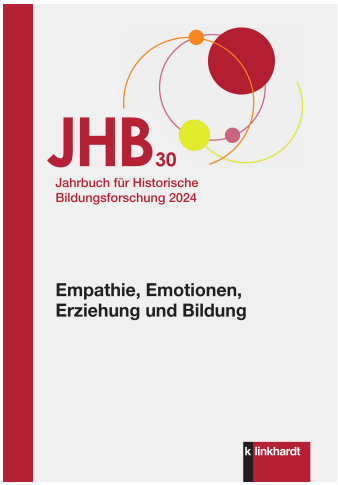
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Be Empathetic! On the Relationship of Inmates and Guards in the West German Penal System

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Be Empathetic! On the Relationship of Inmates and Guards in the West German Penal System

Zusammenfassung
Spätestens seit den 1960er Jahren bestand unter Kriminologen und Pädagogen kein Zweifel daran, dass insbesondere eine psychologisch fundierte Aus- und Fortbildung der Gefängniswärter einen entscheidenden Beitrag zur erwünschten Resozialisierung von Strafgefangenen leisten würde. Welche Maßnahmen und Methoden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland entwickelt und angewandt wurden, um aus dem klassischen ‚Schließer' ein pädagogisch gewandtes Gegenüber zu machen, ist die leitende Frage des Beitrags. In dem er sich mit der Berufsbildung einer spezifischen Gruppe von Staatsdienern befasst, verknüpft er die Geschichte des Strafens nicht nur mit der Historischen Bildungsforschung, sondern zudem mit der Geschichte der Emotionen, wobei die historische Wirkmächtigkeit eines bestimmten Gefühls – der Empathie – im Zentrum steht. Damit verweist der Beitrag auf eine für die Erziehungs- und Bildungsgeschichte sehr grundlegende Beobachtung, nämlich auf das enge Verhältnis von Emotionen und Macht.

Strafvollzugsreform der 1960er/70er Jahre, Resozialisierungsparadigma, Berufsausbildung von Strafvollzugsbeamten, psychologische Wende

Abstract
Since the 1960s at the latest, there has been no doubt among criminologists and educationalists that psychologically informed training of prison officers would make a decisive contribution to the desired resocialisation of prisoners. This article asks which measures and methods were developed and applied in the Federal Republic of Germany in order to turn the classic prison guard into a skilful pedagogical helper. By looking at the vocational training of a specific group of civil servants, it links the history of punishment not only with historical educational research, but also with the history of emotions, with the historical effectiveness of a particular feeling – empathy – taking centre stage. The article thus refers to a very fundamental observation for the history of education, namely the close relationship between emotions and power.

Prison reform 1970s, Resocialisation Paradigm, Vocational Training of Prison Officers, Psychological Turn

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1 Introduction

Prison, it seems, is a place that evokes emotions. Victims of criminal offences may feel anger, revenge or pain towards the perpetrators; a sense of satisfaction perhaps when they are caught, convicted and imprisoned. The offenders themselves, the prisoners, usually experience their stay in prison as a state of emergency. They report feelings such as fear, loneliness, despair or hopelessness, which repeatedly overwhelm them in prison.[1] After all, the prison is inextricably linked to the people who go about their normal, everyday work there, be they doctors, teachers, psychologists, workshop managers or prison officers. The emotions of these groups can only be vaguely recorded historically at best, because they have left behind hardly any sources. Only prison officers, colloquially known as prison wardens, are an exception here, because this occupational group, but also their emotions have attracted the interest of criminologists, sociologists, educationalists and theologians since the 1960s. The focus on the relationship between prisoners and guards was not new. Rather, it had been described as highly problematic since the birth of the prison.[2] The reason for this is that prisoners and prison guards meet repeatedly in everyday prison life, and the prison guard has the power to open and close cells, which means they can directly influence the freedom of movement of the detainee. If prison reformers in the 1960s left no doubt that the vocational training of 'supervisory staff' in particular would make a decisive contribution to the desired resocialisation of prisoners, this was partly due to the nature of the idea of resocialisation as it had been developed in the 1960s, namely as a form of 'social help' based on socio-pedagogical approaches. On the other hand, the idea of pedagogically flanked vocational training was based on the aforementioned assumption that the men and women of the supervisory service, because they were the staff group with the most frequent and intensive contact with the inmates, were also 'in the closest social and psychological proximity' to them.[3] Therefore, according to the reform idea, this group should receive special training in order to be able to influence the behaviour of prisoners in terms of resocialisation.[4]

Which measures and methods were developed and applied in the Federal Republic of Germany in order to turn the classic 'warden' into a pedagogically skilful counterpart is the central question of this article. By focussing on the vocational training of a specific group of civil servants, it links the history of punishment not only with historical educational research, which has so far hardly looked at closed institutions as places of education,[5] but also with the history of emotions. The

1 See for example Kreiler 1979; Werner 1972; Kessler 1974; Trauberg 1970.
2 See Bretschneider 2008; Nutz 2001; Schauz 2008.
3 Hohmeier 1973, p. 5.
4 See Possehl/Däumling 1970; Hohmeier 1973.
5 See Matthes et al. 2021.

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vocational training of supervisory staff centred on teaching them to correctly assess the emotions of their counterparts – the inmates – and to consciously control their own actions on this basis. Although the article focuses on the historicization of feelings,[6] it will not be an emotional history of the prison. Instead, it will focus on the historical effectiveness of a particular emotion – empathy. Because 'calculating mind-reading, compassion, involuntary or arbitrary co-experience and taking the perspective of another',[7] according to one definition of empathy, was at the centre of the prison guard's vocational training because it was seen as central to successful resocialisation. The article thus refers not least to something very fundamental for the history of education and training, namely the close relationship between emotions and power. The social concept of order in the period of the 'psychological turn' was essentially structured by this relationship, which – as is shown here – included the vocational training of prison officers and thus the closed society of the prison.[8]

In terms of time, the article focuses on the peak phase of the German prison reform, which began in the 1960s and subsided at the end of the 1970s. As a first step, it will trace the history of the relationship between inmates and the supervisory service and, in doing so, examine the self-perception and external perception of both groups. The main sources used here are writings by contemporary lawyers and social scientists who were committed to reforming the penal system. In addition, there are surveys that attempted to capture the self-image and external image of the supervisory service. Finally, prisoners whose voices are taken from so-called prison magazines (made by prisoners for prisoners) also have their say. The second part deals with the specific vocational training of prison guards, or more precisely, with educational programmes as they were devised by contemporary scientists and implemented by educators in training courses. One focus here is on the role of behavioural psychology, which had set itself the task of teaching the ability to deal with certain emotional states, which can probably best be described as empathy.

2 The 'significant other': Relationship Stories between Guards and Prisoners

After the Second World War, there was an international consensus, at least in the political arena, that prison officers should receive training. In 1955, the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders published the 'Selection and training of personnel for penal and correc-

6 See Frevert 2020; Frevert et al. 2011, see also Hitzer 2011.
7 Breithaupt [6]2020, p. 8.
8 Tändler 2016.

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tional institutions',[9] in which it was pointed out that prison officers should not merely be deployed as 'guards' but should be trained as 'members of an important social service'.[10] The UN did not present a concrete training plan, it merely emphasised that army and police personnel were not necessarily suitable for prison work as long as they had not mastered the 'elementary principles of psychology and criminology'.[11] The 'Working Group for Prison Reform' (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Reform des Strafvollzugs), which had been founded in the Weimar Republic as an association of prison-critical legal scholars, emphasised in the early 1950s that the efforts of social education workers in the prison system would be completely fruitless 'if the other officials (supervisors, factory officials, administrative officials), who are in particularly close contact with the prisoners on a daily basis, did not strive to achieve the same goals'.[12] On the one hand, they pointed out that 'particularly careful selection and training are essential' for prison guards, and on the other hand, they stated the reason for the required care, namely the special proximity of the men (occasionally also women) to the prisoners. The first attempts to train prison officers in personal interaction with prisoners took place in the Federal Republic of Germany in the early 1950s. The so-called 'Thematic Apperception Test' was used, which had been developed in 1935 by the American psychologists Henry A. Murray and Christiana D. Morgan as a projective personality test.[13] The aim of the test was to train the subjects' observation and interpretation skills. To this end, they were presented with so-called picture panels showing basic human problem situations. The participants' task was to describe, explain and interpret the depicted situations as concretely as possible in order to tell as dramatic a story as possible for each picture. In this way, the officers should recognise their essential instincts, feelings, attitudes, complexes and conflicts, especially their motives for acting when dealing with prisoners. The 'new prison officer', according to the objective of these training courses, would know 'about their professional duties and about a humane attitude towards people at risk',[14] which clearly formulated the demands on prison officers. The aim was to recognise the inmate as a 'vulnerable person' and to behave accordingly in a benevolent, i. e. 'humane' manner. There was no mention of empathy here, at least not directly. However, emotions between compassion and understanding were addressed, which require the ability to empathise. It is hardly a coincidence that the idea of providing prison officers with educational training has been systematically discussed by criminologists since the mid-1960s. Two decades after the end of the Second World War,

9 United Nations 1956, pp. 15–22.
10 Ibid., p. 17.
11 Krebs 1955, p. 300.
12 Schmidt 1952/53, p. 9.
13 See Murray 1943.
14 Hildebrandt 1954, pp. 89–90.

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the economic upturn had also changed the concept and objectives of German social policy. It was no longer just intended to counteract collective poverty, but to enable all citizens to participate in society.[15] This was inevitably accompanied by a change in the perception and treatment of the 'welfare recipient', as Gabriele Metzler emphasised. They 'were no longer the object of official action, but had a legal entitlement to benefits that were standardised, no longer at the discretion of the welfare authorities and tailored to their individual needs.' The aim was also to guarantee citizens in need the right to participate in social life as an expression of a 'dignified existence'.[16] This meant that the focus shifted to those people who – labelled as social 'problem groups' – lived in state institutions: children and young people, the elderly and disabled, psychiatric patients and prison inmates. Closely linked to this, the institutions themselves, specifically their structures and forms of organisation, received more attention than before. Ralf Dahrendorf, a passionate commentator on the German scene, formulated the new challenge as follows: 'What must society look like – and what must it not look like – if the institutions of the representative state are to be effective in it?'[17] For a long time, it was unclear to what extent the conventional methods and common practices in dealing with marginalised groups would have to change. However, in view of the prison's closed society, those responsible agreed that the supervisory staff would be particularly relevant for a 'transformation of the prison system in line with the basic principles of the democratic and social constitutional state' would be particularly relevant.[18] The prison officers themselves took a similar view. The prison system was in need of reform 'in every respect' because it was not able to 'fulfil the task of resocialisation', according to the Association of Prison Officers in Germany in July 1966. In some cases, 'untenable conditions' prevailed, which, from the staff's point of view, was also due to the fact that they were not adequately trained for educational tasks.[19] The federal government therefore demanded the creation of a federal academy for the training of the supervisory service, combined with a careful selection process for applicants. In this case, careful meant only accepting candidates who left no doubt 'that work in the prison system is a social service of great importance'.[20]

The conviction that had been formulated by reform-minded criminologists at the end of the 1960s that resocialisation could only be achieved through frequent interaction with *significant others* (which ultimately meant role models) and that the men in the supervisory service would therefore be the 'most promising helpers of

15 Hockerts 1996, pp. 223–241.
16 Metzler 2005, p. 100.
17 Dahrendorf 1961, p. 9.
18 Calliess 1970, p. 1.
19 Bund der Strafvollzugsbediensteten Deutschlands 1966, p. 3.
20 Ibid., p. 5.

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socialisation' if they took on this role, also prevailed among parts of the supervisory service.[21] In the words of the sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who also studied the process of resocialisation as a specific construction of reality at the end of the 1960s, the aim was to create 'a particularly affect-laden identification with the socialising personnel', whereby social proximity was intended to justify the affect.[22] Beyond all theoretical considerations, the first fundamental task for the prison education programme was to determine which personalities and attitudes shaped the men in this occupational group and, building on this, to what extent the attempt to change roles from 'guard' to 'helper' could succeed in the best possible way.

The first systematic surveys of data based on written and oral with prison guards were published in 1969. The Ministry of Justice of North Rhine-Westphalia entrusted one of these studies to the renowned Munich psychologist Adolf Martin Däumling, who hoped that his work would provide, as he put it, a 'general characterisation of supervisory staff' and 'important pointers for the direction to be taken in reform efforts'.[23] As a basis for the survey, Däumling and his team drew up a 'representative sample' consisting of 300 male supervisory staff members of all ages and ranks in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. He presented these men with 137 standardised questions covering ten question areas: 1. personal circumstances, 2. professional career, 3. ideal service, 4. relationship to prisoners, 5. relationship to colleagues and superiors, 6. relationship to family, acquaintances and the public, 7. mental resilience, 8. professional satisfaction, 9. attitude to prison goals, and 10. resocialisation and willingness to reform.[24] The 'main findings' were summarised as those results that focused on the motivation to choose a career. It became clear that the job of a supervisory employee is a 'typical ‚second job'', which does not refer to a parallel occupation, but rather a change of occupation. Newcomers were generally around thirty years old and stated that they had made a 'crisis-related career choice'. They had a desire for personal or family security. Another motivation for working in the prison system that was frequently mentioned was the proximity of the place of residence to the prison in question, which, like the security aspect mentioned, indicated that the career choice for the 'supervisory service' was not based on a motivation for the actual job. However, the study concluded that it was not enough 'to attract those in the vicinity of the prison who are currently in difficulty and long for professional security or, as they say, have always wanted to become a civil servant'.[25]

Another finding of the survey focussed on the relationship between the staff and the inmates, which the interviewees felt had not changed since the end of the Second

21 Schüler-Springorum 1969, p. 238.
22 Berger/Luckmann 1969, p. 168.
23 Däumling 1970, p. 11.
24 Ibid., pp. 11–30.
25 Ibid., pp. 32–33.

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World War. The men in the supervisory service were generally more afraid of the prisoners than vice versa. The reason for this was the blatant lack of staff. They had to confine themselves to locking up and escorting inmates within the prison; there was no 'normal relationship' beyond that. According to the interviewees, this is the main reason why the inmates' behaviour towards the supervisory staff was characterised by mistrust and aggression, which in turn had consequences for the supervisory staff's behaviour towards the inmates. Despite this perception, most of the staff interviewed were of the opinion that weapons were not the appropriate means of maintaining order in everyday prison life. Instead, they wanted to be better prepared for prisoners' problems as part of a pedagogically sound training programme. Interestingly, 91 per cent of those surveyed stated that they were happy to listen to prisoners' concerns and respond appropriately, especially when it came to family matters. Apparently, the men in the supervisory service were by no means indifferent to the prisoners' concerns, especially when they related to the family. This observation is certainly relevant to the question pursued here about the importance of empathy for life in prison society. The reference to the willingness to deal with family concerns can also be understood as an indication that the officers, with a view to a personal sphere that they knew from their own experience, were certainly able to empathise with the feelings and thoughts of the inmates and react appropriately.[26]

If we now look at the results of the inmate survey, which was also part of the study, a remarkable parallel in the mutual perception of prisoners and supervisory staff becomes clear. For example, the inmates were asked what they thought was the main motive for supervisory staff to apply for a job in the prison service. As with the supervisory staff themselves, the answer was a strong need for professional security and regular working hours, as well as the expected pension. In addition, most of the prisoners surveyed assumed that an application for the supervisory service must have been preceded by failure in previous occupations.[27] Furthermore, they believed that most of the men in the supervisory service were prejudiced against the prisoners and treated them in a correspondingly distant manner.[28] The younger members of staff came off better than the older ones in this respect, with the younger ones being more polite, sociable and committed.[29] By contrast, inmates described the relationship with the supervisory staff member whom they knew best personally because he was in charge of the relevant cell section or labour operation differently. In the 'close-up' section, which was intended to capture this relationship, the staff member was not only mentioned by name, but only six per cent of respondents stated that their relationship with this person was 'bad', while more than fifty per cent described it as 'very good' or 'good'. When asked on what

26 Ibid., pp. 22–23. Very similar results were offered four years later by the work of Hohmeier 1973.
27 See Possehl 1970, p. 89.
28 Ibid., p. 93.
29 See Hohmeier 1973, p. 79.

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basis they would rate the relationship positively, most respondents said that the decisive factor was how a supervisory staff member behaved in a conflict situation, whether they orientated themselves to the needs of the inmate or to their duty regulations. The 'contact behaviour' of a supervisory staff member was thus also assessed by the inmates with regard to their empathy for the prisoners' situation.[30] The extent to which the supervisory services' ability to empathise influenced the inmates' perception of these men can also be seen in the so-called prisoner magazines. Similar to a school newspaper, they were run by inmates for inmates from the late 1960s onwards. In *Lichtblick*, the prisoner magazine at Tegel Prison, in 1969, for example, there was talk of a 'small circle of 'uniformed men' who were 'practically swimming against the tide'. They worked 'with the prisoners and on the prisoners' outside of their working hours, organised hobby and discussion groups and thus came 'closer to the prisoners on a human level'.[31] Mr Kannemann was cited as a particular example from this circle. A prisoner had wanted to see his family at Christmas, which would have been permitted in his case if he had found an officer to accompany him. As expected, this would not be easy at Christmas. 'Who,' said the *Lichtblick*, referring to the problem of finding a suitable officer at Christmas, 'should spend Christmas Eve listening in on intimate conversations between married couples? Who would want to watch their two children not wanting to let go of their dad, for example? Who wanted to see honest tears on this particular day? Who?' The answer was that Mr Kannemann, 'hardly conspicuous in this institution', had finally agreed, 'despite the expected jibes from some colleagues'. The fact that Mr Kannemann had finally invited the prisoner and his family to his home seemed particularly noteworthy to *Lichtblick*. Although there are always officers who are okay, the editor explained, Mr Kannemann was 'quite alone in the field' with his behaviour'.[32] Due to the fact that inmates rated those supervisory staff they knew personally better than those they did not know, the psychologists responsible saw confirmation of the sociological theory that 'social proximity to the other person influences an attitude that is adequate to reality'.[33] That the inmates had a 'desire for a closer relationship' with a supervisory staff member, which, as the investigation revealed, should be characterised by understanding, generosity and trust,[34] also makes it clear how important the ability to empathise was for the vocational training of the supervisory service, also from the prisoners' point of view. At the height of the reform plans in the mid to late 1960s, it was not yet formulated that the dual function of the supervisory officer

30 Ibid., p. 77.
31 Dg 1969, p. 14. The following also reports on voluntary group work by civil servants J.W. 1969, p. 14; mgt. 1970, p. 21.
32 B./B. 1972, pp. 4–5.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p. 7–8.

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as guard and helper could possibly never be realised, despite such investigations and the – at least it can be assumed – firm intention of those responsible, because the structures of a closed prison were simply not made for this. Instead, criminologists and sociologists still believed that they could solve the staffing issue in prisons and train supervisory staff to fulfil their various roles. The aim of this vocational training was to train, shape and cultivate pedagogically valuable behaviour in order to inscribe it into the collective behaviour of an entire professional group.

3 Learning Empathy: Behavioural Psychology and the Training of Supervisory Staff

When Federal Minister of Justice Gustav Heinemann (SPD) commissioned a so-called Prison Commission in 1967 to draw up a draft prison law, one of the tasks of the members (criminologists and prison practitioners) was to address the question of the professional training of the supervisory service.[35] Werner Ruprecht, President of the Cologne Prison Service and member of the commission, suggested at a meeting in 1969, for example, that the men in the supervisory service should be involved 'far more than before in socio-educational and constructive treatment tasks in the general prison system'. According to Ruprecht, restricting their activities to the inclusion and exclusion of inmates was inappropriate in view of the 'new ideas' of the penal system, by which he meant an educationally and above all psychologically guided resocialisation system that was primarily conceived as a form of social assistance. The job title 'constable' should be reconsidered in this sense because it did not express the social aspect of the work. The uniform should also be modernised and 'detached from the military or semi-military models of the past'. Finally, with regard to the upgrading of the supervisory officer's job, he considered an increase in pay to attract applicants with the necessary qualifications in the first place.[36] Finally, he proposed a mandatory two-year training programme for all federal states, which included theoretical and practical aspects of a pedagogically oriented prison system. Based on this, the draft prison law presented by the commission in 1971 finally stated that the training of supervisory staff should be more structured and demanding in future in order to 'orientate treatment towards the needs and problems of the individual and at the same time make prison groups and the entire prison as a community the subject of methodologically sound social work'.[37]

35 It was created in the following six years the Entwurf eines Gesetzes über den Vollzug der Freiheitsstrafe und der freiheitsentziehenden Maßregeln der Besserung und Sicherung – Strafvollzugsgesetz (StVollzG) – vom 23.07.1973, Deutscher Bundestag 7/918.

36 Ruprecht 1969, pp. 160–161. See also Hohmeier 1971, pp. 1–5.

37 Bundesministerium der Justiz 1971, p. 18.

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As much as reformers agreed that training for the supervisory service had to be designed, the question of how this change should take place was controversial. In the wake of the 'psychological turn', which characterised not only the knowledge and ideas landscape of German society in the 1970s, but also the education sector in particular,[38] reformers also discussed various behavioural psychology approaches for the training of supervisory staff. One of these approaches was the so-called 'training in psychologically helpful behaviour towards prison inmates', which was presented in the *Criminological Journal* in 1974.[39] It was a training strategy that focussed on external experience and made the ability to empathise the basis for success. The first training trials took place in 1974. In the training programme presented here as an example, 19 future law enforcement officers between the ages of 24 and 41 took part.[40] The aim of the training was to change the 'emotional behavioural dimensions' of the participants and to teach them 'respectful, positive and affectionate behaviour towards prison inmates'. Furthermore, a 'directive attitude' (= authoritarian behaviour) and the 'aggressiveness' of the participants were to be reduced through various exercises. A total of four double lessons were scheduled for this process. The subject of the first double lesson was 'increasing perceptual sensitivity', while the second double lesson focused on 'perceiving and learning emotionally appropriate language behaviour towards prison inmates'. Finally, in the third and fourth double lesson, 'increasing sensitivity to one's own emotional processes' was formulated as a training objective.[41] Methodologically, the courses were designed in such a way that the participants were to learn certain behavioural patterns based on 'projective conflict situations'; simply put, the aim was to be able to give suitable answers to what-if questions. In order to capture the 'emotional dimension' of language uttered to prison inmates, the participants were asked to describe ten typical prison situations. At the same time, they were asked to rate seven possible reactions to these as appropriate or inappropriate. The standards of their respective assessments were then discussed together in the group and corrected by the leading psychologists if necessary. Finally, the participants themselves were asked to react to the respective incidents and write down verbatim what they would have said to the prisoner in the corresponding situation. One of the incidents the participants were confronted with was as follows:

> "They are in charge of the lockdown. One of the prisoners goes into another prisoner's cell and talks to him. You ask him to go to his cell. He insults you: ‚Why don't you leave me alone? You of all people have to show off when you can do nothing but harass and drive us on!' – Then you say to him: …"

38 Fundamental to this Tändler 2016. See also Nolte 2008, pp. 70–94; Michel/Sprengler 1985.

39 This was the name of a program presented in the *Criminological Journal*. See Kühne 1974, pp. 105–116.

40 See Ibid.

41 Ibid., p. 108.

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Before the training, according to the psychologists' documentation of the participants' 'learning successes', a typical answer was something like this:

> 'Whether you're work-shy or not, that can be clarified. Nobody wants to push you or bully you. It's your fault that you're here; now at least try to make something positive out of it.'

After training, on the other hand, it had failed:

> 'You're noticeably nervous today. If you have any problems, come and see me later and we can talk about who is work-shy or who wants to bully and push someone'.[42]

It is obvious that both answers differ in terms of the ability to empathise. In this respect, the courses were obviously about teaching this very ability, which – judging by the results – was successful. A total of 570 'speech utterances' were delivered by the participants. Six psychologists were entrusted with the task of analysing the utterances according to a predefined 'performance testing system'.[43] They oncluded that the training had led to a 'significant reduction' in the officers' directive attitude and reactive aggressiveness, which was reflected in the fact that the officers used less 'emotionally inappropriate language'.

The importance of language for productive interaction between supervisory staff and inmates has already been mentioned here. In addition, responsible psychologists explained that people who are treated with respect and care have a high level of self-esteem and self-acceptance as 'mentally healthy functioning'. Delinquent behaviour such as criminality is rather rare in 'mentally healthy' people and could therefore – according to the logic of the courses – also be preventively reduced in incarcerated offenders (if they are treated with respect and care behind bars). The training courses were also described as important with regard to the mental constitution of the supervisory officers. This is because constantly being in the company of people who are rejected and despised by the majority of the population is not a favourable experience for the officers' self-esteem and self-confidence. However, the realisation that the convicts were people with psychological difficulties who were in particular need of human attention also meant that the prison officers 'valued themselves, their work and their worth for others and for themselves'.[44] The idea was to create a win-win situation based on the educational approach that empathy could be learnt. The fact that the psychologists in charge considered the ability to empathise to be essential for the personal development of both inmates and supervisory officers makes one thing clear above all: the resocialisation of prisoners and that of supervisory officers (even if not referred to as such in the case of the officers and underpinned by other educational concepts) was clearly not thought of independently of each other.

42 Ibid., p. 107; p. 113.
43 See Horn 1962.
44 Ibid., p. 114.

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Training programmes aimed at recognising, controlling and using emotions in order to influence relationships between people in unequal power relationships achieved such a high level of recognition in the 1970s that even the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) did not shy away from funding research in this field. One example of this is the 'Altendorf course programme' developed as part of the 'Socialisation and Communication Research' special research area at the Social Science Research Centre at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, which was developed in 1976 as 'Psychological training for the prison system'.[45] Researchers designed the programme primarily with the intention of making civil servants aware of their own intentions and also to identify potential courses of action despite 'institutional constraints'.[46] Using concrete examples from everyday working life in prisons, they intended to teach basic principles of learning theory, including techniques for conducting conversations as well as basic knowledge of analysing emotions and motives and self-control. Particular importance was to be attached to the fact that these supervisory officers were locked up during their working hours in a similar way to prisoners and that this should not be overlooked when trying to understand and change their behaviour patterns. For example, it should be explained to the officers at the beginning of the course that it is about learning 'people management' and that the group deals with problems 'that arise when we are with others (e. g. working with others, caring for others, spending our free time with others)'.[47] Understanding the other, the experience of the other, was therefore also at the centre of the thinking here, which supposedly promised success in the desired regulation of inmates' behaviour.
As the course used here as an example was primarily designed to enable participants to better assess the expectations of their counterparts, the exercises were mainly based on role-playing; researchers sometimes asked the participating officers to play themselves and sometimes an inmate. In the role play 'holiday request', for example, an officer had to play a prisoner who had just been informed that his holiday request had been rejected due to a recently discovered alcohol smuggling offence. The prisoner, according to the course director's instructions, was disappointed and extremely angry. He therefore met the officer with the words: 'What a mess!' According to the course participants' instructions to the role, the supervising officer should first respond to the prisoner's complaint: 'It's clear that you're angry now. And I really can't blame you for that.' If the prisoner refused to calm down, the next response would have to be: 'I think if we carry on like this, we'll just get more and more upset with each other. There's certainly no point.' If the prisoner continued to argue (which was the responsibility of the officer who had taken on the role of the prisoner), the actor playing the supervising officer should remain calm and leave.[48]

45 Blickhan 1976, pp. 63–64.
46 Ibid., p. 4.
47 Ibid., p. 11.
48 Ibid., pp. 46–47.

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Following the role play, the group discussed the course of the behaviour. The aim was to recognise the same sequence of certain behaviours, i. e. a so-called 'chain of behaviour'. The course leaders explained this connection: 'You can behave completely differently in the same situation! We influence the other person and the other person influences us. This creates a chain of behaviour between people. Both determine how it ends.'[49] The aim of the role play and its reflection was therefore to make the officers aware of the consequences of their own behaviour and thus teach them how they could consciously control their dealings with prisoners and influence their behaviour. Using the example of comics (Fig. 1–3), the participants were to recognise that 'model learning' often takes place unnoticed and that 'model behaviour' can take individual forms. This was evident in the following dog owner scene as well as in the two scenes between uniformed guards and prisoners and a guard and his wife.

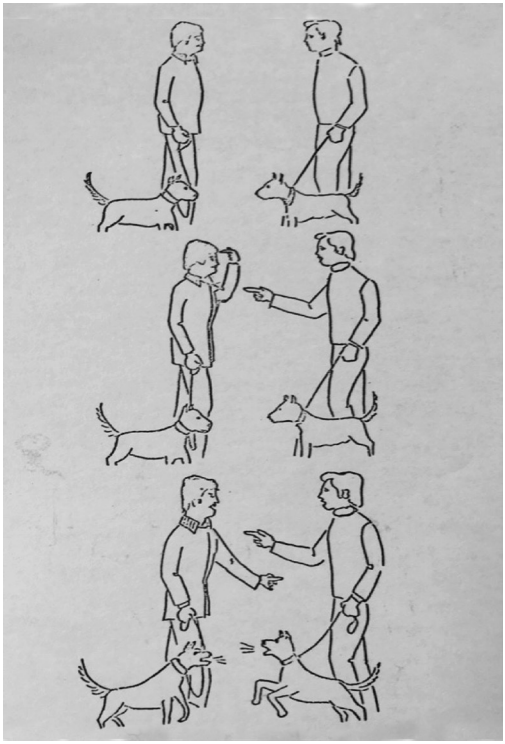


Fig. 1: These drawings were used as part of the so-called 'model-learning'. In: Blickhan 1976, p. 63 (https://pictura.bbf.dipf.de/viewer/image/234023_89350651-53ec-4421-a21b-1561384935de/1).

49 Ibid., p. 14; p. 49.

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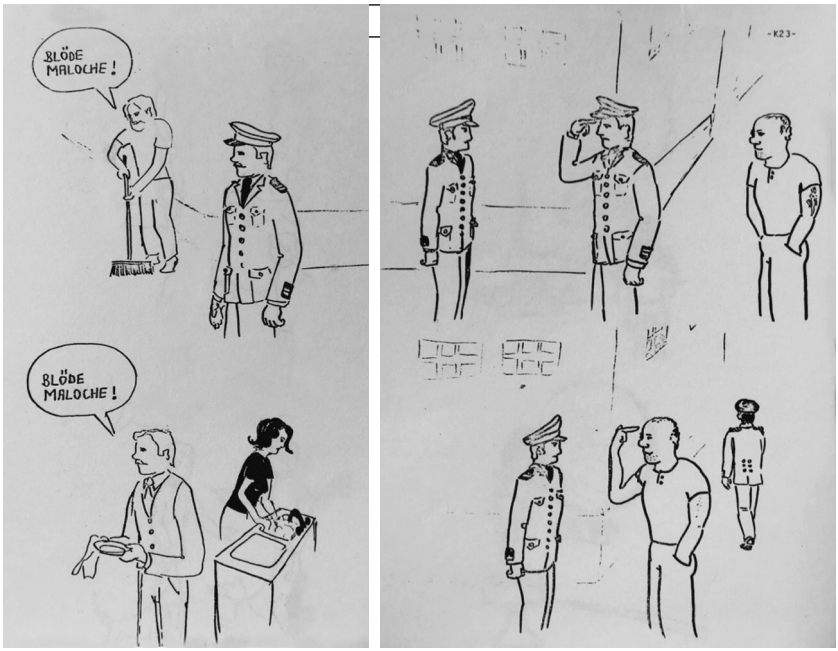


Fig. 2 and 3: These drawings were used as part of the so-called 'model-learning'. In: Blickhan 1976, p. 63–64 (https://pictura.bbf.dipf.de/viewer/image/234021_89350651-53ec-4421-a21b-1561384935de/1).

On the one hand, officers now had to understand that the role model function attributed to them could work in any direction in prison society, i. e. that they too could adopt the behaviour of the prisoners and that they had to be aware of this (see the scenes between the supervising officer and his wife and between the prisoner and the supervising officer in Figs. 2 and 3).[50] The 'Altendorf course programme', on the other hand, was about developing and learning strategies for 'social conflict resolution'.[51] Researchers made clear that the triggers of conflicts could be the prisoners and the officers in equal measure, and that an increase in psychological behavioural knowledge alone would make the officers superior in this respect. Although the 'Altendorf Programme' was based on the knowledge and methods of contemporary behavioural psychology, it did not solve the problem of resocialisation. Nevertheless, the programme's behavioural theory explanations and exercise units presented new behavioural options that expanded the scope of action and the options available to

50 See Blickhan 1976, pp. 20–21.
51 Ibid.

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supervisory staff. From the prisoners' point of view, in addition to the ability to empathise, there was another condition for humane treatment that was hardly noticed by the course developers. Inmates doubted that the supervisory staff would ever be able to take a socio-therapeutic view of prisoners. A *Lichtblick* edition from 1973 stated: 'If politicians, lawyers and senior administrators can still cope with suddenly having to rethink things due to their better intellectual resources, for the "man on the front line", the ordinary prison officer, this is almost an impossibility'.[52] The prisoner accused the officers of being completely incapable of reflective behaviour, appropriate communication and taking on socio-educational tasks due to their background and level of education. Another prisoner perceived the relationship between supervisors and inmates in a similar way: 'The rulers, i. e. the enforcers, appointed by office and dignity, are generally neither created nor capable of ruling in terms of character or intelligence. They are not capable of calmly, objectively and professionally dominating or even leading the others, the prisoners!' To make matters worse, there are also 'two classes' within the group of prisoners: 'the intelligent ones, who also have the character to rule; and the non-intelligent ones, who let themselves drift, the characterless masses'. While the latter posed no problem for the officers because they could be led, the 'intelligent class of leaders among the prisoners' were usually 'far superior to the prison officers in terms of intelligence and character and the will to rule'. Only the 'most intelligent leaders among the prison officers' could in turn deal with these inmates. They were treated 'harshly and unkindly' by everyone else.[53] Only a few supervisory staff, it was said in *Lichtblick* really deserved to be called 'carers' because only they knew how to correctly interpret the disruptive behaviour of inmates, such as smashing furniture, as 'fear of being alone in a locked cell and whatever other humanly understandable reasons there might be for the situation'.[54] It is not known to what extent the specific training courses were at least able to relativize this impression. Nor is it possible to say to what extent they led to changes in the relationship patterns between supervisors and inmates. However, if one takes a look at specialist articles on prison practice that have been published since the 1980s, one gets the impression that the problematic role of the supervisory staff has not changed noticeably. For example, Johannes Fleck, head of Rockenberg Prison, explained in 1986 that, on the one hand, prison officers saw themselves as commanding a 'distrustful-restrictive hierarchy in the exercise of their security and order function', but at the same time, as representatives of this very hierarchy, they should provide 'caring support' to the prisoners.[55] 'Everyone demands something different from prison staff,' says Harald Preusker, then head of Bruchsal Prison, 'some want permissiveness, others educational pressure to perform. Some demand kindness and affection in their dealings with prisoners,

52 gw 1973, p. 43.
53 Anonymous 1973, pp. 1–2.
54 bm 1972, p. 30.
55 Fleck/Ringelhann 1986, p. 300.

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others distance and mistrust.'[56] It seems that this problem has not fundamentally changed to this day, at least according to the assumption made by Anton Bachl, the former federal chairman of the Association of Prison Officers, in 2013. Prison officers occupy a 'sandwich position' between the prison administration and the prisoners, accompanied by too little decision-making authority.[57]

4 Conclusion

Although reform-minded criminologists, educators and psychologists considered the ability to empathise to be essential for the successful resocialisation of prisoners and had been launching corresponding training courses since the mid-1970s, this did not ultimately mean that these attempts were crowned with success. Only in the social therapy institutions, which, unlike normal prisons, were primarily residential groups and had a high level of socio-psychological support, was the recidivism rate relatively low and the success of resocialisation correspondingly high.[58] Nevertheless, this type of institution was not able to assert itself – too expensive and not popular enough, in summary.[59] The importance of empathy for the penal system since the late 1960s cannot be denied. It found its way into psychological and pedagogical strategies as a desirable and learnable emotional state, it proved to be a promising means of improving professional behaviour in the penal system and it was ultimately at the heart of the idea of resocialisation, which, after the experiences of the Nazi dictatorship, was accompanied by the need for new peaceful and humane concepts for behaviour management. That sociology, educational science as well as psychology now determined how prisoners were treated, at least in theory, and that resocialisation was understood as a 'problem-solving social technology',[60] was certainly not only a scientific achievement, but also had a political dimension – as did prison thinking in general. Just as sociology was promoted by the US military administration immediately after 1945 as a 're-education and democratisation science' and elevated to the discipline "that could best make the new social and, above all, political conditions and the expected stationary state understandable"[61] psychology and educational science were to develop into the disciplines that paved the way for a humane way of controlling behaviour. The ability to empathise was of particular importance. It is possible that it was not only convincing on a psychological and educational level, but also – if not above all – on a political level, because its opposite is reminiscent of a lack of compassion and mercilessness.

56 Preusker 1987, p. 13.
57 Bachl 2013, p. 168.
58 Rasch/Kühl 1978, pp. 44–57.
59 Ramsbrock 2020, pp. 197–204.
60 Cornel 1995, p. 33.
61 Rehberg 2007, p. 144.

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