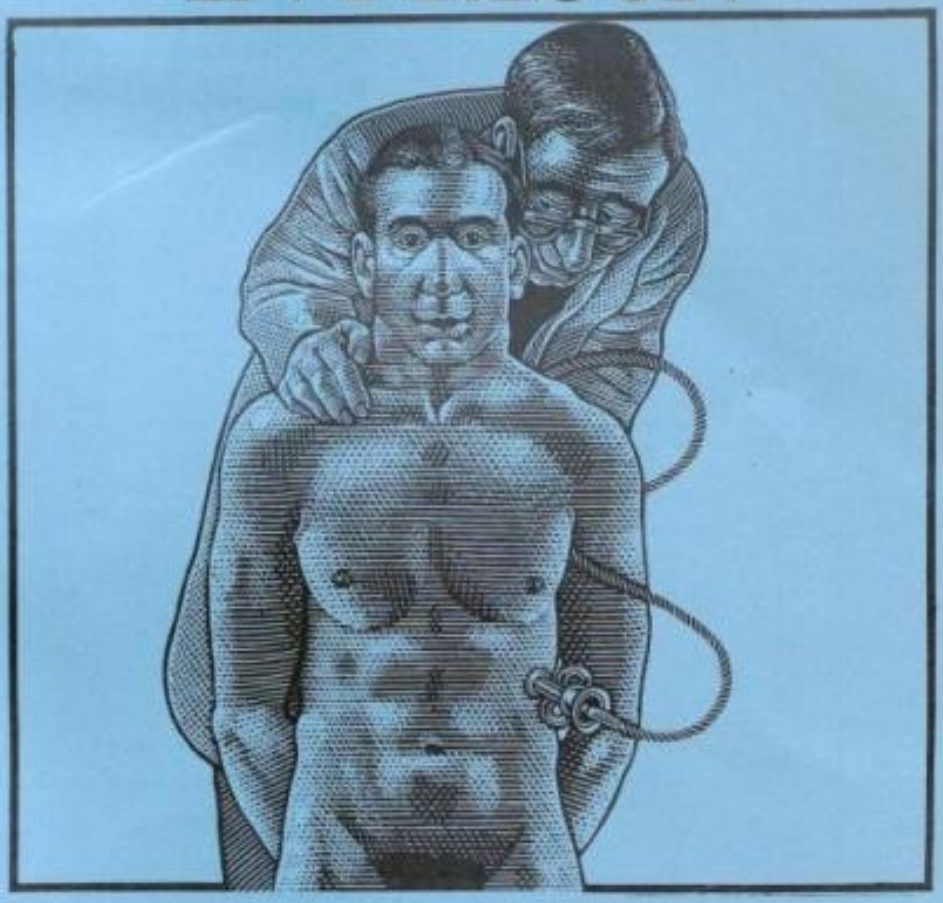
THE ABOLITIONIST

a quarterly journal from Radical Alternatives to Prison

Number 8 Spring 1981

SEX OFFENDERS IN PRISON



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The RAP office has moved once again. We are no longer at 182 Upper St and are still looking for a permanent, new office. Until further notice, we can be contacted at:

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Spring 1981. Number 8

Radical Alternatives to 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 are in prison 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 without doubt they are a very small minority in 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 reduce maximum sentences and an end to imprisonment for certain minor offences
- decriminalisation of other minor offences such as soliciting and the possession of cannabis
- an end to the imprisonment 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 equipped the state with new implements of control and coercion. 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" like the Newham Alternatives to Prison Project (NAP) and the Brighton Alternatives to Prison Project (BAPP). These work, as far as possible, independently of the state and participation cannot be formally imposed by a court.

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

The Special Unit at Barlinnie Prison gives some idea of what can be achieved by a less authoritarian approach.

Some of RAP's medium term goals are shared by other groups who do not share our political outlook. But RAP's overriding 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.

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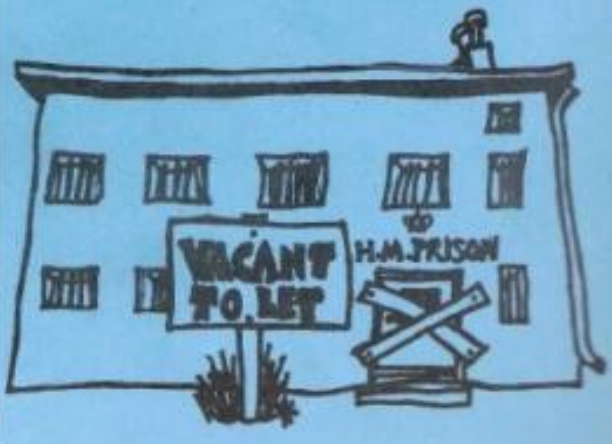


Sex offenders in prison: outsiders inside

No category of prisoner arouses more hostility, nor gives rise to more confused thinking than the "sex offender". The mere bracketing of a wide range of offences under such an emotive label is an indication of the scale of confusion. This, the first in a series of articles drawn from discusssions within the RAP Working Group on sex offenders, is concerned with the problems faced by this class of prisoner in their relationship with other prisoners and staff.

In considering prisoners' attitudes towards sex offenders, it is necessary to draw a clear distinction between those convicted of offences against children (of almost every kind, however marginal and trivial) and those convicted of rape (again of almost every kind except the most obsessive or mutilatory).

"Sex offenders", in the eyes of other prisoners, come almost wholly into the first category. Little attempt is made to discriminate. Vicious attacks - razor slashing, disfigurement with boiling water or fat thrown in the face, powdered glass in food - are as likely to be meted out to a man convicted of 'indecent behaviour', involving neither violence nor coercion, with a young boy or girl, as to those convicted of genital, anal or oral rape of a child.

Where other prisoners do discriminate, it is likely to be in favour of sex offenders who have raped girls rather than boys. Indeed, the rape - even a violent one - of a 13 year old girl who "could pass for 16" carries very little odium, and certainly far less than would a much more trivial assault against a boy of the same age. Girls, in this respect, cease to be seen as children and their abuse is categorised, along with rape of adult women, almost as "fair game".

It is tempting to see this relative tolerance of rape as a major attitudinal difference between prisoners and the general population in the outside community. Perhaps if the comparison were to be made with outside *male* attitudes a different picture would emerge. We are not of course talking here about the tiny number of cases that make banner headlines and become household words for sadism but the vast majority of cases in which the rapist and victim are known, sometimes even well known to each other - and the many more in this category which are never reported at all. The often noted failure of the public to intervene in "lovers' quarrels", for example the rape a few years ago of a young woman in a telephone box in the centre of London's West End, in the sight and hearing of hundreds of passers-by, signifies an acceptance which the prisoner is merely echoing.

Some sexual offences are so obscene that one cannot help but be revolted by them - mutilation, violent penetration of infants. Once one gets to this sort of mercifully rare level, there is general agreement by all prisoners that such men or occasionaly women, must be "sick in the head". Here again, the public attitude is almost certainly identical. Yet the necessary conclusion from such a surely correct assessment -that the behaviour is beyond an individual's power to control- and that condemnation and punishment are consequently meaningless concepts to apply, is never reached. At their court appearances, such people run a gauntlet of abuse and as prisoners, serve their sentences in constant fear of their lives. They form a separate category of prisoner which is segregated even within the segregation unit.

'nonces'

Rule 43 of the Prison Rules provides that "Where it appears desirable for the maintenance of good order and discipline or in his own interests that a prisoner should not associate with other prisoners either generally or for particular purposes, the Governor may arrange for the prisoner's removal accordingly." Prisoners, touchy about their personal status, speak about "Rule 43(a) and (b)" or "Rule 43" and Governor's Rule 43", or "Rule 43 and Rule 43 (43)" -any formula, in fact, that does not tar all Rule 43-ers with the same brush as the detested sex offenders or "nonces" (nonsense cases).

In fact the rule makes no such distinction although the actual manner in which prisoners are allocated within the segregation wing does indicate a rough and ready breakdown into categories.

The layout of prison segregation units varies from prison to prison. At Wandsworth for example a staff member describes it thus: Top Landing -generally grasses, gang

members and people who had turned Queen's Evidence: Second and Third Landings, 'ordinary' sex offenders: Bottom Landing (near Wing office), notorious sex offenders. The same informant describes the top landing as having, in the eyes of the prison staff, the highest status.

PROP looks at the same situation from a different standpoint and describes the status ladder which is erected amongst the the Rule 43 population itself. Thus, just as the general prison population divides into the 'aristocrats' -master safe-blowers, bank robbers and the like - at the top of the ladder, 'gas meter bandits' at the bottom and sex offenders consigned to a nether region below, so too does the nether region itself divide out. The more obscene crimes, as defined in an earlier paragraph, then become the new nether region, while the top of the tree, at any rate amongst those voluntarily segregated, is composed of those escaping gambling debts. In between, and jostling for superiority in countless divisions and sub-divisions are the 'ordinary' sex offenders and the grasses.

rule 43

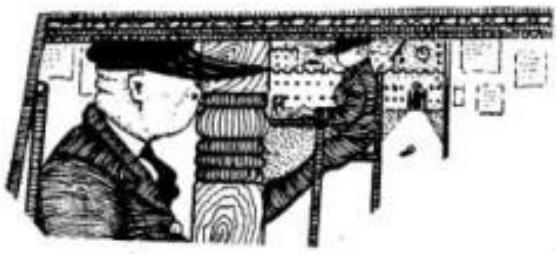
Right at the top of course, and unmentioned by the Wandsworth staff member, is the Rule 43 prisoner segregated "in the interests of good order and discipline" - in other words the troublemaker - an honourable term including the most militant champions of prisoners' rights. It is by them and of them that the term "down the block" is used.

In many prisons there is physical separation of these different elements. Parkhurst for example has a 'nonces' wing' (actually the bottom landing of a wing) with its own exercise yard, while the Block housing all the other elements referred to, is in another wing altogether. But, taking prisons as a whole, it is important to recognise the overlap that occurs in all but the most extreme cases.

Not all sex offenders who get themselves into the Rule 43 situation need have done so. Conviction for 'ordinary rape' is most unlikely to require any prisoner to seek protection, though many such prisoners do so - very often because they cannot face *themselves*. Once segregated amongst the 'nonces', such a prisoner will then incur resentment which he would probably have avoided if he had remained amongst the general prison population.

Inevitably he will be employed on jobs which involve close liaison with the authorities, working with prison officers rather than with other prisoners. These other prisoners will catch glimpses of him from time to time being escorted to these "screws' jobs" in company with known child-molesters and informers. Regardless of his behaviour as a prisoner, he will have effectively isolated himself by the company he has chosen. It is an easier situation to get into than to get out of.

Conversely, some prisoners convicted of offences with children have managed, by avoiding that initial segregation, to get accepted into the main prison community. If their offence has been a minor one, and if they have managed to escape early detection, then it can be possible for them to earn, by their demeanour, a place in the open. But it is a difficult and dangerous course to plot, with the risk of exposure - often by prison officers - always present.



catch 22

The most pernicious and persistent labelling of "nonces" can be summed up in the phrase "All sex offenders are grasses". Such phrases surface repeatedly in prison literature, particularly by those authors who choose to present a powerful male image (usually a fantasy one). Yet the label itself is a classic example of a Catch-22 situation. Sex offenders do work closely with prison officers, they do fraternise and share tea breaks with them - but it is the general prison population and particularly the demonstrative male macho prisoner who force them into that situation in the first place.

To single out sex offenders as informers is particularly inappropriate at the present time when so many of the professional criminal fraternity are busy putting each other away. It is also wrong in fact. Despite being coldshouldered by other prisoners, sex offenders have frequently been instrumental in bringing to light the abuses of those other prisoners. Their presence within the segregation blocks and their proximity to prison officers give them special advantages as the eyes and ears of what is going on. Yet, far from encouraging them, other prisoners seem to do their utmost to push them into the opposite camp.

There have been few successful exposures of the prison authorities that have not been helped by detailed and accurate information from such sources. The long saga of the Hull riot - not just the initial exposures but also the treatment meted out to Hull prisoners moved to segregation blocks of other prisons - is one example where information from sex offenders was crucial to the difficult piecing together of smuggled information. The same applies to the MUFTI (Minimum Use of Force Tactical Intervention) squad assault on Wormwood Scrubs in 1979 and to the long running campaign to expose the prison medical authorities.

In many cases, the contribution has been absolutely crucial. The dossier of evidence compiled on the Stephen Smith case in Wormwood Scrubs in 1974, which led to a jury returning an open verdict on a death which the Home Office had conspired to present as a suicide, could never have happened without first rate detective work carried out, at very great personal risk, by prisoners in this category.

It is clear from the foregoing that prison staff *use* this division amongst prisoners, just as they will try and use and often promote other divisions - for example between black and white prisoners or Irish and English prisoners. In each case where the tactic succeeds, it is because prisoners themselves allow it to happen. "Divide and Rule" is one of the oldest weapons in the authoritarian armoury and it is a direct assault on the prisoners' (or anyone else's) own strongest weapon - solidarity.

It is prison officers who hold the safety of sex offenders in their hands. While on the main wings of a prison it is only their anonymity that defends them - and their identity can be revealed at the whim of any prison officer with access to their records; the surprise is not that sex offenders grass but that so many of them withstand the pressures.

Once on the segregation block, the sex offender is doubly at the mercy of prison officers. Isolation is rarely so complete that he cannot be placed "on the line" for a beating by other prisoners if he fails to please those on whom his protection depends. But, as well as this, he runs the risk of *all* prisoners in segregation of being particularly open to abuse by prison officers themselves.

Prison officers have always been resentful of women working within male prisons - especially when, as so often happens, they relate more closely to the prisoners than to the staff (as, in the cases of teachers or welfare workers, they surely must if they are doing their jobs properly).

Where women staff are involved with sex offenders, the resentment becomes extreme. A case in point - in fact a case which illustrates two sides to this question - concerns "G", a prisoner serving life for rape (in fact for several rapes) in Wormwood Scrubs D Wing. "G" was illiterate and by 1974 had spent many years in custody. He was not in segregation and was not in any great difficulty with other prisoners, amongst whom he moved freely. It was on the wing that he approached a woman prison teacher and asked if he could be taught to read and write and do simple arithmetic. The teacher arranged to come onto the wing once a week, during the lunch break and to give him an hour's tuition in the welfare office - a converted cell on the ground floor with a large window window in its door and within full sight of the administrative office opposite.

The lessons were started during the Wing Governor's absence on leave and, despite mutterings from prison officers, were were continued each week as planned. On the Governor's return, he attempted to get them stopped on the grounds that his staff had objected that they could not be responsible for the woman teacher's safety. It was only with the support of ILEA that the teacher was able to win permission for the classes to continue.

Several years later, the same prisoner at the same prison came across another woman staff member, though this time not a sympathetic or understanding one. "G" by this time had been earmarked for early release and was already allocated to an open prison as an obvious first stage to release on licence. Then a new and inexperienced woman probation officer made a note on the prisoner's record file that "his eyes followed her around the wing".

The authorities, so ready to try and prevent positive action by the woman teacher a few years earlier, were quick to respond. "G's" allocation to an open prison was cancelled and his release put back for years and possibly for ever by a thoughtless and meaningless remark which will remain on his Prison Record, to be read out at every future review of his case. Yet it should require only a moment's thought to recognise that a new woman welfare officer entering an all-male prison is liable to have many eyes, of prison officers no less than prisoners, following her around the wing.

parole myth

"G's" case raises the question of parole. Amongst prisoners on the main wing of a prison there is a myth that sex offenders get parole easier than other prisoners. This does not seem to be borne out in fact because, despite the fact that medical treatment of sex offenders has been widely discredited, and that often relevant treatment, if any, is not available in the prison, sex offenders would still have to give some form of evidence to the parole board that they are receiving 'appropriate' treatment.

Furthermore, for a parole application by a sex offender to be successful, he would most likely have to show that he was receiving treatment - even though that treatment is not open to him until a release date has been secured. Another Catch-22 situation! All the evidence is that sex offenders are very unfavourably placed with regard to parole. The myth that they are not is probably rooted in the resentment of violent-but non-sexually violent - prisoners who find their own applications for parole being consistently turned down.

The attitudes of prisoners towards their fellow prisoners raise considerable difficulties for the various pressure groups that are trying to educate the public about our prison system. This is particularly true of groups like RAP and PROP which identify closely with the prison population, but which must concern them selves with prisoners generally, regardless of their offence.

There is major agreement amongst all prison groups (including those of us who would go a great deal further and question the whole basis of imprisonment) that a prison sentence should not, over and above the denial of liberty, subject a prisoner to insults, degradation, humiliation and brutality at the hands of the prison staff. But of course, it happens and will go on happening until public opinion can be sufficiently well informed to demand a change.

Unfortunately, any appeal to public opinion on these grounds - that imprisonment is itself a punishment - is made almost impossibe to sustain because of the manner in which one particular category of prisoner - the sex offender - is selected as the target for insults, degradation, humiliation and brutality by the prison population itself, led by prisoners who themselves have a record of violence.

The distinction between one sort of violence and another may be clear enough to prisoners anxious to establish their own status by selecting a whole group of people to occupy the place at the bottom of the status ladder. But it is far from clear to the general public which, if it draws lines at all, is likely to do so from the very different standpoint of separating *all* violent offenders from non-violent ones.

Again, the general public, and particularly those of the female half of it who see them selves as potential rape victims, are not going to understand, still less accept the fine distinctions of the macho male imagination which draw a line through sex-offences and place rape on the acceptable or at least tolerable side of it.

In short, prisoners in general and especially those convicted of *any* violent offences are the last people who should be drawing lines if they are not to open themselves to similar labelling by the public. And it is this common labelling of prisoners which constitutes the greatest difficulty in educating the public to the reality of prisons and the institutional brutalities they inflict.

RAP Sex Offences Working Group.

Astrology Hype

Carole Ramer

While in prison six months
my horoscope predicted:
"Travel to exciting places.
New career opportunities.
Romance and adventure."

So far—I've traveled from jail
to Manhattan Supreme Court.
My pay scale has increased from 10 to 25¢ per hour.
Numerous other inmates have made
overtly sexual advances to me
in vacant stairwells.

Honey,
that's not my idea of a rising sign.

From *Songs From a Free Space: Writings by Women in Prison*, edited by Carol Muske and Gail Rosenblum. New York, n.d.

Sex offences & the victim

IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED that sex offences are the most under-reported of all serious crimes. Little is known about the true extent and nature of crimes which have a sexual aspect and consequently the best way of acquiring information as to the nature of the offence, the assailant, the victim and the effect of the offence on him or her is through victim self-report studies.

The most commonly known and widely organised of these studies take place at Rape Crisis Centres, whose sympathetic ears attract far more victims of rape than ever go to the police. It is arguable that rape should really be classified as a crime of violence rather than 'sexual deviancy' since the latter usually refers to anything deviating from the heterosexual norm, such as sexual assaults or molestation of those under the age of consent, any form of exhibitionism or incest. Whatever classification you choose to attach to rape there are few who would doubt that it should be a criminal offence and the findings of Rape Crisis Centres provide a good model against which to assess any information on less well documented sex offences.

Most rape victim surveys come up with many common findings, some of which are as follows:
-only 25% of all rapes are reported to the police
- of those 25%, 75% are reported by somebody other than the victim herself, such as family, friend or witness
-reasons given for non-reportage are overwhelmingly the cynical attitude of the police who may not believe the victim; a reluctance to send the assailant to prison, which victims felt would be unproductive; apprehension about appearing in court and having to 're-live' the whole experience.

These common findings probably shed more light on the attitudes of the institutions that come into contact with the victim after the rape, such as the police and courts, and go some way to explaining why so few rapes are reported by the victim. It seems clear, in the victims' minds anyway, that as much trauma and damage can be suffered from the procedures *after* the rape as are caused by the rape itself.

These findings are doubly surprising when you consider that the vast majority of people believe rape to be unequivocally wrong and one of the most heinous crimes a man could commit against a woman. The evidence really shows up the inadequacy and unsuitability of the present police/judicial procedures for dealing with crimes of such a personal and emotive nature. This criticism is probably true of all crimes in which a sexual aspect is involved.

If people are shocked when they hear of incidents of rape, they are outraged at the idea of 'sexually deviant' acts involving children. Most people are probably under the impression that sex offences against children are of a violent nature, their perception of all sex-related offences being founded on the rape/murder model. It is therefore interesting to hear what has been said of sex offences against children by the victims themselves. A victim self-report survey was conducted from 1974-75 on a group of German University students who were asked to recall all occurrences of 'sexual victimisation' since early childhood. There were some interesting findings:

- Of 267 offences recalled, only 11 were known to the police.
- Women were more frequently victimised than men.
- 50% of women were shocked by their experience.
- 27% of men were shocked by their experience.
- The majority of experiences were with other children
- Sexual encounters with adults were recalled with distaste where violence was used.

Again, an outstanding number of offences were not reported to the police, which can only underline the fact that present perceptions of the nature of sexual offences must lack accuracy. Most offences did not cause any distress and were recalled as one of many events occurring in childhood. Understandably, the violent encounters were the ones which caused greatest disturbance to the victim and it is these which were probably reported to the police and caused concern in the public mind.

stereotype

Those who have undertaken studies of the effects of sex offences on children spend much of their time trying to dispel commonly-held misconceptions on the matter. For instance, Francine Watman says in her article **Sex Offences against children and Minors: proposals for legal reform** that 'it is commonly believed that the sex offender imposes adult forms of sexual behaviour on his victim' which she sees as part of a stereotyping of all sex offenders after the prototype of the sexual psychopath. She goes on to say that, except in a few circumstances, the activity indulged in with children corresponds to the age of the victim and not the age of the offender. Of course, in practice, the consequence of this stereotyping is a lack of distinction between different kinds of activity with children so that a senile exhibitionist is labelled as dangerous as a violent child molester. It is clearly necessary to clarify the true nature of the various kinds of offences in order to review properly whether the law deals with them aptly and whether sentencing policy reflects sufficiently the differences between offences.

The distinction between violence and non-violence is clearly the most crucial, according to the victims themselves, when assessing possible adverse effects caused by sex offences against children. Americans seem to have paid far more attention to assessing the effects of such crime than we have in this country, but their findings are obviously relevant to Britain as well. A study by L.G.Schultz called **The Child as a Sex Victim** makes the distinction between where violence is used and where it is not. He also points out other variables which are frequently overlooked by people when they react to the idea of sex offences against children.

One of these is the possibiltiy that the child may have in some way consented to the activity. This consent could range from passive acceptance through affection seeking or active encouragement to outright seduction of the adult. Most people would rather not believe that a child could acquiesce in any sexual activity but, as Schultz points out,

'in general, physical force and violence on the child victim plays a small role in the offences.' By far the most common activities are exhibitionism, fondling and touching. If this is taken in conjunction with the fact that a relationship usually exists between adult and child prior to the offence (often family friend, neighbour or teacher) it is slightly easier to entertain the possibility of a child engaging in unaggressive sexual activity voluntarily.

Even if it were accepted that in the vast majority of adult/child encounters ther was no risk of physical damage to the child, it is less easy to assess any adverse psychological effects. Schultz says that'possible negative or traumatic effects are related to the amount of violence employed by the offender.' This would account for the fact that often, where there is no physical damage to the child, the offence never comes to light and is seen by the child as an unexceptional event.

As in the case of rape, it seems that there is risk of stress if family reactions are hysterical and police questioning followed by a court appearance should be avoided for a child if possible. The overall impression seems to be that where a child has suffered no physical damage and appears completely undisturbed by any non-violent encounter with an adult, the event should be played down in the child's mind.

In view of the fact that little or no aggression is involved in most offences, punitive measures may be valueless and even detrimental for the offender. Clearly some kind of revised and more realistic approach is called for from both legislature and media towards sex offences against children. Perhaps the only conclusion to be drawn from the evidence of the effects of sex offences on the victim is that ideas of harm and abuse should be re-assessed. What should and should not be a sex offence seems to be an area which is very much taken for granted by the legislature and by the media, but which is demonstrably in need of overhauling and re-assessment.

CLARE MEDHURST

PIE on trial

Paedophilia and Public Morals
Campaign Against Public Morals 95p

IF IT IS PROPOSED to 'cure' an imprisoned paedophile by psychosurgery or some similarly drastic method, the following questions (among others) arise:

1. Does the prisoner know enough about the nature of the operation and the risks involved to give 'informed consent' to the operation?

2. Given the unequal power of the surgeon and the 'patient' can consent be deemed truly voluntary?

3. Is the patient's mental condition such that he is competent to consent?

4. How can an outside body satisfy itself, after the event, as to whether conditions 1, 2 or 3 were complied with?

The same questions arise with respect to any allegedly consensual relationship between a child and an adult. This pamphlet, the work of a group which, though set up to support the defendants in the PIE trial, takes a more radical position than theirs, answers those questions in a bold and fairly startling way. Rather than asserting that children do understand the consequences of consent, they choose to 'turn the question around. Does the child know the consequences of going to school? Does the child know the consequences of religous education?.....The answer is simple. *Nobody ever asks the child.*' (p26; italics in original.)

But surely, if you're opposed to the oppression of children- and this is a major plank of CAPM's platform- you can't use that oppression as an example to justify your own practices? However CAPM (Campaign Against Public Morals) go some way toward answering this objection, as well as the question about unequal power, when they write:

'If we were to outlaw all those human relationships which reflect an oppressive structure in this society, we would end up by banning every human interaction, social or otherwise! We have to ask whether such relationships add or detract from the overall oppression. Given the family, the school, the police, social workers etc, are paedophiles just another brick in the wall imprisoning children? We say determinedly NO. They are a crack in that wall.' (p24)

Very probably. The trouble is that it isn't we who do the banning; it's the agent of the very social structure that we who regard it as oppressive are trying to undermine. To demand the legalisation of an activity on the ground that it's subversive doesn't give you a very tenable position !

On the question of competence, CAPM's argument seems to be that children know what they like, and if they don't like it they can 'scream the place down'. With its implication that anything short of vociferous refusal amounts to consent, this answer is not entirely adequate

But it is on the final question - how consent or non-consent is to be established that the pamphlet really falls down. It seems to me axiomatic that if people are to be subject to punishment such as imprisonment, they should at least have every opportunity to contest their guilt. Inevitably, this turns some trials into an ordeal for the victim. By refusing, in the case of children, to equate *legally effective* consent with consent in fact the law almost certainly reduces to some extent the harm it does to the child. But, say CAPM, 'this is no defence of the existing laws. A unified law of rape, where the victim is not the one on trial, would ensure that *rapists should not be able to get away, whatever the age of the victim.*'(p49; italics original.)

You only have to substitute 'criminals' for 'rapists' to see what a dangerous and reactionary argument this is. Moreover, CAPM give no indication of how the law of rape should be changed. No doubt the existing law is often applied in a grossly sexist manner; but how do you legislate against that?

Flawed though it is, this pamphlet deserves respect as a bold attempt to work out what amounts to an 'abolitionist' position in its particular field. Its prime aim appears not to be to change the law in the near future, but to convince radicals and feminists that paedophiles are their natural allies in the fight against patriarchy. From this point of view, its arguments have considerable force. From RAP's point of view, however, the chief interest of paedophiles is that it is an area where what CAPM terms the 'ideology of protection' is particularly formidable, yet where it can be strongly argued that the intervention of the criminal law does a great deal of harm and precious little good. For our relatively narrow purposes the pamphlet's analysis of the current laws and its chapter on medical and psychiatric 'treatment' are certainly useful but its main theses are at best of marginal relevance.

TONY WARD.

There's nothing more humiliating than having to ask permission to lay an egg. Ask any duck.

Prostitution laws: Wolfenden re-visited

THE REPORT of the committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution (1956-7 Cmnd 247) led both to the partial legalization of homosexual relations between men (*Sexual Offences Act 1967)* and to the *Street Offences Act 1959* which tightened up the laws on prostitution. These two measures can be seen as complementary aspects of what Beverley Brown ("Private Faces in Public Places", *Ideology and consciousness* no 7, p.3) calls the "Wolfenden Strategy " - " a shrinkage of legislative control over personal conduct combined with a more rigorous policing of the cordon representing the public domain". Both are justified in the name of a modified version of the liberal principle that the function of the criminal law is to protect individuals from harm:

"In this field its function, as we see it, is to preserve public order and decency, to protect the citizen from what is *offensive* or injurious, and to provide sufficient safeguards against *exploitation* and *corruption* of others, particularly those who are specially vulnerable because they are young, weak in body or mind, inexperienced, or in a state of special physical, official or economic dependence. " (para 13, emphasis added.)

The Committee recognised that all these criteria (offensiveness, injuriousness, exploitation, corruption) involve " moral, social or cultural standards " , and in these matters was " guided by its estimates of the standard of the community in general ". But in a famous passage (which became the starting point of the Hart-Devlin debate - but if you've never heard of it don't worry, you ain't missed much,) they declared:-

" Unless a deliberate attempt is to be made by society, acting through the agency of the law, to equate the sphere of crime with that of sin, there must remain an area of *private morality and immorality* which is, in brief and crude terms, not the law's business. " (para 15, emphasis added.)

Thus a second distinction is introduced - public versus private - and this is linked with the extended " harm " criterion by what Brown calls " an over-elaborated pun " - the private realm is (a) that in which no-one other than the agent(s) can be harmed because no-one else is present , and (b) the proper realm of private moral judgement. Applied to prostitution this produces the conclusion that if a woman chooses to offer sexual services for money that is a purely private matter - so long as she does not offer them publicly!

The confusion between the public and the harmful is reflected in the concept of " offensiveness ". It is unclear whether this refers (a) to the harm or distress caused to intolerant people by conduct of which they disapprove; or (b) to the " violation of good manners " (J.S. Mill) - doing in public what is permissible in private. In Mill's *On Liberty* this is an important distinction - though when Mill sanctions coercion in support of " good manners " he is not necessarily referring to *legal* coercion.

loitering & soliciting

The *Street Offences Act 1959*, s.1, following Wolfenden's recommendations, makes it an offence " for a common prostitute to loiter or solicit in a public place for the purpose of prostitution ". The report makes it quite clear that this provision is not solely or even primarily designed to spare individuals the annoyance or embarrassment of being solicited: the objective is to " clean up the streets " (paras 231,261) - something the committee clearly felt itself under strong pressure to do.

"In reality, it is not so much the conduct of any particular prostitute that causes annoyance as the presence of numbers of prostitutes in the same place, and the annoyance is to the inhabitants and passengers at large rather than to any individual." (para 253).

The Committee used this argument to justify doing away with the requirement under the old law (*Metropolitan Police Act 1839* and other local acts) to prove that the prostitute caused " annoyance " .

The fact that " Men solicited by prostitutes almost invariably decline to give evidence " (para 251) is adduced, not as evidence that the " annoyance " caused may be too trivial, in the " victims " own view, to warrant prosecution, but as grounds for rejecting the proposal (similar to one made in the recent All Party report *Too Many Prisoners*) that the soliciting laws be replaced by a general law " directed against any person wilfully causing annoyance to any person in a public place by words or behaviour offensive to public order or decency," (para 252) Rather than weighing the harm caused by prostitutes against the harm the law causes them, the committee make a moral judgement between the " interests " of prostitutes and the " rights " of others:

"We feel that the right of the normal, decent citizen to go about the streets without affront to his or her sense of decency should be the prime consideration and should take precedence over the interests of the prostitute and her customers. " (para 249.)

And it confidently asserts that:

" In our view both loitering and importuning for the purposes of prostitution are so self-evidently public nuisances, that the law ought to deal with them, as it deals with other self-evident public nuisances, without calling on individual citizens to establish that they were annoyed. " (para 255.)

If this is self-evident, I must be exceptionally obtuse. What the Report seems to be saying is that the mere presence of prostitutes on the street (loitering) amounts to a public nuisance over and above the admittedly self-evident , but trivial, nuisance of being accosted by

one. Apart from the affront to bigots, the only nuisance I can think of in this category is that the reputation of being a red-light district has adverse effect on the " tone " of the neighbourhood and hence on local businesses, property values and the social standing of the residents. The supremely respectable-sounding witnesses who represented the Mayfair Association and the Paddington Moral Welfare Society probably had solid economic interests to stiffen their crusading zeal.

One other kind of nuisance which might have been expected to concern the committee is the annoyance caused to non-prostitute women accosted by would-be punters. But the Committee rejected the idea that kerb-crawlers should be punished in a passage of striking (if unconscious) hypocrisy:

" If it were the law's intention to punish prostitution *per se*, on the grounds that it is immoral conduct, then it would be right that it should provide for the punishment of the man as well as the woman. But that is not the function of the law. It should confine itself to those activities which offend against good order and decency or expose the ordinary citizen to what is offensive or injurious; and the simple fact is that prostitutes do parade themselves more frequently and openly than their prospective customers, and do *by their continual presence affront the sense of decency* of the ordinary citizen. In doing so they create a nuisance which, in our view, the law is entitled to recognise and deal with." (para 257, emphasis added.)

This statement implies the strongest possible moral condemnation of prostitutes. It implies that what they do is so abominable that their mere *presence* is an affront to decency: it brands them, in effect, as a species of moral vermin. But this of course is not an expression of the moral views of the committee - merely a " simple fact " about the ordinary " decent " citizen.

The one point at which the Report shows concern for the " innocent " woman is in its defence of the " common prostitute " label. If prostitutes were not branded in this way, it argues, women who waited in the street for some quite innocent purpose might find themselves arrested. It seems not to have occured to the Committee that " common prostitutes " might face exactly the same problem.

immoral earnings etc

This part of the law was unaffected by Wolfenden, except that the *Sexual Offences Act 1967* makes it an offence to live off the earnings of prostitution by a man.

The *Sexual Offences Act 1956* (a consolidating act) s. 30 makes it an offence for a *man* to live wholly or partly on the earnings of prostitution, and s. 30 (2) adds that " ... a man who lives with or is habitually in the company of a prostitute ... shall be presumed to be knowingly living of the earnings of prostitution, unless he proves to the contrary."

Wolfenden defended this provision even though the Committee was persuaded by the evidence it heard that the pimp-prostitute relationship was most often mutually beneficial.

" It is in our view an over-simplification to think that those who live off the earnings of prostitution are exploiting the prostitute as such. What they are really exploiting is the whole complex of the relationship between prostitute and customer; they are, in effect, exploiting the human weaknesses which cause the customer to seek the prostitute and the prostitute to meet the demand. " (para 306)

The same could be said of people who trade in tobacco or beer or cosmetics. It is evident here that the law is being defended on purely moralistic grounds. The prostitute, when all is said and done, is selling a service at the market price, but the pimp lives by a form of economic exploitation which is a complete affront to the work ethic - the unacceptable face of capitalism. As for brothels, the law " rightly frowns " on them, " for a variety of reasons " too obvious to explain.

Are soliciting, etc, " sexual offences "? Yes, in the sense that prostitutes and their associates are punished, albeit indirectly and disingenuously, for deviating from the officially sanctioned code of sexual morality. Simply to regard them as minor breaches of public order like obstructing the highway would be to fall for the deception contained in the Report. Many other people - market researchers, Hare Krishna devotees, football crowds - make equal nuisances of themselves but are not routinely imprisoned. On the other hand, other equally unimportant nuisances - beggars, vagrants, drunks - are dealt with in a similar way for reasons that have nothing to do with sex. The common aim of all these laws is to preserve the streets as clean, decent places for respectable folk to live, walk and do business in. The repeal of this entire class of prohibitions can be demanded on the simple ground that the harm they do is out of all proportion to any " nuisance " they may avert - and no consideration of the sexual behaviour or ethics of prostitutes is needed to reach that conclusion.

RAP Sex Offences Working Group

Ten Ways of Looking at Prison Lunch

Gloria Jensen

(With apologies to Wallace Stevens)

1. With both hands over your eyes, releasing one hand slowly to peep.
2. Through the eyes of a friend you have by the hand—who reads braille.
3. In the bing [solitary] where you can refuse to have the thing brought in at all and just lie there and sleep.
4. From across the steam line, where people marvel at your petite body (if only they knew it's not by *choice* you prefer to remain frail and cautious).
5. From a prison visitor's point of view—when suddenly, miraculously, all one sees is steak, greens and potatoes.
6. From your window late at night as you watch one man run with a rake, followed by another with a sack, followed by a corrections officer, followed by a ruckus you've not seen but heard—then all three returning, dragging a heavy sack.
7. Witnessing something come ashore in the bay and thinking: my, but it gave up a great fight.
8. Wondering why they have signs saying DO NOT PEE ON THE GRASS. Then seeing the kitchen girls go out, mow it down and bring it in.
9. "Good Friday"—when all the world's generous and the relief truck pulls up to the kitchen door to drop off loads of potatoes they couldn't unload anywhere else.
10. Seeing more clearly the lunch of steak, greens and potatoes—as you attack the steak first and realize the fight you witnessed (#6) is not yet over, for the beast is biting you now too.

[from Some Prison Writings by Women in Prison, edited by Carol Muske and Gail Rosenblum, New York, n.d.]

Barry Prosser: unlawfully killed

BARRY PROSSER DIED of severe injuries after a brutal beating in Winson Green prison on the evening of 18th August 1980. He was bruised from head to toe, worked over with a vengeance and left with a ruptured stomach and oesophagus. He had a history of mental depression and was on remand, awaiting reports, after being convicted of causing criminal damage to his own home.

After causing a disturbance in the prison he was transferred to a 'quiet cell' in the hospital wing. It was in that cell that he was assaulted and after a police investigation in to his death a senior prison officer, Melvyn Jackson, was accused of his murder. The Birmingham sipendiary magistrate considered that there was insufficient evidence to commit Melvyn Jackson for trial and the case was dismissed. At the inquest, however, the jury took only fifteen minutes to return its verdict on the cause of death. They decided that Barry Prosser had been unlawfully killed.

The medical evidence to the court provided a gruesome catalogue of Barry Prosser's injuries. Both pathologists agreed that the only explanation of his condition was that he had been the victim of a vicious attack. Melvyn Jackson, who was in charge of the hospital wing on the night, declined to give evidence to the inquest. In a police statement, however, he claimed that his only visit to the cell had been to administer a sedative. To do this, he had requested the support of officers from the main prison as well as two other hospital wing officers. In all twelve officers were called to the cell and Barry Prosser was held while an injection was given. The evidence of the officers concluded that the injection was unresisted and force was unnecessary. No record of the incident appeared in either the hospital wing or remand wing occurrence books.

The medical evidence was crucial in indicating the extent of the assault which caused death. It was evidence from other prisoners in the hospital wing, however, which was conclusive in directing the verdict of unlawful killing. They stated that the three hospital wing officers had made an earlier visit to Barry Prosser's cell. Patrick Galvin's evidence was that there was scuffling in the cell and that the officers emerged red-faced. One officer is alleged to have claimed that "he was a fucker to put down". Clive Dicken's evidence was that the three officers went in to stop Prosser from singing. Dickens was told by the officers to get inside a linen cupboard while they went into the cell. The officers were in the cell for about five minutes and he heard Barry Prosser groan "Ah! You bastards" It was after this initial visit that the officers returned in larger numbers.

Patrick Galvin also stated that one of the officers involved had told him to "keep his mouth shut" and he could be "out in a year". All the prisoners in that area of the prison, according to his statement, were dispersed and he was sent to Shrewsbury. Perhaps the most telling response came when he was put under fierce cross-examination over why he had not made these allegations to the police. He jumped to his feet in the court and shouted, "Because I am afraid for my life when I am in these nicks".

In his summing up the coroner, Dr Richard Whittington, considered this evidence to be "crucial" and Patrick Galvin to be "an honest man". It was the evidence of the other prisoners which suggested that during the earlier visit to the cell an assault had taken place. Three prison officers from the hospital wing are now under suspension.

eye-witness

It is unusual, however, for there to be 'civilian' witnesses to such events. As we have noted in a previous article (The Abolitionist, No 7, Winter 1981) even when prisoners have evidence to give it is not always heard as the coroner alone decides on who will be called to give evidence. Yet this case shows clearly that in all situations where there is eye-witness evidence other than that of the prison staff, it is imperative for it to be heard. The inquest has resulted in the submission of the inquest transcript to the Director of Public Prosecutions and a personal submission by the coroner to the Home Office.

In this he said that he would specify the numerous short comings in the running of the prison's hospital wing. He was concerned particularly over the omissions in the record books and that four sets of books were kept to deal with the prescription, use and administration of drugs. The coroner also called for staff exchanges between the prison hospital and outside hospitals to raise the standard of care.

The unlawful killing of Barry Prosser underlines the major deficiencies in a closed and largely unaccountable prison system. The extent of maltreatment of prisoners, both in prisons and their hospital wings, is impossible to assess. Drugs are used as the flipside of physical coercion in the control and modification of behaviour. Attempts to pursue inquiry or research into the issue of medicalisation are frustrated by

secrecy and the difficulties of challenging hidden and so-called 'professional practices'. The separate Prison Medical Service should be abolished with prisoners treated under the National Health Service. The use of behaviour modifying drugs in prisons, remand centres, mental hospitals and other state institutions has to be controlled. If people in such institutions are moved, disciplined, treated medically or their circumstances change then their families or friends should be supplied with full information.

There is no doubt that following the death of Barry Prosser the coroner's inquiry uncovered a sequence of events which otherwise would have passed off without public attention. The medical evidence, however,was clear and unambiguous. The jury appeared to have no doubt that Barry Prosser was the victim of unlawful killing. It is difficult to imagine, given the weight of evidence and the coroner's obvious concern, that any other verdict could have been returned. Yet the inquest proceedure remains inadequate as the testing-ground for such cases. As it is an inquiry there is no-one on trial and no direct opportunity of blame. The coroner has no power to commit people for trial and there is no guarantee of proceedings in any situation. Furthermore the discretion of the coroner in the organisation and control of proceedings, ranging from who is called to give evidence to the direction of the jury, is often crucial to the outcome.

Deaths in all forms of custody require a more exacting structure in terms of their referral, investigation and examination. No matter how far such changes go, however, the problems of brutality and violence by the authorities in custodial institutions will persist.

People in custody are marginalised effectively by the authorities; a process supported by the imagery of the media. They are dismissed as being criminals, mentally ill, political extremists, drunkards, scroungers or black and this suggests that they have lesser rights. It suggests further that they deserve the violence of the prejudices of their custodians and that their injuries or deaths are of lesser consequence. The treatment of Stephen Thompson in Rampton or Richard Campbell in Ashford celarly illustrate this process of marginalisation. Given the current direction of government policy, however, the process of dehumanisation through treatment and practice will worsen. Barry Prosser is not the first victim of this process, neither will he be the last.

Phil Scraton and Melissa Benn.

Women's prisons: a personal account

I have noticed with growing alarm and concern that although the malpractices in prison are now, very slightly, being looked into, the outcomes do not appear successful or in fact to alter any situation within the penal system. Only recently has rare publicity been given to the misuse of drugs within a women's institution, yet this is only one solitary aspect of the total abuse and criminal activities meted out to female inmates.

Having recently been released from a women's prison after serving four years, I ask myself why this is so? The female population is less than that of men's institutions but the malpractice, violence and abuse of all rights and humanity is surely equal to that of the male prisoner. Having now served two prison sentences, I feel justified in saying that what I have witnessed is beyond all possible belief. Violence, beatings, drugging of unwilling prisoners and the MUFTI riot squad have all been part of women's prisons, yet very little has been said on the matter, let alone investigated.

What actually occurs in the three main women's prisons in England would never be tolerated by the male counterpart. Why has nobody spoken out on this matter? Surely it is of equal interest and concern if not alarm that women are being thus treated?

Over a year ago, factual information was sent to Kilroy Silk MP and forwarded on to Lord Belstead which described how the riot squad had been brought into Styal women's prison. Of course they may have needed to contend with the dangerous criminals on a protest - that is a girl of 16 and another of 17. The reply from Lord Belstead on this matter was that the MUFTI riot squad, seven of them, had been called from Strangeways prison, yet no violence or drugging was used. I was there along with a dozen other people. Inmates, staff and the Home Office all know what's going on and have witnessed the whole appalling situation. Why is it then that nothing has been investigated on this matter?

The treatment of women prisoners in general is far more severe than that of men - though here I do not include the gross injustices to people like Doug Wakefield but the general treatment of women prisoners in their everyday existence. The normal running of a women's institution is well designed to de-moralise, embitter, belittle and depress any woman unfortunate enough to be incarcerated: it purposely destroys all signs of calm or self-respect within an individual.

Does nobody care, or because the cases of female mistreatment is less publically known can this justify the actions meted out in female prisons? The discrimination of women within prisons is equally as great as the lack of publicity and concern outside. For the same job and output such as gardening and cooking, wing cleaning etc, a female prisoner is paid far less than a male prisoner. For workroom jobs with outside consignments, again women are not allowed to be paid under the higher incentive wage system, whereas this is offered to men prisoners.

Classes are another form of discrimination. Although few and far between, men may be offered a job or a course with possibilities for future work in that field when released: women are not. At one time they had a computer operating course in Styal women's prison which offered 8-10 places for women. Amazingly, the Governor of Styal disbanded the course for reasons unknown, leaving thousands of pounds worth of equipment to gather cobwebs. Although the Governor is progressive enough to allow an inmate to dust it for the Board of Visitors to view.

no mail

On equal par with men, is the lack of facilities. For example I have never seen a gymnasium in use in the three prisons I was allocated to. I know the gym and equipment is there because I have cleaned it after the staff have used it. The inhumane way of dealing with letters is another major source of concern. Frequently, mail is withheld and not even shown to the so-called recipient. I believe Styal is the worst offender for this habit. A letter can be stopped for no given reason and the inmate is never told about it. This happens frequently if your attitude does not comply with that of the prisons.

I had personal experience of this when letters written from my co-charged and sanctioned by the Home Office were withheld from me on the Governor's orders. Although I investigated this matter, the Styal authorities openly admitted to withholding the post as they were able to interpret the Home Office rules as they chose to.

These are only a few examples of the discrimination so obvious within a women's prison. Perhaps more apt to say the emotional stress, habitually inflicted upon woman, the continual fear of severe punishment (loss of remission, solitary or even violence whilst in punishment) for such petty offences as walking on the grass, urinating during impermissable hours, borrowing a cigarette paper etc, is so prevalent as to render women's prisons intolerable.

I do not condone any imprisonment as I feel the system should be radically altered. Nor do I agree that charges such as soliciting should be an imprisonable offence along with many other petty charges. One cannot alter the laws, at least not yet. My main concern is that women's prisons should be equally exposed to public enquiries so that the malpractices, injustices, beatings and unethical methods of dealing with people under the prison jurisdiction should become public knowledge. It is only then that the situation can be altered and that is an absolute must.

Shelley Gra[illegible]per

Social policy: alternatives for drunkenness offenders

IN THIS ARTICLE I shall be looking at some of the problems that arise in attempting to find suitable courses of action in dealing with drunkenness offenders: first by examining the nature of alcoholism as a social problem; and then by going on to briefly discuss the recent history of disposals for this category of offende: in Britain.

Many people find themselves spending the night in a police cell (if only once in their life) as the result of over-indulgence during a 'night on the town'. These are the one-off cases and more regular offenders whose offences are drink-related, but are not presumed to be the consequences of alcoholism. They may be charged with a drunkenness offence or with a public-order offence. They are pulled in by the police either because they are thought to be too drunk to get home, or because they have been a public nuisance.

The drunkenness offender, however, raises a set of questions about treatment and control which are qualitatively different since it is assumed that alcoholics are victims of a disease which makes them not responsible for their actions. Magistrates look on somebody that has been brought before them for being drunk-and-disorderly as guilty of a misdemeanour - perhaps not very serious, but punishable because the offender could have controlled his or her actions. But the drunkenness offender habitually appearing in court charged with Drunk and Incapable elicits a more sympathetic reaction since, in the first place, his or her arrest is not associated with criminality but with the life-style of the alcoholic - often homeless, physically and mentally incapable through chronic drinking habits, and presumably suffering from considerable emotional and psychological problems. Everybody - the politicans, the Courts, the police, the psychiatrists and the social workers - says that whatever these people deserve it is not to be processed through the Criminal Justice system: one cannot expect to control a disease by a process of retribution.

The first difficulty arising from the relationship between alcoholics and the Law is that of defining the target population. As we have seen a large number of those appearing before the Courts for offences connected with drinking cannot be said to have a serious drink problem, and therefore logically are not in need of treatment. If drunkenness were decriminalised, the 'one-offs' might not pose too much of a problem since all they would require, if incapable, would be somewhere to stay over-night in safety while recoveri ng. The public order offenders (at the moment, mainly D & D) would probably find themselves rem.ining within the control of the Courts since they are likely in any event to attract the attention of the police, who would want to arrest them and use another charge such as Obstruction.

This leaves us, however, with the question of who can legitimately be said to be a habitual drunkenness offender. That is, who would be diagnosed as an alcoholic, or in the process of becoming one, or whose behaviour is a more-or-less direct consequence of drinking habits which do not amount to clinically diagnosed alcoholism but which indicate personal problems which from a psychiatric point-of-view amount to the same kind of absolution from responsibility?

It seems that there is, in fact, no cut-off point such that an individual can be precisely defined into or out of the condition. Of course, in a great many cases the problem will not arise, since they are either obviously alcoholics or not suffering from any recognisable personality disorder at all. But there is an 'area' in between which presents majo- diagnostic problems, not sim ly from a medical perspective but more particularly in relation to their status when brought into contact with the Authorities. It is, for example, probably not uncommon for somebody to make a number of Court appearances for public order offences and drunkenness offences (with an increasing disposition towards the latter), such that an effective screening method might at an early stage reveal that retributive justice was all along inappropriate for them. On the other hand, given the admitted imprecision of diagnosis, a decriminalised and 'widened out' system of social control might encompass more people than is necessary in a quasi-legal treatment process. As regards the administration of control, the question then becomes: who can be (what amounts to) arrested as a drunkenness 'patient'?

treatment

This leads on to the second problem arising from the nature of alcoholism as a social problem itself. If, in the present state of knowledge, there are formidable obstacles to individual diagnosis, there is also a corresponding obstacle to a more general social identification of the group as a whole . And this inevitably entails a question mark over the very possibility of treatment as an effective measure on a socially significant scale.

Whereas the Law is only interested in alcoholism in so far as it is manifested publicly, the condition is a social problem because there seems to have been a trend towards its increase overall. Naturally not everybody who is an alcoholic into contact with the Criminal Justice System as a matter of course. Conviction rates reflect the growth of alcohol consumption, alcoholism and problems associated with drink, but

represent only a very limited percentage of the total number in these categories. A co-ordinated social policy with regard to alcohol would have to account for both those who do, at the moment come before the courts and those who are, legally speaking, invisible. As research overwhelmingly implies, for a largely unknown - and probably unknowable - population treatment of itself is unlikely to provide an adequate response. Not only are there grave doubts about its potential in individual cases, but more fundamentally it is unable to substitute for policies which would prevent the conditions initially occurring. The only viable answer to alcoholism seems to be primary prevention.

These, then, are some of the major problems arising from alcoholism itself. Their complexity and extensiveness evidently require a sophisticated and cohesive political and institutional approach. A substantial body of professional opinion in the welfare services and psychiatry denies that there is any real place for treatment at all in coping with and trying to eradicate alcoholism. They say that its ineffectiveness is inevitable, and that merely attempting it acts as an impediment to a thorough-going attempt at the major task of prevention. And certainly the experience of policy in the past ten years tends to bear out the 'band-aid conspiracy' theory - half-hearted gestures towards treatment serve as an excuse for avoiding comprehensive and politically difficult responses.

good intentions

Nonetheless, the fact remains that in the short-term there is a need for alternative measures to criminal conviction for habitual drunkenness offenders. These would have to be strategically planned as part of a longer-term campaign for tackling alcoholism at root. We can judge this country' success (or as it turns out, lack of it) by looking at the outlines of the initiatives taken since the notional decriminalisation of alcoholic offences in the Criminal Justice Act, 1967.
A 1976 CHAR report comments that,

> " Good intentions have been the hallmark of official policies towards homeless alcoholics for the last decade. What has been lacking is any forceful attempt by sucessive Governments to implement services that have been agreed on all sides as necessary."

Section 91 of the Act empowered the Home Secretary to make arrangements so that drunkenness offenders would not be arrested and charged but rather directed to appropriate treatment centres. Naturally, these did not already exist, so, a Working Party was set up on 'Habitual Drunken Offenders', which produced its report in 1971. Its main recommendations were: the establishment of an integrated range of services including shop-fronts (walk-in advice and treatment service) day centres, detoxification services and supportive accomodation; the active involvement of the statutory health and social service, police and probation services and voluntary organizations; and the establishment of pilot detoxification centres.

If implemented with the comprehensiveness envisaged by the report these proposals would have provided a good base to begin tackling the problem. However, it reflects the degree to which political authority does take the question seriously that there are now in existence only four detoxification centres in the whole of England and that the rest of the institutional paraphernalia has all but gone by the board.

We can see the seeds of inbuilt failure in the DHSS Circular 21/73 'Community Services for Alcoholics' (the DHSS had by now taken over from the Home Office as the responsible Department). Instead of putting forward a straight-forward programme of its own the Report tried to encourage local authorities to take the initiatives by proposing a 'deal' whereby the Department would sponsor schemes set up by them for the first five years of their existence. To promote the strategy an Advisory Committee with a special sub-group was set up. Unsurprisingly the latter has proved to be ineffective in even acting as a watch-dog of the Department's 'intentions' - it is after all completely without any statutory powers. . .

buck passing

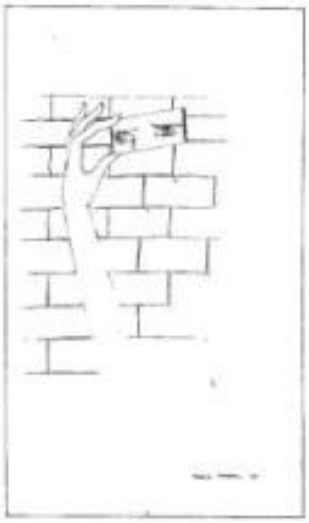
Had anybody (apart from the voluntary organisations) really wanted to make a sucess of the proposals they would not have long tolerated an arrangement which was tailor-made for passing the buck. Of course what has happened is that the DHSS has blamed the local authorities for not taking up its offer, while lacking clear and forceful directives, the latter have spent their diminishing resources on more popular and obviously relevant services.

It is impossible for me in a brief sketch to give the full flavour of over a decade of habitual political neglect. What cannot be seen in outline is the extent of the prevarications, broken promises and sheer lack of interest displayed by the responsible bodies in what they evidently consider to be a relatively unimportant enterprise. And in real life the result has been the only one possible in the circumstances - growing rates of conviction for drunkenness offences, and when (as is frequently the case offenders are unable to pay their fines, imprisonment.

To conclude, a major and escalating problem such as alcoholism does present severe difficulties for the community and its agents. All this is compounded by the low level of knowledge about its causes and impetus. But in order to reach the stage whereby it is even likely that effective action can be taken, there has to be considerable investment, not only financially, but also in terms of political committment. There is a symbolic element in the process: a society that recognises a problem but is not determined to resolve it adopts more or less the same attitude as that adopted in Britain - it pretends for the sake of form to be doing something. All of which might not be quite so depressing if alcoholism was a unique case of the consequences of social deprivation and alienation. But it isn't.

Chris Wallace.

Advertisement in March edition of POLICE (monthly magazine of the Police Federation).



Women i
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WHEN THE INQUIRY into the British prison system chaired by Justice May reported in October 1979, the final report of 347 pages contained nothing about women or girls in prison. The report's failure to look at or acknowledge the position of women in prison was only one of a number of major weaknesses and omissions in its analysis of the prison system in Britain.

The omission of women is not, however, extraordinary in the sense that the Report was merely following a pattern of neglect which had been established for years. While in the last ten years, due mainly to the impact of the women's movement, there has been a proliferation of literature relating to many different aspects of women's lives, paradoxically the areas of women and crime and women in prison have received very little attention or critical study.

The specific nature of women's prisons and the underlying rationale which supports the prison regimes, has rarely been discussed or exposed. This rationale - the definition of women as mad rather than bad and the implementation of work programmes specifically designed to turn female criminals into proper, domestically-oriented women - is the cornerstone of prison policy in women's prisons in Britain today. But these images and definitions of female criminals and what should be done with them in prison, are not new. Rather they have a long history, not only in Britian, but also in North America and Europe. It is illuminating to look at certain aspects of this history as a way of shedding some understanding on the contemporary issues and debates concerning women in prison.

When John Howard published his State of the Prisons in 1777 one of the major criticisms which he made of the British prison system concerned the free association between male and female prisoners. Such open communication led, in Howard's view, to corruption and permissiveness on a large scale. He, therefore, urged that male and female prisoners should be classified and segregated from each other.

new wave

While the sexes were partially segregated following his recommendations, by the early nineteenth century a second wave of prison reformers led by Elizabeth Fry, determined to segregate and classify women prisoners themselves into various groups. Thus the tried and the untried, the young and the old, the first offender and the "hardened, drunken

Almost immediately, Fry set the women to work at sewing and according to her brother-in-law Thomas Fowell Buxton, turned a "hell on earth" into a "well regulated manufactory" (2). Through this type of work the women prisoners would, according to Fry, be rescued from their idle and brawling behaviour and instead became industrious, religous and respectable women engaged in 'proper' women's work. However for those women who rejected the prison regime and rebelled against its discipline, the punishment could be harsh. For example, in October 1811, a female prisoner named Hester Harding was arrested for want of sureties and as she was ill, was sent to the prison infirmary. When she recovered her health she appeared to the prison doctor to be affecting insanity. She was given a cold bath with "a little hot water added as it was December" (3). When this failed, a straightjacket was tried and according to the prison authorities, this proved successful. A second prisoner Martha Jeynes was also suspected of feigning insanity so:

"an electric shock was tried instead, which the surgeon noted 'I am pleased to say produced an immediate desired effect, she fell to her knees, confessed and promised to conduct herself properly in the future'. The 'Electric Machine' was used again when she became obstinate but without effect so the surgeon directed the Turnkey to drench her with Beer Caudle and this proved effective. She was serving two months for stealing butter." (4)

This association between female criminals and madness persisted throughout the nineteenth century. The ex-governor of Millbank prison pointed out that it was often difficult to draw the line between madness and "outrageous conduct" amongst the women prisoners. Furthermore, he believed that women in prison could be more badly behaved than their male counterparts:

"It is a well established fact in prison logistics that the women are far worse than the men. When given to misconduct, they are far more persistent in their evil ways, more outrageously violent, less amenable to reason or reproof. For this there is more than one explanation. No doubt when a woman is really bad, when all the safeguards are removed, further deterioration is sure to be rapid once it begins." (5)

But, it was towards the end of the nineteenth century that the idea of what motivated and constituted the female criminal received its greatest impetus. The work and writings of Cesare Lombroso and William Ferrero reinforced and underlined many of the existing stereotypes concerning the female criminal. Lombroso compared what he saw as normal female behaviour with the behaviour of the female criminal and concluded:

"Her normal sister is kept in the paths of virtue by many causes, such as maternity, piety, weakness and when these counter influences fail, and a woman commits a crime we may conclude that her wickedness must have been enormous

in Prison
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In these writings, the female criminal was imbued with all of the characteristics which male criminals possessed. In addition they also appeared to possess what were regarded as "the worst characteristics of women, namely cunning, spite and deceitfulness" (7). Furthermore, women criminals supposedly did not possess any maternal instinct, which was, of course, the major characteristic of normal women. Thus actions and behaviour by women were explained by resorting to the concept of what was regarded as the natural role of women i.e. motherhood and therefore "rejection of this role....inevitably leads to deviance whether as neurosis or as criminal activity."(8) Although the theories of Lombroso Ferrero and latterly Freud were flawed in a number of ways, nevertheless, the idea of women criminals as either irrational, mad rather than bad, or having a weak maternal instinct has influenced regimes and work programmes in prisons, both here and abroad throughout the twentieth century.

mother prison

In the early years of this century, the lawyer and prison reformer Madeleine Doty wrote:

"Someday, the thing I have dreamed must come true. Prisons will be transformed, changed from a prison to a home. At its head will be a wise, intelligent mother, able to distinguish between the daughter who would be a militant and the one who would be a Jane Austen, treating each according to her needs." (9)

By the 1930s, the prison regime at Holloway was specifically designed to socialise women into a pattern of work of the traditionally accepted female kind. All of the young female prisoners who were physically fit were employed on housework in the officers' quarters or in gardening during the day. Basically the arrangement was that a girl worked one third of her sentence on gardening and two thirds on housework. In addition to this they had two hours of instruction in cookery and table service each week. Any girl who needed elementary education went to school three evenings a week between 5 and 7pm. Those girls whom it was felt did not require this attended embroidery, current events and housewifery classes. Finally, all the girls had two hours instruction a week in needlework and dressmaking. (10)

Similar programmes existed for the adult women who were classified into various groups. For example, Star Prisoners and Division 2 women who were physically fit were employed in the officers' quarters where they were taught housework and in the officers' mess where they were instructed in cookery, table service and kitchen work. Other women employed in needlework and plain dressmaking. For women sentenced to penal servitude, the labour was much the same. Those who were physically fit were taught laundry work. The remainder were employed in ordinary prison washing or were taught - kitchenmaids' work or plain cookery.

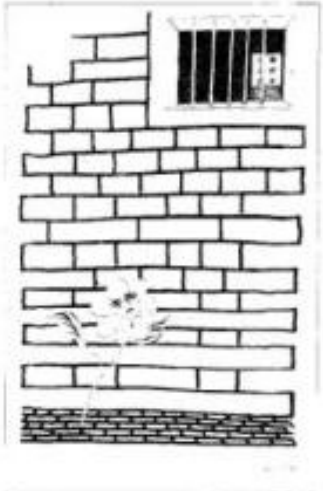
As the Home Office commented, "many of these women are capable of filling posts such as kitchenmaids, scullery maids, or as vegetable cooks in hotels, restaurants or hospitals'"(11) All of the women serving three months or over attended evening classes where they were taught embroidery, knitting, beadwork, toymaking, leather-work, weaving, rug-making, stoolmaking, basket work and pottery. Those women who did not attend evening classes had to accomplish twelve feet of sewing per night. Any woman whose work was regarded as unsatisfactory was cautioned by the trade instructor and then reported to the governor if their labour showed no sign of improvement.

The kind of education which the women received was equally restrictive. At their annualconference in 1928, the National Association of Prison Visitors to Women complained about the classes in current events and citizenship which women prisoners were receiving. In particular they complained of certain statements made by voluntary teachers. As the Association commented:

"The young teachers especially spoke of the remarks of a teacher regarding coloured men: that girls 'should not object to being spoken to by coloured men' and that 'they should not mind marrying black men.' However well intentioned the Teacher may be, such statements show how utterly unsuited she is to speak to girls of this class, understanding nothing of their outlook and mentality and not realising that one of our greatest difficulties is the association of girls with men of colour." (12)

Consequently, the Association recommended that classes on current events and citizenship should cease and that the news given to the women every week by women visitors should be regarded as sufficient. Furthermore, the Association thought it desirable that there should instead be classes on infant welfare, mothercraft and first aid, remarking that "considering the class of women at Holloway and that so many are mothers it is unfortunate that certain classes are on subjects of such an unpractical nature". (13)

This Report was read at the annual meeting of the Association and general agreement with it was expressed in regard to other prisons as well as Holloway. Other members strongly agreed that controversial subjects should not be introduced and criticised the bringing of newspapers into the prisons to be read to the women. Though some members felt that a certain amount of teaching on subjects such as Shakespeare was desirable, all felt that that a larger place should be given to more 'practical' subjects.



less eligibility

At this time, it was noted in the Prison Commissioners Report for 1929 that the daily proportion of women under treatment in prison hospitals was far higher than for men. Whereas one in eleven of the men were under treatment at any giventime, almost one in three of the women was receiving treatment. According to Miss E.H.Kelly, a member of a committee on women's prisons these figures were "startling, but apparently there was nothing unusual from the prison point of view." (14) She also pointed out that none of the privileges awarded to men at Wakefield or Wormwood Scrubs had been extended to women. Such privileges included the payment of small wages, honour parties, special arrangements for visitors, longer hours out of cells and dining in association. It was also pointed out that the bed sheets in the women's prisons were changed only once every month. However Alexander Paterson, a member of the Prison Commission, argued that the conditions in the prisons should not and could not be superior to those on the outside:

"With regard to the sheets, here we do touch on a very difficult question of policy - what should be the standard of cleanliness and comfort of a prisoner? Ought it to be higher than the average standard outside? I find that the Municipal Standard is not nearly so high as our prison standard." (15)

It was not only in British prisons at this time that prison regimes were based on a conception of the traditional female role. In America, at the Federal Industrial Institution for Women at Alderson, the superintendent of the prison, pointed out that his experience both there and in other prisons was that women were grateful for the chance to learn how to keep house well as such an opportunity was rare. Furthermore, "we cannot emphasise too much the importance of focussing the attention of institutions upon character building and the skills which equip women to make life happier and so lead them away from anti-social acts." (16)

1940s

By the 1940s, it was not only the type of work which women should do which was the concern of the prison authorities. During the war years, serious overcrowding in the women's prisons had a major impact on the standard of life inside. The numbers rose from a pre-war figure of 700 to 1,701 in 1945. In some prisons, overcrowding was severe. Birmingham with a capacity for 120 prisoners contained 237 women; Cardiff with room for 85 had 120 and Durham had 141 prisoners in a prison designed for 125 (17).

Accounts written by ex-prisoners of this period indicate quite clearly the conditions under which the majority of them lived. On reception into Holloway, for example. the women were quickly examined by the prison doctor, had a lukewarm bath and then were given their prison clothes consisting of a cotton vest and knickers, a cotton frock black woolen stockings and shoes. This reception bundle also contained two sheets, a pillowslip, nightdress, towel, handkerchief, face cloth and tooth brush. After reception the women were then taken to their cells,

"In my cell, I found a tiny piece of soap, not more than 1 inch by 1 inch by ¼ inch in size (which had to last me for all purposes for over a week) and a very slimy rag, both left by the previous occupant.....Unfortunately, the rag and soap were not the only things left behind by my predecessor. On the shelf were dried faeces, under the matress were some grimy, hair-curling rags and on the floor furniture and all the utensils was a layer of grease and dirt." (18)

It was not only with regard to the physical conditons that life inside was difficult for those confined. Both in terms of prison labour and their relationship with the medical staff, the women complained about their treatment. Many of the women were employed as cleaners on the landings which meant that they had to clean the lavatories which were "always in a filthy condition and usually three out of four were stopped up." (19) These cleaning jobs also meant that some of the women had to clear away from the recesses the pails containing soiled sanitary towels:

"Every morning these were taken down for the contents to be burned. There was no lid on any of the pails I had to empty; nor were they every disinfected.....Much of the food was unsavoury. The greens were always dirty but I had to eat them, I was so hungry." (20)

malingerers

Women also complained of the fact that when they went to seek medical help for any ailments they were regarded as "malingerers" and were either ignored or had to wait for some time before they were treated. For women who were pregnant, the situation was even more severe. These women had the ordinary prison diet until they were six months pregnant and then were given two extra slices of bread and a half a pint of milk each day. They spent 23 hours out of each day either sitting or lying down and were locked up in their cells alone each night right up to the time the baby was due. This could have serious consequences:

"The cell emergency bell often went unheeded especially during the night. One could keep ringing the bell for over an hour without having attention paid to it. On one occasion before I went to hospital the cries of one of the girls were pitiful. We could hear her calling for help and getting more exhausted. The whole landing was awake in the finish and several other prisoners were ringing their bells and calling to draw attention to her. I heard from several prisoners in the morning that when help came it was found that her baby had been born in the cell." (21)

The regime and conditons in Holloway hardly changed in the next two decades. In the early 1960s, there was an influx of women who had been convicted for various offences connected with CND. Accounts by these women of life in Holloway are very similar to the descriptions of the regimes twenty years earlier. Some of these women worked as gardeners building compost heaps. The prison also undertook work for a local firm which marketed frozen food. Many of the women in the workrooms spent hours slicing fresh runner beans brought bya van from the country so that by the end of the day the van could collect vegetables which were ready for refrigeration.

Other prisoners were occupied at sewing machines making prison clothing, post office bags or they worked in the laundry and kitchen. The majority of the rest of the women were occupied in plain scrubbing and cleaning the prison wings and landings. (22)

The quality of the food was a further source of grievance. The milk and egg content of the diet was negligible. In the five hours between breakfast and dinner there was no tea break. The last meal of the day was at four o'clock, with the women receiving a cup of cocoa at seven:

"when Margaret was working in the kitchen on K Wing, she calculated that there was about one thirty-fifth of a pint of milk in each pint mug of cocoa. Might as well have none.

There is an interesting point about the cocoa. Some prisoners think that it is drugged. It is very dark and leaves a red stain on the mug and we heard from an officer that it was ships cocoa. I tried not drinking it for two or three days to see if I felt more alert but eventually gave in as I couldn't resist something hot and wet in the evening however un appetising." (23)

hollow way

The 1960s however were important for the announcement of plans to build a new prison in place of the old Holloway. This plan was to mark an intensification in the process of classifying women who commit crime as being in need of therapy and psychiatric treatment.

The regime at Holloway was to closely follow carefully laid out psychiatric themes. Firstly it was to provide immediate assistance in the matter of family problems such as "provision of meals, meeting children from school and other domestic matters." (24) The second theme was that prison would provide long term psychiatric treatment as well as group counselling and therapy. Finally, it was to provide tuition in various skills, introduction to hobbies and information about various aspects of life outside. The prisoners were also to be categorised into various psychiatric groups including those who were to be placed in a psycho-diagnostic unit for the treatment of the highly disturbed, a psycho-therapeutic unit for the treatment of alcoholics and drug addicts and a unit for those who were "not in need of definite medical treatment but who may benefit from the attention of a psycho-therapist." (25)

In addition to these groupings there was to be an out-patient department outside the prison which was to be designed to supply psychiatric and medical reports to the courts as well as providing out-patient treatment "for those who require it and desire it after release." (26)

Staff training was to proceed on similar lines with particular attention being paid to the psychiatric approach to offending. As well as this, the staff were to spend two or three weeks in institutions such as Broadmoor and Grendon Underwood which specialised in psychiatric medicine. Such a regime has important consequences for how women who commit crime are perceived and what motivates them to criminal activities:

"For most women in prison, the implication of psych-iatric treatment is that she has committed an offence and is not fully responsible for her actions and must be taught by others what is best for her." (27)

Women in this context are therefore denied self-determination, their crimes are often seen as a 'cry for help' a sign of mental illness, inadequacy or of irrational and largely unintentional behaviour. (28) The idea that either women are 'sick' or 'mad' has also provided a rationalisation and framework for the use of drugs in women's prisons. The recent analysis of Home Office figures by RAP would appear to indicate that the use of behaviour modifying drugs is higher in women's prisons than in men's:

"The rate for Holloway prison of 941 doses of psychotropic, hypnotic and other drugs affecting the central nervous system per woman par year is particularly disturbing and demand further explanation from the Home Office. The whole idea that women offenders are 'sick' individuals - mad rather than bad - requiring psychiatric treatment in a medical sense is one that must be strongly challenged." (29)

control

It is not only the use of psychiatry which constrains and controls women inside. Some women, in particular those on Category A, are held in the security wing of Durham prison which is effectively a prison within a prison. In December 1979 there were 37 women held there. (30) At the corner of the L shaped wing is a control box, staffed at all tim es, which is so designed that prison officers can see out but the women can't see in. Cameras are trained on the women at all times; voice-pattern boxes have been installed at all points of entry to the wing and dogs are used to escort prisoners. As a further precaution, all the cell doors are electronically operated. (31)

For the overwhelming majority of women in prison today, such extreme security precautions are unnecessary. Most of the women sent to prison are there for minor offences, petty theft, forgery or prostitution. In England and Wales, the largest increase in the last three years has been in the number of women sentenced to short terms of imprisonment of six months or less. (32) For example, in 1976, the number of adult women sentenced to six months or less was 54% of all those sentenced. By 1979, it had risen to 62%.

The growth in the number of women sent to prison has meant that overcrowding is a major problem, particularly in Holloway. Employment still follows the same traditional pattern with the emphasis being placed on domestic and kitchen work, sewing and cleaning. Outside contract work is undertaken and is of the most menial kind, for example, painting headlights on to toy trucks or assembling plastic toys. At Styal women are frequently employed as machinists making shirts, pyjamas and sports wear. (33)

Rules are also more ri gorously enforced, with the average number of disciplinary charges brought against women being consistently higher than the number brought against men. In 1979, there were average 3.3 offences punished per head of population in women's prisons but only 1.4 per head in male establishments. Similarly the average for closed male borstals was 1.9 whereas in girls' borstals it had reached 8.3 in 1979. (34)

In conclusion, the last ten years has seen the development of organised protests and pressure groups both inside and outside the prisons. These protests have, in the main, been aimed at illustrating the bankrupt nature of prison policy in Britain. It is only in recent years, however, that specific demands aimed at, and made by, women in prison in particular have been mounted. In America , for example, women prisoners have sought equal rights with men. (35) In Britain, in February this year, the East London Women Against Prison published a fifteen point manifesto smuggled out of Holloway. Amongst other things, it demanded the end of sexist and racist remarks by prison staff and the end to imprisonment of women with children. The publication of this manifesto is an important step in bringing to light the specific nature and oppressive conditions of life inside women's prisons. As this article has shown, such oppression has a long history. Hopefully, the publication of the manifesto will mark a turning point not only in creating a greater awareness of what goes on inside but also in motivating individuals outside to become more involved and supportive of the struggles of women in prison today.

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BOOKS

Foucault's followers

Ideology and Conciousness.
No 2: Technology of the Human Sciences.

The contents of 'Ideology and Consciousness', and the subtitle of this issue, are heavily influenced by the work of the French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault. In his history of the French prison system, 'Discipline and Punish' and other works, Foucault's central concern is with the 'technologies of power' which characterise different social structures and with the relationship between power and knowledge.

One result of this perspective is that great strategic significance is attatched to the prison, which is seen as occupying a central position in a network of inter-dependent apparatuses of control and surveillance. Unfortunately the practical usefulness of much of the work of this school is reduced by the method-ological tangles in which it tends to enmesh itself. One of the most intractable of these concerns the compat-ibility of Foucault's work with Marxism; a debate to which Jenny Somerville's review of Poulantzas 'State, Power , Socialism' makes a particularly turgid contribution.

I shall not resort to the Fleet Street trick of quoting bits of post-stucturalist prose out of context, but the would-be reader is warned that the articles in 'I & C' do not yield up their meaning lightly. The authors would probably retort that this is true of any 'discourse' worth reading. At any rate, it is necessary - to borrow their own vocabulary - to "in-terrogate their text unmercifully" with great perseverance. Though the metaphor is not wholly apt since it is the in-terrogator, if anyone, who endures torture.

The article which bears most directly on the questions of crime and punishment is Pasquale Pasquino's 'Criminology - The Birth of a Special Savoir'. Pasquino is hardly breaking new ground by contrasting the 'classical' penology of Beccaria and Bentham with the positivistic criminology which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. The basic contrast between them is simple: the former was concerned with actions of a rational, calculating subject; the latter with the behaviour of an irrational criminal. But Pasquino adds another less obvious contrast. For the classical theorists, society is constituted by the law, which expresses the terms of the social contract (Kant, Beccaria) or the will of the sovereign (Bentham). Crime is simply the violation of the law. For the early (and later) criminologists on the other hand, the 'founding principle' is 'society itself, considered as a complex of conflicts and interests'; the law is merely a codification of the vital interests of 'society' as a whole. ' The criminal' is set apart from other persons as an enemy of society. Pasquino suggests that this change came about because the pure 'laissez-faire' doctrine of classical liberalism had proved unworkable; and more directly because the penal system had failed to check the statistical increase in crimes.

When it comes to explaining what all this has to do with 'present actuality', Pasquino has to fall back on literary metaphors. But in the transformation he describes, the state appears increasingly to have failed in adjusting the economy the prescriptions of criminology have failed to check the rise in recorded crime; a half-baked neo-classicism in penology parallels a half-baked laissez-faire in political theory.

'The Territory of the Psychiatrist' is a detailed review by Peter Miller of Robert Castel's 'L'Ordre Psychiatrique'. Miller is critical (rightly, I think) of Anglo-Saxon 'anti-psychiatric' histories which concentrate too narrowly on the professional ambitions, 'scientific' pretentions and covert social-control functions of the psychiatrists themselves and contrasts their work unfavourably with Castel's account of psychiatry in 19th century France. The 'anti-psychiatry' perspective can lead its adherents to regard law, and even imprisonement, as comparatively benign institutions whose proper function psychiatry has usurped; (see Szasz's 'Law Liberty and Psychiatry') Castel subjects the historical interplay of law and psychiatry to closer scrutiny, and concludes that 'gentle technologies' such as mental care are in reality a necessary counterpart of 'legalism'. To put it very briefly, he suggests that psychiatry at first offered a way of dealing with behaviour that did not fit easily into the legalistic model of voluntariness andresponsibility and later opened up the possibility of intervening socially to prevent deviancies before they occured.

Castel's conception of law and psychiatry as 'partners' is of some interest for current attempts to find some common ground between people active in the 'criminal justice' and 'mental health' fields, though it would help if either his original works or parts of Miller's resume had been translated into English. But I would agree with Miller that Castel's claim that 19th century French psychiatry provides a model for the analysis of the present day politics of social work as being dangerously ambitious.

I have said enough about Beverley Brown's article on 'Private Face in Public Place' elsewhere in this issue in discussing the Wolfenden report; except to say that her main subject is not Wolfenden but the more recent Williams report on Obscenity and Film Censorship.

T.W.

LETTERS

Dear Abolitionist,

I came across the notice about the RAP study groups the other day. I'm afraid I haven't the time or the expertise to be able to volunteer to join you but here are a few ideas which might be worth thinking about.

1. It seems to me that alternatives to prison will have a much better chance of acceptance if they are paid for by the same source as the prison service, so that they are seen as economies. At present, I gather prisons are paid for by the state and the alternatives by local authorities.

Ideally, I think the punishment of small time offenders - including all those committed by magistrates - should be made a local reponsibility with an appropriate array of devices available. The local magistrates would then become much more conscious of the costs, to the rates and hence to their own pockets, of sending people to prison and would be much keener to try alternatives. Local prisons would also, presumably, be much more open to local inspection and control, which would surely be a good thing in its own right.

Such a system would, however, probably require the maintenance of a state system for the more serious, more dangerous and very long sentence cases.

If, as I fear would be the case, such a radical reform is not acceptable, the next best thing would be to fund all the alternatives out of the prison vote, so that the authorities would have an incentive to look for cheaper methods.

2. Following the same line of argument, I think a strong case can be made for transferring permanently to the Police the responsibility for custody of prisoners on remand. This would immediately bring about a worthwhile reduction in the prison population and ease the present gross overcrowding. It would also force the Police to weigh up the costs, to them, of keeping someone in custody against the costs of possible abscondence if they let him/her out on bail. I predict that there would immediately be a large increase in the amount of bail allowed, which would be in the interests of justice. The Police would also have a strong interest in expediting the trial of those kept in custody.

If this idea were accepted it would, of course, be necessary to extend and improve the provision of police cells, but my guess is that this would be considerably cheaper and socially more desirable than building new prisons.

Again, it might be necessary to provide specially for remandees deemed to be a security risk.

Best wishes,

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Books to be reviewed next issue:

"Community of Scapegoats: the segregation of sex offenders and informers in prison" Philip Priestley. Pergamon

"Victims, offenders & alternative sanctions" Joe Hudson and Burt Galaway Lexington Books.

Regular, new item in The Abolitionist.....news and major events over the past three months!

UPDATE

POA strike

ON JANUARY 13, the POA Executive instucted its members to suspend the overtime ban which had been in operation since last October. This followed on the Executive's acceptance in principle of a new Home Office package deal.

The grievance had begun as a result of the POA's dissatisfaction with the May Committee's proposals on continuous duty credits. May had said that 40% of officers, mainly in the dispersal prisons and detention centres, should have meal-breaks counted as working hours; and that 60%, mainly in the local prisons, should not.

The latest offer was for a 42 hour working week for all prison officers including meal breaks or 37 hours excluding them. In addition, there was a promise to cut down on recruitment. The overall effect would be to enhance the opportunities for over-time - the means by which prison officers traditionally supplement their pay-packets.

Initially, the Executive intended to gain membership endorsement of the settlement by means of a referendum but it had not counted on the extent of the militancy in many prisons prisons. And by January 19 it had a full scale revolt on its hands with workers at Hull, Wormwood Scrubs, Brixton, Strangeways, Norwich, Cardiff and Exeter defying the order to return towork.

On January 20, the rebels were joined by the staff of Bedford prison, who demanded the calling of a delegate conference to resolve the issue. They argued that the Executive was breaking the Union's constitution by ordering a return to work when the original demand that the meal break question be settled by arbitration had not been met by the settlement. They insisted that only a full conference had the power to accept the Home Office's terms.

For its part, the Executive maintained that the whole quarrel was a waste of time and that there was no point in continuing the dispute since this was the best offer they were going to get. Tactically, the leadership counted on the innate conservatism of prison officers, calculating that if the militants could be isolated the revolt would soon lose its impetus. As Secretary Colin Steel said:

"Unfortunately for them (the militants), the rather more moderate members are beginning to look askance at some of these noises".

The tactic paid off and within a few days the revolt had crumbled. Not, however, before a High Court injunction was gained ordering the Association's members to resume the ban on the grounds that the Executive had acted illegaly by unilaterally ordering a return ot work. But the injunction itself was suspended for six weeks to give the Executive time to arrange for a delegate conference.

So, in the end the Executive's brinkmanship just about won the day. The prison officers are now back at work and the fine points of the compromise are being worked out in detail. At the time of writing it has yet to be presented to conference in its final form, although it seems unlikely now that the formula will be rejected, whatever it looks like. For the time being the militants in the POA appear to have been out-manouvered.

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Governor 'contemptuous'

ON APRIL 7, the Divisional Court found prison Governor Colin Honey guilty of "conduct calculated to prejudice the requirement that all citizens should have unhindered access to the courts and he was therefore guilty of contempt of court". The citizen whose access to the courts Honey had hindered was Stephen Raymond, currently serving 8 years in Parkhurst. In 1980, whilst at Albany, Raymond had tried to issue proceedings for the commital to prison of the then Governor Honey for stopping a letter he had written to his solicitors about another criminal charge then pending against him. The prison authorities stopped not only the original letter but also the papers asking the High Court to commit the Governor for contempt.

Lords Justices Ormrod and Webster, sitting as the Divisional Court, ruled that while Honey was entitled to stop the letter to the solicitor - which contained the appalling allegation by Stephen Raymond that the Assistant Governor had stolen his RAP/NCCL book "Prison Secrets" - but not the application to the High Court to commit the Governor for contempt. The case is significant because it indicates that the Courts might be willing to intervene in the event of a breach of Prison Rules. Honey was lucky however - the judges decided not to send him down and only ordered the Home Office to pay Stephen Raymond's costs.

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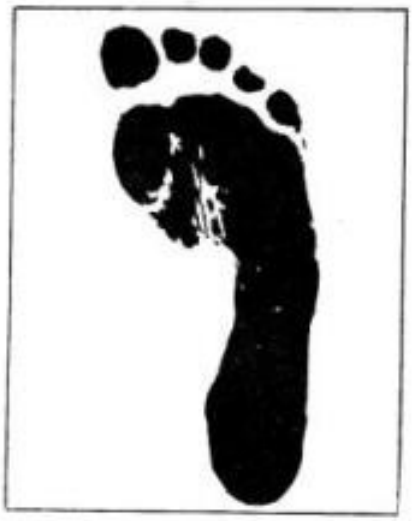

Black prisoners

After years in which the Home Office had said that the information was "not available", PROP has discovered, via a mole in the Home Office, the number of black people in British prisons. 17% of the overall prison population is black and 36% of young prisoners are black. Given that the total black population in Britain makes up only 3-4% of the whole, these figures suggest that black people are almost 5 times as likely to be imprisoned as whites. This makes Britain's record even worse than that of America where black peoplecomprise 20% of the national population and 60% of the prison population.

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Crime-Jobs link

During the last 6 months of 1980, 49% of all detected crime in the Northumbria police district area was committed by unemployed people - compared with 38% in the first half of 1978, when crime and unemployment figures were last considered. This was revealed in the annual report of the Northumbria Chief Constable, Stanley Bailey.

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Prison doctors reprimanded

The Autumn 1980 edition of the restricted Prison Medical Journal contains an interesting article by Ted Williams, a legal adviser at the Home Office, which illustrates the lengths to which prison doctors are prepared to go to preserve their absolute power over prisoners' records. Williams issues a sharp rebuke to prison doctors for not co-operating with the Treasury Solicitor in the event of a writ issued against the Home Office by a prisoner. He tell prison doctors that they are

"under a duty at law to produce documents and show them to the other side when those documents were relevant to the proceedings.....This explains why you may sometimes find that the Treasury Solicitor appears to pressurise you in returning more than once to ask whether he has really been shown all the medical documents. In the past, and I hope this article will bring that situation to an end, I have felt that medical officers have almost been unwilling to allow me, in my capacity as a legal adviser to the Prison Department, to see medical documents, let alone the Treasury Solicitor and our counsel. This has arisen from a laudable and understandable desire to preserve a confidential doctor-patient relationship between prisoner and prison medical officer. But there is in law no medical privilege and I hope that this article will have made clear that, when medical documents relating to a prisoner are called for, what is being called for and what we have an absolute duty to show at least to the Treasury Solicitor and our counsel, if we have one, is every document which exists, whether it be part of the prisoner's records or part of the hospital records of a particular prison, relating to the medical history of the prisoners in question." (Prison Medical Journal, No 21 Autumn 1980).

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Home Office in the dock

Two rulings by the European Commission of Human Rights have severely criticised the way the Home Office runs our prison system. In the first place, the Commission ruled that the British system of stopping letters written by prisoners under a variety of prison rules was not permitted by the European Convention on Human Rights. Secondly, and more importantly, the Commission found by 14-1 that the existing system for dealing with complaints - the courts, the ombudsman, the Board of Visitors and the Home Secretary - did not amount to provision of an "effective remedy" under Article 13 of the Convention. If, as is almost certain, the European Court of Human Rights upholds both these decisions then the Home Office will have to alter the rules on letter writing and introduce a new system for handling prisoners' grievances.

AMBOV

The Home Office has refused to release the names and addresses of the members of prison Boards of Visitors to the newly formed Association of Members of Boards of Visitors (AMBOV). The justification for this is that board members might be exposed to unnecessary risks if their names are known. Since its inaugral meeting last November, AMBOV has received a grant from the Rowntree Trust and claims to have representatives in two thirds of the 125 penal establishments in England and Wales. It recently published the first edition of a quarterly journal in which its aims were described as being "to promote the opening up prisons to the community at large" and to "inform the public of penal policies and practices". While pursuing these worthy aims, AMBOV members will, presumably, continue to sit on kangaroo courts (so well captured in the BBC series Strangeways) at which punishments of up to 180 days' loss of remission are 'awarded' to prisoners.

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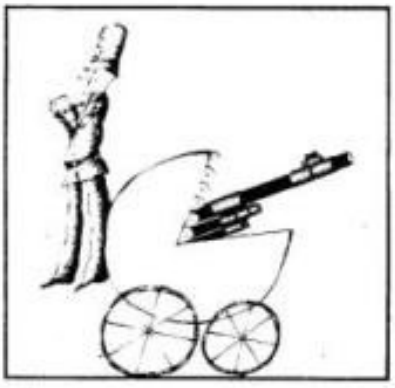

Prison conditions 'intolerable': official

CONDITIONS IN PRISONS are so bad as to be intolerable, according to the Director General of the Prison Service and his deputy in the newly published Report on the work of the Prison Department in England and Wales, 1980.

Many of the buildings themselves are "well past their useful life, heading towards final extinction" and are "in imminent danger of collapse." They are a "constant concern not purely for aesthetic but for basic health, safety security and control reasons".

In addition the jails are so overcrowded that conditions for prisoners are "an affront to a civilized society". It is noted that the attentions of the medical officers were less in demand during the POA dispute. "This was attributed to a lessening of tension as a result of the reduction in overcrowding, coupled with an increase in free association due to the closure of workshops."

Gordon Fowler, deputy Director General, speculated at a Press Conference to coincide with the report's publication that the next decade might see the emergence of a new type of riot to Britain's prisons. Prison officers, themselves demoralised and dissaffected by the conditions, might in the case of prisoner disturbances withdraw from the body of the prison and restrict their role to securing the perimeter.

He also commented on the possibility of a more general withdrawal of staff from prisoners. But he did not give his opinion on the desirabiltiy of such an event from the point of view of the prisoners themselves, restricting his observations to the difficulties it would present for 'control'.

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Prison officers reduce gaol population

Figures released by the Home Office Statistical Dept in February show that the POA's industrial dispute had a significant effect on the size of the prison population. From the start of the industrial action on October 6 unit the end of December last year, the number of men and women held in custody (including those in police cells) fell by 9.1%. Given that the prison population normally falls by about 4% towards the end of the year, this means that the POA were responsible for reducing the numbers in custody by about 5% or 2,500.

The total number of men and women held on remand fell by 20% (which should silence those who say that bail is too easily granted) while the number of non-criminal prisoners (maintenance defaulters and those held in contempt of court) fell by 50%. Of most interest however is the statistic which shows that the number of male prisoners given a short sentence i.e. up to 18 months, fell by about 12%. Rather than a custodial sentence, this 12% must have received either a

suspended or deferred sentence or some other non-custodial alternative. All this was achieved without any noticeable increase in the crime rate. Given that over 70% of the prison population are serving a sentence of less than 18 months, the POA's industrial action has highlighted what many have known for a long time - we, in Britain, send an absurdly high number of our fellow citizens to prison.

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Selective cuts

Although the more punitive elements in the Social Security Bill now before Parliament have been dropped (penalties for social security fraud were to be more tha doubled), the undermining of the Welfare State continues unabated. The Conservative Government has created 1,000 jobs in social security departments to clamp down on "scroungers" - believed to be cheating the country of £50m a year. At the same time it has axed 9000 jobs in tax offices despite the fact that tax and VAT evasion is now running at £5,000m a year. It is estimated that roughly £500m a year in welfare benefits remains uncollected because people don't know their legal rights.

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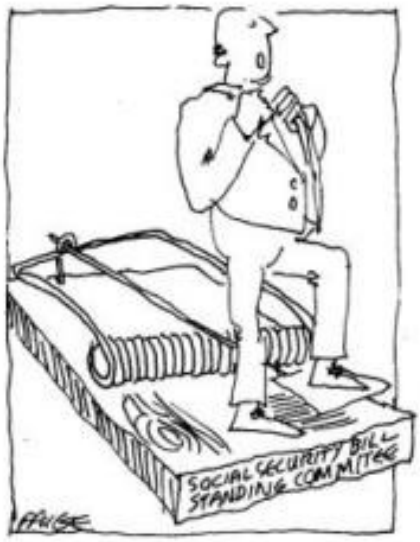

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"short, sharp, shock"

On March 23 the Government announced that "short, sharp, shock" regimes, already operating at two detention centres, are to be introduced to two more centres - Foston Hall, near Derby, and Haslar, near Gosport, Hampshire.

In response to this RAP issued the following Press Release:

"Radical Alternatives to Prison deplores the Government's decision to open two new "short, sharp, shock" centres for young offenders.

No evidence exists to show that the new "rigorous regimes" have had any effect of reconviction rates. Indeed the experience of the Glenochil detention centre in Scotland, which Leon Brittan admitted was the model for the first two "short, sharp, shock" centres in England, has demonstrated that tough regimes make no difference to recidivism rates. During 1978, when Glenochil had an average inmate population of 157 in 180 cells, at least 3,050 Glenochil 'graduates' received new custodial sentences.

Sentences at Glenochil are short (less than 3 months) thus exploding the myth that reducing the length of a sentence is the magic answer to youth crime.

What lies behind the decision to extend the tough Detention Centre regimes is a desire to make youth control cheaper. By using short sentences, the Government aims to increase the volume of traffic through the system and thus reduce the need to build more prisons. It hopes to buy off public opinion by saying that though the sentences are short, inmates will really suffer while they are there.

Detention centres have always been ideal candidates for this sort of penal monetarism as they have always possessed the attractive asset of a high annual turnover.

RAP believes that the new short sharp shock centres are to be used to counter the effects of the slump in youth employment prospects. Research published by the Prison Department in 1979 showed that in the North of England 78% of young offenders in custody were unemployed at the time of their offence. And last year, Probation officers in Bristol found that 82% of offenders are out of work. "Short sharp, shock" centres are absurdly irrelevant to the problem of juvenile crime. The Government is using detention centres to disguise the bankruptcy of their social and economic policies."

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California: $2·5billion on 5 new jails

Governor Jerry Brown of California has applied for two and a half billion dollars to build five new prisons in an attempt to curb the rising crime rate. In a statement broadcast over state TV, Brown said that the present prison population of California is 26,000 and he expected 8,500 more criminals behind bars in 1985 - and these figures are only for state institutions and exclude the yhousands of county gaols for lesser offences. Over the last 5 years, the number of people going to prison has almost tripled.

Brown asked for five billion dollars of taxpayers' money over ten years, half to build moreprisons - three of them maximum security - and to renovate existing ones and the other half to strengthen law enforcement. He added a series of "get tough" measures including longer sentences for youngsters with serious crime records.

Prison Drugs: 1980 Figures

TABLE OF DOSAGE RATES.

Average dosage per man/woman per year in British prisons, Remand Centres and Borstals of Psychotropic, Hypnotic and Other Drugs affecting the Central Nervous System. 1980.

ESTABLISHMENT	1.Psychotropic Drugs-anti-depr, sedatives, tranquillisers)	2.Hypnotic Drugs	3.Other Drugs acting on the Central Nervous System	4.Total Dosage Rate
HM Prison Holloway	340	54	140	534
2 female open prisons [1]	176	80	146	402
HM Prison Parkhurst	150	45	131	334
2 female establishments [2]	158	10	111	279
2 female establishments [3]	163	1	76	240
HM Prison Brixton	156	33	36	225
HM Prison Norwich	102	20	59	181
HM Prison Wandsworth	91	14	55	160
HM Prison Cardiff	84	11	61	156
HM Prison Wakefield	56	18	46	120
HM BC Risley	71	10	25	106
HM Prison W'wood Scrubs	49	5	37	91
HM Prison Bristol	50	9	32	71
HM Prison Durham	30	9	30	69
HM Prison Manchester	25	4	39	66
HM Prison Pentonville	31	7	27	65
HM Prison Birmingham	24	2	37	63
HM Prison Winchester	25	2	31	56
HM Prison Leicester	22	1	32	55
HM Prison Leeds	11	0	40	51
HM Prison Liverpool	14	2	34	50
HM Borstal Feltham	11	0	27	38
HM BC Ashford	19	3	11	33
HM Prison Lincoln	13	1	13	27
HM Prison Grendon	6	3	10	19
HM Prison Dartmoor	9	2	7	18

1. Cookham Wood and Styal 2. Borstals Bullwood Hall & East Sutton Park
3. Moor Court & Askham Grange

The 1980 Report on the work of the Prison Department (Cmnd 8228) included, for the second year running, statistics detailing the number of doses of behaviour modifying drugs dished out in 30 British prisons, remand centres and borstals. The Table (above) shows the average annual dosage rate per man/woman of the three categories of behaviour modifying drugs dispensed last year : dosage rates are presented in the form of a "league table", with prisons dispensing the highest number of drugs per man/woman at the Top of the table.

Though the Table does not appear anywhere in the 1980 Prison Department report, it was produced by combining two sets of information that were included in the report. Dosage rates were worked out by dividing the total number of drugs in each category dispensed in 29 prisons during 1980 (source: Table 18, page 111) by the average daily population of each prison in 1980 (source' Appendix 7, page 80)

In publishing the medical statistics for the second time, the Home Office has ignored criticisms made last year of the way they presented the statistics. The same criticisms of presenta therefore apply this year:

1. The distinction made by the Home Office between "psychotropic" drugs, "hypnotic" drugs and "other drugs affecti the central nervous system" is a meaningless one without further elaboration from the Prison Medical Service on exact what drugs they place in each category. A certain drug could fall into more than one category depending on the time of da it's dispensed. For example, some barbiturates, when taken during the day to sedate or pacify a patient would be classifi psychotropic drugs but when used at night, to induce sleep. would be classified as hypnotic drugs.

2. The broad nature of the Home Office categorisation disdisguises the fact that some drugs are far more dangerous than others while falling within the same division. For example, Mogadon and Amytal could both appear under the heading of Psychotropic drugs despite the fact that one is a mild sedative and the other is a powerful, addictive barbiturate.

3. The Home Office has lumped together into one figure the number of doses of drugs dispensed in 2,3, and in one case 23 prisons. This makes it very difficult to make accurate and meaningful comparisons of dosage rates. It furthermore leaves the Home Office open to the charge that it is wilfully distorting the dosage rates of some prisons known to be excessive in their use of drugs. For example, as in last years' figures (to compare, see The Abolitionist, no 7 still available from the RAP office at 50p) the Home Office has bracketed together Cookham Wood women's prison with Styal women's prison. Cookham Wood is well known as a heavy dispenser of drugs whereas Styal hardly uses any drugs (it has other ways of controlling its inmates). The Medical Officer of Styal was recently reported in Thames Report as saying that "We (in Styal) are very much against the use of drugs. Unless there's a definite psychiatric illness they virtually do not get get them. There are no routine sedtaions. As regards the so-called tranquilisers, they're virtually never used."

RAP believes that Cookham Wood uses more drugs than any priso prison in the country and that the Home Office is trying to hide this fact by bracketing it with Styal, thus evening out the dosage rate. We challenge the Home Office to prove us wrong by next year giving a single figure for Cookham Wood.

Tim Owen.

RAP policy statement

Parole

The Home Secretary recently told the Commons Home Affairs Committee that he favours the extension of the parole system to short term-prisoners as a means of reducing the prison population, in preference to legislation to cut sentences or increase remission (The Guardian 17/3/81)

RAP is oppposed to any extension of the parole system. We believe that the prison population should be reduced by legislation that would cut sentences to such an extent that parole could be abolished.

The existing parole system affects overcrowding hardly at all because it applies only to prisoners serving more than 18 months. These prisoners are housed in "training prisons", whereas it is in the *local* prisons that there is acute overcrowding.

Parole is based on a false theory of punishment. The principle of parole, as stated in the 1965 White Paper *The Adult Offender*, is that "a prisoner's date of release should be largely determined by his response to training and his likely behaviour on release". In reality, prisons "train" hardly anyone at all and an offender's likely behaviour on release can be predicted just as well at the time of sentence as later. The theory is also open to an important moral objection: if people are to be punished for illegal acts, then as a matter of justice the amount of punishment meted out should depend mainly on the nature of the crime. Ironically, the Government appeared to endorse this view in its White Paper on Young Offenders (1980).

In practice, decisions whether to release prisoners on parole are largely based on the same factors that are taken into account in fixing the original sentence; there is no other basis on which they could sensibly made. This re-sentencing by the Executive, in a discretionary and secret manner and without any hearing or representation for the individual concerned, is objectionable in principle and imposes a heavy and unnecessary strain on prisoners, their families and friends.

Mr Whitelaw has said more than once that the courts are sending too many people to prison for too long; but for political reasons he is unwilling to reduce the powers of the courts. The extension of parole would mean that the courts could go on passing all the pointless sentences they like, and the Executive could then quietly revise those sentences to the extent necessary to keep the prison population at a manageable level. It would counteract excessive judicial power with excessive executive power.

In principle, there is no justification for it at all. People who receive sentences of 18 months or less are presumably not judged to be "dangerous", so the only possible reasons for a prison sentence (since prison evidently does not rehabilitate) are retribution and deterrence. The "appropriate" sentence for these purposes can be decided at the time of trial and nothing that happens later can make any difference. That leaves two possible bases for the parole decision: naked expediency or humbug.

At present, parole serves muvh the same purpose cutting down sentences that ought never to have been imposed in the first place. Prisoners released on parole are serving sentences of over 18 months (excluding life) but are considered "unlikely to represent a grave danger to the public". It is unlikely that many of them ever *were* a grave danger to the public: so again the only possible grounds for imprisonment are retribution and deterrence. Even if one accepts these as legitimate reasons for imprisoning people for non-dangerous offences, comparison with other countries such as the Netherlands shows that there is no need for the sentences to exceed 18 months.

There are circumstances when it makes sense to cut short a fixed term sentence, either on compassionate groubds or because the reason for imprisoning the person concerned no longer applies: and these include the rare cases where a "dangerous criminal is apparently "reformed". But there is a long established proceedure for releasing prisoners in exceptional circumstances: the Royal Prerogative of Mercy. Like Parole, however, it is a discretionary power effectively vested in the Home Secretary, ano so if used too extensively would be open to the same objections.

We are sceptical about the value of compulsory supervision, and we therefore see no justification for proposals such as those made by Dr Roger Hood, under which the majority of prisoners (long or short term) would be automatically paroled after one third of their sentences and kept under supervision for the remaining two thirds: it would be simpler and more honest to cut sentences by half, retain one-third remission for good conduct and abolish parole. But there is a need for a good after care service. In our view probation officers should be free to concentrate on *voluntary* after-care: on providing ex-prisoners with services they actually *want*.

RAP Policy Group

Alone

Deborah Hiller

She who walks alone and dreams
will remain lonely.

She who sleeps with her pillow
only dreams of her pillow as partner.

But she who sits in her cell,
and writes
will master this world

The following article appeared in the March edition of the Police Federation magazine, POLICE.

Up and under — New York style

New technique to capture the mentally deranged

by

Barbara Basler

Special from

THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE New York City police, who have to handle a growing number of cases involving mentally disturbed people, will begin using fire extinguishers and nets when they answer such calls.

Officials said the fire extinguishers contained a harmless bicarbonate-of-soda mixture that is sprayed at the person to disorient him while a 10 by 14-foot net is cast over him.

Three ropes are attached to the net so that it can be pulled taut, throwing the person to the ground with his arms pinned to his sides.

Patrick J. Murphy, chief of operations of the New York Police Department, said that it handled 21,000 'E.D.P.' — emotionally disturbed person' — calls in 1980. He said the department had been searching for ways to subdue violent or threatening deranged persons without harming them or endangering the police.

He said he believed the nets would prove effective, but he acknowledged that 'they may be controversial.'

'It doesn't look too nice,' he said, 'when you see a fellow enveloped in a cloud of smoke and netted, almost like an animal, but all this is in an attempt not to hurt these people.'

Dr. Sara L. Kellermann, Commissioner of the city's Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services, said she would defer to the police in the matter, and added: 'I am sure this has been carefully studied and considered.'

When the new method was described to a prominent doctor who deals with mental patients, he said: 'I don't know whether to laugh or cry. The gas and the big net — it conjures up an incredible picture, like one of those medieval lithographs with the mental patient surrounded by yapping dogs or tied to a stake.'

In this training exercise, an 'emotionally disturbed person' is sprayed with a fire extinguisher to disorient him while the net is thrown over him.

How to control the uncontrollable?

But the doctor, who asked to remain unidentified, conceded that 'the police have a tough job, trying to control the uncontrollable,' and he said 'this might be a good answer.'

The search for ways to handle the problem began in August 1979 after an emotionally disturbed Brooklyn man who was brandishing a pair of scissors was shot and killed by a policeman.

A deranged person often poses a real threat to the police, Chief Murphy said, and 'we want to protect the officers and the public without using force.'

The procedure requires three captors — one to use the fire extinguisher and two to throw the net. Police officials said the spray and the net could be used from 10 or 15 feet away from the subject. The equipment includes two six-foot poles that can be used to fend off the subject if necessary while the spray and the net are made ready.

Chief Murphy said emergency-services personnel could be trained to use the nets in an hour and would begin to use them immediately. They will be 'evaluated after several months' use, and if they are found effective, more will be ordered.

PUBLICATIONS

Control Units and the Shape of Things to Come(1974) Mike Fitzgerald. An analysis of the importance of the Control Units to the thinking of the prison system and its obsession with security and control. 40p

Prison Secrets (1978) Stan Cohen & Laurie Taylor RAP/NCCL. A detailed account of the system of secrecy which protects our prisons and those who run them from public scrutiny and accountability. £1.50 - only available from NCCL, 186 King's Cosr Road, London WC1.

Notes on the Prison Film (1979) Mike Nellis. 45p

Outside Chance: the story of the Newham Alternatives to Prison Project. (1980) Liz Dronfield. Preface by Stan Cohen. A report on a unique alternatives to prison in the East End of London, founded by RAP in 1974. £2.25p

The Abolitionist No 1. (January 1979) French prisons; The Home Office and the Liquid Cosh; Crime & the Media; the future of the Children & Young Persons Act 1969; Law & Order - Tories and Labour; Barlinnie Special Unit; review of the Acceptable Pressure Group - RAP & the Howard League. 40p

The Abolitionist No 2/3 (Summer 1979) Ball & CHain Award 1979; sentencing rates in Magistartes Courts; Prison Films; RAP's evidence to the May Inquiry; Drugs in Prison the work of the Medical Committee Against the Abuse of Prisoners by Drugging; Foreign prisons. 65p

The Abolitionist No4. (Winter 1980) Brigid Brophy on the "philosophy and practice of burying people alive"; Sex in Pr Women in Prison. 45p

The Abolitionist No 5. (Summer 1980) Black people in prison; Ball & Chain Award 1980; Alternatives to Prison - a case study; Drugs used in psychiatry; May Inquiry - RAP replies; Women in Prison; end of review of "The Acceptable Pressure Group"; Marxism and the Law. 45p.

The Abolitionist No 6 (Autumn 1980) Ten Years of RAP - a review; Room with a view - the Brighton Alternatives to Prison Project; Parole and the Justice Model; Boards of Visitors; What Alternativr for the violent offender?; Sentencing pblicy and the Court of Appeal; Reviews - the All Party Penal Affairs Group report - "Too Many Prisoners"; Doug Wakefield's "One Thousand Days of Solitary. 60p

The Abolitionist No7. (Winter 1981) Drugs in Prison - Home Office figures analysed; the deaths of Richard Campbell and Matthew O'Hara - prison medicine and official secrecy; Brother Jailers? - the POA dispute; Mozambique - justice after the revolution; Young Offenders, the Justice Model and the White Paper; Prison Deaths and the Coroners' Courts; Sex Offences and sentencing policy; Ball and Chain Award 1981; Reviews - The Commission of Enquiry into the Irish Penal System; King and MOrgan's 'The Future of the Prison System'. 70p

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speakers' co-op

On April 2, RAP, PROP (the National Prisoners' Movement) CRAG (Criminal Research & Action Group) and Release launched a Speakers and Information Co-operative. The four groups have joined together to provide a comprehensive information service dealing with every aspect of the Criminal Justice system, to schools, youth clubs, colleges, political parties & Trade Unions.

The Co-op provides speakers for a wide variety of meetings. When requesting a speaker, indicate the subject your group is interested in and write to the organisation that you think would be most likely to cover it. If they can't provide a speaker on the requested date or feel that another member of the Co-op would be more appropriate, they will pass on the details. Listed below are some general topics covered by the Co-op: these topics are not rigid and each speaker will vary somewhat in his/her approach.

Drugs & the Criminal Law
Young people & the law
The experience of prison
Law & Order and the media
Prison secrecy
The politics of crime
Women, crime and prison
Social and technical advice on drug use
Prison medicine - care or control?
Police and court procedures - myth & reality
What about the victim?
Who runs the prisons?
The crisis in the prison system
General talk on one of the sponsoring group's philosophy and work

Please note that normally speakers require a few weeks notice. Travelling expenses are required for the speaker and should be paid at the meeting. Fees are requested at certain venues but are optional at smaller meetings.

If you simply want information on any of the subjects listed above, all the groups in the Co-op publish journals, newsletters, briefing papers and specialist literature related to their work.

RAP, 7a Victoria Rd, London NW6.
tel: 01 328 3775

PROP, 97 Caledonian Rd, London N1
tel: 01 278 3328 /542 3744

CRAG, 97 Caledonian Rd, London, N1
tel: 01 278 3327

Release, 1 Elgin Avenue, London W9
tel: 01 289 1123.

Patron: Dame Flora Robson, D.B.E.

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