

Men in Crisis, Human Breakdowns in Prison, by Hans Toch (Chicago, Ill.: Aldine Publishing Co., 1975), 340 pp., \$14.75.

REVIEWED BY
Lee H. Bowker,
Ph.D.

Hans Toch's *Men in Crisis, Human Breakdowns in Prison* is one of the most meaningful books ever to emerge from the discipline of social psychology. The book continues in the tradition of Toch's prior books, *The Social Psychology of Social Movements*¹ and *Violent Men*,² but this time, Toch has narrowed his focus to examine human breakdowns in New York correctional institutions. Equipped with a doctorate in social psychology from Princeton, Toch now occupies a fine vantage point from which to observe the workings of the criminal justice system, for he is currently professor of psychology in the School of Criminal Justice, State University of New York at Albany.

Men in Crisis is a book about the self-destructive acts of men and women in prison. It does not discover any new principles of behavior that are applicable to everyday life, but it does have relevance beyond the prison setting. This relevance extends in three directions: to survival behavior in other kinds of total institutions, to multiple human disasters of the "towering inferno" genre, and to suicide and other forms of self-damage outside of correctional institutions. Because of these multiple relevances, *Men in Crisis* is of interest to not only penologists, but also to social workers, psychologists, sociologists, psychiatrists, epidemiologists, and other theorists interested in obtaining a better understanding of self-destructive behavior.

A team of researchers helped Toch to obtain the material upon which *Men in Crisis* is based. The group began its work by employing disciplinary and infirmary logs, wardens' and deputy wardens' records, prisoner referrals and central office files, to produce a list of self-injuries and attempted suicides in the New York State and New York City prison systems between January 1971 and August 1973. As a result of this research, 847 interview candidates were

identified. Of this number, 381 actually taped an interview with a member of the research staff. A response rate this low inevitably imposes limits on the validity of the results (more so in the case of New York City detention facilities—where there was a 25 percent response rate—than in New York State prisons, in which approximately two-thirds of the surviving self-injurers completed interviews). When a random sample of 175 prisoners was interviewed as a control group, it was found that the self-injurers among them—7 percent—had not been included in the original list of interview candidates.

After the interviews were completed, they were subjected to content analysis. The interviews were categorized by the primary themes expressed by the prisoners and, in most cases, additional supporting themes. Eventually, these themes were clustered together in such a way as to constitute a typology. The typology of personal breakdowns thus created contained nine types formed by the combination of three psychological dimensions (impotence, fear, and need for support) and three kinds of difficulty (coping, self-perception, and impulse management). For example, Toch gave the label "isolation panic" to reactions that combined coping difficulties with the psychological dimension of fear, and "hopelessness and self-doubt" to reactions that combined difficulties about self-perception with the psychological dimension of impotence.

Coping crises are discussed in chapter 2, self-perception crises in chapter 3, and impulse management in chapter 4. Chapters 5 through 8 discuss background and environmental variables related to personal crises of a self-destructive nature, and the following four chapters present psychological autopsies of individual successful suicides, based on official records and interviews with prisoners and staff members who knew the suicide victims. Chapter 13 is a general discussion of problems and crises that highlights some of the differences between the control group subjects and the self-destructive subjects. In the final chapter, Toch

discusses how to intervene in crisis situations and he summarizes his recommendations in a table that lists psycho-social medications for each of the nine crisis types in his model.

The style in which Toch presents his material is a combination of quantitative social science and a clinical case study approach. In most of the chapters, the material unfolds through Toch's making a general statement and then following it up with several examples from the interviews, each about a paragraph long. This sounds suspiciously like proving a point by example, instead of by presenting "real" evidence that links independent and dependent variables empirically. But it's not. Toch's data are not causal in the same sense as most contemporary behavioral science studies. The research strategy in the study was to create a typology, relate other factors to the constructed types, and then to associate interventive strategies with each of the types. Within this methodological framework, the use of case examples to illustrate points is quite appropriate.

Rather than being a weak point, the use of many vignettes is really the strong point of the book. Toch collected a large number of cases with sufficient controls to satisfy most reasonable quantitative researchers; but by using so much original case material, he also gives the reader an appreciation of the phenomenology of prisoner self-destructive crises. This is absolutely essential in dealing with so delicate a topic. A strictly quantitative approach would have left us with an understanding of causal relationships between abstract variables, but it would have given us no empathy for the people involved; and in so doing, would have deprived us of the opportunity to develop a *personal* knowledge of the subject.

Three chapters deserve special mention. The first is chapter 5, "The Ingredients of Despair," which presents sort of an epidemiology of prisoner self-destruction. Sampling and response rate difficulties notwithstanding, this is a mag-

nificent contribution. There is nothing like it in the existing literature on prisons. In this chapter, we learn that blacks, married prisoners, older prisoners, drug users, and offenders without a history of violence are less likely to damage themselves in prison than whites, Latins, single and younger prisoners, and those offenders having a history of violence but no record of drug use. Blacks in the sample suffered from a larger number of fear reactions than the other groups; Latins were low on fear, but high on self-linking crises; and whites were high both on fear and self-retaliation. These ethnic differences have recently received more extended treatment by Robert Johnson, a member of Toch's research team, in *Culture and Crisis in Confinement*.³ These reactions are not unusual in prisons. Toch's data suggest that the true level of self-injury may range from one in ten in general men's prisons to one in three in prison mental hospitals.

Another chapter of special merit is the one on women in crisis contributed by James G. Fox, also a member of Toch's research team. If it seems strange that a book entitled *Men in Crisis* should include a chapter on women, we can at least rejoice that women were not completely ignored as in most criminological treatises. Although female prisoners are probably more likely to injure themselves than male prisoners, they make up only one-twentyfifth of all incarcerated adults. The members of Toch's research team were able to locate and interview only 52 women in one city and two state facilities. Fox feels that imprisonment elicits dependency needs in women that prisons are not able to deal with successfully. The women showed a greater need for interpersonal support during times of crisis than was found in the male sample. Self-destructive incidents developed when women in crisis situations could not maintain contact with people who would demonstrate empathy and compassion for their attempts to deal with their problems.

The final chapter is written from the perspective of crisis intervention, which has largely been ignored in American prisons. Not only are staff members usually untrained or uninterested in interventive activities, but the prisoners themselves tend to resist involving staff in their problems. Toch points out ways to overcome this immobilization of resources and to involve sympathetic staff members, stable prisoners, and survivors of previous crises in interventive efforts. Unfortunately, his table, "Intervention Implications of the Typology of Crises," appears on the next to last page of the text. Hence, this innovative material is not as fully developed as it should be.

A good review should point to a book's weaknesses as well as its strengths. In the case of *Men in Crisis*, there is not much to quibble over, but three points come to mind. First, the mass of case material is so great that it occasionally becomes tedious, and one wishes that there were more theoretical passages and less detail. Second, the literature research done to provide background for the study was surprisingly inadequate. There is no reference in the book to Cooper's study of self-mutilation in Peruvian prisons,⁴ Elmer Johnson's monograph on self-mutilation in correctional institutions in North Carolina,⁵ Danto's article on suicide at the Wayne County Jail in the *Police Law Quarterly*,⁶ or his book *Jail House Blues*.⁷

The final criticism is a very personal ideological point. Toch gives us many insights into the horrors of prison life, but his view of the system that has more than a little to do with producing these horrors does not demonstrate a critical awareness of the impact of administratively sanctioned social structures upon the men and women incarcerated in prisons. Instead, he makes statements such as "There is violence in prison, but prisons harbor men who have been violent elsewhere," as if to suggest that we (as citizens) and our agents (the administrators) are faultless in bringing about the high incidence of American prison violence.

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Anyone who is interested in the relationship between law and psychiatry will probably want to spend an evening with *Men in Crisis*. Along with other recent volumes such as *Prison Homicide* by Sylvester, Reed, and Nelson,⁸ *Prison Violence* by Cohen, Cole and Bailey,⁹ and *The Health Risks of Imprisonment* by Jones,¹⁰ it is part of the new realism about prison conditions and activities that is replacing the abstractions and vague philosophies of the 1960's.

Notes

1. Hans Toch, *The Social Psychology of Social Movements* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).
2. Hans Toch, *Violent Men* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).
3. Robert Johnson, *Culture and Crisis in Confinement* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1976).
4. H.H.A. Cooper, "Self-Mutilation by Peruvian Prisoners," 15 *International Journal of Offender Therapy* 180-188 (1971).
5. Elmer H. Johnson, *Correlates of Felon Self-Mutilation* (Carbondale: Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency and Corrections, Southern Illinois University, 1969).
6. Bruce L. Danto, "Suicide at the Wayne County Jail: 1967-1970," 1 *Police Law Quarterly* 34-42 (1972).
7. Bruce L. Danto, *Jail House Blues* (Orchard Lake, Mich.: Epix Pub., 1973).
8. Sawyer F. Sylvester, John Reed, and David Nelson, *Prison Homicide* (New York: Spectrum, 1977).
9. Albert K. Cohen, George Cole, and Robert Bailey, *Prison Violence* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1976).
10. David A. Jones, *The Health Risks of Imprisonment* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1976).

Criminal Russia: Essays on Crime in the Soviet Union, by Valery Chalidze (New York: Random House, 1977), 240 pp., \$10.00.

A Manual on Psychiatry for Dissidents, by Vladimir Bukovsky and Dr. Semyon Gluzman (Washington, D.C.: Committee Against the Political Misuse of Psychiatry, 1976), 18 pp., n.p.

REVIEWED BY
Arnold A.
Rogow, Ph.D.

Lenin believed that the fundamental cause of crime was the exploitation of the masses—their want and their poverty. He also believed that once this chief cause was removed, crime would disappear. Whether or not Lenin was right, there can be no doubt that, as Valery Chalidze (a Soviet dissident who came to the United States in 1972) points out in *Criminal Russia: Essays on Crime in the Soviet Union*, crime is far from negligible in the country that, in a sense, Lenin created—the Soviet Union.

The penchant of Soviet officialdom for obfuscation and secrecy has prevented persons outside the Soviet Union from gaining more than a vague idea of the nature and extent of crime in the U.S.S.R. Still, as Chalidze emphasizes, there is good reason to believe that much crime in the Soviet Union is related, directly or indirectly, to Soviet economic regulations designed to eliminate or severely restrict activities that we in the West associate with initiative and "getting-ahead." Indeed, more than 50 pages of *Criminal Russia* are devoted to chapters entitled "Bribery," "Private Enterprise," and "Theft of Socialist Property." A good deal of space is also devoted to "Murder," not because there is so much of it in the Soviet Union—again, no outsider really knows—but rather because Chalidze (who is quoted on the jacket as being "fascinated by the customs and personalities of Russian criminals") presents us with a number of brief, but succulent, "case histories" of murder.

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JEFFREY L. STEINGARTEN, ESQ. *Mr. Steingarten is the Psycholegal Centers Editor of this Journal. He is the recipient of a fellowship from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation to study the legal history of civil commitment in America from 1750 to 1950. He is also at work on In The Matter of Alberta Lessard, which will be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 1979.*

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Editors' page

It is not by accident that a number of the articles in this issue of the Journal address themselves to the problem of involuntary civil commitment of mental patients. This problem remains a thorny one for organized psychiatry. There is a growing body of opinion within the field that opposes psychiatrists' involvement in the nonmedical issues that are part of involuntary hospitalization. This debate still is far from resolved, but it is our opinion that a psychiatrist's involvement should remain within the medical context, that is, in the areas of diagnosis and treatment, areas for which he has specific training. Psychiatrists should refrain from being drawn into testifying on nonmedical, or quasi-medical issues that exceed the bounds of medical expertise.

There has not been sufficient evidence that would justify making such concepts as "dangerousness" and "competency" legal terms of strong moral cast, psycholegal terms that have a medical valence. The fuzziness of these designations has unfortunate consequences when psychiatrists attempt to include them within their purview as medical experts. The most unfortunate consequence of all occurs when the psychiatrist, unwittingly in many instances, becomes an agent of social control who forfeits, thereby, his unique role as agent of social healing.

Psychiatrists are expected to be self-aware and to be very cognizant of involving themselves in unwarranted conflict. This awareness stands as a crucial element in the treatment of emotional disturbance. Awareness of self is no less warranted in taking that step of moving into the three party relationship of court, patient/defendant, medical expert. The paradox is that it is most often in the three party rela-

BOOK REVIEW

WITH NO LANGUAGE BUT A CRY . . .

MEN IN CRISIS. By Hans Toch. Chicago: Aldine, 1975. Pp. 340.

This book thoroughly explores the why underlying suicide by incarcerated males. It is based on an analysis of over 600 interviews with prisoners concerning self-destructive acts. Toch has derived three major themes underlying suicidal behavior, and then these themes are broken down into specific topics. The style of presentation is thorough, clear, and easy to read. His presentation first states a theoretical explanation of the theme which is then fleshed out by the use of opportune excerpts from the clinical interviews. Although Toch's explanations are clear, the reader gets a better "feel" for the self-destructive themes and underlying emotions from the supporting interview data.

At one point, Toch differentiates between suicidal behaviors of inmates in jail versus those in prison. However, he does not define the differing motivations nor compare and describe the two settings. To the naive reader, this could be confusing. The book is adequately titled *Men in Crisis*, as women are given short shrift. In one chapter Toch claims to cover the reasons female inmates have for attempting suicide. This section deals with very few themes and cites few excerpts. The female homosexual relationship is considered more important and more emotionally laden than its male counterpart. Yet the subject matter is merely skimmed. The chapter on women does a disservice by its brevity and superficiality, and certainly deserves its own book. In a similar vein, Toch discusses suicidal issues facing the minority group of Latins in prison. A great deal is made of cultural and dependency issues. Again, the reader must await more complete coverage.

The three case histories toward the end of the book are effective conclusions to the section on breakdown. Most of the history is based on officer reports and interviews with peers. Hindsight is so often inaccurate, overrated, and omniscient. One is struck by the absence or inaccessibility of psychological services in prison and what a person

must do to get help. Concerned guards' write-ups are neglected, peer warnings are ignored, the suicidal inmates' pleas are dealt with by isolation, observation, and medication—a sad commentary on the system. A big disappointment is the chapter on crisis intervention. The suggestions were skimpy and vague. Such a vital topic deserves expansion and clarification.

Despite its few shortcomings, as a book that explains causative factors in psychological breakdown, Toch's book is excellent. It is refreshing to read a compassionate treatise as opposed to the usual academic analysis. Novices as well as seasoned criminologists will find the book a readable, informative, and thought-provoking insight into self-destruction in male prisoners.

—James E. Kantner, Ph.D.

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Radzinowicz, Sir Leon, and Joan King. **THE GROWTH OF CRIME: THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE.** *New York: Basic Books, 1977. 334 pp. \$11.95.* Topics covered include world currents of crime, explanations of crime, the response of the law, enforcing the law, and the penal predicament. The authors demonstrate that crime is growing both in mature industrialized countries and in countries on the threshold of industrialization. It is also concluded that the criminal justice system works poorly in most parts of the world.

Salgado, Gamini. **THE ELIZABETHAN UNDERWORLD.** *Totowa: Rowman & Littlefield, 1977. 207 pp. \$10.00.* Although written by a Professor of English, this is one of the most fascinating contributions to the historical sociology of crime to have been produced in several decades. Salgado has provided a detailed account of the underworld of Elizabethan London which would make even a seasoned New Yorker blanch. If you want to be able to hold forth at cocktail parties on cony catchers, bawdy baskets, kinchin mortis and doxies, this study can be strongly recommended for criminology course at all levels.

Sarason, Seymour B. **WORK, AGING, AND SOCIAL CHANGE PROFESSIONALS AND THE ONE LIFE-ONE CAREER IMPERATIVE.** *New York: Macmillan, 1977. 293 pp. \$14.95.* Sarason argues that changes in our society during and after World War II dramatically increased people's "great expectations" and set the stage for a collision between personal growth as a value and the one life-one career imperative. He studies the interrelationships among social change, individual values, and the sense of aging through personal interviews with career-choosing college seniors; with medical, law and graduate students; and with physicians, lawyers and academics.

Sonquist, John A., and William Dunkelberg. **SURVEY AND OPINION RESEARCH: PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS.** *Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977. 468 pp. \$19.95.* This handbook for survey researchers includes discussions of data organization and structure, editing of files, coding, construction of indices and scales, use of statistical analysis programs, and project management. It is a comprehensive, practical guide that should be useful for both novice and experienced survey researchers.

Stein, Leon (ed.). **OUT OF THE SWEATSHOP—THE STRUGGLE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY.** *New York: The New York Times Book Company, 1977. 367 pp. \$12.50.* This is a useful compilation of primarily contemporary comments on conditions of work and labor struggles in America from the 1880s through the 1930s. It also includes several recent summary statements on the legacy of the early workers' movements and the continuity of the problems faced by workers. Focus is on the garment trades. Most of the selections are less than three pages long.

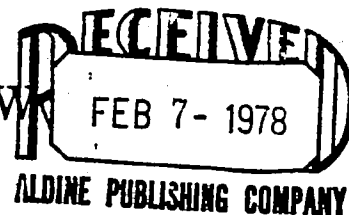
✓ Toch, Hans. **MEN IN CRISIS: HUMAN BREAKDOWNS IN PRISON.** *Chicago: Aldine, 1975. 340 pp.* This welcome contribution to the social psychology of prison life is based on a study of 381 people who had attempted to commit suicide or self-injury while inmates of New York prisons. The major concern is with the conditions under which "coping" strategies fail, and self-injury is resorted to. Toch also provides a list of intervention strategies designed for a variety of types of crimes. A readable yet harrowing book.

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EDITED BY BENJAMIN FRANK, PH.D.

A Revealing Study of Despair and Suicide Among Prisoners

Men in Crisis: Human Breakdowns in Prison. By Hans Toch. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1975. Pp. 327. \$14.75.

Based on over 600 interviews, *Men in Crisis* tells in the actual and oftentimes poignant words of the prisoners themselves, the history and current feelings of their despair, hatred and rejection. While the small print and what appears to be long pages give the impression of academic stuffiness, in reality, the book represents material in an easy-to-read package for the correctional practitioner. For the academician and others who have not had the prison experience, the chapters that quote heavily from prisoners will be a unique and revealing encounter.

The book spells out some of the causes of prisoner despair and suicide. One major contribution is the labeling and categorizing of themes: themes related to coping (Self-victimization, Isolation Panic, Aid Seeking) and their manifestation by describing actual cases and direct quotes from prisoners that exemplify the type. The same approach is followed in describing themes related to negative assessment and themes related to impulse management. These well thought-out descriptive labels would be good teaching tools for instruction in crisis intervention for correctional practitioners. Interspersed between verbatim inmate statements, are the thoughtful and articulately enunciated observations and deductions of the author.

Because of both the extensiveness and in-depth quality of the study, more weight can be given to the conclusions. Narrowly focused, this is a balanced presentation erring neither on the side of maudlin sentimentalism of pious do-gooders nor on the side of a callous rationalism of myopic scientists. The author is quite fair in his evaluation judgments of both prisons and prisoners. Nor is Dr. Toch often fooled, although at times he is somewhat naive in interviewing and responding to psychopathic types and consequently takes their statements at face value, especially, since they superficially exemplify his categories.

Chapter 6 makes some interesting contrast between jail and prisons and the individualized crisis evoked by each which is an important practical contribution to the field. Only minimally peppered with psychological jargon, *Men in Crisis* makes some interesting arguments throughout, and the chapter on women in crisis is especially vivid. In the final chapter on crisis intervention, it is noteworthy that many correctional systems have implemented some of Dr. Toch's recommendations concerning line staff counseling. Whether his "Typology of Crisis" can be used in mapping out future institution programs or needs of prisoners is only conjecture.

The book is distinctive in its marriage of theory and in vivo reporting of crisis and personal breakdown. Unlike many crisis intervention texts, it deals with individuals as more unique rather than as generalized syndromes. The excellent psychological autopsies of Part 3 are fast paced, well-written biographical accounts of driven men who eventually take their own lives. Their stories reflect the pathos of many prisoners' lives and the book is worthwhile because of these four chapters alone.

In final analysis, the best way to sum up *Men in Crisis* is to quote one prisoner's statement, "The worst thing about prisons is you have to live with other prisoners."

Philadelphia, Pa.

Gerald M. Farkas

History—The Best Teacher

American Prisons—A History of Good Intentions. By Blake McKelvey. Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith Publishing Corporation, 1977. Pp. 387. \$16.50.

Blake McKelvey's book, *American Prisons—A History of Good Intentions*, is unique because the author is not a penologist, but a historian. Accordingly, the usual biases which frequently saturate essays about prisons and imprisonments are, happily, absent. Mr. McKelvey makes no judgments, offers no apologies, nor suggests any solutions. His book is simply a thoroughly documented, at times disturbing, narrative history of the origin, development, and present state of the American prison system.

The author has developed his portrayal of American prisons so that there is never a lag in the flow of material. Moreover, as Mr. McKelvey meticulously threads his way from the origin through the development of prisons in America, the book manifests the historian's eye for detailed research and accuracy. Because the growth and development of penology was not consistent throughout the United States, the reader is provided with separate sections describing the conceptual formulation and implementation of penal practices and priorities for various regions in the country. In this manner, he is able to capture the fragmentation which historically has characterized penal concepts.

Throughout the book the reader is treated to an in-depth description and appraisal of the various prison movements and reforms which have occurred over the past several hundred years. The book not only reflects the changing concepts of prisons, but the author, without bravado or intellectual smugness, provides succinct explanations of the underlying social, economic, and political climates which invariably triggered or, in some way, contributed to the changes in penal practices.

As the reader wends his way through the chronology of events which have paved the way of the American prison experience, it becomes evident that prison riots, and reforms aimed at correcting the causes of the riots, have characterized the American prison scenario since its inception. Each generation of Americans has produced reformers who have decried the failure of prisons to achieve their stated objective; the rehabilitation of those offenders committed for confinement.

Based upon the historical documentation presented by McKelvey, it is apparent that, despite our best efforts, we do not seem to be any closer to solving the dilemmas which have plagued the American prison system. Even the defenders of American penological concepts would be hard pressed to contradict the objective data included in McKelvey's book. For this reason, persons who are seriously interested in the field of penology or corrections will want Mr. McKelvey's book for their library. It is an up-to-date, comprehensive, well written, scholarly work which

breakdown" during incarceration: situational adjustment, "self-evaluation" judgments, and impulse management. In part two, he presents the empirical data and three detailed analyses: type of penal setting, cultural background, and gender differences. In part three, four psychological autopsies are presented restructuring the final stages of breakdown. In part four, some feasible and practical ways of modifying penal settings to reduce the incidents of self-injury are presented.

Men In Crisis is a massive and extensive undertaking. It represents a major contribution to the understanding of inmate experience, it adds to the clinical knowledge needed for meaningful treatment in penal systems, and provides both empirical and experiential data for effective prison management. Its unique feature is its vivid illustration, both conceptually and experientially, of the environmental and psychological stress experienced by incarcerated individuals. This format gives the reader an opportunity to explore the "raw human data" from which the author's conclusions are drawn as well as get a real "feel" of the stress of incarceration.

This book's exploration of the impact of systems upon individuals and the unique reaction of specific individuals to the system has major implications for prison management and psychological treatment. Hence, there are two reader groups who would find this book most specifically useful. The first group is those individuals involved in the planning, policy setting, and administration, of penal institutions. The second group is the beginning helping professional who is working with or may work with incarcerated populations. This book is *real* social psychology. It illustrates how the same behavior in the same situation but in different people has different meanings and hence needs to be handled in different manners and can be prevented in different ways. It demonstrates how bureaucratic "insight" could lead to bureaucratic "behavior change."

Hans Toch, *Men In Crisis*. Chicago: Aldine, 1975, 340 pages.

*Reviewed by Gary M. Wood
and Gary R. Vandenbos*

Gary M. Wood is the substance abuse counselor at the Livingston County Jail. He is the training coordinator of The Listening Ear of East Lansing, Inc. and has been involved in Crisis Intervention work for the past five years. Also Mr. Wood has served as a trainer and consultant in communication skills for S.T.R.I.D.E. and C.R.E.T.C.A.

Gary R. Vandenbos, PhD is the director of the Howell-Area Mental Health Center and Psychological Consultant to the Livingston County Jail. He has been doing psychotherapy with incarcerated criminal offenders for three years. He has co-authored, with Bertram Karon of Michigan State University, nine articles on the psychotherapy of schizophrenics and the effectiveness of such treatment.

In *Men In Crisis* Hans Toch examines the crisis of incarceration, the typical interpersonal and intrapsychic stresses generated, and identifiable patterns of coping (including the so-called maladaptive strategy of self-injury). Over 600 interviews were conducted with both self-injuring inmates and nonself-injuring inmates. Empirical data is presented on the likelihood of self-injury by age, sex, marital status, race, previous drug use, previous violent behavior, and type of penal setting. The majority of the book is presented in the format of the researchers' conceptualization of the inmates' crisis experience and the process of coping, followed by concrete illustrations of the inmates' experience.

The book is presented in four parts. In part one, Toch discusses three varieties of "human

Somewhere in *The Music Man*, there is a song extolling "sadder but wiser" girls. I don't know about girls, but I see virtue in being read by a reviewer who has "been there" himself, has run programs, drawn inferences, written books, and knows what *can* and *cannot* be done with real-life data.

I also know that a book, like a person, can be valued (if one tries) in relation to its aims: Years ago (in a preface) I wrote about the unfairness of asking cows to lay eggs; I still think it's bad practice.

Many students have an unobstructed view of what Science is, and what Theory ought to be. I wish them well when they translate their ideals into practice, but no one else (and least of all, I) can do the job for them. My immediate problem, though, is that the Russian roulette of CP has drawn Fred Loya as my reviewer (*Man in Crisis: Human Breakdowns in Prison*; CP, 1977, 22, 525-526). And I find myself being castigated by him for falling short of perfection (which I do), in ways that I never sought perfection, and along lines I don't pretend to understand.

In relation to my classification of personal crises, Loya writes that "it is unfortunate that Toch does not detail the all important criteria utilized to make classification decisions." In fact, I went so far as to reproduce my entire thematic code, which Loya can find, if he wants it, on pages 32-33, 51-52, and 93-94. Loya also complains that the "discovery of relationships that will hold across subjects is left unsupported by the methodology and the data." On the other hand, where Loya reads chapters that are entirely concerned with "relationships that hold across subjects," he complains that "statistics that are presented are limited to frequency counts," or alleges that "these chapters are sociological, antidotal discussions of penology," whatever that may be.

Loya accuses me of having shortchanged a "search for underpinnings" for deadpan portraits of "stoic, sterile, and misunderstood" phenomena. Leaving aside the issue of "stoic" phenomena, I see no objection to Loya undertaking a search for underpinnings. But I can't see decent underpinnings being found without the sort of data we provide. Moreover, where I undertake autopsies to explore the dynamics of crises, Loya objects to my "case study approach."

What I resent most is Loya's statement that (given my presumed lack of clinical depth) "the reader is promised an intervention plan that never materializes." What I promise, I try to deliver. Chapter 14 of *Man in Crisis* outlines a differential inter-

vention plan in painstakingly tiresome detail.

To add insult to Loya's injuriousness, he complains that the work we report "does not permit replication." I hope I haven't wasted the declining years of my life doing the sort of work that cries out for replication, but a good team of trained clinical interviewers with access to prison staff and inmates and with generous government support could repeat what we have done. When these replications are completed, I promise to favorably review the replicators' book, because I am sadder if not wiser than Fred Loya.

HANS TOCH
State University of New York
at Albany

Men in Crisis, Human Breakdowns in Prison, by Hans Toch (Chicago, Ill.: Aldine Publishing Co., 1975), 340 pp., \$14.75.

REVIEWED BY
Lee H. Bowker,
Ph.D.

Hans Toch's *Men in Crisis, Human Breakdowns in Prison* is one of the most meaningful books ever to emerge from the discipline of social psychology. The book continues in the tradition of Toch's prior books, *The Social Psychology of Social Movements*¹ and *Violent Men*,² but this time, Toch has narrowed his focus to examine human breakdowns in New York correctional institutions. Equipped with a doctorate in social psychology from Princeton, Toch now occupies a fine vantage point from which to observe the workings of the criminal justice system, for he is currently professor of psychology in the School of Criminal Justice, State University of New York at Albany.

Men in Crisis is a book about the self-destructive acts of men and women in prison. It does not discover any new principles of behavior that are applicable to everyday life, but it does have relevance beyond the prison setting. This relevance extends in three directions: to survival behavior in other kinds of total institutions, to multiple human disasters of the "towering inferno" genre, and to suicide and other forms of self-damage outside of correctional institutions. Because of these multiple relevances, *Men in Crisis* is of interest to not only penologists, but also to social workers, psychologists, sociologists, psychiatrists, epidemiologists, and other theorists interested in obtaining a better understanding of self-destructive behavior.

A team of researchers helped Toch to obtain the material upon which *Men in Crisis* is based. The group began its work by employing disciplinary and infirmary logs, wardens' and deputy wardens' records, prisoner referrals and central office files, to produce a list of self-injuries and attempted suicides in the New York State and New York City prison systems between January 1971 and August 1973. As a result of this research, 847 interview candidates were

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HANS TOCH
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BOOK REVIEW**WITH NO LANGUAGE BUT A CRY . . .**

MEN IN CRISIS. By Hans Toch. Chicago: Aldine, 1975. Pp. 340.

This book thoroughly explores the why underlying suicide by incarcerated males. It is based on an analysis of over 600 interviews with prisoners concerning self-destructive acts. Toch has derived three major themes underlying suicidal behavior, and then these themes are broken down into specific topics. The style of presentation is thorough, clear, and easy to read. His presentation first states a theoretical explanation of the theme which is then fleshed out by the use of opportune excerpts from the clinical interviews. Although Toch's explanations are clear, the reader gets a better "feel" for the self-destructive themes and underlying emotions from the supporting interview data.

At one point, Toch differentiates between suicidal behaviors of inmates in jail versus those in prison. However, he does not define the differing motivations nor compare and describe the two settings. To the naive reader, this could be confusing. The book is adequately titled *Men in Crisis*, as women are given short shrift. In one chapter Toch claims to cover the reasons female inmates have for attempting suicide. This section deals with very few themes and cites few excerpts. The female homosexual relationship is considered more important and more emotionally laden than its male counterpart. Yet the subject matter is merely skimmed. The chapter on women does a disservice by its brevity and superficiality, and certainly deserves its own book. In a similar vein, Toch discusses suicidal issues facing the minority group of Latins in prison. A great deal is made of cultural and dependency issues. Again, the reader must await more complete coverage.

The three case histories toward the end of the book are effective conclusions to the section on breakdown. Most of the history is based on officer reports and interviews with peers. Hindsight is so often inaccurate, overrated, and omniscient. One is struck by the absence or inaccessibility of psychological services in prison and what a person

must do to get help. Concerned guards' write-ups are neglected, peer warnings are ignored, the suicidal inmates' pleas are dealt with by isolation, observation, and medication—a sad commentary on the system. A big disappointment is the chapter on crisis intervention. The suggestions were skimpy and vague. Such a vital topic deserves expansion and clarification.

Despite its few shortcomings, as a book that explains causative factors in psychological breakdown, Toch's book is excellent. It is refreshing to read a compassionate treatise as opposed to the usual academic analysis. Novices as well as seasoned criminologists will find the book a readable, informative, and thought-provoking insight into self-destruction in male prisoners.

—James E. Kantner, Ph.D.

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BOOK REVIEW

WITH NO LANGUAGE BUT A CRY . . .

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—James E. Kantner, Ph.D.

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victim of circumstances, an alternative to the "mechanomorphism" and technicism that haunt the profession.

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JERRY S. COHN, M.D.
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Men in Crisis: Human Breakdowns in Prison, by Hans Toch. Chicago, Ill., Aldine Publishing Co., 1975, 327 pp., \$14.75.

Men in Crisis appears to me to be representative of one pole of the extremely wide spectrum of thought among mental health professionals regarding prisons and their inmates. This viewpoint, in rather simplistic summary, is the humanistic-sounding one that criminals are regular folks caught up in circumstance and that, as often as not, they are unfortunate victims of society and particularly of its institutions for criminal offenders. The viewpoint at the other end of the spectrum, again stated simplistically, is more that criminal offenders have defects of personality, behavior, and thinking which make them quantitatively at least, from the beginning, different. A recent example of the latter view is the book on *The Criminal Personality* by Yochelson and Samenow. The area between these two latter views is occupied by that which roots the

strong impression that more traditional and permissive psychotherapeutic approaches have not achieved staggering successes with criminal offenders. This is not to say that the less permissive, more confrontative, behavior-oriented approach suggested by Drs. Yochelson and Samenow is proven; it is as yet relatively untried.

I would raise some specific points that cause me to question the validity of Dr. Toch's thesis. First, his book is based on retrospective consideration of crisis responses among prison inmates; the information presented is thus entirely verbal and subjectively based. Dr. Toch attempts to allay this concern by pointing out the "low turn-down rate" for interviews and the careful communication of the interviewers' "disaffiliation with the correctional system." It has been my experience that the average inmate will dissemble when he or she has nothing to gain but such minimal benefits as obtaining a break in prison routine or favorably impressing an interviewer. The inmate might also think that even a completely detached interviewer might exert some influence to improve his or her situation in some way or might be of some future use.

Dr. Toch states that another reason he felt the interviews were genuine was the fact that the inmates interviewed made statements suggesting that "they were sharing concerns that they had never communicated to anyone." From my experience I have come to accept that sort of approach as a highly manipulative attempt to "hook" the interviewer. I was also struck with Toch's statement that even when inmates suggested that their behaviors in situations had been manipulative Toch considered that this was not the case—that they

had truly been in crisis but wanted retrospectively to hide their loss of control so as not to appear weak. My experience has led me to the entirely opposite conclusion—that a presentation of "emotional distress" is an often-abused standard form of manipulative communication in a jail setting.

To provide crisis services in such a setting would fulfill an extension of "Parkinson's law" that the crises would expand to meet the services provided. Not only would such an arrangement tend to be abused, it is my impression that setting up such a system for a formalized alternate mode of communication avoids the real problem of improving communication between inmates and basic staff in correctional facilities. If one really desires to improve prisons, a far better strategy than having mental health professionals swarming over them to engage in crisis work would be to work toward the establishment of corrections work as a field with clearer goals, supported by our society in general, with appropriate training, and encompassing aspects of mental health practice that have been proven useful by objective measurement. Rather than continue to provide permissive psychotherapies that, to my knowledge, do not work effectively in such a setting and are largely regarded as a joke or an object of manipulation, it would be far more humanitarian to try to provide effective correctional programs, even if some hardness of attitude is required as a feature of such programs.

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GLENN E. SWANK, M.D.

Abnormal Ageing: The Psychology of Senile and Presenile Dementia, by Edgar Miller. New York, N.Y., John Wiley & Sons, 1977, 160 pp., \$11.95.

As the title indicates, this is a psychology text, aimed primarily at description and discussion of the psychological changes in dementia. It pays only scant attention to physical and neurological correlates. The author addresses theory, practice, assessment, management, and amelioration of senile and presenile dementia. He briefly considers pathology and epidemiology and discusses intellectual and memory changes, paying some attention to language and learning in dementia. There is a brief discussion of the correlation of psychological factors with EEG, air EEG, and cerebral blood flow.

The book is representative of the increased interest in identifying and addressing dementia in the elderly. It is not surprising that this work emerges from the United Kingdom which some see as considerably ahead of North America in geriatric medicine generally and psychogeriatrics in particular. It will be a useful addition to the library of any clinical psychologist testing or treating patients suspected of having organic brain syndrome. The section of the book dealing with management will be useful for any mental health professional or administrator responsible for planning or maintaining an optimal environment for demented patients.

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Hartford, Conn.

HANS TOCH. *Men in Crisis: Human Breakdowns in Prison*. Pp. vii, 340. Chicago, Ill.: Aldine Publishing Company, 1975. \$14.75.

This is another book in the "have tapé-recorder, will do research" genre, in which over six hundred inmates "spent countless hours sharing their thoughts, feelings, and concerns." The study was supported by an NIMH research grant under the title of "Self-Destruction Among Prison Inmates," and the interviews were conducted in all major facilities of the New York State Department of Correctional Services and the New York City Department of Corrections. These included inmates incarcerated, between January 1971 and August 1973, in the maximum security prisons, an institution for youthful offenders, the women's prison, and two facilities housing inmates with psychiatric problems or special treatment requirements. The researchers sought out the inmates who had committed acts of self-injury or had attempted suicide. Among those finally interviewed were 357 males and 56 females. Most of the book, except for one chapter and some selected references, deals with males, which perhaps explains the baffling title. One hundred seventy-five control subjects were interviewed, representing a systematic random sample of inmates who had no record of self-injury. The study revealed that seven percent of inmates in the control group had also inflicted injuries on themselves which went unrecorded.

The material is organized in a conceptually satisfying manner, but this is not immediately apparent because more than half of the book offers us visions of private hells by quotation from transcripts which thus conceals its scholarly contribution. We are also offered, for the first time, a quantitative profile of prisoners who commit desperate acts of self-injury. The value of these profiles is enhanced by comparing them with a systematic random sample of prison inmates. We learn that the suicide

and injury-prone male inmate is likely to be young and unmarried. Whereas four out of ten men in the crisis group are under the age of 21, this group represents only 22 percent of the inmate population. Though black prisoners make up two-thirds of the prison population, they constitute only one-quarter of the crisis group. Persons with histories of drug addiction were similarly unaffected by self-destruction, at least in statistical terms. On the other hand, being white or of Spanish American origin leads to a high risk of self-injury. The same is true for persons with a known history of violence. The profiles for women show some striking differences. The injury-prone group is also likely to be young, of white or Latin background, and with a history of violent offenses. Unlike males, however, their marital status seems to make no difference and most of them have had a history of drug addiction (78.8 percent in comparison with 54.1 percent in the random sample).

Space does not permit detailing the conceptual sophistication of this research. Not only does it identify and portray the various forms of human despair under conditions of incarceration, but its last two chapters are dedicated to specific practical suggestions on how to deal with each type of crisis. The major problem with this work is its basic insecurity, timidity, and modesty. It is probably a sense of insecurity about the validity of his data that explains Toch's excessive use of transcripts, since no scientist is expected to produce all the evidence at his command for public consumption. Furthermore, the sixteen crisis themes developed by Toch are significant and general enough to claim universality. Yet Toch prefers to view self-destruction as peculiarly unique to the prison system and comparatively rare in the outside world. Paradoxically, for a scholar who is so mistrustful of all the official statistics generated within the prison system, Toch unquestionably accepts official statistics gathered outside the prisons. Toch's contribution

to the unraveling of the human dilemma is greater than he is willing to assert.

ALEX SIMIRENKO

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FRANCES WILLARD VON MALTITZ. *Living and Learning in Two Languages: Bilingual-Bicultural Education in the United States*. Pp. xvi, 221. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975. \$8.95.

Since the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was passed, a new and important movement in American education has been gathering momentum—Federal funding of an unprecedented number of projects in which non-English languages have been recognized as proper mediums of instruction. Under the impetus of this measure, more than a dozen states enacted legislation in the 1970s requiring instruction in a bilingual setting for children of limited English-speaking ability, while others passed permissive laws. In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the Supreme Court held that identical instruction in San Francisco for English-speaking and Chinese-speaking pupils was discriminatory, a ruling extended by Federal courts to school districts in New York, Colorado, and New Mexico. The following year, the Office of Civil Rights required local school districts to offer effective remedies for "eliminating past educational practices under *Lau v. Nichols*."

As these events suggest, in its contemporary form American bilingual instruction is less than a decade old. Most educators have some awareness of its recent emergence, but lack a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The general public is even less well informed. An avalanche of literature relating to this area has poured from the presses, but it has not closed the knowledge gap because it tends to be too technical or restricted in scope to provide a broad grasp of the subject. This volume should fill the need, for it offers a relatively full and clear treatment of this developing field.

Some of the book's special features follow: (1) Von Maltitz was qualified to author this volume as a bilingual student of a volunteer professional and a volunteer writer who has written extensively on the subject. She has a gift for presenting subject matter succinctly. (2) She has prepared this book through authoring this book through extensive correspondence, travel and observation in Puerto Rican bilingual schooling and reference books for majors and bilingual teachers. She stresses Chicano experience and emphasizes the Puerto Rican background material needed by teachers and sociologists in the Northeastern corner; (3) She is committed to bilingual education. Maltitz nevertheless handles controversial aspects with commonsense; and (4) She offers an analysis of bilingual education in this country.

These are some of its distinctive features. (1) Von Maltitz deliberates on bilingual politics. This is comparable to the politics from an account of government's operations, that bilingual education and bilingualism are inextricably intertwined. Concentrating on aspects of bilingual education, she expends the expense of its attendant social circumstances leave relatively unprepared for the developments in countries like Spain, Yugoslavia, and Canada. Contrasting languages consist of a single ingredient—however complex in the complex political, economic, and social matrix in which the group relationships are. (2) Addressed largely to administrators, this volume is light on the immense and complex work inherent in establishing and maintaining public bilingual education in school districts that are economically underprivileged. Because of the relatively

MEN IN CRISIS. By *Hans Toch*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1975. Pp. vii, 340. \$14.75.

The focus of this book is on "mapping a wide spectrum of despair . . . cataloging the feelings . . . [and examining] self-destruction [in the prison setting]." Professor Toch does not examine the appropriateness of the medical model but considers the words "patient" and "prisoner" to be synonymous. He assumes that self-destructiveness in prison, for the most part, is a result of longstanding emotional problems of coping by the "patient" in his life prior to his incarceration. The approach to the problem under study is clinically scholarly and painfully "objective."

In discussing the research approach, the author rightfully acknowledges the cooperation of New York prison authorities, including Russ Oswald. But in an effort to maintain "objectivity" (a will-o'-the-wisp in any research endeavor), Toch becomes in effect an apologist for the correctional administration:

The reason for cooperation was probably the desire of officials for relevant, trustworthy feedback. . . . [I]n our experience the custodians of inmates do not seem oblivious to the suffering of their charges. They appear concerned about

Dr. Toch's Law & Criminology

their impact and about possibilities [within the limits of the available options] for ameliorating the experience of incarceration . . . [T]he warmth with which we were received may have been due in part to the fact that our credentials and our past involvements implied that we would approach our task with an effort at objectivity. (p. 20)

Translation: Based upon the prison authorities' previous experience with Toch's research, the former were convinced they had nothing to fear because the research would be "safe" and would constitute no threat to the correctional administration. But that kind of self-limiting alliance-unduly biases the results of any research.

The author notes some ill effects from imposed constraints in general prison management. But the morality and the efficacy of the administration's contribution to the phenomenon under study is accepted with equanimity because the modality of prison management is not questioned.

Toch has accomplished a difficult task in selecting cogent portions of voluminous transcripts of inmate interviews. *Men in Crisis* (that strangely includes a chapter entitled "Women in Crisis") is well written and displays Toch's ability to convey clearly what he is trying to say. However, sometimes the beauty of the language blurs the meaning. In discussing one case study, for example, the writer scrupulously avoids conceding guard brutality. Instead he observes: "It can be assumed that in the charged atmosphere that existed at the time, minimal provocation by Johnson could spark retribution." (p. 232) In another context in the same case, he writes that "The obdurate walls of confinement do not yield to Johnson's trumpet." (p. 249) Or, one could say that Johnson had no impact on the prison organizational structure in making it more responsive to his needs. Both statements hint at the same meaning. While the former rendition is more artistic, the latter is perhaps more accurate.

Toch's research focused on inmate perceptions as if they were in fact reality. It was assumed that inmates either were telling the truth or believed themselves to be telling the truth about their feelings. Other writers, practitioners and this reviewer have all attested to the common occurrence of willful "sandbagging" or "jackpotting" (claiming an alleged grievance

against an innocent victim) of an officer or inmates by an inmate whose purpose is to agitate the system or to pursue his own personal goals. Such activity is mere manipulation and an effort on the inmate's part to cope with his environment or to adjust it to his needs. The researcher's apparent unawareness of this fact of prison life (that inmates have been known to lie upon occasion), calls into question the validity of the analysis and consequently some of the conclusions regarding self-destructiveness in the prison setting.

Nonetheless, the case study method in this book is effectively and artistically utilized and both the correctional worker and the inmate probably can gain some insight into prison dynamics from a perspective differing from that set forth in the writings of Clemmer, Cressey or Sykes. The difficulty with any new intellectual discourse lies not in its conceptualization but in its implementation. In the closing chapter, Toch describes how the prison pathology can be diminished by more skillfully applying treatment techniques. The recommendations include a "network model for the human services . . . mapping of the needs of the clients . . . fact-gathering and evaluation procedure applied to *all* inmates." (p. 306)

A closing paragraph begins with the hopeful statement that "physical and social environments of institutions are also alterable." However, Toch avoids an opportunity to propose methods by which the administration could change the prison environment. Instead:

Even within the narrow range of settings of the prison system, the social-ecological dimensions of different prisons vary significantly, and a single prison may contain a variety of subenvironments that differ significantly. . . . If we know what a man's milieu requirements are, we can use crisis-relevant dimensions to place him in a "matched" setting. . . . It requires ecological mapping of tiers, wards, public rooms and living accommodations.

The institutional practitioner could easily find experts to help him plot the range of environments available to him, and to develop ways of improving relevant environmental attributes. (p. 306)

No doubt.

Acknowledgement is made that the paraprofessional—the foreman, the housewife or the inmate—could be an effective therapist.

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Of course.

TOM MURTON

University of Minnesota

MEN IN CRISIS. By Hans Toch. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1975. Pp. vii, 340. \$14.75.

The focus of this book is on "mapping a wide spectrum of despair . . . cataloging the feelings . . . [and examining] self-destruction [in the prison setting]." Professor Toch does not examine the appropriateness of the medical model but considers the words "patient" and "prisoner" to be synonymous. He assumes that self-destructiveness in prison, for the most part, is a result of longstanding emotional problems of coping by the "patient" in his life prior to his incarceration. The approach to the problem under study is clinically scholarly and painfully "objective."

In discussing the research approach, the author rightfully acknowledges the cooperation of New York prison authorities, including Russ Oswald. But in an effort to maintain "objectivity" (a will-o'-the-wisp in any research endeavor), Toch becomes in effect an apologist for the correctional administration:

The reason for cooperation was probably the desire of officials for relevant, trustworthy feedback. . . . [I]n our experience the custodians of inmates do not seem oblivious to the suffering of their charges. They appear concerned about

against an innocent victim) of an officer or inmates by an inmate whose purpose is to agitate the system or to pursue his own personal goals. Such activity is mere manipulation and an effort on the inmate's part to cope with his environment or to adjust it to his needs. The researcher's apparent unawareness of this fact of prison life (that inmates have been known to lie upon occasion), calls into question the validity of the analysis and consequently some of the conclusions regarding self-destructiveness in the prison setting.

Nonetheless, the case study method in this book is effectively and artistically utilized and both the correctional worker and the inmate probably can gain some insight into prison dynamics from a perspective differing from that set forth in the writings of Clemmer, Cressey or Sykes. The difficulty with any new intellectual discourse lies not in its conceptualization but in its implementation. In the closing chapter, Toch describes how the prison pathology can be diminished by more skillfully applying treatment techniques. The recommendations include a "network model for the human services . . . mapping of the needs of the clients . . . fact-gathering and evaluation procedure applied to *all* inmates." (p. 306)

A closing paragraph begins with the hopeful statement that "physical and social environments of institutions are also alterable." However, Toch avoids an opportunity to propose methods by which the administration could change the prison environment. Instead:

Even within the narrow range of settings of the prison system, the social-ecological dimensions of different prisons vary significantly, and a single prison may contain a variety of subenvironments that differ significantly. . . . If we know what a man's milieu requirements are, we can use crisis-relevant dimensions to place him in a "matched" setting. . . . It requires ecological mapping of tiers, wards, public rooms and living accommodations.

The institutional practitioner could easily find experts to help him plot the range of environments available to him, and to develop ways of improving relevant environmental attributes. (p. 306)

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their impact and about possibilities [within the limits of the available options] for ameliorating the experience of incarceration . . . [T]he warmth with which we were received may have been due in part to the fact that our credentials and our past involvements implied that we would approach our task with an effort at objectivity. (p. 20)

Translation: Based upon the prison authorities' previous experience with Toch's research, the former were convinced they had nothing to fear because the research would be "safe" and would constitute no threat to the correctional administration. But that kind of self-limiting alliance unduly biases the results of any research.

The author notes some ill effects from imposed constraints in general prison management. But the morality and the efficacy of the administration's contribution to the phenomenon under study is accepted with equanimity because the modality of prison management is not questioned.

Toch has accomplished a difficult task in selecting cogent portions of voluminous transcripts of inmate interviews. *Men in Crisis* (that strangely includes a chapter entitled "Women in Crisis") is well written and displays Toch's ability to convey clearly what he is trying to say.

However, sometimes the beauty of the language blurs the meaning. In discussing one case study, for example, the writer scrupulously avoids conceding guard brutality. Instead he observes: "It can be assumed that in the charged atmosphere that existed at the time, minimal provocation by Johnson could spark retribution." (p. 232) In another context in the same case, he writes that "The obdurate walls of confinement do not yield to Johnson's trumpet." (p. 249) Or, one could say that Johnson had no impact on the prison organizational structure in making it more responsive to his needs. Both statements hint at the same meaning. While the former rendition is more artistic, the latter is perhaps more accurate.

Toch's research focused on inmate perceptions as if they were in fact reality. It was assumed that inmates either were telling the truth or believed themselves to be telling the truth about their feelings. Other writers, practitioners and this reviewer have all attested to the common occurrence of willful "sandbagging" or "jackpotting" (claiming an alleged grievance

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while gang fights, drugs, and "snitching" were the most frequent factors in multiple-assault homicides. There was much violence in the victims' histories, but even more in the assailants' records. In general, size, security classification, and (slightly) density identified the institutions most likely to have experienced a homicide in 1973.¹²⁴

Three comprehensive studies of prisoners who turned their aggression inward on themselves have appeared since 1969. The first was Elmer Johnson's report, *Correlates of Felon Self-Mutilations*, in which he analyzed 291 North Carolina prisoners who mutilated themselves from 1958 to 1966.¹²⁵ Whites were ten times as likely to mutilate themselves as blacks, perhaps because of greater relative deprivation as compared with their lives in the larger society.¹²⁶ Since so few blacks were involved in this study, we'll look only at the findings that apply to white prisoners in the following discussion.

Although some men mutilated themselves because of homosexual fears or general fears of other prisoners, these reasons were less common than mental turmoil or a manipulative or rebellious stance. Even more prevalent than any of these was a dependency complex that was uniquely associated with repeated self-injuries. Of the eleven men who mutilated themselves ten or more times, nine were of the dependent type. Most of the self-mutilators committed only a single act, or perhaps two or three, but a quarter did so four or more times.¹²⁷

Most of the injuries were moderate ones such as cut limbs, but nearly a quarter of the men committed aggravated self-mutilations—that is, breaking bones, taking poison, trying to hang themselves, and burning themselves. Almost another quarter committed gross injuries, which included cutting their heels or Achilles' tendons, removing their fingers and toes, and severely starving themselves.¹²⁸ Taken as a whole, these acts appear more as evidence of social manipulation than madness. The more often a person mutilates himself, the less pathological the circumstances of the act seem to become,¹²⁹ which may mean that the multiple mutilators are learning how to enjoy the secondary gains of their pathology without as much self-injury.

In Hans Toch's book, *Men in Crisis*, we have the unusual combination of detailed clinical data derived from phenomenologically oriented depth interviews with prisoners and a statistical analysis of the aggregated clinical data in typical social science manner.¹³⁰ By using a phenomenological approach, Toch allows the prisoners to speak for themselves. The categories in the statistical analysis are then partially derived from the men's experiences of their own crises rather than from artificial clinical categories lifted from a textbook on abnormal psychiatry.

Toch's sample included all the prisoners in the major facilities of the New York state prison system plus the New York City jails between January 1971 and August 1973 who either attempted suicide or committed acts of self-mutilation. In addition, a control group of 175 prisoners was interviewed. Due to the high turnover in city jails, Toch and his assistants were only able to interview a quarter of the sample from the New York City system, but they were able to

reach two-thirds of the prisoners in state facilities who had suicide or mutilation attempts on their records.

By allowing the subjects to speak for themselves, the analytic categories represent the crisis incidents as experienced by the prisoners in their personal lives, not prejudgments by the researchers. The final classification consists of nine categories formed by the intersection of three types of difficulty and three relevant psychological dimensions. The types of difficulty are coping (self and environment), self-perception, and impulse management (both self and others); the psychological dimensions are impotence, fear, and need for support.¹³¹

The most unexpected finding of all is that suicide-mutilation crises are incredibly common in confinement, if we can assume that the New York data can be generalized to the nation. Toch estimates that one out of every sixteen men and one of every nine women will suffer a self-destructive breakdown while incarcerated. At a prison mental hospital, the odds are even worse: one in three. Those who are younger, single, Latin or white, nonaddicted to drugs and have a record of violence are the most likely candidates for a breakdown.¹³²

Toch's book provides a mass of case history material that will enlighten any reader as to what being in prison (and feeling unable to deal with it) is like. In his final chapter, he makes a major contribution to prison treatment programs by suggesting how to handle the crises that arise in each of the nine categories of tragic events. For each category, he gives the goal(s) toward which the therapeutic intervention should be directed, the setting and process of the intervention, and the primary intervention agents recommended.¹³³

Robert Johnson was one of the researchers on Toch's team. His doctoral research, subsequently published in *Culture and Crisis in Confinement*,¹³⁴ was based on an expansion of the ethnic differences in Toch's sample. Johnson found that psychological impotence was a problem for approximately 60 percent of the crisis subjects in all ethnic groups, but Latins had a higher rate of support problems and a lower rate of fear problems than blacks or whites. By crisis type, there were fewer ethnic differences. Self-assessment was the most common crisis for all three groups. The primary difference was that blacks were significantly more likely to suffer a crisis relating to impulse management.¹³⁵

Black and Latin prisoners seem to experience the same crisis patterns regardless of demographic background and criminal careers, but whites are more diverse. In the case of the former, perhaps this result is one of the marks of oppression. The primary problem for Latins is separation from the interpersonal supports provided by family contacts. Ghetto conditions prepare blacks so well for prison life that few experience personal breakdowns. The few who do break down feel that they are too weak to survive and experience fears not unlike those they may have experienced in the ghetto, but at a heightened level. Whites suffer prison stress partially because they lack the street skills necessary to survive in the lower-class life of the "joint." Problems of guilt and self-hatred are also common among white prisoners.¹³⁶ Johnson concludes with some thera-

peutic recommendations, which are not greatly different from Toch's, but are more focused on the dimension of ethnicity.

International Perspectives on Prisoner Subcultures

In the period 1969-1976 as earlier, few studies of prisons outside the States were printed in the English language. This isolation is one of the reasons for the extreme parochialism of American penology. From Europe there are Parker's *The Frying-Pan* and Cohen and Taylor's *Psychological Survival, The Experience of Long Term Imprisonment*.¹³⁷ Mexico and Scandinavia are represented by one article each, and Canada by a group of reports from the *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Corrections* plus two reports distributed through the Centre of Criminology at the University of Toronto.

Parker's book on the advanced treatment facility at Grendon, England, should be enlightening, but since he is a writer rather than a social scientist, *Frying-Pan* is mostly a series of unconnected interviews with prisoners at Grendon. The other work from England, *Psychological Survival*, is also focused on the day-to-day lives of a small number of men—in this case a group of "dark" prisoners in a "max-max" wing of Durham Prison. The authors' approach is phenomenological rather than statistical. Participant observation and field essays replace questionnaires administered to random samples as the methodological techniques for data collection. Cohen and Taylor use a style that is more literary than scientific to communicate to the reader the vast experience of these men on the psychological as well as the physical level. Their book is filled with references to other studies of extreme deprivation, such as concentration camps and disasters. The book makes evident that at Durham the beginnings of a radicalization process enabled the prisoners to organize themselves well enough to resist administration attempts to fragment them and to mount collective protests to better their material conditions. This kind of active (rather than passive) behavior also has positive consequences for the growth (rather than the arresting of deterioration) of the prisoners.

The Mexican study is Price's famous article on the free market economy in a prison in Baja, California.¹³⁸ It shows that prisons can be structured to encourage active rather than passive behavior, particularly in the economic realm, but it provides neither a full examination of the prisoner subculture at Mesa Penitenciaris nor an analysis of the effects of this program on recidivism or any other relevant outcome variable.

Hindman was funded by the Canada Council to do a supplemental analysis of the Wheeler-Cline data from fifteen Scandinavian prisons.¹³⁹ He found that, in general, prisoners having higher rates of social contact with guards, staff, and inmate friends were more likely to feel more justly treated.

homosexual behavior, Propper separates them and finds very little overlap between the two. She did find that husband and wife role occupants in all-female pseudo-families were more likely than other prisoners to engage in homosexuality, but most pseudo-family members adopted mother-daughter roles, and were less likely to participate in homosexual acts than other prisoners. In the coeducational institutions, boys took over the male roles, so the possibilities for female role choice were decreased.⁶⁷

The significance of previous homosexual involvement in explaining institutional homosexuality gives some support to the importation theory of prisoner subcultures, but of the other fourteen importation variables tested, only one had any relationship with institutional homosexuality. The indigenous origin theory fared even worse, with none of the fourteen variables representing actual or perceived deprivations being significant in predicting institutional homosexuality.⁶⁸ In summary, Propper's methodology and analysis are among the best carried out on prisoner subcultures to date and hopefully will become generally available in book form.

Comparisons between Males and Females in Prison

How do male and female prisoners differ? Do these personality and background factors lead to differences in prisoner social organization? Many projects have studied one sex, but few have studied both sexes simultaneously with the intention of comparing them. Sutker and Moan found that females and males in four Louisiana institutions differed in various ways, the most significant of which was type of offense, in which females were more likely to be incarcerated for homicide, forgery and checks, and drug offenses.⁶⁹

Using MMPI profiles of matched groups of North Carolina corrections admissions, Panton found that male prisoners were more pessimistic, irritable, emotionally immature, and complaining, while female prisoners were more generally deviant, withdrawn, and less confident about their ability to cope in the marketplace.⁷⁰ Males were more likely to experience authority conflict and females to feel isolated and insufficiently gratified in their social relationships.

Cochrane's study of value systems compared male and female prisoners from Michigan with matched control groups of respondents from a national probability sample.⁷¹ In general, prisoners had a shorter time perspective and valued those things that had personal relevance in the near future. Female prisoners differed more from female controls than male prisoners did from their controls and were characterized by a more "masculine" value system, which thus suggests that sex role deviance may be related to female criminalization.

Toch's study of human breakdowns in New York prisons included material on female prisoners.⁷² He found that more women than men had deliberately injured themselves. Among the females, young women, Latins, and those with a

drug history were more likely than others to do so. Compared with men, women were more likely to experience crises about coping, self-linking, and self-release. About 80 percent of the women who experienced breakdowns reported a great release of pent-up emotions. Women self-injurers were more likely to recidivate in injuring themselves than male self-injurers.

Fox has contributed a descriptive chapter on women in crisis to Toch's book, in which he reports that women were more concerned about support from significant others in a crisis situation than men were.⁷³ He believes that the inability to play meaningful socially approved roles is more problematic for incarcerated women than the physical deprivations of imprisonment. In response to the deprivations of imprisonment, men are more dependent on their own resources, developed through the masculine role, but for women to deal with these problems, they require security and responsiveness in others. Because these conditions are in extremely short supply in prison, they are forced to regress to more immature behavior, which is often self-destructive.

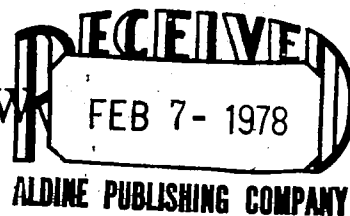
In *Convicts, Codes and Contraband*,⁷⁴ Williams and Fish summarize the characteristics of the economic system in female prisoner subcultures in one chapter, and then go on to make a detailed comparison between male and female prisoner subcultures in a second chapter. This analysis points out that economic producers in male prisons are either craftsmen called "merchants" or cliques controlled by a "right guy" who largely recreates the structure of an organized crime family based on his experiences with it on the street. Women also do what they learned before incarceration, but in their case it is simple thievery. Although women breadwinners play male roles in pseudo-family organizations, they do not adopt male modes of economic production because their socialization experiences outside the prison have not prepared them to do so.⁷⁵

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, we discussed the results of studies completed between 1913 and 1934 and asked whether these findings would still be applicable in the 1970s. The answer is yes. Carter's 1973 article, "Race, Sex, and Gangs," could, except for the style of presentation, be exchanged with any of the early articles by Otis, Ford, or Selling. The continuity in both form and content is striking and thus supports the generalization that similar deprivations stimulate the development of similar defensive social systems, but does not rule out Giallombardo's position that female prisoners import most of the characteristics of their social systems from the sex-linked roles they occupied on the streets. The condition of women in American society has not yet changed so much that it would greatly modify the role characteristics imported into female correctional institutions.

Two secondary points can also be made. First, there apparently are some

Your Bookshelf on Review



EDITED BY BENJAMIN FRANK, PH.D.

A Revealing Study of Despair and Suicide Among Prisoners

Men in Crisis: Human Breakdowns in Prison. By Hans Toch, Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1975. Pp. 327. \$14.75.

Based on over 600 interviews, *Men in Crisis* tells in the actual and oftentimes poignant words of the prisoners themselves, the history and current feelings of their despair, hatred and rejection. While the small print and what appears to be long pages give the impression of academic stuffiness, in reality, the book represents material in an easy-to-read package for the correctional practitioner. For the academician and others who have not had the prison experience, the chapters that quote heavily from prisoners will be a unique and revealing encounter.

The book spells out some of the causes of prisoner despair and suicide. One major contribution is the labeling and categorizing of themes: themes related to coping (Self-victimization, Isolation Panic, Aid Seeking) and their manifestation by describing actual cases and direct quotes from prisoners that exemplify the type. The same approach is followed in describing themes related to negative assessment and themes related to impulse management. These well thought-out descriptive labels would be good teaching tools for instruction in crisis intervention for correctional practitioners. Interspersed between verbatim inmate statements, are the thoughtful and articulately enunciated observations and deductions of the author.

Because of both the extensiveness and indepth quality of the study, more weight can be given to the conclusions. Narrowly focused, this is a balanced presentation erring neither on the side of maudlin sentimentalism of pious do-gooders nor on the side of a callous rationalism of myopic scientists. The author is quite fair in his evaluation judgments of both prisons and prisoners. Nor is Dr. Toch often fooled, although at times he is somewhat naive in interviewing and responding to psychopathic types and consequently takes their statements at face value, especially, since they superficially exemplify his categories.

Chapter 6 makes some interesting contrast between jail and prisons and the individualized crisis evoked by each which is an important practical contribution to the field. Only minimally peppered with psychological jargon, *Men in Crisis* makes some interesting arguments throughout, and the chapter on women in crisis is especially vivid. In the final chapter on crisis intervention, it is noteworthy that many correctional systems have implemented some of Dr. Toch's recommendations concerning line staff counseling. Whether his "Typology of Crisis" can be used in mapping out future institution programs or needs of prisoners is only conjecture.

The book is distinctive in its marriage of theory and *in vivo* reporting of crisis and personal breakdown. Unlike many crisis intervention texts, it deals with individuals as more unique rather than as generalized syndromes. The excellent psychological autopsies of Part 3 are fast paced, well-written biographical accounts of driven men who eventually take their own lives. Their stories reflect the pathos of many prisoners' lives and the book is worthwhile because of these four chapters alone.

In final analysis, the best way to sum up *Men in Crisis* is to quote one prisoner's statement, "The worst thing about prisons is you have to live with other prisoners."

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Gerald M. Farkas

History—The Best Teacher

American Prisons—A History of Good Intentions. By Blake McKelvey. Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith Publishing Corporation, 1977. Pp. 387. \$16.50.

Blake McKelvey's book, *American Prisons—A History of Good Intentions*, is unique because the author is not a penologist, but a historian. Accordingly, the usual biases which frequently saturate essays about prisons and imprisonments are, happily, absent. Mr. McKelvey makes no judgments, offers no apologies, nor suggests any solutions. His book is simply a thoroughly documented, at times disturbing, narrative history of the origin, development, and present state of the American prison system.

The author has developed his portrayal of American prisons so that there is never a lag in the flow of material. Moreover, as Mr. McKelvey meticulously threads his way from the origin through the development of prisons in America, the book manifests the historian's eye for detailed research and accuracy. Because the growth and development of penology was not consistent throughout the United States, the reader is provided with separate sections describing the conceptual formulation and implementation of penal practices and priorities for various regions in the country. In this manner, he is able to capture the fragmentation which historically has characterized penal concepts.

Throughout the book the reader is treated to an indepth description and appraisal of the various prison movements and reforms which have occurred over the past several hundred years. The book not only reflects the changing concepts of prisons, but the author, without bravado or intellectual smugness, provides succinct explanations of the underlying social, economic, and political climates which invariably triggered or, in some way, contributed to the changes in penal practices.

As the reader wends his way through the chronology of events which have paved the way of the American prison experience, it becomes evident that prison riots, and reforms aimed at correcting the causes of the riots, have characterized the American prison scenario since its inception. Each generation of Americans has produced reformers who have decried the failure of prisons to achieve their stated objective; the rehabilitation of those offenders committed for confinement.

Based upon the historical documentation presented by McKelvey, it is apparent that, despite our best efforts, we do not seem to be any closer to solving the dilemmas which have plagued the American prison system. Even the defenders of American penological concepts would be hard pressed to contradict the objective data included in McKelvey's book. For this reason, persons who are seriously interested in the field of penology or corrections will want Mr. McKelvey's book for their library. It is an up-to-date, comprehensive, well written, scholarly work which

breakdown" during incarceration: situational adjustment, "self-evaluation" judgments, and impulse management. In part two, he presents the empirical data and three detailed analyses: type of penal setting, cultural background, and gender differences. In part three, four psychological autopsies are presented restructuring the final stages of breakdown. In part four, some feasible and practical ways of modifying penal settings to reduce the incidents of self-injury are presented.

Men In Crisis is a massive and extensive undertaking. It represents a major contribution to the understanding of inmate experience, it adds to the clinical knowledge needed for meaningful treatment in penal systems, and provides both empirical and experiential data for effective prison management. Its unique feature is its vivid illustration, both conceptually and experientially, of the environmental and psychological stress experienced by incarcerated individuals. This format gives the reader an opportunity to explore the "raw human data" from which the author's conclusions are drawn as well as get a real "feel" of the stress of incarceration.

This book's exploration of the impact of systems upon individuals and the unique reaction of specific individuals to the system has major implications for prison management and psychological treatment. Hence, there are two reader groups who would find this book most specifically useful. The first group is those individuals involved in the planning, policy setting, and administration, of penal institutions. The second group is the beginning helping professional who is working with or may work with incarcerated populations. This book is real social psychology. It illustrates how the same behavior in the same situation but in different people has different meanings and hence needs to be handled in different manners and can be prevented in different ways. It demonstrates how bureaucratic "insight" could lead to bureaucratic "behavior change."

Hans Toch. *Men In Crisis*. Chicago: Aldine, 1975, 340 pages.

Reviewed by Gary M. Wood
and Gary R. Vandenbos

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Gary R. Vandenbos, PhD is the director of the Howell-Area Mental Health Center and Psychological Consultant to the Livingston County Jail. He has been doing psychotherapy with incarcerated criminal offenders for three years. He has co-authored, with Bertram Karon of Michigan State University, nine articles on the psychotherapy of schizophrenics and the effectiveness of such treatment.

In *Men In Crisis* Hans Toch examines the crisis of incarceration, the typical interpersonal and intrapsychic stresses generated, and identifiable patterns of coping (including the so-called maladaptive strategy of self-injury). Over 600 interviews were conducted with both self-injuring inmates and nonself-injuring inmates. Empirical data is presented on the likelihood of self-injury by age, sex, marital status, race, previous drug use, previous violent behavior, and type of penal setting. The majority of the book is presented in the format of the researchers' conceptualization of the inmates' crisis experience and the process of coping, followed by concrete illustrations of the inmates' experience.

The book is presented in four parts. In part one, Toch discusses three varieties of "human