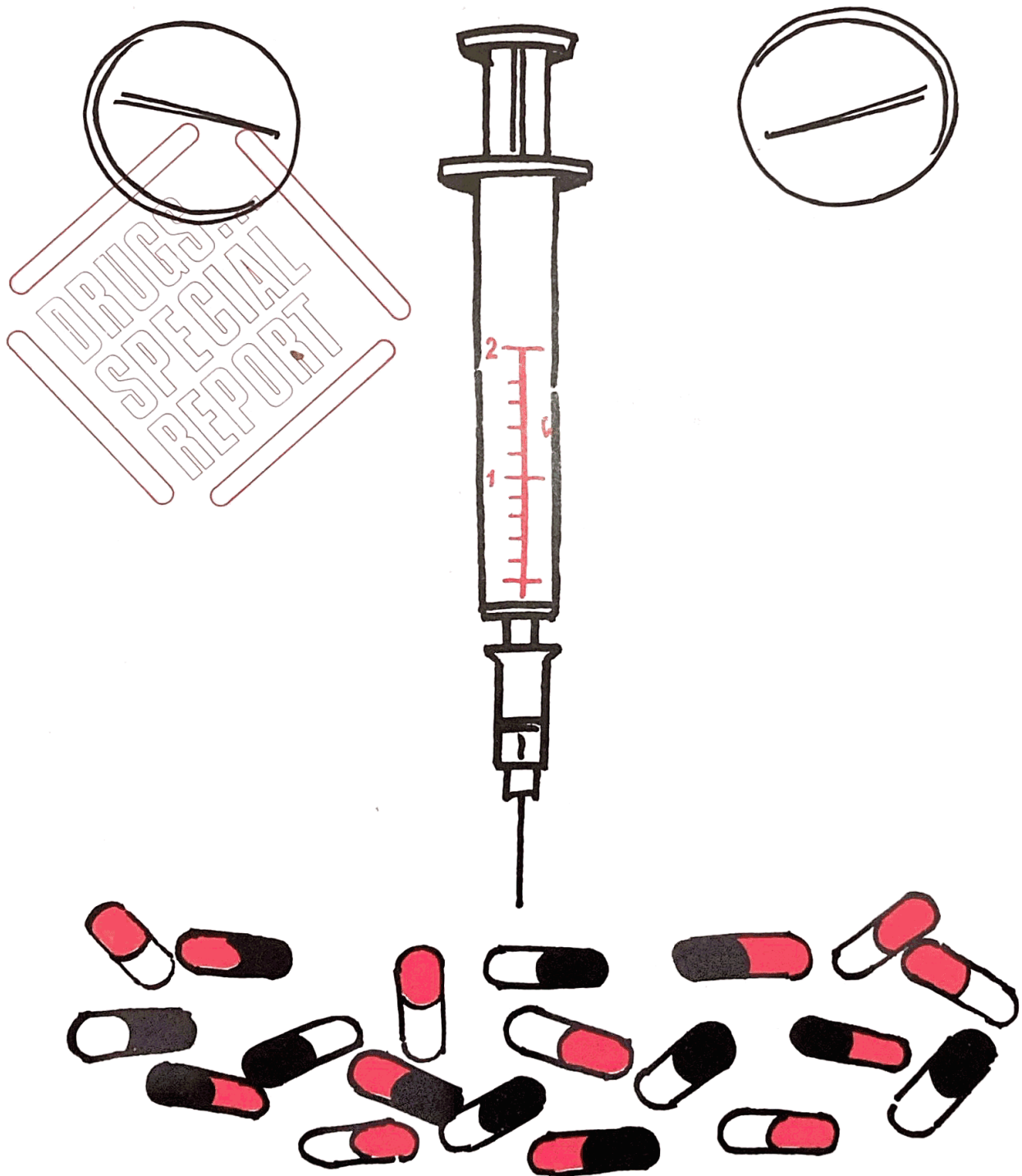


THE ABOLITIONIST

The Magazine of Radical Alternatives to Prison



£1.50

incorporating Inquest PROP Women In Prison

RAP is a pressure group working towards the abolition of imprisonment. We do not believe that imprisonment is a rational, humane or effective way of dealing with harmful behaviour or human conflict. We believe that it functions in a repressive and discriminatory manner which serves the interests of the dominant class in an unequal society - whether capitalist or 'socialist'.

Most people in prison are there for crimes which are a response to the frustrations of their economic position. Capitalism creates its own 'crime problem' and no amount of tinkering with the penal system will solve it.

We recognise that there will be no possibility of abolition without fundamental changes in the social order. We also recognise, while working towards abolition, that it may never be fully attained. There may always be some people whose behaviour poses such a threat to others that their confinement is justified; we cannot tell. There are some such people in prison now but they are, without doubt, a very small minority of the prison population.

A capitalist state cannot do without imprisonment, but it can make do with very much less of it than ours does, as other countries, notably the Netherlands, have shown. RAP supports measures to reduce the prison population by means of:

- an end to prison building;
- legislation to cut maximum sentences;
- decriminalisation of certain offences, such as soliciting and possession of cannabis;
- an end to the imprisonment of minor property offenders, and of fine and maintenance defaulters.

The introduction of 'alternatives' like community service orders and intermediate treatment has not stopped the prison population from rising, but has increased the scope for intervention by the state in people's lives. We do not deny that some good things have been done in the name of alternatives within the penal system, but we hold no brief for them. What we do support are 'radical alternatives' which are, as far as possible, non-coercive, nonstigmatising and independent of the state.

Many prison reforms amount to a sugar coating on a toxic pill. But while prisons remain, some features of our present system can and should be done away with, in particular:

- secrecy and censorship;
- compulsory work;
- the use of drugs to control prisoners
- solitary confinement (by whatever name);
- the system of security classification.

These demands are largely satisfied by the Special Unit at Barlinnie Prison, which has shown what can be achieved by a less authoritarian and restrictive approach.

Many of RAP's medium-term goals are shared by other groups who do not share our political outlook. But RAP's fundamental purpose is, through research and propaganda to educate the public about the true nature, as we see it, of imprisonment and the criminal law; to challenge the prevailing attitudes to crime and delinquency; and to counter the ideology of law-and-order which helps to legitimate an increasingly powerful state machine.

RAP

Radical Alternatives to Prison,
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"Has the **Abolitionist** been abolished?" is a question we have been asked too often lately to find it amusing. The answer, obviously, is no, but we are very short of money, printing costs have steeply increased, and that is why there have been only two issues this year. To keep going, we need your support. If you read the magazine but aren't a RAP member, join - we need the income from subscriptions to survive. Introduce your friends to the **Abolitionist**; or get your college, or your local library, to subscribe. Or just give us some money!

We think it is not unduly conceited to say that the **Abolitionist** is highly regarded among its relatively small circle of readers. Even Richard Kinsey, John Lea and Jock Young, with whom we don't always see eye to eye (see Mick Ryan and Tony Ward's article in this issue), are kind enough to describe it in their recent book as "an excellent journal". The trouble is that not enough people know about it, and with barely enough money to pay to print it, we have nothing left over to spend on marketing. We believe that the **Abolitionist** plays a unique and important role in presenting a radical perspective on penal policy, prisons and crime. With your help, we shall go on playing it.

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WAR

A SCREWED-UP

If there is one sphere where old-fashioned, red-blooded law-and-order rhetoric still reigns supreme, it is that of drug abuse. While Douglas Hurd appears to realise that talk of a 'war on crime' rings hollow after seven years of continuous defeat, he and his globetrotting side-kick David Mellor are eager to be seen as front-line soldiers in the war against drugs. And Labour's recent policy statement on crime, **Protecting our People**, which in other respects opts for a low-key, prevention-centred approach, promises new (but unspecified) sentencing powers to deal with drug dealers - the only statement on sentencing in the entire document - and emphasises the party's support for the Government's legislation on forfeiture of assets derived from drug trafficking, with its alarming reversal of the normal burden of proof in criminal cases.

A 'war' on drugs, as Tim Malyon argued in a recent **New Statesman** article (17.10.86), is in all probability unwinnable. At colossal expense, the police and customs authorities are able to intercept around 10% of imports - not enough to make a significant impact on the availability or price of drugs. The 'war' metaphor is unhelpful, to say the least, in relation to any kind of crime, but where drugs are concerned it is especially ludicrous because, as Dave Cameron points out in this issue, drug abuse is the one crime where the perpetrator and the victim are the same person. The idea that 'dealers' and 'users' are two separate classes of people (one evil, the other sick) is a myth.

The categorisation of drugs by the law and by politicians is riddled with illogicalities. Barbiturates, arguably the most dangerous of all controlled drugs, are rated only as class 'B' because, unlike LSD for example, they have never been the subject of a major 'moral panic'. Alcohol, which may cause as many as 25,000 deaths a year, a hundred times the number attributed to illegal drugs, is virtually ignored by the Government's crusaders. No doubt if all the MPs with financial interests in the drinks trade had invested in heroin dealing instead, political priorities would be different.

The arguments for removing cannabis from the list of prohibited drugs are as strong as they ever were - indeed, after recent events in Handsworth, St Paul's and Brixton, they are stronger. The argument that because most 'hard' drug users have used cannabis the two are causally connected is an elementary fallacy. But if escalation **does** occur, putting cannabis on the other side of the 'threshold' of illegality from 'hard' drugs might well make it less likely. Despite the legal categorisation of cannabis, however, there is evidence that both cannabis users and the

general public distinguish sharply between this and other drugs. The police's selective 'crackdowns' on cannabis form the basis for a racist slur linking black people (who in fact appear to be **under**-represented among heroin users) with drug use in general.

As in other areas of penal policy, advocating treatment as opposed to punishment does not offer any panaceas. People who are motivated to come off drugs may be helped to do so in a variety of ways, and different approaches may suit different people; but the overall success rates of efforts to 'cure' addiction are not encouraging. One reason for this may be that if people are to be motivated to come off drugs, they must believe in the prospect of a worthwhile, fulfilling life without them. The harsh truth is that many drug users belong to the part of the population to whom our society offers little such prospect.

If 'hard' drugs are likely to be with us for the foreseeable future, it is important to develop realistic policies to minimise their worst effects. The death from cocaine poisoning "aggravated by lack of care" of Anthony Lemard (discussed in the INQUEST section of this issue) raises serious questions about the adequacy of police procedures and training. As in the case of drunkenness, part of the problem also lies with the understandable reluctance of hospital staff to accept potentially violent patients.

Educative and preventive policies must be based on an understanding of users' experiences, rather than stereotyping them as sick, bad and dangerous to know. Such stereotypes, as Devora Wolfson of the Community Drug Project argues, undermine the effectiveness of current Government advertising. People with heroin-using friends know that they are not all the mental and physical wrecks portrayed in the commercials, and may therefore feel that they have 'seen through' the whole campaign. The adverts also reinforce the hopelessness and helplessness of drug users, encouraging them to see themselves as 'victims' who can't stop what they're doing.

Drug abuse does not lead inexorably to incurable addiction and death. Avoiding these outcomes must depend largely on self-help, and the projects described in this issue seek to encourage this, rather than placing users in a dependent, doctor/patient relationship or subjecting them to what Dave Cameron calls the "neo-right" authoritarianism of places like Phoenix House.

In the next **Abolitionist** we shall focus on responses to child abuse. Suggestions and contributions (literary as well as financial) from readers will be very welcome.

THE RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP

A THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY MODEL OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL REHABILITATION: The Richmond Fellowship

The Richmond Fellowship for Community Mental Health, as part of its services to people recovering from mental illness and emotional stress, offers three residential care houses for recovering alcoholics and drug abusers. The drug abuse house is in London, and the two alcohol houses are in Purley (South London) and Bognor. The ideas on which the work of the houses is based derives from the more general philosophies of the Fellowship. These are, first, its concern for community mental health, and, second, its treatment and care philosophy, which is that of the therapeutic community.

Why should a mental health organisation concern itself with services for drug and alcohol abusers?

The Richmond Fellowship takes a very broad view of mental health. It is also a positive view, being concerned with health rather than illness and with the community's health as well as that of individuals.

All forms of personal and emotional stress, feelings of disillusion, depression, disorientation are a problem for the health of individuals and our community. It is often possible to carry on, bearing the stress or feelings of ill-health. If this happens, people are not contributing to the life of the community as strongly as they could, and, for themselves, their life does not have the meaning, the freedom of choice, the chance of personal growth that good mental health implies. So, to be concerned about mental health implies a concern for everyone's chance of emotional strength and happiness. If the chance is lacking for some people, then they, their family and their community are the weaker for it.

The Fellowship's philosophy is then to give people the chance to get as much out of life as possible and to put as much into life as they can. People who have used too much alcohol, or who have abused drugs need that chance, and it is the Fellowship's role to find ways of offering it. Responding to drug and alcohol abuse is, then, an important aspect of promoting mental health.

The Fellowship's 'therapeutic community' approach is examined at length in relation to other styles of therapeutic community in Jansen's book.¹ The basic idea is that the main purpose for bringing people together for personal help is to use the fact that they are together and the environment in which they live and/or work together as a means of helping them. The fundamental style of work is to promote interaction among the group of residents and to involve them in managing the house and their life within it.

This has two benefits. First, people learn from practising the skills of managing their behaviour, and the practical social skills of cooking, cleaning, buying food and looking after themselves. Second, the experience of being involved in planning the living situation helps people gain personal confidence and ability to create and manage relationships with others.

There are implications of this approach which may not be immediately apparent. In order to promote real resident responsibility, staffing is minimal; domestic staff are not

provided and caring staff work alongside residents enabling them to do things themselves. A series of groups during the day discuss and plan who is going to do what and how. Individual residents take up leadership for particular pieces of work; they also take responsibility for bringing their own problems into the group and helping others with their difficulties.

Staff provide individual counselling to help residents make use of the experiences they are having.

This style of work presents particular problems with alcohol and drug abusers. Unlike some residential facilities, the Fellowship starts off from the assumption that residents will take some responsibility for themselves and, in particular, drinking and drug use which is not permitted. However, some residents are not able to accept that responsibility and a greater degree of control is exerted in the early stages.

The Fellowship's present facilities are not designed for the early stages of treatment. Residents are expected to be alcohol- and drug-free when they come. Lapses lead to residents being given notice to leave — later readmission is possible, the experience of being forced to take responsibility for such lapses in this way is often useful. The groups confront residents with their behaviour and problems, so that interaction cannot be avoided.

New projects are being developed in co-operation with other agencies for the Fellowship to provide a care and residential facility allied to other treatment, and it is keen to undertake new joint projects in this way.

Admission to a Fellowship establishment is through referral by the potential resident directly or from professionals on their behalf. An essential element in the philosophy is that the resident makes an informed choice about whether they want to come, and other residents are involved in meeting and discussing with potential residents the part they can play in the house.

Success is hard to define. A number of residents do not stay long enough to become truly committed to the programme and may revert to former behaviour patterns. But the Fellowship is prepared to try again — it looks at what people want to achieve or have the potential to gain, rather than their past problems. Residents who stay for a typical nine to eighteen months nearly always move on to a more successful and less disturbed lifestyle.

Malcolm Payne

For more information from and referrals to: Nicola Gregson,
Senior Admissions Officer, 8 Addison Road, Kensington,
London W14 8DL (tel: 01-603 6373/4/5)

Reference

1. E. Jansen, (ed), *The Therapeutic Community Outside the Hospital*, London: Croom Helm, 1980.

AGENCIES OF CHANGE



What are agencies in the field of drugs and alcohol doing to aid drug users? How are they responding to the 'moral panic' on the issue? What alternatives to prison if any, are they developing? Here Melissa Benn speaks to workers from 3 agencies.

Drugs Dependents Anonymous was set up in 1985. It is based in Nottingham, although it gets calls from all over the country. DDA describes itself as a non political, non religious organisation providing support and guidance to drug users and their families. Their membership consists of scripted users, ex-users and professionals working in, and interested in, the area of drug use. DDA takes the view that users and ex-users must be encouraged and assisted to help themselves. **Dave Cameron** is one of the founder members of DDA.

MB: *Is DDA very different from other drug agencies?*

DC: Yes, before we started up I spent three months thinking about what service the drug field actually needed. I had been involved with drugs since I was 14/15 – I'm 34 now – and it seemed to me that all the other agencies work on the carrot and stick principle. To get the carrot, you have to agree to be hit by the stick – that is, you have to be clean, to agree to 'come off'. DDA holds to the view: why force people off drugs if they don't want to? We're not pro drugs: we're just concerned with practicalities. People need to be fed everyday, they have to be kept going don't they? It's not good enough to use addicts as scapegoats, the new folk devils. DDA's approach is that this addict in front of you is a human being and should be treated as such because the addict of tomorrow unfortunately could be your son or daughter, sister or brother.

None of the existing agencies deal with the problem in the right way. I don't want to knock them. But if someone goes to a de-tox unit in the NHS, then when it's finished, what will happen? They will be thrown back into the community where all their problems began. Or else people get sent to a Rehab (rehabilitation house) some of which are Christian organisations which aren't necessarily acceptable to non-Christians or they use the questionable Minnesota approach used in the USA, you know Betty Ford and all that. Or people are sent to prison. We say: if a person has a problem with drugs, give them something to stabilise it and then... get people to live lives that are worthy and meaningful. Drugs have now become an epidemic. Why? Because it's rooted in the working class and you'll never get rid of it now that's happened. There was a time when working class youth wouldn't touch drugs because it wasn't macho, but now you go into any pub in any inner city and you can get heroin. People may say, well, working class people have got a choice, but what sort of choice do they have? It's a choice between being desperate, or being stoned and desperate.

MB: *What is DDA's experience of the police?*

DC: Well, for our first 3 months as an organisation we had the police sat outside and taking photos and putting it about that we were drug dealers and so on. But we got onto some solicitors, and it is changing now. It's even been known for them to ring us up when they've arrested someone so we can arrange solicitors etc.

MB: *What about this new law of forfeiture. Can you tell me a bit about that?*

DC: Well, the law in this area is very complex, and I can only give you a brief summary of it. As far as I understand it, it comes under the new Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986. The Act provides new powers for tracing and freezing the proceeds of drug trafficking, and for Confiscation Orders to be imposed on persons convicted of drug trafficking offences. It also creates new offences of 'assisting another to retain the proceeds of drug trafficking' and 'disclosing information likely to prejudice an investigation into drug trafficking'. This Act received the Royal Assent on 8th July 1986 and was to have come into force on a day to be appointed. At the time of this interview I'm not sure as to which parts of the Act have come into force.

The 1986 Act does not directly, as such, affect the provisions contained in Section 27 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 which enables the courts upon the conviction of a person for an offence under the 1971 Act to order that anything that relates to that offence be forfeited. However the court must not order anything to be forfeited unless some other person claims to be the owner or to have an interest in it without giving that person the opportunity to be heard by the courts. In this country anything includes money and the part of the proceeds of sale of drugs. However, it has been successfully argued that under Section 27, money that was in effect the working capital for trading in drugs, could not be forfeited.

MB: *What about drug users' experience of prison?*

DC: There are these 'Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice' published by the HMSO which set out the rules for drug users in all different situations; hospitals, prisons and so on, but in our experience very little in them is adhered to in practice. Or in spirit: they say drug users should be treated like normal human beings, but they're not. If a drug user is busted and sent to a men's prison they're put straightaway into isolation, and tested for AIDS. That's supposed to take only 10 days, but I know a guy who spent the first 2 months in isolation, and then after that he's being locked up 23 hours a day as if he's on remand, although he's serving 5 years. Junkies in prison are the last to be given work. The junkie has become the new 'wandering Jew'. Everyone turns their hand against them.

MB: *Are more people being sent to prison?*

DC: There's no doubt more people are now being sent down.

There is no sympathy at all in the courts. Addiction is the only crime where you are both the perpetrator and the victim. But the courts don't want to hear. If you're middle class you can do something about it — send your kid to private treatment or something. But if you're working class, it's different: the most that will happen, you'll be sent to a psychiatrist who'll make you feel even more of a monster than you do already.

MB: *Have you at DDA thought about alternatives to prison for drugs?*

DC: Basically, what we're saying is to keep locking people up for having a character flaw is wrong. Something else has to be found: the only way to cure addiction is through education. More and more addicts are being driven into the closet: particularly women, who are having babies or women who are pregnant because they are so frightened their children will be taken away from them. And doctors won't co-operate with them. And we see a lot of single parent addicts, women who have to go whoring, to put it plainly, to keep going, and then have to take drugs to deal mentally with how bad they feel about what they're doing.

DDA, 2a Robin Hood Chase, St Anne's, Nottingham NG3 46Z.

DAWN (Drugs, Alcohol, Women, Nationally) London is an educational and information service for women with drug and alcohol problems. It was set up in 1979 by a group of women who worked in the drug and alcohol field, mainly in alcohol, who got together because they felt women were getting a bad deal in mixed services. They felt women were stigmatised more than men — seen as sicker and more deviant — and that the media portrayed stereotyped images of women with drug and alcohol problems. DAWN produces many leaflets, does training for professionals, and makes recommendations on provisions of services for women dependent on drugs and alcohol. **Devora Wolfson** is a development worker with DAWN.

MB: *What particular problems do women have with drug dependency?*

DW: Mainly the stigmatisation of women, and the fact that most services were set up to cater for white men. And women and people of different cultures are supposed to fit in with that, and when they don't succeed with those services then this is seen as proof that women, or black people, are harder to help. And because of the stigma women are less likely to come forward for help until desperate, and also then, their bodies might be greatly damaged by alcohol because of the fact that women's bodies are damaged more easily than men's, by alcohol.

The other particular problem that women face is if they've got children, then they might not come forward, with good reasons, particularly if they have an illegal drug problem. The recent case in Berkshire, now at the House of Lords, when the baby was taken into care because of use of illegal drugs at pregnancy, accentuates this fear for women. We often get phone calls from women who are pregnant who are frightened to come forward, in case social workers close in and the child is taken into care.

MB: *What do you advise women in that position to do?*

DW: I just explain to them that it depends on what geographical area they're in as to how they will be treated. We give them the information and the women can decide what they want to do from that. Some councils are better than others on their policies on women with children who use drugs, take different factors into account. Also, most services don't have any childcare facilities. So when a woman with children wants to go for residential treatment for drug or alcohol problems, because there's no places for women with children, they have the choice of putting the child in voluntary care — and maybe a prolonged hassle getting them back afterwards — or not getting the help that they need. Some services are taking steps towards having provision for women with children, but it's a slow process.

DAWN is involved with setting up a short stay house (around 3-6 months) for women with children. It will be called 'Lilith'. The house would aim to reach women before they are in a desperate situation.

MB: *What about black women, women of colour? What are services like for them?*

DW: DAWN did a survey on services available to women using drugs, including alcohol, in London. We found only one in twenty agencies saw more than 10% of black women and women of colour. So it's obvious that black women are not using the services because the services are not appropriate.

Why? Because most workers and most services are white. A few services have one black worker. A white worker is likely not to understand a black person's experience. On top of that they may be prejudiced. Because of racism and living in a white society it is often harder for black people to admit they can't cope and there are particular dangers for them in going to a specialist drug service, because of the differential policing of the black community. Look at Boy George, he was prosecuted for 'having a drug problem in the past', which has worrying implications. Theoretically, the police could go into any therapeutic community and pull people out whenever they wanted.

MB: *And of course everybody will have read of the Boy George case won't they, so that will further discourage drug users . . . ?*

DW: Yes, and look at *Brookside*. When the ambulance came to take Nick, the heroin addict away, they said 'well the police will be round and if you don't open the door, they'll break it down!' That's terrible. You have all this publicity and it puts people off. And the way the woman drug user in *Brookside*, Barry's friend, was portrayed . . . totally pathetic, lacking in self respect, willing to give her body to get drugs.

MB: *So what is DAWN's approach to drugs? You mentioned earlier your aim of giving women accurate information . . .*

DW: Yes, our aim is to offer women accurate and non-sensationalised information about drugs and alcohol, and the services available. As our leaflets (on different kinds of drugs) do.

We have a very different analysis of drugs to groups like **Narcotics Anonymous** or **Alcoholics Anonymous**. They see addiction as a disease from which you can never recover. As soon as you start on drugs again you're 'ill' again. Whereas DAWN sees dependency as an issue related to social and political events in women's lives, and we see it as all part of a spectrum. Most women use drugs, including tea and coffee, at some time in their lives. Some women use more heavily when under stress but then go back to using recreationally, although some choose not to. Often when a woman uses drugs, she has other problems in her life so she's doing it as a way of coping, so we're not talking about a 'simple' drug problem. There are other problems to sort out.

MB: *Do you offer a direct service to women, a drop in service?*

DW: We have lots of women ringing up, but not dropping in. The only 'face to face' resources are the open meetings, for women with dependency problems. These are usually held in an alternative cinema in North West London, Cinema Action in Swiss Cottage, or at Friends House in Euston. We usually have a film.

MB: *How many women come?*

DW: About 15-30. There's a core, but women come for different topics. Much as we'd like to see dependency as a single issue, women do come because of interest in a particular subject, like a film about heroin.

MB: *Is there talk afterwards?*

DW: There's a discussion which I take responsibility for getting going. But I'm not there as a professional.

MB: *Do you think the criminal justice system is harsher on women?*

DW: Sometimes women can get treated more leniently because they're seen to be led astray by men. Take 'Operation Julie' which was the popular drug story in 1977-78. That was a good example. Christine Bott was one of the women charged. She was a qualified doctor, but the press — who focussed on her — liked to describe her as a 'girl doctor', 'fair haired' etc. In fact, Christine Bott colluded with the idea of the passive woman and she denied her responsibility in the crime in the defence

that she ran. The judge when sentencing her was not impressed by this. 'You struck me in evidence as a clear headed and very sensible woman. I think if you had wished to do so you could easily have kept out and not involved yourself . . .' So that goes on.

MB: *What do you think of the government heroin campaign?*

DW: I'm not that impressed with it, for a number of reasons. Firstly, it concentrates on a single drug, heroin, and presents it as the most dangerous drug which overlooks the fact that people can run into problems with various drugs, not just heroin. Secondly, there are no phone numbers given, so what are people supposed to do if they're worried about drug use? And the campaign encourages people to come forward and use services that can't really deal with the demand, services which were overstretched before this campaign started. And, thirdly, it's debatable how successful the campaign has been. Research that has been done shows that in the first instance it does make young people more anti-drug, but then if drugs are offered by a close friend, the anti-drug effect of the campaign is diminished. Also, they show young people in very desperate situations through drugs and if someone knows a friend who is using drugs and who isn't that desperate, they will believe that the whole campaign is lies and that people don't get into trouble with drugs. And that's not true.

DAWN: *Boundary House, 91-93 Charterhouse Street, London EC1 6HR. 01-250-3284.*

The Community Drug Project is an independent voluntary agency based in South East London. It was established in 1968. It provides advice, counselling and referral services to people with drug related problems, their families and friends. CDP also provides a consultancy and training facility for professionals and community groups. Paul Floyd is Training and Development worker at CDP.

MB: *Tell me how CDP started?*

PF: In the late sixties many people were 'using' drugs openly around Camberwell Green and getting hassled by the police and others. The whole climate around drugs was quite different then. The medical response was one of maintaining people rather than taking them off drugs. At that time, you could obtain pure heroin on a prescription (script) and on an indefinite basis. Like any system it was open to abuse, some people would convince doctors that they had bigger 'habits' than they did, and sell the surplus. Now it is rare to get maintenance prescriptions; people are put on a reduction programme using methadone.

CDP was set up on conjunction with Phoenix house, a residential therapeutic community, largely through the efforts of people at the Addiction Research Unit in Denmark Hill. It operated as a Day Centre for people 'on the street', offering a 'fixing room' where people could inject legally prescribed drugs and which was warm and dry. CDP has since developed as an independent agency although we maintain close referral links with Phoenix House. By 1978, we no longer offered 'fixing' or day centre facilities, but maintained the detached street work for a short period.

MB: *Does CDP have any particular approach to drug use?*

PF: CDP's philosophy is based on the premise that problem drug takers are not a homogenous group. A problem drug taker is someone who experiences difficulties which can be physical, emotional, legal or social, or any combination of these, through their use of drugs. We attempt to match needs to the options available i.e. self help groups, a range of rehabilitation houses, de-toxification units and so on and work with people to reduce drug related harm. CDP does not believe that one form of treatment can work for everyone, and we do not adhere to a rigid abstinence model.

MB: *What would you do about a 16 year old who came to you off the street who was using, say, amphetamines?*

PF: That's a good question, because there is, in fact, very little for 16 year olds or, indeed, anyone under 16. We would find

out if they had a trusting relationship with an adult i.e. a teacher, youth worker, friend, and offer to support/advise the adult: essentially it isn't useful to confirm the identity of being a drug user at that age. We would offer support from our youth worker. If they didn't have any other help, of course. We are constantly challenging perceptions which suggest it's the substance alone which is the problem. It's an old cliché but still true, which states "It's not coming off (drugs) that's the problem, it's staying off". Although a person may be drug free, the related difficulties remain and need to be tackled. People who work most successfully, with users, are those who have relationships with them. Which is my job, to train people; play leaders, youth workers, social workers, probation workers.

MB: *Can you say a bit about that?*

PF: Well, we get them to look at their drug use, see it not as a foreign experience. We start with everyday known substances which are in the culture, like tea, coffee, alcohol and cigarettes. Look at those patterns of behavior and their perceptions and prejudices regarding other drugs. So they can then place the behaviour of those they are working with on part of the same spectrum.

MB: *Do you actually get many 16 year olds coming to you off the street?*

PF: Not really. We mainly do outreach work in relation to 16 year olds. Sometimes their parents will have pressured them to come. The people we get off the street tend to be older, in their 20's, or 30's, who've been using for a long time, who have got into a mess with it.

MB: *Would someone coming in to CDP see one worker only, and have a continuous relationship with that worker?*

PF: Yes, if they want, but some people won't use us that way. We operate an appointments system because we can't guarantee that a worker will be available otherwise, and also to provide privacy. Some people have specific needs, for example they will only talk to a worker of a particular sex.

MB: *How soon can you see someone who comes in?*

PF: It depends. We cover the whole of South London and sometimes we are too busy to respond immediately. Usually, we can see someone within a week.

MB: *How do you avoid the patronage, the set relationship you get within statutory agencies: what you might call the worker-client relationship?*

PF: We see people only if they want to come, on a voluntary basis. We are perceived differently from, say a Probation Officer. People can vote with their feet if they don't want to come to us. We won't see people as a condition of court.

MB: *Why not?*

PF: We would never offer ourselves that way. That would destroy our credibility if we were closely associated with the judicial system, because we offer somewhere where people can talk about their using without it being taken down, used against them.

MB: *What about the role of the criminal justice system in relation to drugs? Has the moral panic over heroin and so on, affected sentencing in your experience?*

PF: Sentencing practices for the same offence aren't consistent. They vary from court to court. Presently, there are heavier sentences for simple possession and people are sometimes being charged not only with possession but also with intent to supply. However, in some areas, the police are adopting a policy of cautioning in some cases which could be seen as contradictory to the attitudes of the courts. The law on drugs is highly irrational. Drugs fall into three main categories under the Misuse of Drugs Act: A, B and C. Categorisation has little to do with substantiated research, and more to do with 'panics' of the time. Drugs are moved from category to category in a somewhat arbitrary way.

CDP: 30 Manor Place, London SE17. 01-703-0559

POEM

Temptation

*The devil's side kick came to me
'Do you want a hit?' said he.
I answered: 'Yes! Why not my friend,
Everyone tries it in the end.'
I took it once, it was so nice –
I never knew it led to vice.
I climbed the mountains, I climbed so high,
Wondering when I would reach the sky.
But the devil's side-kick appeared no more.
So I had to go to his front door,
I banged his door until he came,
His face lit up, he had no shame.
'Yes! Young man what can I do?'
I said I'd like a hit or two.
The crafty bugger wasn't slow,
Did I have cash he wanted to know.
'But friend,' I said, 'you gave it free
Only the other day to me.'
'The other day is dead and gone,
Go get some money my little pawn.'
I was just about to beg for more,
When the dirty dealer shut the door.
So home I went, my head so tight,
With a long and lonely battle to fight.
I shook and shivered all night long
And woke when the birds broke out in song.
I knew then that the battle was over,
Oh I wish I had a four leaf clover.
So out I went to find some money –
It was like asking a bee to jar her honey.
I asked my Mother, I asked my Dad,
But they replied that things were bad.
Mum has eyes in the back of her head,
But Dad didn't, he was in his bed.
I waited 'til he went to sleep,
Then I went and done the creep.
I stole his money and didn't feel bad.
I shows the power that big 'H' had.
So off I went to the dealer's door,
Hoping I had enough to score.
The dealer asked me how much I had,
When I replied he seemed quite glad.
Two tennner bags appeared like magic,
But in the end it turned out tragic.
The sound of a whistle reached my ear,
And out of no-where the police appeared,
To the dealer the policeman said:
'Don't try to run or you are dead!'
His gun was pointed at the dealer,
Who I hope didn't think I was the squealer.
To me the policeman said 'Disappear.'
But not before he took my gear.
So another night I had to fight,
To get my system back to right.
I had some help to fight this time,
As I confessed to Mother my crime.
So now I'm back with Mum and Dad,
Things don't seem half as bad.
The drugs are still out on the street,
But temptation and me just do not meet.*

J.Gormley

*This poem is taken from a new book produced by Gateway
Exchange called Poetry from Prison: Time In, Time Out.
Some of the prisoners are in Peterhead Prison.*

WHO GUARDS THE GUARDS?

Sixteen senior male officers are being drafted into Holloway women's prison. CHRIS TCHAIKOVSKY from WOMEN IN PRISON gives the background to this disastrous decision.

The reason given by the Home Office for the drafting in of male officers ignores the issue surrounding the introduction of men into the women's prison system. It merely tells us that Holloway is extremely short staffed and women officers are refusing to work overtime and to take promotion.

It is true that Holloway is understaffed and most Holloway officers do not work overtime. Holloway is an appalling place to live in, so obviously a terrible place in which to work. The modern low cost building is dark, depressing and claustrophobic: its sprawling, low ceilinged corridors seem endless, and officers complain that they have 'to walk miles' moving around the prison. They choose not to work any longer than they have to. It is also true that Holloway officers will not take promotion. The reasons for this are complex and varied. Over the last decade the 'pastoral' side of a prison officer's work has been eroded; there is not a lot of job satisfaction in simply locking and unlocking prisoners.

Also, the older type of prison officer who was dedicated to her work and who lived and breathed prison life has disappeared, to be replaced by a new group of officers, younger, better paid and who have a life beyond the prison wall. She is only too glad to finish her shift on time and head for the officers' mess. Bringing men into an environment which holds an all-female, captive population causes us great concern, although the task was made easier for the Home Office when Baroness Seer, in a report on women in custody, published earlier this year, advocated the introduction of mixed prisons. **WOMEN IN PRISON (WIP)** publicly opposed this at the time, arguing that the introduction of unqualified men drawn largely from the manual trades and without a professional code of conduct, into closed and secret prisons holding the most disturbed and disadvantaged women in the country, was a recipe for every conceivable abuse.

While serving my last sentence two women were to my certain

knowledge sexually abused by male civilian workers. One of the women was gullible, sweet-natured, trusting and vulnerable. The other was isolated and lonely. She had frequent oral sex with a male kitchen worker for which she was paid a couple of cigarettes. Giving the cigarettes away on the wing at night ensured that she had some friends among the prisoners.

I did inform the Governor of Holloway prison of these abuses at the time but even though I had a statement from one of the women I was not believed.

Off the record Governors and senior professional staff working in women's prisons express alarm at the road the Home Office is taking. They do not want male officers in women's. Publicly and typically, however, they toe the Home Office line and say nothing that might embarrass the Minister.

Men in women's prisons is seen by some to be as uncontroversial as the mixed educational system; it has also been argued that the introduction of men will 'normalise' women's prisons. They reveal only their ignorance as to what prison is really about. Normality cannot be grafted onto a regime which ruthlessly exerts control over an isolated, powerless group of women.

Now that that control is to be exercised by men we must ask what their function will be: will those men work in close proximity to the women? (when cell doors are opened women can be viewed in the lavatory); will those men be called when a woman needs to be 'restrained'? Will those men use MUFTI? (The Home Office has denied that MUFTI is used in Holloway we know that it is and that men must have been involved in the past). Will those men be around when strip-searches are taking place?

None of these questions have been answered by the Home Office nor do they need to make an answer, for the Prison Department is completely unaccountable for its actions. This latest abuse — literally the rule of men over women — must be opposed by us all.

Letters of protest at the introduction of male officers in Women's prisons to WIP.

PRISON RULES:

A WORKING GUIDE

by Joyce Plotnikoff

In prison, information is power. Drawing upon a wide variety of sources, this book is a uniquely detailed guide to the Prison Rules, Standing Orders and Circular Instructions.

It also provides an up-to-the-minute guide to case law on prisoners' rights and entitlements.

This invaluable reference work is available, price £6.95, from **Prison Reform Trust, 59 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU.** (Tel. 01-278 9815/6/7).

Details of other Prison Reform Trust publications are also available on request.



ONE WOMAN'S PRISON DIARY

Preface: I am 74, wife of a retired clergyman, and was sentenced to 14 days imprisonment for refusing to pay a fine imposed for taking part in a symbolic 'Snowball' fence-cutting action at Capehurst Nuclear Processing Plant in April. The following is a personal diary of my time in Risley and Styal prisons, written the day after my release, with further comments added later. I was in Holloway last year for entering Greenham base (under bye-laws recently declared illegal by the Mildenhall Bench).

July 25: Bakewell Court 'Hearing' present only myself, husband, a report and waiting policemen. At my own request was straightaway 'taken into custody' and whisked off to Police Station, then Buxton and Risley over Cat and Fiddle. As usual the police weren't sure of the way and seemed to need continual direction. A nice pair — the man had badger watching as part of his duty. Arrived Risley with four minutes to spare — 'Reception' closes for an hour at midday so we were not very popular! Was part-processed and taken up to 'Hospital' wing in dressing-gown, carrying my dinner (curry and rice); got rather cold, so did the dinner.

Went down at 2 for rest of processing — a tedious affair involving strip search. At least I was not asked to remove my dentures, under which I could easily have concealed heroin, which is what they are most afraid of. About 15 admitted so didn't get back to cell till about 6pm. Given food at 4. Some had been to Court, so had already gone through the search process that morning. Is it really necessary when they are under scrutiny all the time? For some it was their first experience of prison and they were naturally upset and frightened.

A four bed cell with toilet and basin similar to the one at Holloway. An attractive (?) cell door — white wrought iron reminiscent of Greek key pattern. A second solid door with a small grille was never shut. Cell mates were Sarah, a 16 stone woman aged about 36, looking like a weight lifter, slightly 'simple', on remand charged with arson (this time £10,000 worth of woodland at Clumber Park). A friendly, jolly character. Said she had times of deep depression when 'anything could happen'. In another prison she had picked up her bed and hurled it through the door. I taught her ribbon rummy and she taught me Black Jack. Felt curiously safe with her, but wouldn't like to get across her.

Mary aged 41, an epileptic, barbiturate addict, heavy smoker, in a highly nervous state, admitted with me. Convicted of shop-lifting. Common-law husband a Pole — also on barbiturates and had been in prison, now arthritic. Had been a pro dancer since age of 10. Worked in Blackpool circus, pantos, clubs, etc. Father a bully. Mother died five years ago and epilepsy started.

Elizabeth aged 23, pregnant, a heroin addict for six years. Burglary. Feeling ill with withdrawal symptoms. Did they really think I would be better here 'because of my age' than in the block where I would have been in a single cell? Was glad of some nursing experience as I could see Mary was heading for a fit which she duly had the next day. She was missing her Nembutal and cigarettes and got very upset being accused of stealing another inmate's tobacco. I shouted to Jackie who caught her as she fell and we got her on to the bed. The warden and three nurses came running. I wonder how much training, if

any, the 'nurses' have had? The sister must surely be qualified? They all seemed to lack that 'caring' quality. After the fit at 5pm the cell door was locked until next morning. Jean was not even looked at. I asked the warder for a bowl for her to be sick in. 'What d'you think I am? This is not a bloody hospital.' She couldn't stand for some time, and I was glad of Sarah's strength to get her to the toilet. There were not many dull moments and I got very little reading done (R. Bertell's *No Immediate Danger*). Visits through the grille – from various people e.g. Probation Officer, RC Priest, Methodist Minister, Asst. Chaplain (woman), a Nun.

Expeditions for weighing (already weighed in Reception), to Asst. Governor, for photographing (but no finger prints) to Doctor: 'You look very fit.' Unlike Holloway where I caused trouble by refusing a medical examination, it was not even suggested.

Food cooked by the men. Always hot, large helpings (Sarah ate much of mine). Suited me as I don't mind soggy cabbage. Fresh fruit about twice a week, they said. Breakfast 8am after stripping beds, folding blankets, etc. Dinner 1pm. Tea 4pm. Cup of tea and biscuit 8pm, then locked in till next morning. All food eaten in cell. Plastic cutlery collected speedily by warders – dangerous weapons?

Cleaning after breakfast. All floors scrubbed, swept etc. They wouldn't let me scrub so cleaned the basins, sinks, toilets – a chance to meet others then locked in. Beds re-made after dinner and we were allowed on them (not on the counterpane).

TV sometimes allowed to watch about 5 to 9pm – Crossroads, East Enders etc. Otherwise locked in cell.

Radio: I found this really trying. Compulsory listening from morn till 10pm. Usually a commercial radio with lots of adverts on loud and the place echoed. The majority liked it; if it was off there were constant shouts of 'Miss! Miss! can we have some music?'

Outside Exercise: The Home Office Rulebook says this should be half an hour daily, weather permitting. I never had any in one week. Shortage of staff, I suppose. At Risley we saw one batch of women having exercise just walking round and round in twos. Violent and dangerous women were exercised behind a high fence. Regular alsatian dog patrol.

Punishment Cells were on the ground floor. It was disturbing to hear sometimes the shrieks and cries of women inside. The warders describe them as 'Tantrums'!

Warders: Very rough, tough types for the most part, likewise some of the 'nurses'. One sister couldn't string three words together without two 'bloodies'. With some a little authority and power goes to their heads and most prisoners keep quiet because afraid of losing remission. There is much petty vindictiveness e.g. 'Roberts wanted.' (Mary) 'Mrs Roberts is in the toilet.' (Warder, shouting) 'She's not Mrs in here – she's just Roberts.' Withholding of tobacco, a light, etc.

The only time I spoke my mind was in Reception when Mary was being bawled at for leaving her socks on. I said 'Don't shout at that woman. She's an epileptic and liable to throw a fit at any time.' It was quite effective.

The Women: Surely at least half should not be there at all. Non-violent remand prisoners could be on bail for example. We need to find alternative forms of punishment for petty thieves and shoplifters. Many are mentally disturbed and need psychiatric help, e.g. Sarah. The courts haven't much choice when our mental hospitals are being closed down.

Drugs are an alarming problem: so many are in for drug possession or for crimes connected with drugs – most of them young (theft, fraud, forgery).

When you are locked up with the same people, minor irritations assume major proportions. Rumour and gossip spreads and some unfortunate woman can become a scapegoat even to the extent of being physically assaulted. We are warned against confiding in other prisoners but most women need to talk to somebody and they are not going to talk about the weather. Being old I became a sort of mother confessor – not easy. I increasingly felt what a soft, sheltered life I had had. Self-mutilation is not infrequent: although I had no direct experience, several alarms went off.

Chaplaincy: Still feel this should be independent of the 'system' i.e. not paid for by the Home Office though they need some say in who is appointed. A Eucharist on Sunday am. Told I would *not* be popular with the warders if I went and did not partake. Not allowed to go to RC Mass as I was down as CofE – fair enough!

Medical Service and Hospital should be independent under NHS. Was offered cervical smear, blood tests etc not accepted. Prison medical service has Crown Immunity and compensation can't be claimed for anything that goes wrong. Prisons come under the Official Secrets Act so it is difficult to get evidence from staff who want reform.

Buildings: Dingy and antiquated compared with Holloway. Plenty of labour if money available for paint surely?

Personal: Conversation with a 'nurse'. 'I don't agree with your views but I suppose all this action stops you getting senile!'

Husband's reception visit on first day. Across table close to where two warders sitting through room was large; about 10 mins. Allowed flowers (after examination) and 'a crossie' but not newspaper. Frisked afterwards. Male warder on gate volunteered: 'I *do* admire your wife: if my union were political they'd never have let her in.' Shared cell with woman on murder charge.

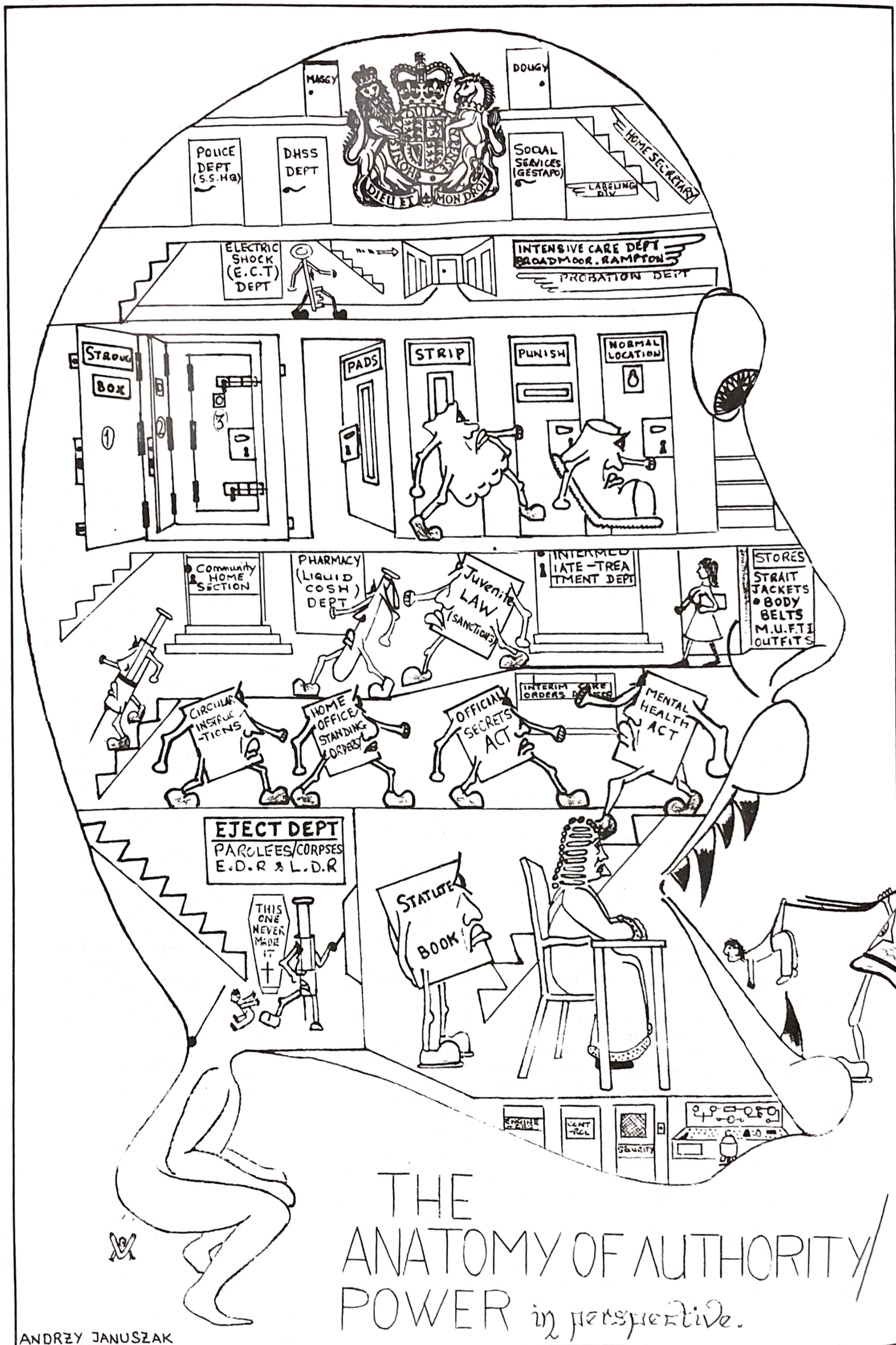
STYAL on Tuesday in mini-bus with 7-8 others and two warders. Great fuss over my four books. 'How do you think you're going to read all those?' 'I'm a fast reader.' Second warder, helpfully, 'She'll have plenty of time on her hands.' Crossword book forbidden 'too tatty'. Others cut from *Guardian* also forbidden. Allowed biro but no paper! Again – because of my age (an active 74) put in Hospital wing. I think they needed someone fit there with a good pair of legs! Styal built as orphanage originally with many different houses of about 20 each. Quite pleasant visually. Lots of grass (to be kept off), trees, shrubs, a vegetable garden, probably fruit trees but didn't see them. Many 'lifers' and longtermers here as well as young ones continually coming back in. It is the only stable and secure 'home' some have.

Atmosphere more relaxed with free movement about the Hospital top floor until locked in ward 9pm. Given key to locker. 'Remember you are with convicted criminals who would have the coat off your back!' Got into trouble for giving one a pair of socks and not telling who it was. Small day room with TV, a few books and games, where we had our meals which had to be carried (by me and another) from the house next door where they were cooked. Good cooks = good food: bad cooks = bad food. They were in plastic containers (individual) and never hot. About ½ Risley quantity. The diabetic didn't really get enough and kept feeling a 'hypo'. Breakfast milk freely watered.

Hospital housed about four, but only five of us. Jean my epileptic friend had to sleep in a cell with only a floor mattress and potty (cardboard) very off-putting and unnecessary. She was moved next day. Joanna a drug addict (barbiturates), fraud and forgery of cheque cards. Cathy heroin addict doing two years and now with hepatitis; in bed mostly. Ill for seven weeks but not allowed visit from sister in another house. I wonder why? And how long has she to live? How can this drug business be stopped? Samantha from London. Parents Jamaican. Possession of cannabis: two year sentence. Very upset to be moved from Holloway where her friends are and she can be visited. In such a case, would relatives get help towards travel? A long way for 30 minute visit. Got Psoriasis on feet.

Clergy, Probation Officer drifting in and out. Mistook Governor for a Methodist Minister! He is a very nice man – goes alone round the place – is approachable and treats the women as women not as 'non-persons'. Before his time Styal virtually run by the warders – they did what they liked. He is anxious to bring about reforms and strong enough to control staff, so a prisoner said who'd been under three Governors.

Still no exercise but there were some games for the younger ones somewhere, workrooms and classes, but saw nothing of these. *Chaplain's Hour* on Sundays much appreciated. 'We are treated like normal people.'



INQUEST

UNITED CAMPAIGNS FOR JUSTICE

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SICK TO DEATH



ANTHONY LEMARD AND JOHN MIKKELSON

INQUEST is funded by the London Boroughs Grants Scheme, and exists to help those struggling to obtain justice through the coroners' courts, especially where someone has died in custody or in circumstances involving the police.

Membership rates: individuals, waged £6, unwaged £2; organisations £10; institutions (e.g. trade unions, statutory bodies) £20. For further details please contact the INQUEST office.

Tel: 01-802 7430

ANTHONY LEMARD

The violence which marred the end of the inquest on Caiphus Anthony Lemard - violence which we believe to have been provoked by an uncharacteristically insensitive action on the part of Westminster Coroner Dr Paul Knapman - should not obscure the fact that the verdict of "death by non-dependent abuse of drugs aggravated by lack of care" was vindication of the position taken by the family's solicitor, Gareth Peirce.

Nearly every fact in the case was a matter of contention between the police and one or more of the other witnesses. In the immediate aftermath of the fatal incident a meeting was convened in the canteen of Kensington Police Station. There the officers concerned pooled their recollections and composed what was essentially a joint account of events leading to Mr Lemard's death. Usually it is maintained that at such gatherings each individual author relies on his or own unaided memory. This time the process of joint composition was described as "standard practice" by a participant. So the police evidence had the advantage of being monolithic, while the other witnesses, not surprisingly, differed from one another as well as from the police. Mr Lemard had either one or two kitchen knives, which he either dropped (putting his hands together in a prayer-like position and saying "Here I am, master"), or had taken from him, after lunging at the police, by officers who deserved - and would probably get - commendations for bravery. And so on and so forth.

Yet certain things were clear enough. As Mr Lemard's mother told the **Voice**: "My son was crying out for help and said thank God when he knew the police were coming. But they did not help him, did they?"

Why didn't they? Primarily, say the police, because "the strongest man they ever met" put up such a struggle. Usually it is the family and friends of a dead person who emphasise the violence of the struggle while the police try to minimise it. Uniquely, in our experience, it was the police who in this case emphasised the degree of force they had to use. Strangely, the three pathologists could find little of the kind of bruising a "violent struggle" would be expected to

leave - but they, of course, weren't invited to the canteen meeting.

Even the fiercest fight must come eventually to a conclusion. The police, by their own account, must have thought this one had when a disarmed and arrested (but not cautioned) Mr Lemard was carried face downward into a lift and driven away, lying on his stomach with his hands cuffed behind his back, on the floor of a police van, restrained by (**they** say) only two police officers.

The real condemnation of the police is that they never for an instant treated Anthony Lemard as the sick man which the other people present could plainly see he was. The first person they encountered says he told the officers: "That gentleman over there needs help." When Mr Lemard was told the police were coming he was pleased because he needed help. He managed to make this quite clear to two members of the public, although the police claimed that he made only incoherent noises (one thought he was "speaking African"), except for the single word "cocaine".

People who have overdosed on cocaine are ill. Mr Lemard was very ill indeed. The police thought he was "crazy", "berserk", "bolo". Either mental illness is illness, or it is not. If, as society affects to believe, it is, then the crazy, the berserk and the bolo are ill and need help.

JOHN MIKKELSON

In the account of the death of the Black Hell's Angel, John Mikkelson, in our last **Bulletin**, we wrote:

"As a result of the jury's verdict seven officers - a Chief Inspector, two Inspectors, two Sergeants and two Constables - were suspended the same night. No charges have yet been brought. If the precedents of Blair Peach, Winston Rose and Cynthia Jarrett are anything to go by, they never will be. Prove us wrong, Sir Tony Hetherington - but quickly."

As many readers will know, he didn't. He proved us right, after a very long delay. This is one matter about which we would much rather have been wrong. As we told the **Voice** newspaper:

"The DPP's decision is a move calculated to disperse any remaining shreds of confidence that the Black community has in British justice"

So far, however, the **Justice for John Mikkelson Campaign** has not lost faith. On the contrary it is appealing for £30,000 to launch a private prosecution of the officers concerned. We support that Appeal as well as the Campaign's other demands: for the Public Inquiry which local MPs and councillors also want, and for the erection of commemorative plaques both in Bedfont Close, where the initial fight took place, and outside Hounslow Police Station where the victims were afterwards taken.

If you would like to help, please contact the INQUEST office or the **Justice for John Mikkelson Campaign, c/o Ms Jean Southward, 25 Southern Avenue, London SE25 (01-751 6551).**

By the time you read this, the Appeal will have been launched at what promises to be a huge public meeting in Hounslow.

It is splendid that there are both white and Black people with sufficient public spirit to do Sir Tony Hetherington's work for him, but it is shameful that they should have to.

Sir Tony never prosecutes, he says, unless there is a 51% chance of conviction. Had he sat with us in Dr Burton's court (after being searched at the door, of course), he must have been convinced that the chances were a great deal higher than that.

"Ah, but," he will say, "the standard of proof in a coroner's court is different." Indeed it is. But consider how the evidence in this case was tested.

First of all, Sir Tony and his satraps, as well as the P.C.A. and the investigating force, must have chewed it over and decided not to charge anyone with causing Mr Mikkelson's death. If they hadn't, there wouldn't have been a full inquest.

The inquest itself was a feast of high fees for several skilful barristers whose sole function was to prevent criticism of the police and try to discredit any witness who dared express any. These lawyers, unlike Mr Pownall for the Angels, had all the inform-

ation they needed to prepare and conduct their cases.

Inquests are said not to be adversarial but this one was, Coroner Burton himself being one of the adversaries Mr Pownall had to confront in his struggle to get at the truth.

Yet despite this horrendous imbalance the jury's verdict was unanimous: John Mikkelson was unlawfully killed.

To reach that verdict by the route which they did, the jury had to be satisfied that the negligence of the officers who had charge of Mr Mikkelson was so gross as to amount to "a crime against the State". But the State can be wonderfully forgiving where the transgressions of its servants are concerned.

It is evident that the authorities are interested in coroners' courts and their juries only insofar as they are prepared to be rubber stamps for predetermined establishment views. They would not otherwise treat them with such contempt.

As for the reported attempt by some of the suspended officers to overturn the verdict, this can only involve an attack on the coroner's summing-up: a speech by a man who was on their side, the terms of which were approved by the very experienced counsel for the Metropolitan Police. No fair-minded court, we believe, could lend itself to such a manoeuvre.

John Mikkelson died, basically, because he was a Hell's Angel. Among the public at large, though, the fact of his blackness will count for at least as much; and the feelings of outrage though not more deeply held may be more widely spread within the Black community.

Our rulers are adept at sending us signals. When, for example, no action is taken against the officers involved in the deaths of Blair Peach, James Davey, Winston Rose or Nicholas Ofusu, the rest of us are expected to receive a message. The message is powerfully reinforced when, as in the case of Mrs Jarrett, it is delivered on the very day that earnest souls are endeavouring to recruit large numbers of Black police officers. It is the same message in the case of John Mikkelson: **YOU CAN'T BEAT THE ESTABLISHMENT.** Can't we? Let's see.

INQUEST's latest major publication is **DEATH AND DISORDER**, by Tony Ward. To give you a taste of the pamphlet and explain what it sets out to do, we reprint here an abridged version of the Introduction, which also sums up INQUEST's view of what is now the Public Order Act 1986. The complete pamphlet is available from INQUEST for £1.25 (retail price £1.95).

Like Melissa Benn and Ken Worpole's book **Death in the City**, this pamphlet uses some of the cases with which INQUEST has been concerned as a basis for an exploration of some wider aspects of policing. The murder of Blair Peach in 1979 was one of the events which led to INQUEST being launched in 1981, to campaign on the issues of custodial and police-related deaths and coroners' inquests. The death of Cynthia Jarrett was one of the most momentous to occur during the 3½ year period when we were funded by the GLC to monitor police-related deaths in London. The death of Kevin Gately, though it occurred before INQUEST was founded, contributed to the climate of concern over police violence.

Each of these three cases has already been written about at some length. The object of writing about them again is not to add to the available stock of knowledge about the facts, but to relate them to the questions of principle about public order which are among the most important current topics of political debate. The chapter on Kevin Gately and Red Lion Square uses Lord Scarman's report on the incident to illustrate some general points about the 'right to demonstrate' and the police's 'duty to maintain order'. The chapter on Blair Peach argues that the lawless behaviour of the police at Southall in 1979 was made possible, in part, by the nature of the laws they were sent there to uphold. The chapter on Mrs Jarrett focusses on the police interpretation of the events surrounding her death, as presented first at her inquest and then in the Metropolitan Police's **Public Order Review**, and develops into a general critique of the Met's approach to the prevention and suppression of riots.

The pamphlet is written from a civil libertarian standpoint. That is, it assumes that for democracy to be worth anything, it has to be recognised that citizens have certain rights, which the Government cannot legitimately infringe; that the first duty of the police is to uphold those rights, not the interests of the Government; and that respecting people's rights is, in the long run, a better

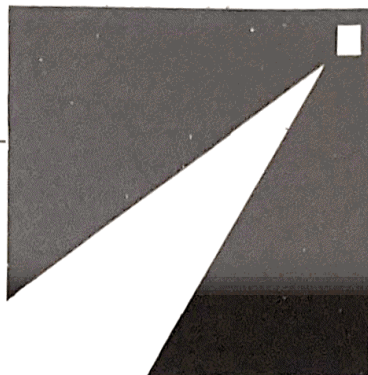
way of maintaining order than trampling on them.

It follows from this position that INQUEST is strongly opposed to the Public Order Bill which looks set to become law shortly after this is published. To understand why, one has only to consider the position of a group of people who have just heard of a death in their local police station and wish to protest against it. If they want to march on the police station, once the Bill has become law, they must give the police six days' notice in writing. If they cannot give six days' notice, and the police consider that whatever notice they do give is less than is 'reasonably practicable', the 'organisers' can be charged with an offence and, if convicted, fined up to £400. At least one person must be named to the police as the 'organiser' of the protest, and no doubt marked in the police's eyes as an 'anti-police agitator'. If the would-be protestors try to avoid these difficulties by holding a picket of the police station, the most senior officer present can impose conditions on them stipulating how many of them can stand where and for how long (for example two, a hundred yard away, for five minutes). A right to protest at the discretion of the people you are protesting against is no right at all.

Some people might find this pamphlet lacking in 'constructive' suggestions. INQUEST does not accept the argument that one cannot validly criticise existing police tactics without specifying what 'acceptable' tactics would be like. We have neither the competence nor the inclination to attempt such a task, especially where methods of crowd control are concerned. What we can do is to consider the **principles** which should determine what laws and what police methods are acceptable and what are not. Within those limits, the choice of the most efficacious available method is largely a technical matter. Without this distinction between questions of efficacy and questions of acceptability, democratic debate about police methods would be all but impossible. And a principled, democratic debate about the limits of police power is as vital now as it has ever been.

PRISON ...NEWS SECTION

women in prison



C1: EMINENT PERSONS MEET

Marie Staunton, acting General Secretary of NCCL, has instituted an Eminent Persons Group to look into the situation on the notorious C1 wing in Holloway prison. The group will comprise, at time of writing, of Julia Neuberger, Anna Raeburn and, hopefully, Mary Warnock. The duty of the EPG will be to visit C1 and pronounce their verdict with a view to producing a booklet in January or February 1987.

NCCL will be canvassing the views of the Prison Reform lobby in the course of the inquiry.

WIP will be working closely with NCCL, and the EPG. Our central recommendation will be that: C1 should be closed and not replaced by a re-sited purpose-built psychiatric unit within the confines of Holloway, or any other prison; that there should be national implementation of the Barnet Psychiatric/Social Services Scheme; and creation of short stay Crisis Centres for people suffering mental distress so that their immediate situation can be assessed and their housing, family and economic problems can, where possible, be resolved.

REMAND DEMANDS

Remand prisoners could have no better person to put their case than Audrey Peckham, author of *A Woman in Custody*. Speaking to assembled Liberals in Eastbourne she made a moving and impassioned plea to reduce the remand population. Audrey also advised us that the cost of imprisoning so many people, both sentenced and on remand, costs a swingeing *14 million pounds a week*.

PADDED PUNISHMENT

WIP was recently advised that a young prisoner was placed in the new padded cell in Holloway (known as the black box) on the instructions of one Dr. Speed. Our adviser also alleged that the young prisoner had thrown a cup of water over the Doctor some minutes before being placed in the padded cell. Officers and staff were extremely upset about the woman being placed in the padded cell: WIP received three phone calls from the prison. The young woman was placed in the cell at 11am. WIP was advised at 3pm. After calls to the prison and the Home Office the young woman was taken out of the cell at 4pm.

MINISTRY FOR WOMEN PLEDGE

Jo Richardson MP, and hopefully the first Minister for Women, made a commitment to women in prison when addressing a fringe meeting on Women in the Penal System arranged by the Howard League for Penal Reform at Labour Party Conference this year. WIP will be involved in formulating MOW policy on women and girls in custody.

BABY'S DEATH: INQUEST RESULT

Despite evidence to the contrary, in WIP's view, the October inquest on the death of a baby born to Lynne Marsland in June this year (Lynne was in Holloway) brought in a verdict of death by 'natural causes'. Baby Marsland is the fifth baby of a woman in Holloway to have died in five months. (See full story on Baby Marsland, over.)

MEN IN HOLLOWAY

Sixteen senior male officers are being drafted into Holloway prison. WIP has made its opposition to this move clear, but it is an action made easier by the proposal in Baroness Seer's

report on women in custody earlier this year that there should be 'mixed nicks'. WIP argued then, and still does, that the introduction of men into a closed and secret environment holding some of the most disturbed and distressed women in the country is a recipe for every conceivable abuse, including sexual abuse.

Off the record, Governors and senior professional staff working in women's prisons express alarm at the road the Home Office is taking. They do not want male officers in women's prisons either. But publicly and typically, however, they toe the Home Office line and say nothing that may embarrass the Minister.

RISLEY CONTINUES GRISLEY

Risley Remand Centre, where Ruth Dyson died late last year after failing to receive proper medical attention, has been the site of two more disturbing incidents in the last few months. On September 17th a 20 year old woman was found hanging in her cell in the remand centre. Paula Thomas of Merseyside had been awaiting trial on charges of theft, handling goods and possession of drugs with intent to supply. The inquest was opened and adjourned.

And in October, according to press headlines 'Risley women go wild in riot'. There were disturbances in the women's wing, it was claimed, as a 'reaction against authority': these then spread to the men's wing. This follows a rooftop demonstration at Risley three weeks earlier.

Local MP Doug Hoyle has contacted the Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, demanding an immediate inquiry into conditions at the remand centre. It is well known to be overcrowded: to house nearly 1,000 inmates of whom 125 are women.

STOP PRESS: CI MEETING

Following the chillingly accurate BBC 1 'Forty Minutes' programme on C1, WIP held a public meeting to draw attention to what was going on in the prison to the local community. Over 50 people attended. The meeting was held next to Holloway in the John Barnes library; speakers included Candy Atherton (Chair of Islington Women's Committee); Hilary Lowe (Camden Women's Committee); Chris Tchaikovsky and Pru Stevenson of WIP. Marie Staunton of NCCL chaired the meeting. There was also a taped message from Dot Scheina, aunt of Mark Sancto who died so tragically and unnecessarily on C1 Wing last year. After the meeting (held on November 6th), there was a candlelit vigil outside the prison.

BULLWOOD HALL NO HOLIDAY CAMP

Section of letter to WIP from Bullwood

"I now have only three weeks left of my holiday. I didn't enjoy it, not enough sun and the chalets are a bit overcrowded; as with Butlins, we have the famous Bluecoats but I think I prefer the yellow Coats in Maplins 'HI DE HI!'. I mean the jokes the blue coats come out with are so corny and they cannot take being beaten when we play hide and seek you hide in a little cupboard cell) and they lock you in. Now would you call that fair play? Certainly not. The food is diabolical but you eat it cos' you're bored. And as for the nightlife! A dance floor 6 by 9 foot and a speaker that plays the most monstrous music, a most used radio station called 'Country Bumpkins Get Together' otherwise known as ESSEX RADIO..."

THE DEATH OF BABY MARSLAND



Lynne Marsland was due for release at the end of June this year after serving a twelve month sentence for credit card fraud totalling four hundred pounds. At this time, Lynne would either have been in the last stages of pregnancy or have had a newly born baby. She had nowhere to go and had been told to 'knock on the door of Hounslow Housing Department' who should, she was told, find her a place to stay. But Lynne had a further small charge (£200 credit card) against her at Knightsbridge Magistrates Court. For this she received another prison sentence which left her at eight months pregnant, with seven months to serve.

Lynne's imminent housing problem had passed, but we remained in touch with her – only to learn that she had lost her baby on June 29th at the Whittington Hospital. We visited Lynne immediately and learned that she believed labour had begun in the early hours of Sunday morning (approx 2.45pm) when a nurse examined her and moved her to a single cell. Lynne was watched through the hatch throughout the night and unlocked in the morning to get a cup of tea for breakfast. The midwife on duty examined her, but could not feel any contractions. She did not give Lynne a vaginal examination at this stage.

This same midwife had been on duty two days before when Lynne alleged she had shown her a mucus discharge, but she then denied seeing evidence of foetal distress and was not asked at the inquest whether or not she was aware that Lynne's other baby Lisa was born by Caesarean section without Lynne going into labour because the baby was in foetal distress.

Lynne was eventually taken to the Whittington Hospital at approximately 5.45pm, 15 hours after her belief that labour had begun. Lynne had been in continual pain throughout this period and had hot flushes and backache. She had also taken two baths to try and 'induce' labour when all she had wanted was to be taken to hospital.

At the Whittington, Lynne was placed on a sonic aid at 6.05pm. A doctor was called to her at 6.25pm because the baby's heart beat had decelerated. She was taken immediately for a Caesarean Section which began at 6.40pm. The baby was delivered at 7.03pm. The baby, Anne Louise Marsland – lived for just thirty minutes. The delivering doctor noted the anemic colour of the baby and the presence of 'meconium' (discharge) unlike any he had seen before. It was dark brown instead of the usual green colour and he said that it was 'odd and old looking'.

The coroner made the point, at the inquest, that Lynne was not treated as an emergency at the Whittington because she was processed into the hospital in the normal way, therefore all was as it should be at that time. This, of course, cleared the prison of culpability even though Lynne said she had shown the evidence of foetal distress to both a prison doctor and a prison midwife two days before her confinement.

The coroner also ignored the pathologist's report which clearly stated that cause of death was unknown and the pathologist would in such a case as this, look into clinical management of the patient. But no-one will 'look into' the clinical management of Lynne Marsland or any other pregnant woman in Holloway. No doubt women will continue to be locked up alone in breach of prison rules if the night sister so chooses. And other women will be told that they did not show a mucus discharge to the prison midwife, when they believe that they did. Nor will they be believed that labour has begun unless the midwife can feel the contractions even though they have already had one baby without labour by Caesarean Section. Nor will the prison medics heed the outside doctors who considered Lynne a 'high risk' patient who should be transferred immediately to hospital at any sign of labour because of the scar on her uterus from her previous birth.

The coroner could have made recommendations to improve the treatment of pregnant women in Holloway. Instead, he chose to describe the conditions there as very 'Iron Maidenish'. Then he went on to say that in 1984 the Coroner's Rules introduced a 'funny complication' called Death by Neglect. This was, he said, a '*most artificial theoretical construction*' and coroners don't like it because charges of civil liability could arise from it and this was not for the coroner's court to decide.

But if a coroner's court cannot truly ascertain the cause of death, if it must exclude the possibility of neglect because this might lead someone to being liable, an inquest is no more than an 'artificial theoretical construction' itself. *The unfunny complication of liability makes a mockery of an inquest's inquisitorial role, and its only function defunct.*

Chris Tchaikovsky

WIP in conjunction with NCCL are calling for an independent inquiry into the treatment of pregnant women in Holloway Prison and have approached Wendy Savage to back it. Wendy Savage has replied that she is interested in doing something.

BREAKING THE SILENCE

Breaking the Silence, the GLC-commissioned report on women in prison is published in December. The three workers on it were: Amina Mama, a social psychologist, researcher and teacher; Maria Mars, a psychologist who has worked with the Black Female Prisoners Scheme; and Pru Stevenson, who worked as a teacher on the C1 unit in Holloway until she resigned in protest in 1984.

Here, Melissa Benn talks to Maria and Pru about the contents of the report.

MB: *Is the report a summary of other published work, or did you do original research?*

MM: It is a combination of both. Given the time that we had to do the report we felt that it was essential to use already published material, more detailed studies. When you look at the section on health, for instance, evidence was obtained from published sources that have addressed the issue and in terms of interviewing, the sort of data we gathered was original. But regarding published material on black women, there was virtually none at all, and we were starting from scratch.

MB: *So you talked to many prisoners?*

PS: We interviewed 40 women prisoners. We put more than usual emphasis on prisoner evidence. We felt that women prisoners should have the opportunity to say what their experience of prison had been, what their views of the system were. This was crucial to the whole report. For some women it was the first time they had been able to talk about it and been believed.

MB: *Did you visit many prisons?*

PS: Well, Maria and Amina visited Holloway. I didn't because I'd worked there. We visited Pucklechurch and Cookham Wood and we were all set to visit Styal and we were rung up literally the day before we were due to go by the Home Office saying we didn't have authorisation to visit even though we'd seen the Governor, Jim Anderson, previously and he had given us a personal invitation. So we were blocked on that.

MB: *From looking at the report, it is clear that a central theme of it is the different treatment of black women in the criminal justice system, from sentencing in the courts through to prison. Can you say something about that?*

MM: In terms of being in prison, what we got from the women we talked to was that they could deal with racism from the inmates — that wasn't what they worried about — but racism from prison officers was a problem. Some black prisoners have complained about being verbally abused by prison staff and being discriminated against in job allocation (to the kitchen, to workshops), allocation to evening classes and also for home leave. So even though the Home Office have a policy statement

on Race Relations in the prison service, one needs to look at how this policy is monitored and implemented. There is no effective means of ensuring that racist practices do not occur.

MB: *What about remand prisoners? Is there a great difference concerning women held on remand?*

MM: The main differences are in terms of visiting conditions, and remand prisoners are allowed to receive food, clothes and other packages brought in by relatives and friends.

PS: But apart from those few sops, like daily 15 minute visits which are more frustrating than anything — remand prisoners are being held in the same conditions as the convicted, conditions which we found by and large intolerable. The vast majority don't then get a prison sentence, or are acquitted altogether.

MB: *What about young women? Do they have a different experience of imprisonment.*

MM: The women I interviewed were between the ages of 15 to 20. In theory, youth trainees are allowed more privileges than adults. However in practice, there is no evidence to show that young girls are treated differently from women except for those trainees, sixteen and under, who have compulsory education.

MB: *Can I go now onto the section about regime? One of the common notions about prison is that there are minimum standards in prison. Is that true?*

PS: No. What came across so strongly is that there are very different standards for hygiene and health and safety in prisons than there are outside in the community. What also came across was the immense complacency of the prison inspectorate, who inspect every aspect of prisons. It is clear that when people get behind prison walls, they are denied similar standards of health and safety that the rest of us would expect outside. For instance, the risk of fire in prison is very great indeed. Looking through the Inspector's Reports, going back several years, the Inspector may make a recommendation about fire regulations every time. But they are never implemented. And a lot of people die because of it.

MB: *You make a point in the report, that reception is used by the authorities as a kind of 'taster' of things to come?*

PS: Yes, the first part of the report is designed to give people who read it some idea of what prison is like. It's all in direct speech, mainly talking about reception and day to day life and night life and every single one of them said their experience of going through reception was horrific, whether it was their first time or their tenth. That they felt it was deliberate on the part of the authorities to say 'okay you're in prison now, you can forget about anything outside'. This is what it's going to be like. This is a taster. All the women found it very traumatic.

MB: Right, there are pages of recommendations in the report. Are there any that you particularly want to mention?

MM: In relation to health, it's vitally important that mentally ill people should not be sent to prison and that they should be treated in hospitals or in therapeutic units within the community. C1 wing (the psychiatric wing in Holloway) should be closed down because it is unsuitable for its task. Women prisoners should have the right to ask to be treated by women medical staff.

PS: Prisons must be more accountable, women with children should not be sent to prison unless they are a continuing and serious danger to the public. Women who are pregnant should be paroled before confinement. I think the whole thing on visits and contacts is vital too; a lot of women either lose touch with their families or find it difficult to keep up ordinary contact when they are in prison. Lesbian women don't have the same rights as far as visiting is concerned so relationships can often break up. Women from other countries can often lose touch with their families as well.

There should be a daily visit for all women: for a minimum of one hour, to take place either in the afternoon or evening.

MB: What do you hope will be achieved by this report?

MM: That more research should be continued. For example, to investigate the treatment and needs of young women offenders. More supportive work should be done, like the setting up of bail hostels or clinics because there is need for women to have somewhere to stay, apart from prison, to await medical and social reports. Plus, in the report we have separated black prisoners and white prisoners but in terms of collective action, policy making, we have to come together and unite, to be stronger in our struggle for the rights of all prisoners.

PS: Yes, I'd hope that governors, magistrates, all those involved in the judiciary will read this report and perhaps for the first time will listen to what ex-prisoners are saying about prison conditions, and that they have some idea of what prisons are doing, that prisons don't work basically. That comes over quite sharply. Also that other people will come to understand what prison is like, the reasons why women are being sent to prison, the devastating effect it has on their lives, the lives of their families, children, friends. And that we must consider alternatives to custody.

Breaking the Silence will be available from WIP. Write or phone for details.

The trouble with the concept of 'rights' when it applies to prisoners is that they do not have any.

The trouble with outsiders dealing with prison issues is that they are not aware that this is so. And the trouble I have with reviewing an information sheet from NCCL called 'Prisoners Rights' is my concern that even more outsiders will believe that prison officers are less arbitrary and capricious in their dealings with prisoners than they are.

That said, the information could perhaps be used by prisoners to convince the jailers that here at least is what NCCL thinks are, or should be, our 'rights'. And this could be effective. For example, in the section on mothers and babies the information given is: 'If you are pregnant you will sleep in the prison hospital or in a room with at least two others so that help can be called if necessary'. Here the information duplicates Prison Rules which are not readily available to pregnant women in Holloway. If Lynne Marsland (see WIP section) or her cell mates had had a copy of the NCCL information sheet they might have convinced the night sister on duty in Holloway that Lynne should not be moved from a dormitory to a single cell when she, and the night sister, believed labour had commenced. There again, and probably more likely, they would not have convinced anyone. If a pregnant woman with a history of difficult childbirth is isolated in breach of prison rules at the point of labour what chance has any prisoner against the determination, whim or mood of those in charge on the landings?

But there is useful information on the sheet and it is defeatist to argue that as prisoners will most likely be treated in a certain way we shouldn't make attempts to change that treatment.

It is also important for prisoners to know that groups are working on their behalf.

As well as producing the 'Rights' sheet NCCL intend to draw up a list of what rights prisoners should have and campaign for their introduction. WIP will be working with them on this.

Chris Tchaikovsky

NCCL 'Prisoners Rights'
Fact Sheet 40p + p&p,
available from NCCL, 21
Tabard Street, London
SE1 4LA.

LETTERS

DURHAM

DURHAM: 'There is sometimes an atmosphere of stress so strong that one can almost feel it physically, like a living force'...

Durham H Wing is one of the most oppressive units for women prisoners in the whole country. Calls for the wing to be closed down have been growing over the years. Here, we print two powerful articles about the wing, one by Judi Ward who has served nearly 12 years on Durham 'H' Wing. There is now a London H Wing group as well as a Durham H Wing group: anyone with any information on Durham should contact the London group c/o WIP.

'You can't forget Durham, can you?' These words have been said to me quite a few times. Like a bad injury that leaves a scar so in retrospect does Durham H Wing. The difference is that whereas physical pain fades and dies eventually, the memory of H Wing continues to bubble to the surface and you can never eradicate the dehumanisation and utter helplessness of having been there. You are left with scars, visible and invisible that I know will be with me for the rest of my life.

I spent from August 1983 to March 1985 on H Wing, the top security wing for wimmin. This wing was originally built for 25 Category A male prisoners but was closed down in 1971 after a report by Lord Mountbatten condemning the wing as unnatural and intolerable in a civilised society. It was re-opened in 1974 since when it has entombed 36 wimmin with £100,000 worth of added security. It is a concrete box tucked deep inside the bowels of Durham prison: the prison itself houses nearly 1,000 male prisoners. At least half of the wimmin inmates are of foreign nationality, usually in for drug related offences. Only a small minority are there serving life.

It is a medical fact that lack of privacy causes stress. Everything wimmin do on H Wing is monitored by camera, operated by men or the ever present prison officer. The toilets don't have locks and have short stable doors which one doesn't have to be a limbo dancer to get beneath. God help the inmate who should mistakenly or out of despair go out of turn to use one of these toilets, for to go to the toilet when in the workroom one has to go down on a list. If she goes out of turn, she risks the embarrassment of further degradation of having one of the screws, arms akimbo, on top of the cubicle door demanding to know 'What are you doing?' with the further possible risk of being placed on report if she tells her.

I am having to come to terms with a recurring urinary tract infection and hormone problem. But this isn't surprising considering the strain put onto the bladder, kidney and bowels by being made to wait in turn one at a time to use the toilets in the workroom and trying to avoid the potty during lock in. There is the unavoidable further degradation of the slop out when unlocked, usually whilst the food is being set out directly below the slop-out recess.

No light penetrates within H Wing walls: fluorescent lighting has to be in continual use. I entered the prison with 20-20 vision and had to wait nearly 5 months before an optician examined me. I am now having to adjust to wearing glasses for the rest of my life. Many women's periods stop and schizophrenia and paranoia are prevalent.

Petty infringements of the rules are treated far more harshly on H Wing than in any other prison and inmates are at the mercy of the moods and personal dislikes of the screws. During the 20 months I was on H Wing I was put on report 22 times. I lost 6 weeks remission. I was given 7 days loss of remission for wearing illegal clothing, (a track suit). I also have a phobia about spiders but the same treatment was meted out to me for being unable to clean a cobweb infested area because of my phobia. The No 1 governor said I was guilty of refusing a direct order from an officer. There is also a catch 22 regulation entitled 'against good order and discipline' which enables a screw to charge an inmate with anything for anything.

As a known lesbian (the media laid great stress on this when they reported my case) I was earmarked from the beginning of my sentence. I had to be very careful and avoid using one of the 8 showers and one bath on the wing whilst any of the wimmin I associated with was using them.

Ginger LeGrand

JUDI WARD gives an update on the situation in the wing, two years after the establishment of the Close H Wing campaign.

The new kitchen facilities: installed after the hunger strike by inmates regarding lack of cooking facilities has proved invaluable. But due to the low wages, only a small percentage of inmates use it for any worthwhile cooking. Average wages are approximately £2.90 per week so, after buying tobacco, stamps and cosmetics there is little left to purchase foodstuffs which can only be bought with earnings. One welcome consolation: we are now allowed to buy, once a month, coffee, teabags, sugar and dried milk from personal cash, sent in by friends or relatives.¹ Unlike other prisons, inmates on H Wing have to provide their visitors with refreshments personally, instead of a WRVS refreshment stall being allowed which is a great bonus and alleviates the scrimping and saving of weekly wages.

The recently re-furbished gymnasium has hardly been worth the thousands of pounds spent on it. The PE period is still restricted to one, two hours per week. It's quite ludicrous to believe that the Home Office has spent large amounts of taxpayers money on a gymnasium that is only used occasionally.

The present liberal regime means *education facilities*² have much improved although anything above the three afternoons for Open University students is hard to join. At present I am

the only inmate allowed a combination of five mornings per week education and five afternoons braille work, which one could perhaps class as 'full time' education. The reason for this distinction is the fact that I have served nearly 12 years on H Wing and the full time education is allowed as a 'prop'.

*The emphasis on H Wing is still very heavily in favour of work rather than rehabilitation,*³ a phrase which seems to have little meaning. The braille unit (which the women on H Wing campaigned to get established, raising money through a sponsored wash up and gym display) is still stuck somewhere in the red tape. The Education Department are trying to establish it as a Vocational Training Course and local management commitment is high but so are the obstacles to be surmounted. But the enthusiasm of the inmates cannot be dampened. Brailled machines have been purchased and the women are teaching themselves braille in their spare time.

Exercise has recently been reduced from one hour to half an hour daily. There are various reasons given for this, too much time spent out of the workshop and the fact that we have full time association to name just two.

However, as we have enjoyed one hour exercise daily and two hours PE weekly for the last 11 and a half years, we now regard our one hour period of exercise to be a right. We are told that one hour's exercise is a privilege but as we have not done anything to have this privilege removed we object totally to this privilege withdrawn. As the majority of inmates here are Lifers or Long Term Inmates we feel that it is essential to have a full hour of exercise daily.

Meals have improved somewhat for the ordinary diets with three choices of meat or fish being allowed for the main midday meal. Vegetarian and other diets leave much to be desired, although vegetarians have recently been allowed two pieces of fruit weekly, whereas other diets are still restricted to one. I believe that in Cookham Wood and Holloway, lifers receive milk and a piece of fruit daily. No such concession is allowed on H Wing. The only way one can get milk in the mornings here is to pour the milk off the cornflakes at breakfast. There's nothing like a bracing cup of coffee in the morning, with cornflakes floating on top!

Strip and cell searches are now part of the daily routine. Inmates are stripped after all visits. Apparently there is a 'drugs problem' on H Wing, a fact that I and many inmates would deny. There are no 'heavy' drugs on H Wing. Many of the older inmates and those with weight problems find the procedure of strip search totally embarrassing and degrading. Although probation, solicitors and personal visits result in the inmates being stripped afterwards, inmates who receive prison visitors have never been stripped afterwards. Prison visitors are seen as being an 'acceptable risk', being vetted by the Home Office

and appointed by the Secretary of State. I often wonder: are prison visitors a different type of human from other beings? Any other visit the inmates receives are usually in the sight and/or hearing of one or even two officers thus enhancing the danger of drugs being passed.

Rub down searches are now employed daily, entering and leaving the workroom, the exercise yard and the gymnasium, another exercise in futility.

There has been extensive building for the past year on a new gate lodge area and the H Wing exercise yard has been extended, which has improved exercise space considerably. However part of this new area is we believe to become a rockery! I would have thought that looking at the bleakness of the wall, wire fence and barbed wire surrounding us, a rockery would be the last thing anyone would think of. What about some fresh, green grass or is asking for a little vivid colour to relieve the greyness too much?

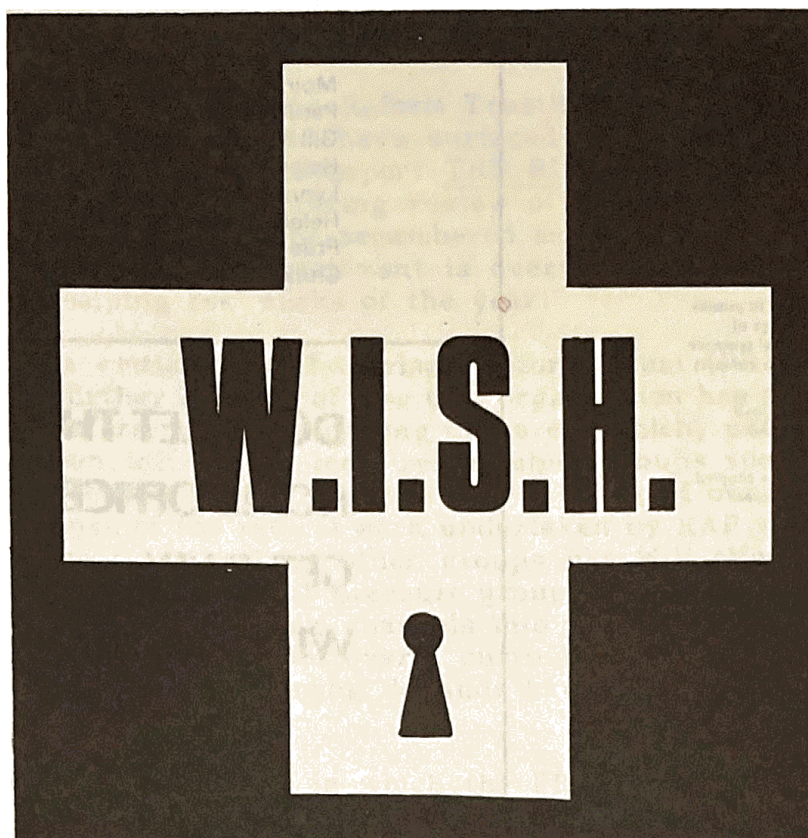
Major improvements and changes like the gymnasium, kitchen, improved education, facilities etc., are very welcome but they don't in themselves alleviate underlying pressure and tension. Frustration, which comes from pettiness and rules which cannot be justified continue to lead to pressure which reveals itself in the general claustrophobia of the wing. *There is sometimes an atmosphere of stress so strong that one can almost feel it physically, like a living force.* We have tried to relieve these pressures by organising discos, concerts and parties. Speaking personally after nearly 12 years on H Wing, I sometimes find it very difficult to produce anything positive and productive whilst at the same time trying to override the futile and petty restrictions placed upon us by the words 'top security'.

As a postscript, I would like to add that of all the money spent on H Wing, little has been used for roof repairs. The roof has been leaking continuously for 12 years and the recent heavy downfall of rain finally caught up on the decaying structure. We awoke one morning to a totally flooded recess: two cells running with water, one girl's bed was absolutely soaked. The gymnasium was flooded and PE was cancelled, but more dangerously, the rain was leaking through the workroom roof onto the electrical machinery below, a real danger to both staff and inmates. Perhaps we should be arranging another sponsored wash-up to raise money for roof repairs?!

Footnotes added by WIP:

- 1 *But this does not help anyone who doesn't have someone to give them personal cash.*
- 2 *Compared to education available to male long termers and lifers, education for women on H Wing remains comparatively inadequate.*
- 3 *Work on H Wing means either cleaning, or machining.*

DURHAM



WIP is launching a new project on women in special hospitals (WISH). We became interested in the project because it became clear to us that just as many women are incarcerated unjustly and inhumanely within prison, without basic civil liberties, so they are within Special Hospitals, with possibly even less public awareness of their situation. Prisoners are regularly transferred from prison to Special Hospitals, under a variety of orders.

Here, *Pru Stevenson* sets out some basic information on the subject – there will be a more detailed report next issue.

The Special Hospitals are *Broadmoor*, *Rampton*, *Moss Side* and *Park Lane* (men only). There are approximately 400 women in Special Hospitals at any one time, compared to approximately 1,400 men. Broadmoor has 120 female beds, Rampton 189, Moss Side 74.

The average age of an inmate is 33 – for both men and women.

Special Hospitals are under the direct control of the Secretary of State at the DHSS. They are not part of the National Health Service, but are managed by a branch of the DHSS. Doctors and Nurses at them are employed by the DHSS. All staff and civil servants must sign the Official Secrets Act. Nurses belong to the POA.

Special Hospitals are like prisons. They have high walls or fences. All the doors are locked. Inmates are not allowed money, matches, penknives although they can wear their own clothes. Patients have to be escorted everywhere. Nurses wear POA uniforms and carry large bunches of keys: there is a husband and wife tradition within Special Hospitals going back generations.

ONE WOMAN'S STORY

Michelle Colman, age 20

In 1984 Michelle was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for assault. Michelle has a mental age of 12 and is extremely

slow in her speech and movement. Except for a few weeks, she spent her entire sentence on the C1 Psychiatric unit in Holloway. Since her imprisonment, she has been disowned by her parents. She has no friends who are not themselves in institutions. Michelle spent much of her time on C1 on Rule 43. Often denied privileges and in isolation.

She was always desperate for a friend and made very strong attachments to staff and other prisoners. If denied access to them because of punishment she would react violently. She was heavily drugged much of the time and often had difficulty speaking and stopping her eyeballs from rolling back. At the end of her sentence, Michelle was transferred to Moss Side Special Hospital for an indefinite period.

BROADMOOR

Opened as a Criminal lunatic asylum, takes those with psychopathic disorders. Currently being re-built. In 1984, it had 584 beds, which they hope to reduce to 510 eventually. Some patients (male) have been transferred to *Park Lane*, in Bedfordshire or *Moss Side* in Liverpool. Opened originally as an epileptic colony in 1919, it opened in 1933 as an institution for 'mental defectives'.

The criteria for entrance to a Special Hospital: that they present a grave and immediate danger to the public, and here's the catch, to themselves! There is very little therapy in special hospitals: it is mainly 'milieu therapy', i.e. *the idea that just being there is good for patients*. There is a disciplined life etc: most patients are considered to be untreatable.

All patients are detained patients.

Discharges and disposals

1983 figures:

Of the 297 men and women who were discharged or 'relieved of restrictions' in 1983, 69% of men and 80% of women were conditionally discharged and therefore *liable to recall*.

2% of men and 5% of women had been detained for over 30 years, that is: since their original committal or last recall.

**'Women in Prison' — campaigning
for WOMEN PRISONERS — demands:**

1. Improved safety conditions, particularly in Holloway Prison where women have been burned to death in their cells.
2. The introduction of a range of facilities (e.g. more visits, including family and conjugal visits in relaxed surroundings, more association with other prisoners, fewer petty rules) aimed both at reducing tension and, subsequently, the number of drugs prescribed for behaviour and mood control rather than the benefit of prisoners.
3. Improved, non-discriminatory and non-paternalistic education, job-related training, leisure and work facilities.
4. Improved training and supervision of prison officers, aimed at reducing their present discriminatory practices against women from ethnic minorities and lesbian, disabled or mentally or emotionally disturbed women.
5. A mandatory and non-discriminatory income-entitlement to meet the basic needs of women prisoners.
6. Improvement of the existing child-care facilities in prisons together with the introduction of a whole new range of child-care facilities for mothers receiving a custodial sentence (e.g. new centres specially for mothers and children contacts with local nurseries and parents' groups).
7. Improved medical facilities in general and specialised facilities for women during pregnancy, childbirth and menstruation.
8. Dismantling of the punitive disciplinary structure coupled with the development of official recognition of prisoner participation in the organisation of the prison.
9. Non-discriminatory sentencing of women.
10. Unrestricted access to the Boards of Visitors for representatives from women's organisations, community, ethnic minority and other minority (e.g. lesbian) organisations.

Women in Prison — campaigning for ALL prisoners demands:

11. Democratic control of the criminal justice and penal systems with: suspension of Official Secrets Act restrictions on the availability of information about prisons; public accountability of the Home Office Prison Department for its administration of the prisons; public inquiries replacing Home Office internal inquiries into the deaths of prisoners, injuries and complaints in general together with Legal Aid to enable prisoners' families to be represented at any such inquiry.
12. Reduction in the length of prison sentences.
13. Replacement of the parole system with the introduction of half-remission on all sentences. Access to a sentence review panel after serving seven years of a life sentence.
14. Increased funding for non-custodial alternatives to prisons (e.g. community service facilities, sheltered housing, alcohol recovery units) together with greater use of the existing sentencing alternatives (e.g. deferred sentence, community service order, probation with a condition of psychiatric treatment etc), with the aim of removing from prisons all who are there primarily because of drunkenness, drug dependency, mental, emotional or sexual problems, homelessness or inability to pay a fine.
15. Abolition of the censorship of prisoners' mail.
16. Abolition of the Prison Medical Service and its replacement by normal National Health Service provision coupled with abolition of the present system whereby prison officers vet and have the power to refuse prisoners' requests to see a doctor.
17. Provision of a law library in prisons so that prisoners may have access to information about their legal rights in relation to DHSS entitlement, employment, housing, marriage and divorce, child-custody, court proceedings, debt, prison rules etc.
18. Improved living and sanitary conditions together with a mandatory income entitlement to meet basic needs.
19. Non-discretionary rights to call witnesses and to full legal representation of prisoners at Visiting (internal) Court proceedings together with the abolition of the charge of 'making false and malicious allegations against an officer'.
20. A review of the existing methods of the recruitment and training of prison discipline staff.

**Campaign for Women in Prison
Members 25.3.86**

June Battye (NAPO)
Melissa Benn (INQUEST)
Sharon Bennett
Rosemary Farrar (ACA)
Jenny Hicks (Clean Break)
Moira Honnan (Stockdale House)
Patti Lampard
Gill Mebarek (Clean Break)
Helen Moore
Lynn Reed
Helena Stephenson (CAST)
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Chris Tchaikovsky (INQUEST)

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I enclose for membership (£5) and as a donation
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I will receive an annual report and a calendar and will be
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The (name of organisation)
wishes to affiliate to the Campaign for Women in Prison.
I enclose £10 affiliation fee
Our organisation is/is not willing to allow its name to be used
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PETERHEAD, NORTHEYE & WYMOTT: RIOTS OF 1986

A Briefing Paper by PROP (the National Prisoners Movement)

It is unfortunate that the Prison Reform Trust's excellent report on the prison riots of April and May 1986 should have surfaced to coincide with the Peterhead riot in Scotland. The title of the report THE RIOTS OF '86 merely adds to the confusion by implying an all-embracing review of the year's major disturbances. Yet it is now clear that 1986 will be remembered most of all for what has happened at Peterhead; unless even that statement is overtaken by more trouble erupting elsewhere in the remaining few weeks of the year.

None of this is a criticism of the Prison Reform Trust (PRT). Their report is first class and is a further example of how that organisation has assumed the leadership of the prison reform lobby by moving into areas which, until a couple of years ago, would have been left to the less 'respectable' groups such as PROP or RAP to explore. Far from feeling aggrieved at this stealing of our thunder, we see it as a direct consequence of the radical work undertaken by RAP since 1970 and PROP since 1972, subsequently joined by other groups like WIP (Women in Prison) and INQUEST. This, after all, is what pressure groups are all about - forcing forward the debate out of the dry, academic channels into which it had settled prior to the emergence of RAP. As with the controversy surrounding the Prison Medical Service, many of RAP's and PROP's pioneering demands have been taken up by louder and more powerful voices.

Our concern is at the manner in which the PRT report is likely to be picked up by the media, and is the same concern that we feel at the publication of our own letter to 'THE GUARDIAN', written before we were aware of the PRT report, but printed after it had been circulated to the press. If we had in this country a media really prepared to research the programmes they so readily flash onto the screens, or the articles which burst overnight into print, then inputs such as the PRT report would be put into context. But the media are not like that. No sooner had the Peterhead riot ended than we were being asked by television if we could produce ex-Peterhead prisoners "who had come out over the last few weeks" to speak about the situation there and comment on the reports that prison officers themselves were inciting the violence in our prisons "for their own ends".

THE ONGOING BRUTALITY OF PETERHEAD

Of course prisoners are not on tap for instant production, from Peterhead or anywhere else. And of those that do get released at just such a moment, sometimes after destructively long sentences, few are in the mood or have the inclination to have the media spotlight turned on them. They have enough problems without that. If we then suggest to the media that they approach ex-prisoners who have been through the Peterhead experience, though perhaps not in the very recent past, we are told that this is not immediate enough. We stress the fact that the whole point about Peterhead is that it is not an immediate problem and that nothing has changed over the years. The violence so graphically described by Jimmy Boyle nearly ten years ago is as commonplace today as ever, and a long deep look at the situation by someone who has passed through it all and can place it in a historical context is particularly relevant - not as a substitute for the immediate firsthand accounts, if such are available, but in addition to them.

The reference by TV researchers to the allegations that prison officers were inciting the violence or, in another phrase, "turning a blind eye to it", puzzled us until we discovered where they were coming from. They were being taken, out of context, either as direct quotes or by implication, from the PRT report on the disturbances which marked the prison officers' (POA) dispute earlier in the year. The danger, now, is that the entire debate about prison violence and brutality will be sidetracked by the finger of responsibility being pointed at the uniformed prison officer rather than at the authority which both employs him (or her) and dictates the conditions in which he operates. It is because of our concern at this danger

that we have, at the last minute, rewritten our contribution to this issue of 'THE ABOLITIONIST', and devoted the whole of our space to these events.

THE 'POA DISPUTE' AND THE RIOTS AT NORTHEYE AND WYMOTT

The riots of April and May 1986, notably at Northeye and Wymott but, to varying degrees, at several other prisons, were a direct consequence of the prison officers' dispute. When the industrial action in furtherance of that dispute began, PROP issued a 'Briefing Paper' (published in the last issue of 'THE ABOLITIONIST') giving some of the background of the dispute and reminding people of what occurred last time, in the winter of 1980, when the Prison Department itself was caught out in its attempts to set staff and prisoners at each other and put the prison officers publicly in the wrong. We refer readers to that article for details of what we believe is a well documented and unarguable case against the Government and Home Office. Where we went wrong in the 'Briefing Paper' was in forecasting the recent (1986) industrial action as a re-run of the four months' long dispute of 1980.

THE BACKGROUND AND THE RESPONSIBILITY

As before, the POA decided to include amongst its tactics a refusal to allow receptions of newly sentenced prisoners into prisons which were already officially overcrowded, but their emphasis this time was far more on a direct overtime ban in the face of the Government's new budgetary controls which had already cut the quality (abysmally low to start with) of prisoners' lives up and down the country. The closure of workshops and restrictions on the availability of educational and other facilities were in many cases a direct economy cut, and in others a result of the Prison Department's refusal to sanction overtime for staffing the shops, and the prison officers' refusal to do the work on any other basis. Because these 'economies' affected only prisoners' wellbeing, rather than security, there was virtually no pressure on the authorities to negotiate. The POA then imposed overtime bans or curbs at selected prisons, only to be met by what were, in effect, lockouts by their employers. With both sides in the dispute calling each others' bluff, leaving prisoners in many jails almost unattended, disaster was inevitable.

The prime responsibility for playing with prisoners' lives must lie with the Thatcher Government and its Home Office. They employ the prison officers and it is they who stress the artificiality of overtime at the same time as they build new jails which, in terms of staff, are more labour intensive than older prisons. No doubt a lot of overtime is artificially created as well, but it is seven years since the May Committee of Inquiry into the UK Prison System directed attention to the urgent need for renegotiating prison officers' conditions of service and pay. Only the present government, with its Rambo attitude towards trade unionism, would imagine that this could be done by crudely chopping overtime, without restructuring payscales to safeguard prison officers' accustomed paypackets.

The immediate background to all this cannot be overlooked when considering the reasonableness or otherwise of the prison officers' case. Huge amounts of money are being spent on the prison system, just to enable it to grow even bigger and still further outdistance our European neighbours in the proportion of our population which we put behind bars. It is the pressure of this inexorable rise in prison numbers which has led the authorities, at the same time as they throw money into new and badly designed prisons in more and more remote locations, to lay down strict budgetary controls on individual existing prisons. As a result, the last eighteen months has seen a succession of news stories of workshops being closed, dental treatment being curtailed, education being restricted.

A CODE OF MINIMUM STANDARDS

These were Government actions, not the actions of prison officers. In fact what the POA has called for is the exact opposite - an acceptance of a Code of Minimum Standards of Imprisonment, thereby lining themselves up with NACRO, NCCL, the Howard League, NAPO (the Probation Officers), and indeed most of the penal reform movement. Again the background must be considered. It was in 1982 that the Government announced its intention to publish a draft code on minimum standards

in the following year. However, no such code appeared and, in answer to parliamentary questioning, the Home Office then indicated its intention not to publish anything further in the form of a code, but to proceed instead in the context of building standards for new establishments (the same new establishments whose bad design is now itself the subject of fierce criticism!). Meanwhile it is officially admitted that the disgusting conditions under which most prisoners are housed will go on well into the 1990's, which of course is government gobbledygook for saying that slopping out and overcrowding will still be with us in the next century.

A code of legally enforceable minimum standards would have diverted the enormous sums of money which are now going into the prison estate, for the primary purpose of enlarging it, into improving the quality of life for prisoners, and thereby the working conditions of prison staff. PROP has its own reservations about such a reformist policy, but they are unimportant against the present background of escalation of the prison population, and the parallel escalation of the misery in which it exists.

Neither prisoners nor prison officers are going to put up meekly with more and more of this. Prisoners will riot, prison officers will take industrial action, and the two acts of dissent will inevitably strike sparks off each other. The Government will try to distance itself by blaming 'violent and evil men' on the one hand, and union 'intransigence' on the other. The media, all too often, will go along with that line because it is a simple one which lends itself to easily read and emotive headlines.

THE OPPOSITE OF PRISONERS' SOLIDARITY

The PRT's report into what happened at Northeye and Wymott uncovered behaviour, by prisoners towards each other, which makes us, as a prisoners' organisation, uncomfortable. We are sure that the PRT is no less unhappy about it, though it had the duty, as we would have done, to report all that it found. The case against staff brutality towards prisoners is not helped by internecine fighting amongst the prison population itself. PROP does not condone, nor has it ever condoned, the actions of those prisoners who strike terror into other prisoners, usually because of the nature of their offences. Nor do we excuse the wickedness of prison officers who 'turn a blind eye' to it happening. We wholeheartedly support the PRT's recommendation, arising out of the discovery by rioting prisoners at Wymott, of fellow prisoners' files, and their subsequent attacks on those prisoners, that all such records should be kept where they cannot be retrieved by other prisoners, even under such exceptional circumstances as a prison riot.

Nor do we attempt to excuse, though we can certainly understand, those prison officers who felt it was in their interest to escalate the industrial dispute by egging on prisoners towards the insurrection which was to lead, eventually, to the prisoners' attacks on one another. But, even without that egging on, the natural conclusion of the respective 'brick wall' stances of government and union must have been a complete breakdown at one prison or another. If impatient prison officers had not brought events to a crunch, the misery would merely have been more protracted, and the eventual outburst maybe even worse. It is to their credit that the POA as a whole, faced with the consequence of some of their members' actions, quickly drew back from the brink. There was little or no sign that the Government, bearing a far greater responsibility for what happened, had any intention of showing the same sort of sense.

HOW THE SYSTEM DEFINES THE PRISON OFFICER'S ROLE

PROP is not suddenly 'going soft' on prison officers. In prison after prison we have witnessed, and some of us have personally experienced, the most brutal behaviour by prison officers. The segregation units, and in many cases the hospital units, of most prisons, up and down the country, have their quota of uniformed sadists. In some prisons the brutality becomes part of the general atmosphere of the prison, rather than an underlying menace. But we are also aware that there are certain prisons with a different atmosphere, just as there are, in every jail,

prison officers who are amongst the best people working in the system, in or out of uniform. Most prison officers, of course, neither sink nor rise to such extremes.

THE ROLL-CALL OF INSTITUTIONAL BRUTALITY

The allegations that prison officers turn 'blind eyes' to violence need to be kept in some sort of perspective. That perspective must not ignore what happened at Wymott and Northeye, but nor should it elevate them to join the roll-call of Peterhead, Parkhurst, Hull, Albany, Gartree, Winson Green, Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs. The spectres which those names conjure up are the images of brutality, meted out over decades and condoned and covered up at the highest levels. It is not prison officers' 'blind eyes' which have permitted so much injury, terror and misery: it is the blindness of what should be the overseeing eye of the prison authorities themselves. Barry Prosser died at the hands, or the feet, of prison officers in Winson Green; scores of prisoners had their heads split open by prison officers at Wormwood Scrubs in 1979. We could fill a page, even a whole issue of 'THE ABOLITIONIST' with examples of brutality against prisoners at each of these jails. These dreadful abuses take place, not only because the authorities let them take place and, sometimes from Home Secretary level downwards, cover up for them, but also because the prison system, as it is constituted, demands that they take place. A 'stick and carrot' policy of running prisons requires sticks and the staff to use them. It has required even more of them since Leon Brittan's regulations on parole removed from whole groups of prisoners, at a stroke, the hopes of early release as a result of good behaviour. And the POA was against his action too!

THE RIOTS OF '86 is published by the Prison Reform Trust, price £1.95, and is available from the Trust at 59 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU. It is strongly recommended.

PROP's letter to THE GUARDIAN was published on 15 November 1986 and is reproduced here:

Sir, — Ten years after the Hull prison riot, our television screens and newspapers carry pictures from Peterhead depicting identical scenes and the same rooftop slogans - urgent appeals that somebody, somewhere should take action to stem the brutality. The years between have seen many other examples from all over the country, but none which has demonstrated in quite so chilling a fashion that nothing has changed.

We are also getting the same headline language about the gaol housing the "toughest men" or the "most violent criminals" in the prison system; as if such statements explain what has happened, let alone offer the authorities any excuse. Yes, the prison population includes people who are all of these things but, far from providing a justification for tough, isolated prisons, recognition of the fact should lead to the opposite conclusion: that prison regimes need to provide mental and physical stimulation as outlets for bottled up, frustrated virility.

It should not be necessary to make such a point about Peterhead because it was the same violence in the same prison that led the Scottish author-

ities, in a rare moment of commonsense, to set up in 1973 the Barlinnie Special Unit. There, on a small scale, a stimulating regime was tried and shown to work.

Provide the regime, and the right sort of prison officer will come forward to staff it. Offer only the bleakness of Peterhead and elsewhere, and uniformed thugs will be required to maintain a system which brutalises everyone within it.

Ten years ago we called for a public inquiry into the Hull riot. All we got was the same Home Office investigation of itself which is being wheeled out now, the stock response whenever there is something to hide. This time, the demand for an independent public inquiry has been eloquently put by Jimmy Boyle, himself a Peterhead and Barlinnie ex-prisoner.

Widespread support for that call is urgent if the relentless progression towards brutality in our prisons is to be halted. The alternative, sooner rather than later, will be loss of life, of prisoners and prison officers alike.

PROP (the National Prisoners Movement),
London WC1.

LEFT REALISM

AGAINST THE

REST

Mick Ryan and Tony Ward

Radical criminology in Britain has split in recent years into two camps, the so-called 'Left Idealists' and 'Left Realists' - terms which we shall use here for convenience, though we doubt that they are entirely apt. This division is more clear-cut in criminological theory than it is in political practice. RAP, for example, moved away from a straightforwardly 'Idealist' position in the early 'eighties, but has not wholeheartedly embraced 'Realism'; and many police monitoring groups and local authority police committees are equally difficult to classify. It is this middle ground between the two camps that we wish to defend in this article. We can agree with the Realists on the need to 'take crime seriously', on the value of working within existing political structures including the Labour Party, and on the importance of police accountability, without sharing their sweeping rejection of less orthodox political forms, their optimism about the police role in crime control, or their views on the relation between race and crime.

SOME BACKGROUND

When RAP was first formed in 1970 it was fashionable for political activists on the Left to ignore the Labour Party. The institutions of bourgeois democracy as a whole, Parliament, trade unions, the political parties, all these institutions were seen as highly bureaucratic, elitist and therefore unrepresentative and largely irrelevant to ordinary people's lives and the necessary process of fundamental political change. Radical practice, therefore, was to work outside the existing political structures, whether at national or local level, and to build instead alternative, parallel structures. What exactly these structures would amount to, their precise goals, their overall institutional form, such questions were of little interest to the new Left. Indeed, even to raise such questions was to invite criticism, since they suggested the need some sort of blueprint for the new, evolving society: a sterile, even dangerous demand which could all too easily lead to rigidity and dogma. What was very fashionable at the time, then, was not the finished but the unfinished, to borrow from Mathiesen's strategic vocabulary on the prison and penal reform.⁽¹⁾

What this led to in effect was the emergence (or re-emergence) at local and national levels of a variety of loosely organised groups voicing radical political demands over a wide range of issues, but standing outside the formal political structure. Ideally, but not always as in the case of RAP, such groups were community or client led. Those who did much of the organising, and participated most, were to be those who knew where the shoe pinched: the prisoners in PROP, those on social security in the Claimants' Union, tenants in tenants' associations, women organising their own support groups and even, it has to be said, rank and file trade unionists in the revitalised and unofficial shop stewards' movement which reached its post-war peak at about this time.

To be sure, there was a certain amount of self-deception over the question of working outside the formal political system. These groups did make demands on government and the political parties, and this led to long and difficult

debates over the dangers of co-option and the limits and possibilities of reform. There was, too, sometimes a degree of cultivated political myopia. That is, single issue groups often campaigned as if their demands had little to do with other groups, or the wider political economy, so avoiding difficult political questions which could have split their membership and destroyed their cohesiveness. Papering over these contradictions, however, the new Left succeeded in convincing many radical activists that the future lay in constructing a loose political alliance among these new groups, whether they represented those at the margins of the welfare state, middle-class students, oppressed women or whoever. This alliance was to replace the Labour Party whose commitment even to something as tepid as Parliamentary socialism was now in question since the organised, trade unionised working class, the traditional vehicle for radical change, was now warming to the consensus politics of the sixties and the affluence brought about by Britain's sustained economic growth since the mid fifties.⁽²⁾

Partly as a result of some of the internal contradictions we have described, but largely due to external economic and political pressures, this particular alliance strategy had collapsed by the end of the 1970s and the organised working class and the Labour Party had regained some of its centrality. This is not to suggest that left-wing activists are no longer talking in terms of alliances. Quite the contrary, in fact, alliances between for example the Labour Party, feminists and black groups are still seen by some Left Realists like Jock Young et al. as central to any future political strategy.⁽³⁾ However, what is really striking if we look back to the rhetoric of the early 1970s is the prominence given to the formal political apparatus, especially the Labour Party with its still more (surely?) than just notional commitment to a struggle centred on the means of production and the organised, unionised, working class.

In the context of law and order in particular, one of the earliest signals of this re-entry into formal politics was Ian Taylor's Law and Order: Arguments for Socialism (1981), in which he argued for radical new policies which would depend more broadly "on a reconstruction of the dominant form of politics in the Labour Party of the kind attempted by Tony Benn".⁽⁴⁾ At about the same time, and likewise believing that the time was ripe, RAP sought to influence and redirect the Labour Party's thinking on law and order through individual membership of the Labour Campaign for Criminal Justice. At a local level too there was pressure from academics like Jock Young in Islington and elsewhere to persuade Labour boroughs to undertake local crime surveys.

LAW AND ORDER

This new Realism was welcomed by some on the Left, not just because it signalled what they saw as a necessary re-entry into formal politics, but also because it was portrayed as at last taking the working class experience of crime seriously. That is, there was a feeling that radical criminology in the late sixties and early seventies - like so much of new Left rhetoric - had little appeal or relev-

ance to Labour's traditional supporters. True, radical criminology praised the assault on bourgeois property rights by squatters, made the usual, ritual acknowledgements about the crimes of the powerful going largely unpunished and unpunished, even championed the cause of those who like dope-users committed crimes without victims, but it had little to say about the burden of routine crime on working class communities, and still less about the crimes committed by the working class against the working class. It was against this 'Left Idealism' which effectively vacated, at both an ideological and a policy level, the crucial law and order site so ruthlessly exploited by Margaret Thatcher in the run-up to the 1979 General Election, that Jock Young's Left Realism was directed in Capitalism and the Rule of Law (1979). Young derived the term 'Left Idealism' from E.P. Thompson's influential 1978 essay attacking the "platonic notion of the true, the ideal capitalist state",⁽⁵⁾ and he continues to argue against this position, most recently with Richard Kinsey and John Lea in Losing the Fight Against Crime (1986).

In presenting these all too brief references to Young's position it is certainly not our intention to caricature his work, or to deny that there was some misplaced idealism. Young's views have been developed over a number of years and there are those of us who well remember his frequent, if not altogether fashionable, interventions in the seventies as a self-styled "working class criminologist". Furthermore, the radical re-engagement with formal politics, and the need for socialists in the Labour Party to "take crime seriously", as Lea and Young put it,⁽⁶⁾ are positions we ourselves have supported. However, we part company with the Left Realism of Young et al. on a number of fronts, and not least because of its characterisation of Left Idealism which by implication is portrayed as having been uncaring in the past, and largely irrelevant to the present. Such an analysis is surely too blunt, and sometimes seems to be directed against a 'platonic notion of ideal Left Idealism', rather than any substantial political or theoretical tradition.

ON DOING GOOD AND BEING RELEVANT

In the first place, looking back at the late sixties and early seventies it is hard to believe that radical groups like Release, PROP, Up Against the Law, did not do some good. True, these groups were not always client led, and no doubt some of them had their fair share of professionally trained Left Idealists who were on the mailing list of the National Deviancy Conference. But this is surely not to deny that such groups did a lot of committed and defensive work for hundreds of individuals who would otherwise have been marginalised still further. Nor was this work always carried on remote from, or oblivious to, those working class communities whose plight the Left Realists are so keen to emphasise. The Newham Alternatives Project is just one example. Set up in 1974 by Radical Alternatives to Prison, this project was intended to provide alternatives to prison, alternatives other than those already provided by the State, such as probation. Based in a deprived London Borough this project took on working class clients, had an open shopfront to the community and tried very hard to involve local groups in its activities. There was no way in which it sought either to celebrate crime, or elevate it as some sort of proto-revolutionary activity; nor were those who ran it, like Ros Kane, indifferent to, or unaware of, the damage which some of its clients had inflicted on their own working class communities.⁽⁷⁾ Another example at about this time would be Ian Cameron's attitude towards his work at Release. Ian was far from idealistic about some of the working class 'heavies' he had to take on as clients, nor did he ever shrink from admitting their sometimes cynical manipulation of due process which held

dangers for all those who came before the law, whatever their social class. Like others working at the sharp end of the system, the practical good that these Left Idealists did was nearly always marked by realism.

As for the implied irrelevance of this alleged Left Idealism to the politics of nineteen eighties, we feel strongly that this is erroneous. Even if the building of alternative structures in opposition to the formal political system is now given less strategic prominence than it once had, even if the credibility of radical criminology's message in the seventies is now open to revision, groups like PROP and RAP did have an enduring influence, and in a progressive direction. For example, it is surely unlikely that the demand to make the prison system more accountable, the demand for a fairer way of dealing with disciplinary charges against prisoners, the demand even for less use of prison sentences as such, all these demands which the Labour Party now supports, would have surfaced at all had it not been for the activities groups like PROP and, to a lesser extent, RAP. Whatever these groups had to say about crime, whether they sometimes underestimated the damage it did to working class communities, whether they sloganised about the crimes of the powerful, they were important in helping to shape what the Labour Party now thinks about crime and punishment, which we assume Left Realists like Young et al. would at least agree is an improvement on what Labour has had to say on these issues in the past. To put the same thing more pointedly, before the arrival of the new Left and the alternative, cultural politics it gave rise to, the Labour Party and the trade unions were as little interested in prisoners' rights as they were in gay rights. Surely there has been some progress on both these fronts, even if the Party and the trade unions still have a long way to go?

THE NATURE OF CARICATURE

In political debate caricature has its place; properly used it can highlight the essence of an opponent's position, sometime even point up its logical absurdities. On the other hand, caricature also has its dangers, and in two senses in particular. In the first place it can misrepresent its opponents, pretending that they stand for something which they patently do not. So, for example, in the late sixties and early seventies, when the post-war consensus came under stress, everything on the Right of British politics which moved was labelled 'Fascist', which was a theoretically - let alone historically - absurd label, and one which encouraged some groups on the Left to adopt tactics which were wholly inappropriate. Secondly, wilful misrepresentation of other people's position - by taking things out of context, for example - can often set up barriers between people or groups who should otherwise be working together in some form of political alliance, albeit perhaps a loose one. Regrettably, it seems that some Left Realists are more keen to divide than to unite.

Take as an example the response of Young, Kinsey and Lea to an article by Mick Ryan and Joe Sim which appeared in The Abolitionist (No. 16) in 1984, entitled 'Decoding Leon Brittan'. In this article, which was written to counter a re-run of the Tories earlier and successful law and order campaign, and to mitigate its intended impact on the penal system, the authors pointed out that the vast majority of recorded crimes were not the wanton, violent variety which Leon Brittan was so keen to highlight, and against which he promised new tough measures. To support their case they quoted from several sources including Sir Robert Mark, a former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, and the Home Office Research Unit. This was labelled by Young et al. as a "strange consensus of Left and Right". And what is more, they went on to imply that the authors were either ignorant of, or unconcerned about, violent

crimes, particularly those which are often under-reported and/or under-policed, like rape or organised assaults on members of the black community.

This is a scurrilous caricature of their position on several counts. To begin with, even if some Left Idealists did use similar arguments to play down the very real hurt and damage caused by violent crimes, it is still incumbent on those of the Left to look critically at how the Right overplay the law and order card in this particular respect. Others, like Ian Taylor in Law and Order: Arguments for Socialism argued along similar lines, and they should be free to do so without being uncritically lumped together in some kind of unholy alliance with the Right.⁽⁸⁾ Second, and perhaps more telling, the authors of 'Decoding Leon Brittan' are long-standing members of RAP and were at that time members of the Editorial Collective of The Abolitionist, a journal which in recent years has consistently sought to provide a forum for a discussion of just the sort of crimes which Young et al. imply that they are ignoring! This aspect of RAP's work was summed up by Tony Ward in the following way, in an article which was first prepared a long time before Losing the Fight Against Crime was published:

[RAP] has sought to develop links with other groups on the Left which have an interest in criminal justice, and to draw attention to the need for an effective, radical challenge to the ideology of law and order. Through its magazine, The Abolitionist, and through a working group on sexual offences which met from 1980-82, RAP has carried on a dialogue with groups which view the criminal justice system from somewhat different perspectives, including the Community Alliance for Police Accountability (which is particularly concerned about the horrific level of racial violence in East London) and Women Against Rape.⁽⁹⁾

To accuse those who have actively supported these new contacts, who have welcomed the sharp dialogue which they have sometimes given rise to, of being in some kind of ideological alliance with the Right is annoying, perhaps, yet at the same time it is so wide of the mark that it is difficult to take altogether seriously.

POLICING

Given Young's fondness for caricature it is tempting to label him as a Left Pragmatist, who shares much in common with Right pragmatists like the American James Q. Wilson. What we mean by this mischievous suggestion is that Wilson rejects the search for the 'causes' of crime and any idealist 'solutions', but seeks instead to make the existing criminal justice system more effective, through better policing, more emphasis on crime prevention, all measures which are deliberately advocated without any serious exploration of the wider social, political and economic inequalities in which the system operates, and which necessarily prevent it from operating according to its classical, liberal ideal. However, while it is true that Losing the Fight Against Crime, in particular, is strongly pragmatic in much the same vein, it would indeed be a caricature to link Young's work too closely with that of people like Wilson for a number of reasons, not least being the important fact that he has usually been willing to acknowledge these inequalities and some of their consequences. Indeed, one of his recent papers makes a strong plea for greater attention to the aetiology of crime.⁽¹⁰⁾ Nevertheless, one of the results of what we take to be Young's increasing pragmatism is his over-optimistic view of what a reformed, accountable police might achieve in the 'fight' against

crime. A similar anxiety was expressed by Norman Ginsburg when in response to Young and Lea's What is to be Done About Law and Order? he observed:

So what is their answer to the law and order problem? Not an attack on poverty and unemployment, not the development of new organs of popular democracy, but more bourgeois democracy in the shape of police accountability to local authorities and "more efficient police protection responsive to the needs of the working class and the groups within it." Hey presto - better policing is the answer to crime.⁽¹¹⁾

This irony is well placed, though we should make it clear that we are less willing than Ginsburg to dismiss the apparatus of 'bourgeois democracy'. However, it remains true, and this is the nub of the matter, that Young et al. have increasingly - though not, in fairness, exclusively - justified their law and order policies as socialist ones on the basis of making sure that the police are responsive to the needs of working class communities. This responsiveness is, primarily, what makes their policies socialist. We would argue that such a restrictive emphasis is hardly sufficient, and is probably one reason why their work continues to invite so much criticism.

The fact that there is little, if any, socialism in the Realists' proposals does not necessarily mean that socialists should not support them. There is, after all, nothing intrinsically socialist about gay rights, or a reductionist penal policy. There is an overwhelming (albeit 'bourgeois') democratic case for giving elected authorities greater control over the police, and for the view that police action should, in general, be initiated by the public rather than the police themselves. Measures like these, which would significantly constrain police autonomy, seem to us to be well worth supporting, if only because the alternative of leaving the police to continue on their present trajectory is so horrendous. But by an unfortunate irony, Young's attempt to construct a socialist case for these eminently reasonable liberal reforms leads him to subordinate them to a strategic goal which we believe is antithetical to socialism: an increase in arrest rates for crimes associated with poverty. The problem, we believe, arises from Young's excessive faith in the deterrent capacity of the police, coupled with his inadequate conception of social justice, and is particularly acute in its bearing on black youth.

DETERRENCE

One of Young's jibes against Left Idealism is that it "has taken up precisely the same monetarist notion of human nature as the new administrative criminology".⁽¹²⁾ But if anyone is guilty of this it is surely Young himself, in his uncritical acceptance of the theory of general deterrence, which restores the 'rational, calculating subject' to the centre of the criminological stage. Whether the Realists' "fight against crime" is won or lost depends above all on certainty of detection. It is a fight waged against criminals who are not only rational, but amazingly well-informed about the 'true' detection rate, which even Young et al. have difficulty in disentangling from official clear-up rates. Their standard of rationality, however, is quite different from that of their potential victims. Thus it is self-evident that no burglar could be deterred by a detection rate (for any one offence) of 2½%,⁽¹³⁾ but it is also self-evidently rational for people to be deterred from leaving their homes by a fraction of that risk (on any one occasion) of falling victim to crime. We are indulging in caricature again, but we do so to make the

serious point that the relationships between 'objective' detection rates, perceived certainty of detection, and crime are much more complex and ambiguous than Young et al. imply, and in view of this the more cautious attitude of the 'new administrative criminologists' (i.e. Home Office researchers) Morris and Heal has much to commend it:-

While all the studies discussed find a strong inverse relationship between crime rate and clearance rate, it is quite unclear what implications are to be drawn from these results. On the one hand, such findings may be seen as providing evidence for the effectiveness of police activity; on the other, it can also legitimately be argued that the studies demonstrate a 'workload' effect, and that the clearance rates are high simply because crime rates of an area are low.⁽¹⁴⁾

The 'new administrative criminologists' are equally sceptical about the police's chances of substantially (and legitimately) increasing clear-up rates. In particular, a recent Home Office study casts doubt on one of the main theses of Losing the Fight Against Crime, that major gains could be made by devoting more time to the routine investigation of burglary.⁽¹⁵⁾ We do not wish to assert categorically that the police could not deter this kind of crime more efficiently than they do now, but in the present state of the evidence, to assert positively that they could do so involves a considerable act of faith: and whether or not to make that act of faith is, in large measure, a political choice. Young et al. are surely right to suggest that the Home Office would not so readily (despite some internal resistance) accept the limitations of policing if it were not in some respects politically convenient: it "lets the police off the hook" so far as criticisms of their clear-up rates are concerned. But in their eagerness to get the police back on that particular hook (there are plenty of other hooks available!) Young et al. impale themselves on the dilemma of seeking to reduce the victimisation rates of the poor by increasing the already disproportionately high arrest rates of equally poor offenders. (The chances of being caught for burglary may not be impressive, but they are a lot higher than for tax fraud.)

JUSTICE

The Realists' demand for effective crime control makes no distinction between those crimes which take advantage of, and reinforce, oppressive social relations (such as rape, racial attacks and corporate crime) and those which are a response to oppression on the part of its victims. All crime, they argue, is a product of "individual moral choice"⁽¹⁶⁾ and, in most cases, it adds to the oppression of the poor.

Human action does indeed involve an element of choice, but in a grossly unequal society such choices are unequally constrained. The 'moral choice' not to steal, when the alternative is a life of grinding monotony and poverty, involves a degree of self-denial which it does not involve for the better off.

In 1979, Young recognised that any socialist reform of the criminal justice system must be informed by a concept of substantive justice which would take account of these effects of inequality:-

we must involve ourselves in legislation which moves from individual to collective responsibility for crimes and we must make much of the 'excuse' of unemployment as mitigation for crime, for this denial of citizenship is a fundamental contradiction under capitalism.⁽¹⁷⁾

Young seems to have forgotten about this part of his original Realist manifesto, but the idea of 'socialist justice' has been cogently developed in the writings of Tony Jefferson and Roger Grimshaw,⁽¹⁸⁾ who in our view succeeded better than Young et al. in injecting a recognisably socialist element into the liberal-democratic case for police accountability. The essence of 'socialist justice' is that it recognises the effects of involuntary inequality on individuals' 'free choices' and seeks to compensate for them. Like Left Realism, 'socialist justice' would give priority to preventing those offences which bear particularly hard on the poor and the oppressed; but it also addresses and resolves the dilemma posed by the high arrest rates of the poor:-

For socialist justice there is no problem in principle: decreasing victimisation rates for such offences cannot be achieved at the expense of increasing offender rates, if both victims and offenders are poor. Only preventative work which would simultaneously lower offender and victimisation rates would be acceptable.⁽¹⁹⁾

Such a strategy is eminently practicable. NACRO's Safe Neighbourhood Units could provide one model for acceptable forms of prevention; but a more apposite example in this context is the remarkable fall in crime which seems to have been achieved on the Broadwater Farm Estate prior to the 1985 riot. Recorded crime fell by 50% in a year and though such figures (like the strikingly similar ones from Detroit, the nearest thing to Left Realism in action)⁽²⁰⁾ must be treated with caution, Lea and Young's own survey confirmed that residents' perceptions of crime compared very favourably with nearby Islington.⁽²¹⁾ The Broadwater Farm Inquiry attributed this achievement to a combination of elementary security measures by the council, and the Youth Association's achievements in rebuilding a sense of 'community' and constructive activity on the Estate. Rising confidence in the police on the residents' part was certainly not a factor!

Young et al. are aware of the value of some preventative strategies, and the conclusion to the Islington Crime Survey⁽²²⁾ shows a noticeable shift of emphasis away from overreliance on the police. They also deal sensibly with some of the less acceptable implications of 'situational' crime prevention and of multi-agency policing.⁽²³⁾ But the reasons of principle why socialists should prioritise preventative rather than detective strategies seem to elude them. The contradictions to which this leads are particularly acute in relation to black people.

RACE AND CRIME

As Lea and Young observe in What is to be Done About Law and Order? there are a "few crimes for which there is some evidence of a substantial, if still minor, racial component", including theft from the person. We have no objection to that 'minor component' being discussed, but Lea and Young accord it a place in their analysis of crime out of all proportion to its significance. By far the longest chapter of their book is devoted to it, but that is not all. The central thesis of the book as a whole is that the police's 'militaristic' response to rising crime has led to a breakdown in relations with those groups who potentially have the most information to give about the criminal activities of their members, and this generates a vicious circle of falling clear-up rates, more crime, more militarisation, and so on. On the face of it, this analysis applies to sections of the white as well as black working-class. But in fact, if Young and his colleagues are correct in their interpretation of the Islington Crime Survey, the phenomenon of alienation from the police

leading to unwillingness to give information is largely confined to Afro-Caribbean youth.⁽²⁴⁾ So we are forced to conclude that if accountable, 'consensus' policing were, as Lea and Young predict, to generate a higher arrest rate, the additional arrests would be drawn chiefly from young blacks whose already excessive arrest rate is, as Lea and Young acknowledge, partly a result of police racism. When this is coupled with Lea and Young's unflattering and unsubstantiated portrayal of the 'subculture' of black youth, it is not surprising that many black people, and many socialists, find their argument unpalatable.

Another reason for the hostility Young et al.'s work arouses is that their view of popular fears about crime as 'rational' shows no appreciation of the element of racism which such fears often involve. This is strikingly illustrated by the PSI's finding of a close relationship between white people's fear of going out at night and the number of black people in their area.⁽²⁵⁾ It is this point about the ideological link between race and crime issues that forms the basis of Paul Gilroy's critique of Young's work, and it is in this context that he declares himself "unable to accept [Young's] assertion that 'all sections of the population are united in their opposition to street crime'"⁽²⁶⁾ - not, as Lea and Young suggest, because he "believes that a substantial minority of the black population supports such activities".⁽²⁷⁾ Young's assertion is, in a sense, true; but then it would be equally true to say that "the National Front and the black population are united in their opposition to unemployment".

AUTONOMY

The work of Gilroy and his colleagues at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in The Empire Strikes Back (1983) is the subject of one of Young's most pungent caricatures, which has already been effectively dealt with by Ginsburg (see above). However, the strategic substance of that caricature is of particular importance to us, not least as members of the Labour Campaign for Criminal Justice. The essence of the argument appears to be that while neither side is any longer prepared to see productive relations in the classic Marxist prescription as being necessarily central to any future socialist transformation, Young still sees working class institutions such as trade unions and the Labour Party as important to that transformation, though in alliance with other radical groups such as blacks and feminists. Gilroy on the other hand, because of his distrust of white working class chauvinism and trade union and Labour Party racism, is distrustful of such an alliance. Indeed it is just this call for a broad democratic alliance which "perverts Gramsci".⁽²⁸⁾ (At one point Gilroy goes so far as to suggest that the trade unions and the Labour Party do not represent the Labour Party do not represent the working class as a class at all.)⁽²⁹⁾ It is, therefore, no wonder that he argues for the autonomous development of black and feminist politics.

We find this position uncomfortable, to say the least. Not because we disagree with Gilroy about the chauvinism and racism within traditional working class institutions. Nor because we believe in the absolute primacy of productive relations, or wish to subordinate all other struggles to those of organised labour. Quite the contrary, in fact: our intention on re-entering the formal political system through the Labour Party in the early nineteen eighties was, like Ian Taylor's, to help shift the Party from its historic attitudes and position, to make it more amenable to a new style of cultural politics, one which was openly responsive to demands predicated on the needs of other groups whose oppression was not directly reducible to economic relations. While we would be the first to accept that there is still a long way to go in this struggle - Labour's

attitude to the demand for Black Sections is just one example of this - Gilroy's cogent and forceful thesis goes even further, implying that the struggle is a futile one.

Whether Gilroy is right remains to be seen. With the Labour Party and the trade unions now drifting to the right we freely admit to being less sure about our own position than we once were, though we still remain unclear - like some Left Realists - about the lines and potential of any alternative strategy. One thing is for sure, however: arguing through these complex strategic positions, whether in the context of law and order, feminist politics or whatever, will not be served by self-styled Left Realists caricaturing just about all who oppose them.

NOTES

1. T. Mathiesen, The Politics of Abolition (London, Martin Robertson, 1976).
2. Criticism of the Labour Party and the trade unions was expressed by many writers, but most eloquently by Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn in Towards Socialism (London, Fontana, 1965).
3. See, for example, John Lea and Jock Young, 'Reply to Norman Ginsburg', Critical Social Policy, Issue 12, 1985.
4. I. Taylor, Law and Order: Arguments for Socialism (London, Macmillan, 1981), p. xvi.
5. Introduction to State Research, Review of Security and the State (London, Julian Friedman, 1978), reprinted as 'The Secret State' in Writing by Candlelight (London, Merlin, 1980).
6. Expressed most forcefully in J. Lea and J. Young, What is to be Done about Law and Order? (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984).
7. L. Dronfield, Outside Chance (London, RAP, 1980).
8. I. Taylor, op. cit., Chapter 1.
9. T. Ward, 'Symbols and Noble Lies' in H. Bianchi and R. van Swaaningen (eds.) Abolitionism: Towards a Non-Repressive Approach to Crime (Amsterdam, Free University Press, in press).
10. J. Young, 'The Failure of Criminology' in R. Matthews and J. Young (eds.) Confronting Crime (London, Sage, 1986).
11. N. Ginsburg, 'Striking Back for the Empire', Critical Social Policy, Issue 12, p. 127.
12. 'The Failure of Criminology', op. cit., p. 19.
13. R. Kinsey, J. Lea and J. Young, Losing the Fight Against Crime (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986) p.23, quoting Trevor Jones' estimate of the 'real' detection rate on Islington Council estates, taking unreported offences into account.
14. P. Morris and K. Heal, Crime Control and the Police (Home Office Research Study No. 67, HMSO, 1981) p. 17.
15. J. Burrows, Investigating Burglary: The Measurement of Police Performance (Home Office Research Study 88, HMSO, 1986).
16. Albeit "within the context of the circumstances which beset" the offender: Losing the Fight Against Crime, p.75.
17. 'Left Idealism, Reformism and Beyond', in N.D.C./C.S.E. (eds.) Capitalism and the Rule of Law (London, Hutchinson, 1979) p.26.
18. 'Law, Democracy and Justice' in D. Cowell and J. Young (eds.) Policing the Riots (London, Junction Books 1982); Controlling the Constable (London, Fredrick Muller, 1984); 'The Problem of Law Enforcement Policy in England and Wales', International Journal of the Sociology of Law, 12 (1984), pp. 117-135.
19. Controlling the Constable, p. 164.
20. Losing the Fight Against Crime, p.93.
21. Lord Gifford (Chair) The Broadwater Farm Inquiry (London, Karia Press, 1986).
22. T. Jones. B. Maclean and J. Young, The Islington Crime Survey: Crime, Victimisation and Policing in Inner-City London (Farnborough, Gower, 1986).
23. 'Reply to Norman Ginsburg', op. cit.; Losing the Fight Against Crime pp. 105-36.
24. Islington Crime Survey pp. 141-2.
25. D. Smith and J. Gray, Police and People in London: The PSI Report (Farnborough, Gower, 1985) pp. 31-4, 273.
26. P. Gilroy, 'Police and Thieves' in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in '70s Britain, p. 150.
27. What is to be Done About Law and Order? p. 120.
28. The Empire Strikes Back, p. 305
29. *ibid.*

A VISIT TO BARNET HOSPITAL

CRISIS INTERVENTION SCHEME

The Crisis Intervention Scheme (CIS) is a team of people consisting of psychiatrists, social workers and nurses whose aim is to divert, wherever possible, people who are showing signs of extreme mental disturbance and confusion from the penal system. Two workers from WIP went to visit the scheme to see how it worked.

CIS liaise with the local police station and are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with two people on duty during the day and one at night. If, when they arrest someone for a 'minor' disturbance, the police feel that the 'offender' is behaving in a bizarre manner or is showing signs of mental illness, they will contact the CIS who aim to send someone within the hour, usually to the police station. The Crisis Intervention worker will attempt to talk to the person and try to find out what the problem is, whether he or she has a recognisable mental illness or whether they are temporarily confused or disturbed by a particular event, ie the break up of a relationship or appalling home circumstances etc. If the person is showing signs of severe or potentially long-term mental illness, they will arrange for that person to be admitted to a hospital – usually this will be under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act, which lasts for 72 hours and can only be implemented by a psychiatric social worker or doctor. If they feel the person is not ill as such they will tell the police who (most probably) go ahead and press charges as usual. In some instances, CIS feel it is better that someone takes their chances before the courts, rather than go to hospital. A hospital stay may mean being away from home or out of circulation for possibly several weeks.

As a team, they believe most people with whom they come into contact through the police are reacting to a social situation, home pressures, stress, homelessness and are not 'mentally ill' as such. They are mainly in need of practical help and advice. They are mainly in need of practical help and advice. They also feel that a hospital stay is not necessarily a good idea. It cannot, in the majority of cases, solve the problem which made the person come into contact with the police and can only give temporary respite, but not treatment, unless it is a recognisable illness treatable with drugs. Mental hospitals in their opinion should mainly be seen as 'asylums' from the harshness of everyday life. Some people enjoy being there and enjoy a higher standard of living than they would have outside, plus people to care for them and friendship. They feel it is important to look at the cause of people's illness and to never lose sight of that, unlike most psychiatrists, who tend to treat the symptoms and ignore the social problems.

This particular scheme does not operate anywhere else in the country, as far as they know. *This is mainly due to antagonism from the medical profession who feel professionally threatened.* They tend not to like people being treated in the community and see most manifestations of distress as an illness to be treated in hospital under constant supervision.

Pru Stevenson

WIP is undertaking a special study of Women in Special Hospitals (WISH), see the WIP section for more details.

LETTERS

Dear RAP,

Amnesty International has appointed me as research coordinator in order to collect, compile and analyse case material about people imprisoned on grounds of homosexuality. This project has been initiated with the purpose of providing information for an internal discussion within Amnesty International about whether the organisation should or should not consider such people as "prisoners of conscience" under its Statute.

Today the organisation could regard as a prisoner of conscience anyone imprisoned for advocacy of equal rights for homosexuals. In the discussion it has been stated that the term "advocacy" may not be clear. Also, it has been proposed that other types of cases be considered. An initial aim of this study is to clarify what categories of cases exist.

It must be stressed that Amnesty International is focusing on prisoners and would be interested to learn about concrete cases of people who have been *imprisoned* for reasons related — directly or indirectly — to homosexuality. This would include cases where other charges are brought but the real purpose is to discriminate against someone who is homosexual.

Any press clippings, trial records, etc which give further information would be welcome as well as pieces of relevant legislation. We would also appreciate addresses of other organizations you believe might have information of this kind. As we are aware of the often sensitive nature of the information about cases concerning homosexual individuals in many countries, we want to assure you that Amnesty International will treat your information with full confidentiality. In the interest of the persons concerned, no identifiable information about persons will be made public, nor will Amnesty International give any information about the sources of its information. I would appreciate your acting in the same manner on this.

The information I will be looking for is both on cases that clearly fall within the present mandate (as outlined above) as well as on cases that do not. These would be cases such as persons imprisoned solely on grounds of being homosexual or because of their homosexual behaviour. I would look forward to any such information that may have come to your attention and that you would want to provide us.

There is one point I need to emphasize. This study is linked to a policy discussion. For that discussion we will need to know a wide range of types of cases involving imprisonment. After this discussion, when Amnesty International will define its area of concern, in view of its possibilities and limitations, some types of cases are likely to be outside that definition. It is therefore likely that Amnesty International will not subsequently act on all cases provided to us. This is so regarding all the various areas of the organization's mandate, since Amnesty International has to limit its own mandate and to restrict its work accordingly.

The fact that we are conducting this survey does not necessarily imply that we are about to change policy (that can only be determined by our International Council after considering all the facts). But of course this discussion will benefit greatly from detailed information about concrete cases. We therefore would like to request you to provide us with all relevant information you might possess in order to make this important project as complete and successful as possible.

Let me finally reiterate that all data provided on cases will be dealt with in a strictly confidential manner in accordance with the longstanding practice of Amnesty International and rules of data protection.

Yours sincerely,

George A J Siemensma
P O Box 1473
1000 BL Amsterdam
NETHERLANDS

Dear RAP,

Thanks for the journal, and please find enclosed cheque for another year.

The journal seems to be even better in recent issues, partly it is the supplements from **PROP** and **WIP** but also the subject matter is more relevant and challenging to my life. Especially good is the introduction of the feminist view.

Ideas for the future: a parliamentary report, more book reviews, what alternatives are being developed in other countries, interviews and 'on the spot' reports.

I work a lot in trades unions and I would welcome articles around this area such as laws against organising. Many articles in *The Abolitionist* focus on individuals or groups as defined by society. How about groups who define themselves and find themselves up against the law?

I know it's more work, but I'd welcome a chance to meet people and to listen to them. Has **RAP** ever had a conference/workshops? From them could come a whole journal, report backs, talks etc.

There does seem a large gap in work in unions. I'm just reading the inside cover and it appears to me that there is enough there for motions. There is the danger of them being motions and little else but at least the question is up for debate. It does seem ironic that at a time when the government wants to hit unions hard that the debate has so little put into it from the very people it hits hardest. At times it seems that almost we vacate ideological territory. The words on the inside cover, to me, state where we are and what we need to do, at least in sketch.

Thanks again for your journal and all you do.

Jonathan E Stanley
35 Dunscombe Road
Hertford
Herts SG14 3B7

Leeds Prisoners' Support Group
c/o Box A.S.S.
59 Cookridge St.
Leeds 2

Dear RAP,

I am writing to let you know that LPSG is a new group formed about 3 months ago. We are currently, and primarily, concerned with visiting prisoners in Armley, Leeds, and because of few resources, and the nature of people in the group, we are concerned mainly with political prisoners. That is to say, prisoners whose cases have been defined as 'political' by the state, although as anarchists we believe all prisoners are political. However we do not have the resources to support every inmate at Armley!

We are currently visiting four A.L.F. remanders and three people recently released for an arson attack on a Leeds branch of Lloyd's bank. Funding for visits (i.e. taking food, newspapers etc. in to them) has come mainly from A.L.F. Supporters Group, B.U.A.V. and what funds we have raised locally from benefit gigs etc. We are also setting up a Northern network of local support groups in the region, e.g. Manchester Black Cross, and we are also in contact with Anarchist Black Cross in London. We organise regular visits into Armley, both from Leeds members and friends from outside Leeds of the prisoners, and offer whatever support we can.

We are slowly sussing our way round the Prison Rules, and finding out more every day about the system!! Once we become more established and more organised we would be interested in working with **RAP** and increasing our activities and involvement in prison work, and would like to remain in touch with you.

We would be grateful if you could publicise LPSG in the **Abolitionist**, and/or put us in touch with other support groups in the region

Yours sincerely,
Louise Bolotin, L.P.S.G.

contact tel. nos.
623880/790739

REVIEWS

AND INJUSTICE FOR ALL?

NACRO'S report on 'Black People and the Criminal Justice System'

For years now, black people have been complaining of the racist and discriminatory treatment they have been receiving throughout the criminal justice system — from the police, through the courts and probation service, into the prisons, borstals and youth custody centres. Their complaints, however, have gone largely unheard, even by the larger and established legal reform groups such as the National Council for Civil Liberties and the Howard League for Penal Reform. In this context, the recent report by the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) on *Black People and the Criminal Justice System* may be welcomed as an important new document, as evidence that, at last, mainstream reform groups are taking seriously the concerns of black people. This, however, would be a serious mistake. For the NACRO report completely misses the point by failing to get to grips with the question of racism.

This expensive report — £5 for 48 pages — which was published to much media attention in September, comes from a 'Race Issues Advisory Committee'; the product, we are told, of a year's work. This committee was set up in 1983 to 'focus attention on black people in the criminal justice system' and, in 1985, decided to embark upon a 'major initiative' to seek out and pull together the available information and to open up discussion with the 'responsible bodies'.

The committee looked at the courts, the probation and social services, the prison system, the voluntary sector and at black people as victims of crime. (Policing was excluded because 'quite a lot is already known'.)

In its chapter on the courts, the committee bemoans the absence of any ethnic monitoring of people passing through the criminal courts and goes on to discuss the evidence available about sentencing patterns. Such evidence is contradictory and far from conclusive. What is beyond doubt, however, is that black people are disproportionately represented among the prison population and at least one study has shown that this cannot be explained by the seriousness of the offences for which they have been convicted.

The NACRO report ignores such evidence which, on the face of it, points to racially-biased sentencing, and goes on to discuss the recruitment of more black magistrates as though this were the answer. In addition, the committee recommends that bodies such as the Magistrates Association, the Bar Council and the Law Society should adopt equal opportunities statements, that more black people should be recruited as magistrates and justices clerks, and that people working in the courts should undergo 'race training'. Whatever that is, the report never makes clear.

The report says nothing about the many aspects of court procedure about which black people have made serious allegations. There is nothing, for instance, about the granting or refusal of bail, the attachment of restrictive bail conditions, the problems of ensuring multi-racial juries, the ways in which the courts have frequently disregarded due process in cases involving black defendants, or the ways in which the courts have sanctioned and thereby legitimated, police malpractice towards black people. Evidence of such court practices may not be found in the kind of 'impartial' academic studies quoted by the report, but it is available and ought to have been discovered and reported if the committee were serious about giving a voice to black people's concerns.

Just as the NACRO report lets the court off the hook, so it lets the probation service off lightly. It acknowledges that studies show that black people get a 'poor deal' from social

inquiry reports and cites evidence from probation workers themselves admitting that they make fewer recommendations for the supervision of black offenders within the community. But all that the report can then find to recommend is, as with the courts, a mixture of equal opportunities statements, recruitment of black staff and a race relations component in social work training courses. As with the courts, the question of racism is avoided.

Not surprisingly the question of racism is avoided too in the chapter dealing with prisons. There is no mention, for instance, of the considerable evidence of racist behaviour of prison staff towards black (and Irish) prisoners and nothing either about the evidence of support for fascist organisations among staff in certain prisons. Again, this evidence is available and ought to have been presented here. Instead, the NACRO committee talks almost exclusively in terms of Home Office prison department circulars, prison race relations liaison officers and race relations training. It does not recognise not only that these have little impact on what goes on inside prisons but that they exist, not because of good will or good intentions on the part of the prison department or prison staff, but because the Home Office had to do something to deal with an increasing — and increasingly rebellious — black prison population. Not surprisingly, the NACRO report goes on to recommend that the prison department publish an equal opportunity statement, make racial discrimination a disciplinary offence, recruit more black prison officers and increase the number of black people on boards of visitors. Just as the NACRO report fails to get to grips with the ideas and reality of racism, so its discussion of black people as victims of crime and, in particular, as victims of racially-motivated crime, is quite inadequate. Its account relies heavily on police and Home Office evidence and pays little attention to the numerous other accounts including by black people which paint a grimmer, starker picture. Following from this, the report accepts at face value so-called police 'initiatives' to deal with the problem of racial attacks. So, for instance, the definition of a 'racially-motivated incident' recently recommended by the Association of Chief Police Officers to all police forces is accepted without question even though it confuses inter-racial incidents (where victim and aggressor are of different colour) with racial attacks. In the same way, the 'multi-agency approach' adopted by the Metropolitan Police is noted without qualification even though such an approach removes racial violence from the ambit of routine policing, treating it as something other than criminal as yet another problem for social services.

Having accepted the official definition and description of the problem, the NACRO committee can then talk of the commitment of the police to tackle racial incidents', implying that such a commitment actually exists while the experience of black people shows precisely that there is *no* such commitment. (The committee does concede that the police response to racial incidents is 'extremely variable' but goes on to say that 'there is a need for continued training' as though this would solve the problem.) Just as the committee fails to understand racism in the criminal justice system so it fails to understand police racism.

The limitations of the NACRO report can be partly explained by the nature of the people who gave evidence to the committee. So the people who addressed the committee on black people were, not former black prisoners or groups working with black people in prison such as the Black Female Prisoners Scheme or PROP (the National Prisoners Movement) but a

prison governor, a former member of a board of visitors, the assistant secretary of the Prison Officers Association and the prison department official with responsibility for race relations. Similarly, when it dealt with racial attacks the committee heard no evidence from any police monitoring groups or local campaigns against racial violence, but its four witnesses did include the head of the Metropolitan Police community relations branch. Had the committee sought out and listened to the views of those at the receiving end of the criminal justice system its report might have been a truer reflection of the actual situation.

As it is, the committee fails to understand the nature and the

reality of racism and how this leads to the criminalisation of black people. Indeed the committee is not concerned about racism at all: it is, after all, a 'race issue' (whatever that means) committee. Had it been concerned to identify racism it would have looked through the prism of the black experience and seen the fundamental injustices of the criminal 'justice' system. As it is, the committee argues for equal treatment in a system which remains fundamentally unjust.

This is a longer version of an article that appeared in the Campaign against Racism and Fascism section of the December issue of Searchlight.

DELINQUENT SENTENCERS

Elizabeth Burney,
Sentencing Young People: What went wrong with the Criminal Justice Act 1982
Gower, 1986, £12.95 hbk.

Perhaps it's odd of me, but I generally find that books which are meant to make me feel angry about something produce just the opposite effect. Even if the book is well written and I'm broadly in sympathy with the argument, sooner or later I'm overcome by the wet, liberal urge to be fair to the person or institution under attack. It's the wet liberal books, the ones that bend over backwards to be fair, that make me really angry about the injustices they expose. Elizabeth Burney's book is one of those.

Probably the greatest political achievement of the erstwhile MP for Knowsley North (Mr Killjoy Slick, as some of us affectionately called him) was Section 1(4) of the Criminal Justice Act 1982. This lays down that a court may not pass a custodial sentence on a person under 21 unless it is satisfied that the offender "is unable or unwilling to respond to non-custodial penalties" or "a custodial sentence is necessary for the protection of the public" or - a concession to Tory MPs horrified at the radicalism of the original proposal - "the offence was so serious that a non-custodial penalty cannot be justified". Under Section 2(7), a magistrate's court is required to record its reasons for thinking that one of the three criteria is satisfied.

The most remarkable finding of Elizabeth Burney's study of 12 magistrates' courts in the South-East - even she is moved to describe it as "devastating" - is that "in the majority of cases courts break the law by failing to follow the statutory sentencing formula, or failing to record it. In about 60 per cent of cases ... the statement of reasons was either incomplete, invalid, or just not there at all." The 14% of custodial sentences for which no reason at all was given included 28 days DC for a 16-year old boy who stole 78 pence worth of biscuits, breaking a 9month old conditional discharge.

The question comes to mind, though Burney is too polite to ask it, whether people who display such a contemptuous disregard for the law, or else such plain incompetence, have any business to sit in judgement on their fellow citizens, let alone exercise the awesome responsibility of depriving them of their liberty.

But even when magistrates do follow the letter of the law, the protection it affords is insignificant. Theft of a giro for 50p was, in one case, deemed so 'serious' that only a custodial sentence would do. The 'seriousness' and 'protection of the public' clauses can be used to justify blanket policies of general deterrent sentencing for 'football hooligans' and other groups. And the 'unwilling to respond' clause means that people can be punished for their base ingratitude in failing to be rehabilitated by their previous sentence.

What, you may ask, did the defendants' lawyers do about

this? They were ill-prepared, in some cases worse than useless, and not "noticeably active in challenging the use of statutory reasons for custody". Where appeals were lodged and won, this seems often to have been on the initiative of social workers. But even the Court of Appeal paid no attention to the statutory formula in its 'guideline' judgement on football violence, and custodial sentences in such cases (usually for 'threatening behaviour' rather than actual violence) were unfailingly upheld by the Crown Court.

Social workers and probation officers do not come out smelling of roses, either. Of custodial sentences for burglary, 42% were recommended, or as good as recommended in Social Inquiry Reports, a few of which were "nothing less than character assassinations". Most of the reports dwelt heavily on family background, lending themselves to the practice of punishing the children for the sins of their parents. "It's no new discovery", Burney drily remarks, "that a stable supportive home is very important if you want to avoid being locked up".

Many custodial sentences are imposed, not out of simple vindictiveness, but in the ludicrous belief that they will do the offender some kind of good. Most courts prefer Youth Custody to Detention Centre sentences, even for periods short enough to be spent in D.C., because they still imagine that Y.C. inmates receive beneficial 'training' of the sort Borstals were supposed to provide. The thought of so much pain being unflinched out of well-intentioned, pig-headed ignorance is one that I find particularly exasperating.

Burney's recommendations are mostly along the right lines. Abolish prison for summary offences (or perhaps limit it to three weeks), repeal the 'seriousness' criterion, and press for the closure of institutions on the Massachusetts model. She puts one of the crucial points very neatly: "The patient with 'flu is told to take aspirin ... however many times he catches the complaint. The offender who has received custody once re-offends and is given custody again. So why ... should non-custodial penalties not be repeated ... given that one accepts that the sentence, like the aspirin, is no 'cure'?" It's a pity she spoils this by arguing that a more flexible, less tariff-fixated approach to sentencing must include "the possibility of using a heavy sentence early in a criminal career where it seems the right thing for that person." Surely this kind of common-sense hunch, against all the evidence, that locking someone up will be good for them is just what needs to be discouraged.

Then again, perhaps not. Perhaps the only thing that will knock some sense into the heads of our judicial law-breakers is a six month sabbatical as guests of HM Prison Department. And the earlier in their careers the better.

Tony Ward.

REVIEWS

OBITUARY

Jean Davies was a formidable defender of prisoners' rights. Here, her son Nick Davies, the journalist, writes about the life and work of his mother.

My mother was an unusual woman. There was one particular day when she was extraordinarily late in picking me up from school, but when she finally arrived she was able to come up with an explanation that far surpassed the kind of domestic bother that most mothers produced.

She explained that, earlier that day, she had discovered that a teenage boy she knew had been out burglarising — despite all his promises to the contrary — and she had offered him a straight choice: he could throw away his ill-gotten gains or she would turn him in to the police.

He had agreed to the former and, not wanting to give him a chance to wriggle out of it, she had taken him there and then to a main-line railway station in central London and surreptitiously helped him to stuff hundreds of pounds in crisp new notes through some railings into an old basement.

She was always doing that kind of thing: barmy episodes which involved her special potent mixture of benevolence and bullying. It was that mixture which made her such a force to be reckoned with in the world of prison reform and she would use it with equal determination on prisoners, judges, bureaucrats, journalists or anyone else who needed to be dealt with.

It was there at the beginning, in 1968, when she became a prison visitor at Grendon Underwood with a lot of other well-bred ladies with flowers in their hats. She soon broke ranks by encouraging those she visited to stay in touch when they were released — a breach of the rules which led to a showdown with the Governor, her resignation as a visitor and a deep commitment to prisoners which lasted until her death in July.

From that time, the house was always full of 'her boys'. She listened to them and understood them and offered them her help: she let them stay as long as they needed to, she found them jobs, she stood their bail and paid their bills and if any of them ever stepped out of line, she exploded. I once saw her chasing an armed robber up the stairs, shouting: 'Go to your room. And don't come down until you're sorry.' He went without a murmur.

The whole thing just grew spontaneously. To provide work for the people she was trying to help, she set up a company to make and sell wooden jewellery. To promote prisoners' art, she opened a specialist art gallery. To keep young offenders off the streets, she opened workshops. And to give the whole enterprise some political clout, she made it a charity, the Burnbake Trust, and recruited a few Big Names as trustees — a decision which was eventually to prove her undoing.

She whipped it all along at a hectic pace, harassing Home Secretaries ('Oh, Don't be so stupid', she'd scold them), staging a one-woman sit-down in a prison gateway when she was refused access, feeding stories to the press, careering from one financial crisis to another, always instinctively pushing to protect the rights and potentials of prisoners.

It all finally came unstuck in 1983 when the powerful trustees whose help she had enlisted turned on her and demanded that she should come to heel. It was all very well trying to help these people, they complained, but you have to balance the books and make it pay. When they ignored her pleas and set about dismantling her creation, she resigned in despair and fell into a long depression.

Within a year she became ill. There was an operation. Some of her energy came back: she set up a hostel for homeless people; she visited my sister in Zimbabwe and set up a business, backed by Robert Mugabe's sister, to import African women's crochet work. But early this year, she became ill again and, eleven weeks later, she died, aged only 58.

PUBLICATIONS

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Doug Wakefield: A Thousand Days in Solitary £1.40
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The story of Doug Wakefield, a life sentence prisoner, and his personal account of his ordeal in solitary confinement.

Outside Chance: The Story of the Newham Alternatives Project. Liz Dronfield (1980). £2.25

A report on a unique alternative to prison in East London, founded by RAP in 1974.

Parole Reviewed (1981). 75p
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Out of Sight: RAP on Prisons (1981). 70p
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