
Narcotic Addict's Right to Live at Synanon Defended

The state Court of Appeal has heard arguments in a case which will have a major impact on the one program which has shown promise of permanently rehabilitating narcotics addicts.

At stake in the appeal of George Gilbert Faucette is the right to live in Synanon, the civic

storm-center and haven for long-time junkies.

Faucette, a parolee with a long record of narcotics arrests and petty larceny, refused to move from the Santa Monica facility of Synanon when ordered to do so by his probation officer.

The officer, Eugene L. Arnold, asserted that Synanon's building was outside his supervisory district.

Preferring Synanon and the promise of kicking the habit, Faucette went to court to seek a writ of habeas corpus which would compel the Department of Corrections to permit him to remain at the center.

Syanon has never received the approval of state officials or agencies, though the so-called Synanon technique has been widely adopted in other states.

The sometimes open antagonism of state agencies, none of which has achieved the success of the volunteer-supported Synanon, is not itself an issue in the case.

But if Faucette is successful, and Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Benjamin Landis earlier granted the writ, official hostility

and subtle obstructionism could be much reduced.

Syanon spokesmen have made it clear they believe that the Faucette case is crucial. The probation officer's order to Faucette, they have charged, is a symptom of the rigid non-cooperative attitude of state agencies.

Were addicts funneled to Synanon instead of being warned away, the rehabilitative rate in California might be improved, the organization's supporters have claimed.

Syanon leader Charles Deidrich has estimated that about one-half of the addicts who came to live in Synanon kick the habit permanently. State and federal rehabilitation programs can claim a 10 percent "cure" rate.

Faucette's case was handled at the trial level by Frederick M. Nicholas, ACLU cooperating attorney. A. L. Wirin, affiliate chief counsel, argued the appeal in the Court of Appeal. The brief, which contended the probation officer's order was an abuse of discretion and was arbitrary, was written by Assistant Counsel Fred Okrand.