as soon as they get out of here, for instance, go right from the gate here to (a night club), have a ball, women. They don't go to get some good food and have a nice time.

If you take alcohol, or something, it can be directly harmful.

c) Difficulties with civilians were mainly reported by the psychiatrically diagnosed inmates at Ila. The few human relations problems among the regular inmates all featured marital misunderstandings. (In view of the special nature of this category, the following illustrations are drawn from interviews at Ila. All other examples quoted in this report derive from the prison inmates):

On my last leave I met a couple I know. They asked me if I was traveling, in spite of the fact that they knew I was sitting at Ila. It was painful for both them and me.

When the family says they feel sorry for me, I do not know how to react.

It's awkward to meet the people I know at Jessheim (home). I take a cab home from the station to avoid meeting anyone, avoid familiarity.

It was painful to come back to the family after the separation that imprisonment has brought about, you come into another category than they. This I felt strongly.

The above difficulties reflect both psychological problems of these men, and consequences of their sub-normal classification.

d) The time-limit imposed on leave presented difficulties to some men-- most notably to those who had been allotted two-day furloughs:

In that short time I did not get time to talk to anyone, was almost just the folks at home. You don't manage much in two days. . . . two days are far too little. Three days are almost too little.

If you should have any benefit from a leave, one has to have at least one day and one evening, or at least 2-3 days. Otherwise, it turns out that you just go and look at the clock.

e) Some inmates reported more or less temporary discomfort connected with negative attention from others. This feeling seemed specially prevalent among inmates who thought that their offense had proved shocking to the community:

Felt very nervous, you know. . . . Seemed that everybody was glaring at me. I did not get rid of that till I was back in the cell again.

Felt people were looking at me as I walked through town. Got rid of that feeling when I came home and got to chat a bit.

f) A related concern was the difficulty of adjusting to what was now a strange and alien world. Some inmates reported wandering through the streets feeling lost or lonely:

Easier to come in again. When you've been sitting inside, in the quiet, it's kind of strange to go out in traffic again.

Was seized with loneliness there and had to ring my pen pal.

One gets awfully tired from going shopping.

g) The last category of reservations comprises specific practical difficulties and complaints about the inadequacy of material resources:

You want to have something extra but it gets expensive. Last time I bought a coat for four hundred kroner--almost half a year's earnings here.

Came out on leave Mon. night, went by City Hall Sq., met a dame there, asked "Anything doing?" "Sure", she said, "got five kroner on you?" We got into an argument, and before I knew what was happening, she called to the police, who followed after me, and I was taken at Cecil and brought to Victoria Terrace (police station). Had to spend the night in Oslo, got to sleep at the student quarters.

In assessing the themes we have summarized in this section, we must distinguish between special problems posed for particular kinds of inmates, and general difficulties inherent in the leave situation. The latter category seems to include the problem of return and readjustment, which was mentioned by about a third of our sample. Indeed, it would be surprising if the walk toward the fortress gate and the sound of the cage door clanking shut behind the returning inmate failed to produce its moment of bitterness or sad reflection. But we must recall (1) that--as pointed out by one inmate we have quoted--the shock can be anticipated and prepared for, and (2) the fact of returning from furlough deprives the return of its connotation of indefiniteness and finiteness. Whereas the inmate may be aware of the fact that he is back, he is simultaneously aware of the limited nature of the return. It is for this reason that our data reflect the paradoxical coexistence of the statements "it was hell coming back" and "the experience has made the stay here much easier".

But both our interviewees' observations about the long walk back and the specific difficulties mentioned by particular inmates point to the need for individualized briefing and debriefing sessions in which such difficulties may be ameliorated. Our concluding section addresses itself to this need, as well as to other prospective speculations.

The Criterion Problem

A smoothly functioning furlough system cannot be operated by the proverbial "hard-headed Practitioner". A Pragmatic approach is doomed because criteria for furlough have a habit of turning into sticky value choices. A good example is the Norwegian system, where the objective of leave, as stated in the law, is "expedience for treatment". Should this mean that we release those who show evidence of the speediest progress? Or do we give furlough to persons whose recovery appears problematic unless we try heroic innovations? And assuming that we can resolve this difficulty, what do we do if our ideal candidate proves to be a high escape risk or an object of public trepidation? And if we are fortunate in this respect, what stance do we take relative to the obvious inequity of our "treatment" criterion? How do we explain to the inmate who is kept in custody (for instance, because he responds to prison group therapy and has a loyal, devoted wife) that his cell-mate is furnished with the joys of freedom as a therapy measure--rather than as a flagrantly arbitrary preferential reward?

The obvious solution is to combine various criteria. Mr. H. Byrkjeland of the Norwegian Prison Administration thus tells us that "in order to arrive at a correct decision concerning leave, it is necessary to have

an intimate knowledge of the inmate and the situation. At the same time, a certain degree of uniformity in practice is desirable.⁴ But how are such desiderata to be blended? Again, it seems, the nature of the formula would have to vary with one's values and assumptions. In these final paragraphs, I shall try to uncloak one or two premises of my own and to trace out their implications:

A few Postulates about the Framework for Furlough:

- (1) Unless a furlough system were viewed by inmates as equitable, the damage to those left behind could easily offset the gain for the beneficiaries.
- (2) It would not only be inhumane but destructive to rely on section criteria that are private, or (if announced) very vague.
- (3) It would be destructive to reject inmates (within established categories of eligibles) because of personal characteristics not even remotely subject to their control.
- (4) Whereas furloughs are more therapeutic for some inmates than for others there should be some treatment benefit for almost every inmate.
- (5) The specific benefits would vary from one inmate to the next, and it should thus be the nature of the furlough rather than the fact of furlough that would determine treatment benefit.
- (6) If every inmate had a unique set of treatment objectives, the connotation of furlough as simply a pleasurable benefit would become untenable, and the concept of equity would be modified.

⁴Personal communication to the author.

What I am suggesting is that eligibility for furlough be viewed as a process separate from that of actual disposition. Eligibility could be governed by general criteria, that would apply dispassionately to all inmates, and would be subject to inventory by them. (If some of the criteria were mutable or conditional, they could provide hope for even persons that were at first excluded.)

When eligibility has been equitably established, the treatment function of furlough could become dominant. Furloughs could be tailor-made to individual requirements, with varying preparation for the experience, changing tasks and conditions, and appropriate de-briefing procedures. Inmates could then decide jointly with staff whether they wish to avail themselves of the opportunity and its attendant obligations.

I have two further assumptions about the framework for furlough:

(1) I think it would be desirable to have furloughs determined at least in part by inmate behavior, so that getting a furlough comes to be viewed as an achievement, rather than as a staff action designed to attain staff ends.

(2) I think that what happens on furlough should have meaningful consequences for the inmate's future in the correctional setting. If the inmate "passes" the test of his first leave, we could thus plan further leave experiences for him: and in the event he performs creditably here, we might consider this fact in fixing his parole date. We would do this, not to reward for obedient performance, but because furloughs are our most life-like (and therefore reliable) index of adjustment.

In other words, furlough could be considered by correctional administrators somewhat in the fashion in which it is viewed by the inmates themselves--as a test of adjustment, as a constructive phase of institutionalization, and as a prelude to release. This view of furloughs would permit an integration of the experience into the inmate's over-all management and assessment. It would make furloughs a core portion--rather than an appendage--of the correctional process.

A Framework for the Framework

In administering a furlough system, we have a unique opportunity to deal with the inmate in his social context rather than in isolation. We can convert furlough into the most rewarding possible experience by working closely with the inmate's family, with his friends, and with representatives of the community to which he returns. Prior to the inmate's release, we can serve as scouts for him, and act as advisors to his hosts. During leave, we can make ourselves available as consultants if problems develop. And when the visit is over, our role could be that of facilitating the constructive assimilation and digestion of the experience. But why confine this type of service to the administration of furloughs? Why not extend it (at first, possibly, for the inmates involved in the furlough program) to constructive parole supervision and management?

Lastly, if we were to permit ourselves an even broader perspective, why not view furloughs as only one of an infinite number of possible admixtures of institutional and community treatment? Why not foresee (and project) various and sundry flexible programs of freedom modulated

with institutional control? If this sequence appears utopian, it may help to recall that today's experimentation with work-release furloughs began in 1913 with a dispensation for minor offenders and misdemeanants (Trends, 1965, pp. 58 ff.).

Speculations like these, of course, take us out of the researcher's province into the realm of poetic license. Research must scrutinize current practices and advance only one tentative step beyond them. It can suggest innovations, which in turn have to be implemented and carefully evaluated. Moreover, the rest of the field must catch up. Pioneering ventures may lead to further experimental effort, but prevalent practice may remain in the stone age. These final comments therefore represent a statement of hope--a guess as to where the logic of furlough would lead if sustained by courage, good faith and charity.. Our Norwegian inmates were in a position to suggest the start of the sequence; their successors (and the successors of their keepers) will confirm or impede its subsequent development.

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