

# **PROP**

**the national prisoners' movement**

**WHO WE ARE . . .  
. . . WHAT WE DO**



104a BRACKENBURY ROAD, HAMMERSMITH, LONDON W6 (Telephone 01 542 3744)  
50 WESTBOURNE AVENUE, HULL, NORTH HUMBERSIDE (Telephone 0482 447484)





# PROP

## the national prisoners' movement



Chairman: Dick Pooley    National Secretary: Geoff Coggan

### SPONSORS

VICTOR FAINBERG

Mgr BRUCE KENT

JOHN PLATTS-MILLS QC

Professor LAURIE TAYLOR

MARY TYLER

Dr TONY WHITEHEAD

### HOW PROP EVOLVED

PROP was conceived on the exercise yard of Dartmoor prison by a small group of prisoners who agreed to do something on their release to help their fellow prisoners and to open up to public discussion the whole question of imprisonment. Its undoubted driving force and inspiration was Dick Pooley, a safe-blower who had spent a total of 20 years inside. It was on his release in 1972 that PROP ("Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners") was launched, with Pooley himself as national organiser.

Its early history was marked by uncertainty as to its aims, and by a temptation to fulfil the more sensational roles ascribed to it by newspaper headline writers. Its tactics vacillated between extreme militancy on the one hand and the seeking of a negotiating role with the Home Office on the other. It is out of self-criticism of such experiences that PROP's present position has developed.

### WHY A NATIONAL PROP WAS REBORN

The Hull prison riot of September 1976 - the most violent confrontation in English prison history - signalled the urgent need to hammer out a coherent policy which would no longer merely respond to events as they occurred. Pooley, then running a hostel for ex-prisoners in Hull, was in rooftop contact with the Hull demonstrators, and the demands which they made for a public inquiry were also taken by PROP as a call for unity amongst ex-prisoners and all who felt concern at the running of our prisons.

### PROP - THE NATIONAL PRISONERS' MOVEMENT

Since November 1976 PROP has been operating from both London and Hull with the united voice that is essential if we are to begin to play our part effectively in fighting the challenges which face our country and which are reflected, and in many cases foreshadowed, by the manner in which we treat our prisoners.

### WHAT DOES PROP STAND FOR?

- 1 PROP takes as its starting point the recognition that what goes on inside our country's prisons cannot be separated from what is going on in our society as a

whole, and that it is a measure of the direction in which our society is moving.

- 2 The absence of prisoners' 'rights' should not be seen as a denial to prisoners of the 'rights' enjoyed by the rest of the population. Rather should it be seen that the conditions and treatment of prisoners are indications of what democracy really means in our society.
- 3 The function of the prison system can only be understood if we recognise the class structure of our society and see the penal system as designed to maintain that structure.

PROP's principal aim is to help develop this understanding amongst prisoners and amongst the working people of our country.

Further, PROP:

- (a) seeks to explain what crime really is - that it is one of the symptoms of a defective society, and that if it is ever to be ended society must itself be changed and people learn to understand and respect one another.
- (b) seeks through open debate to educate the public to the harmful effects of the existing prison system and to help develop a positive attitude to socially irresponsible behaviour.

To this end, PROP is a propaganda organisation whose main weapon is its bi-monthly journal.

### THE PROP JOURNAL

The PROP newspaper has appeared regularly since March 1977. It is now in its sixth issue and many of its articles have been widely quoted in the national press. It is not allowed in the prisons though it is sold outside prison gates and by one means and another is both read and contributed to by prisoners. It is sold by many radical book-stalls and has a growing list of individual subscribers.

Apart from providing up to date news from inside the prisons and initiating discussion on social issues in accordance with our published aims, the PROP newspaper has spear-headed several major campaigns which, in view of the ongoing attention that they are receiving in the wider media, we will here just briefly summarise:

### THE HULL PRISON RIOT

PROP was determined from the start that the Hull prisoners would get the public inquiry for which their rooftop banners had called. We called strenuously for an official inquiry, openly conducted by independent investigators. It was a call that was taken up by many others, in the press, Parliament and elsewhere. But the Government decided instead that there should be a purely internal investigation, behind closed doors. As 'The Times' said at the time, "No matter how well such an inquiry is conducted, it will appear in these circumstances to be a whitewashing exercise".

In default of an official public inquiry PROP mounted its own 4-day Public Inquiry into the Hull Prison Riot, at the Conway Hall in London. Despite the fact that all the prisoners involved in the riot had by then been segregated in different prisons all over the country, PROP mounted an operation to obtain evidence on what had happened during and after the riot, and the events that led up to it. Detailed depositions and plans were received from more than thirty prisoners and these were presented by a team of barristers and solicitors to an Inquiring Committee which scrutinised them with the



help of evidence by prisoners' relatives, specialist witnesses and part-time prison workers with many years' personal experience of successive regimes at Hull.

The Inquiry Committee was headed by John Platts-Mills QC and included amongst its members Mary Tyler, the schoolteacher who had been imprisoned in India for 5½ years without trial; Dr Albie Sachs, interned and then deported by South Africa and now Lecturer in Law at Southampton University; Mike Cooley, Past President of the AUEW (TASS) and Editor of 'Combine News'; and Mgr Bruce Kent, Chairman of 'War on Want'.

Almost everything that has appeared in all branches of the media, concerning the events at Hull, has come either directly from this Inquiry or from summaries of the evidence submitted to it. Now, two years after the riot, and undoubtedly influenced by the pressure of sustained criticism, of which the Public Inquiry was a focal point, criminal charges are being laid by the DPP against a number of prison officers.

The findings of the inquiry led by Mr Platts-Mills QC saw the events of Hull as being far more deeply rooted than could be explained by the actions of a few 'rogue' prison officers. PROP's task now - and it will be a difficult one to fulfil in view of prisoners' natural tendency to revel in the sight of their persecutors being themselves called to account - is to see that the prosecution of a few convenient scapegoats does not allow the Home Office to evade its own responsibilities.

#### THE BARLINNIE SPECIAL UNIT

The Barlinnie Special Unit was set up in 1973 in an attempt to deal with the widespread violence within Scottish prisons - a violence which had been both provoked and aggravated by the system's own violence, as exemplified by the infamous 'cages' at Inverness.

During the following years at Barlinnie a remarkable relationship and understanding developed between the prisoners in the unit and the prison officers - all volunteers for the job - manning it. Systematic violence in Scottish prisons was virtually eliminated, while in the unit itself there has not been a single instance of violence between prisoners and staff. Furthermore, the prisoners to date released from the unit have remained out of prison for the longest period of their adult lives.

That such remarkable results can be obtained with men who, by their own admission, were murderously violent, inevitably calls into question the manner in which the rest of the prison system is operated.

It is that challenge to traditional prison policies, together with the wider social implications of the obvious success of this fundamentally cooperative and caring attitude between people, which we believe explain the unscrupulous campaign that was mounted last year in an attempt to force, first, the closure of the Special Unit, and then, surprised by the strength of public resistance to the threat of closure, the emasculatation of those elements which had made it a success.

Both in its own name and behind the scenes PROP acted to coordinate public support for the prisoners and prison officers in their struggle to save an experiment which we continue to see as lying at the heart of the prison/prisoner question - the question of socially responsible behaviour and the will to social progress.

#### THE ABUSE OF PRISONERS BY DRUGGING

In November 1977 PROP announced the formation of its Medical Committee Against

the Abuse of Prisoners by Drugging. The aims of the Committee are:

- (a) the collecting of evidence on, and the monitoring of, the use of drugs in prison.
- (b) a medical service for prisoners, free from Home Office interference and control, under the auspices of the local Area Health Authority.

The Committee comprises Dr Tony Whitehead (Chairman), consultant psychiatrist at the Bevendean Hospital, Brighton; Dr Marie O'Shea, consultant psychiatrist at the Connolly Hospital, Birmingham; David Markham, chairman of the Bukovsky Committee; Victor Fainberg, Russian emigre who spent 5 years in a Soviet psychiatric hospital where he was told that his 'disease was dissent', and who is now chairman of CAPA (Campaign Against Psychiatric Abuse); together with representatives from the following organisations: MIND (National Association for Mental Health); NCCL (National Council for Civil Liberties); PROP (National Prisoners' Movement); RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison); RELEASE; and SCODA (Standing Conference on Drug Abuse). Other doctors are associated with the Committee's work though not regularly attending its meetings.

The breadth of this Committee reflects the mounting concern at the widespread, and growing, use of drugs as a means of control inside our prisons. Some of these drugs are the same ones that have earned headlined condemnation in our newspapers when referring to their use in the labour camps of the Soviet Union. We support that condemnation to the full - and ask only that we do not employ double standards when considering the very serious developments which are taking place in our own country. No-one would accept official Russian assurances on the 'medical' treatment of their prisoners so long as this were accompanied by the refusal to permit independent observers to see for themselves. Our purpose, through our Medical Committee as in all our investigatory work, is to offset the similarly bland assurances of our own bureaucrats and 'experts' by direct evidence obtained from within the prisons themselves.

#### PROP'S LEGAL PANEL

A PROP sub-committee whose advice has been crucial to all our campaigns is our Legal Panel. The Panel, made up of barristers and solicitors from many parts of the country, offers free legal advice to convicted and remand prisoners and their families. It meets regularly to coordinate legal initiatives on behalf of prisoners, to advise PROP on legal matters and to liaise with other lawyers who are acting for prisoners. The Panel's members have been involved in many cases arising out of the Hull prison riot, including appeals to the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg.

A lawyer from the Legal Panel attends all meetings of the Medical Committee, to ensure that legal options are not overlooked. This is important not only with regard to the abuse of prisoners by drugging but also to the contradictions in sentencing policy exposed by, for example, the 'merciful' and 'lenient' life sentences which are sometimes given, in place of long fixed sentences, to those who have been diagnosed as mentally ill.

The implication, and often the clearly stated intention at the time of sentencing, is that the prisoner will receive specialist treatment and that his subsequent release on licence will be fundamentally a medical decision. From the moment of diagnosis these indeterminate sentences are subject to the gravest abuses, with situations arising where a prisoner can be denied treatment until he has been given a release date and, simultaneously, refused even the consideration of a release date until he has received treatment.



## HOSTEL FOR EX-PRISONERS

There is considerable overlap in all our work between direct, practical assistance to prisoners and the linking of these individual cases to the broader objects laid down in our published aims.

Our legal assistance to prisoners has already been mentioned. But perhaps most direct of all is PROP's work in Hull, in the running of a hostel for ex-prisoners. A charitable trust was set up there in 1973 when Dick Pooley, PROP's chairman, and his wife Elaine launched their first hostel in Fountain Street. Since then they have provided temporary shelter for over 400 ex-prisoners from all parts of the country.

Now a new hostel has been opened with eleven single rooms, each attractively decorated and furnished with fitted wardrobe and carpet, hot and cold water and central heating.

The hostel is financed separately from PROP's other activities.

## LINKS WITH PRISONERS

As ex-prisoners with a combined experience covering most prisons in the country we have numerous links with the inside, not only through prisoners but also through prison workers and even prison officers. Much is heard these days about brutality within the prison service and a great deal of our work is involved in exposing it. But we have always publicly acknowledged that the service also contains men and women who share our concern.

Fresh contacts continually develop around the distribution of the PROP newspaper. Indeed, a high proportion of inquiries for the lawyers and doctors working with us come directly from approaches made to us while selling the paper outside prisons.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

We are very careful to maintain the credibility which we have built up, particularly over the past two years, in all our dealings with the press. Not only is the reliability of our information accepted in such quarters but we are being increasingly called upon to check on stories which have reached the newspapers through other channels.

We have taken part in a number of television and radio programmes but we are not concerned with publicity for its own sake and have declined to appear in as many more where there seemed to be a serious risk of trivialising complex issues.

We have accepted invitations from all parts of the country to speak to societies, groups, universities and schools, and we see this as a very important part of our work. For some of these engagements we are booked as outside lecturers with our expenses fully covered. But with most youth clubs and schools, which are in other ways particularly rewarding, the costs have usually to be met from our own resources. Despite this, we have not yet had to decline any such invitations though their acceptance has inevitably cut into other activities.

In conjunction with RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison) we have sponsored a play on law and order, "Screwed", with which the CounterAct theatre company, with Arts Council support, has toured many parts of England, Wales and Scotland. PROP has had an ex-prisoner available at most of the performances to lead the discussions which followed. Though such a regular commitment made heavy inroads into other initiatives,

and into our very meagre funds, the play enabled us to speak to thousands of people whom we would not otherwise have reached.

## PUBLICATIONS

We see the regular appearance of the PROP newspaper as the pivot of our activities. The paper has always covered its cost, though it does not - nor we believe should it - contribute towards our other work. For that we are dependant upon donations, benefits and collections.

Lack of funds has so far prevented publication of the full transcripts of the Public Inquiry into the Hull prison riot, or the editing of the 13 hours of Videotape which were made of the proceedings. Much of the preparatory work has been done in the hope that funds for these purposes will be forthcoming.

Again subject to funds being available we intend to publish a series of prison paper-backs. The first, "There but for fortune" by Maurice Hill (an ex-prisoner's detailed report on Wormwood Scrubs) is already typeset and ready for printing. Short extracts from it have already appeared in "Prison Secrets" by Laurie Taylor and Stan Cohen, published by RAP and NCCL.

A publishing priority for 1979 will of course be the report of the current investigations of the Medical Committee into the drugging of prisoners and the activities of the prison medical service.

## HOW DOES PROP FUNCTION?

PROP's governing body is its Executive which meets monthly in London and is responsible for policy and the administering of funds.

The Executive consists of ex-prisoners, members of prisoners' and ex-prisoners' families, a practising barrister and a practising solicitor (both members of PROP's Legal Panel), a representative from RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison), a member of PROP's Hull Public Inquiry Committee, and a member of the Medical Committee. The emphasis is on practice, and Executive members are co-opted solely on account of their active interest in our work.

There is an effective majority of ex-prisoners on the Executive, though a quorum for meetings of this policy-making body must include at least three non-prisoners, of whom one must be a lawyer.

The editing of the PROP newspaper is an ex-prisoner responsibility, acting within guidelines laid down by the Executive. Though articles by outsiders are welcomed, the emphasis of the paper is on keeping it as a genuine prisoners' voice with as much material as possible from inside.

## WHY IS PROP'S EXISTENCE IMPORTANT?

The questions of law and order, of antisocial behaviour and of prisons are probably more discussed today than ever before. Yet there is a meaninglessness about the discussion which we believe is purposely built in by the manner in which the much heralded 'public debate' is conducted.

In order to get beyond this illusion of debate it is essential to break out of the pattern whereby the Home Office is recognised as one side of the discussion, while



bodies funded by or otherwise linked with the Home Office are accepted as the critical voice. Far too many radio and television interviews are conducted in this manner, giving a semblance of balance which is wholly spurious.

Newspaper and television visits to prisons add a third voice to the 'debate' but, even when these are permitted by the prison officers, they are so controlled, selected and conducted by the prison authorities that the only exposures they can make are what the Home Office allows to be exposed. It is no accident that the television programme that has most upset the prison officers was not a documentary at all, but a dramatisation which was less subject to Home Office surveillance and consequently better able to depict its subject in an authentic manner.

A fourth voice in the 'debate' is the academic one provided by sociologists and criminologists, for whom the basic materials for analysis are statistics provided by the Home Office itself. Such statistics can be endlessly discussed but their validity is virtually uncheckable through normal academic avenues. Acceptance, for example, of the comparative punishment figures for different prisons, supplied by the Prison Department and published by HMSO, led to false conclusions being drawn by many well intentioned surveys of the causes of the Hull riot.

Only prisoners at the prisons mentioned are in a position to question such figures and to draw attention to anomalies which would pass unnoticed by anyone else. With an institution as closed and restrictive as a prison, the information is available through no other channels. No external prison reform group can substitute for this specialist knowledge, and no debate, documentary, interview or 'in depth' newspaper article which ignores it can make any serious claim to objectivity.

It is as a prisoners' voice, meeting these needs, that we see PROP's continued existence as vital to the exposure of the anti-democratic developments demonstrated by the manner in which we run our prisons.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

PROP enjoys fraternal relations with RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison) with whom we have joined in many activities and on whose policy committee we are represented. As indicated by the composition of PROP's Medical Committee, we are anxious to foster co-operation on the widest possible basis with other organisations. We also maintain friendly contact with NACRO and the Howard League in areas of mutual concern.

We believe that our own clear identity as a group and the validity of its viewpoint are now generally recognised, even by some of the penal reform groups furthest from our outlook. Unlike some organisations, and particularly of course those most closely identified with the Home Office, we are not concerned with assisting the Home Office in the running of its prisons. We are also painfully aware - having experienced some 'reforms' at first hand - that it is in our most modern and treatment orientated prisons that the psychiatric abuse of prisoners is most prevalent. We must not forget that, historically, the penal reformers have not been the adversaries of the prison system, but its architects. The control units, aversion therapy, and the drugging of prisoners have all been introduced in the name of progress - as was the treadmill in its day.





# PROP

paper of the national prisoners' movement

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4

DECEMBER 1977 - JANUARY 1978

BI-MONTHLY 10p

## DRUG ABUSE IN PRISON

• • • WIDE SUPPORT FOR PROP CAMPAIGN

The following press release was issued on November 6th.

Concerned about:

1. The already widespread, and growing, use of drugs as a means of control inside our country's prisons;
2. The use of prisoners as guinea-pigs for the pharmaceutical industry.

PROP - the National Prisoners' Movement announces the formation of the **MEDICAL COMMITTEE AGAINST THE ABUSE OF PRISONERS BY DRUGGING.**

The aims of the Committee are:

- (a) the collection of evidence on, and the monitoring of, the use of drugs in prison
- (b) a medical service for prisoners, free from Home Office interference and control, under the auspices of the local Area Health Authority.

The press release was given some publicity in the Guardian and The Times, though The Times managed to do so without mentioning a single supporting organisation. Most significant of all, both papers omitted any reference to the support of Victor Fainberg and David Markham - a sure sign of the value of their support and a reminder to everybody that this country has its own methods of limiting the freedom of expression. Victor Fainberg and David Markham have both, in the past, received considerable publicity for their struggles against the maltreatment and conditions of Soviet prisoners. Naturally, the Home Office is not pleased by the extension of their campaign to many of the same practices in English jails.

The Committee will be convening shortly to discuss the question of Larry Winters, the prisoner recently found dead from a drugs overdose in the Barlinnie Special Unit. They will be particularly concerned with Larry Winters' 'treatment' before he entered the Special Unit when, at least during his time in Porterhead Prison, Inverness, he was being given drugs 'in excess of the dosage given in closed state hospitals' (see p. 7). The Committee intends to offer to the Fatal Accidents Inquiry into Larry Winters' death an independent medical witness.

**INSIDE** THE LIFER QUESTION  
PRISON REFORM

Dr WHITEHEAD on DRUGS IN PRISON  
THE GERMAN PRISON MURDERS

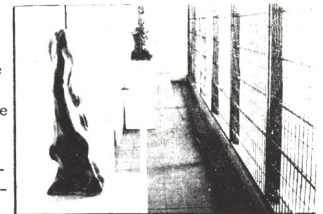
### THE COMMITTEE

Dr. Tony Whitehead (Chairman), consultant psychiatrist at the Bevendean Hospital, Brighton; Dr. Marie O'Shea, consultant psychiatrist at the Connolly Hospital, Birmingham; David Markham, chairman of the Bukovsky Committee; Victor Fainberg, Russian emigre who spent 5 years in a Soviet psychiatric hospital where he was told that his 'disease was dissent', and who is now the chairman of CAPA (Campaign Against Psychiatric Abuse); together with representatives from the following organisations: MIND (National Association for Mental Health); NCCL (National Council for Civil Liberties); PROMPT (Protection of the Rights of "Mental Patients" in "Therapy"); PROP (The National Prisoners' Movement); RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison); and RELEASE.

## BARLINNIE A UNIQUE EXPERIMENT

### SEE INSIDE PAGES

Sculptures by Jimmy Boyle outside the cells of the Special Unit. As part of its campaign to eliminate the experiment, the Prison Department has ordered that the sculptures be removed and put in storage. The staff have refused to carry out the order - a further demonstration of their courage and solidarity with the prisoners.



PROP calls upon the international community that has already recognised Jimmy Boyle as a sculptor of outstanding talent to join the campaign in support of the Special Unit. That Jimmy Boyle's talent has become apparent only during his years in the Unit, underlines the truly remarkable nature of this experiment.



1. PROP takes as its starting point the recognition that what goes on inside our country's prisons cannot be separated from what is going on in our society as a whole; that what goes on inside prison is a measure of the direction in which our society is moving.
2. The absence of prisoners' 'rights' should not be seen as a denial to prisoners of the 'rights' enjoyed by the rest of the population. Rather should it be seen that the conditions and treatment of prisoners are a measure of what democracy really means in our society as a whole.
3. The function of the prison system in our society can only be understood if we recognise the class structure of our society and see the penal system as designed to maintain that structure.

PROP's principal aim is to help develop this understanding amongst prisoners and amongst the working people of our country.

Further, PROP:

- (a) seeks to explain what crime really is - that it is one of the symptoms of a defective society, and that if it is ever to be ended society must itself be changed and people learn to understand and respect one another.
- (b) seeks through open debate to educate the public to the harmful effects of the existing prison system and to help develop a positive attitude to socially irresponsible behaviour.

To this end, PROP is a propaganda organisation whose main weapon is its bi-monthly journal.

## LIMITATIONS OF PRISON REFORM

### A PROP POLICY STATEMENT

#### DEMANDING 'RIGHTS'

Demanding prisoners' rights can be compared with workers demanding the right to work. There are certain similarities and some very fundamental differences.

To demand work of a profiteering society, by itself, changes nothing. If the reason for making work available - for providing jobs - is that it will make someone a profit, then no amount of demanding is going to make those jobs available while profits are easier to come by in some other way.

Profits - for a few - are easier to come by in another way - by making unemployment, rather than employment, the rule. That is why we have 1½ million unemployed men and women producing absolutely nothing, and many more millions producing a great many things for which we have no real need - and which would be very low in our priorities if the choice of what we produced was made by the working people themselves.

Unemployment will be ended only when profit is no longer the criterion for producing goods - when in fact we decide to produce goods on the basis of our own needs.

So, demands for work, like demands for £50 minimum wages for everybody all round, including pensioners and the sick and unemployed, are demands which our present profiteering society cannot meet.

It might be said that publicly demanding the right to work is itself serving to raise public consciousness of the need for change - and nothing can be changed until there is that awareness that will

lead people to say "Enough is enough, we will run this country ourselves and produce what we want and need".

So long as that aim is not lost sight of, then demands for work, like factory sit-ins, pickets, strikes, can all have their place. And the workers, who between them produce the profits for the financiers, have tremendous muscle when it comes to the withdrawal of labour.

But the prison situation is not the same at all. We do no good by pretending that the prisoner is in the same position as a worker, or of speaking of prisoners' unions in the same breath as we speak of trade unions. The prisoner produces nothing that is of any use to anybody except himself - for his own sustenance. The other things that he works at - mailbags, nobby dolls, cable stripping - even the output of the "industrial" prisons like Coldingley - are of no economic significance whatsoever.

It is true that a prison runs only with the consent of the prisoners. It is they who do the cooking, cleaning, plumbing, laundering. If they were to withdraw these services on a mass scale, as has sometimes been unrealistically suggested as a tactic, it would admittedly cause chaos in the prisons. But the victims would be the prisoners themselves.

A prison strike on a local basis can have a propaganda value in drawing attention to a particular situation. But if it were possible - and it is not even remotely possible - to organise a mass stoppage of work throughout the entire prison system, the immediate result would be an army take-over of the prisons with the overwhelming support of the people in this country.

#### THE PUBLIC AND THE PRISONS

We must stop assuming that the question of imprisonment is one that particularly interests the public - except in the negative sense that they would like to see more of it. If Mrs Thatcher's proposals for a referendum on capital punishment and the birch were to be put into effect, the likely result would be a large majority for hanging, corporal punishment, and for longer and stiffer sentences. We delude ourselves if we think otherwise.

Of course, the question of imprisonment should concern the public. It is in fact in their vital and most urgent interest to recognise that the steady development of the repressive institutions of the State is aimed at them - at the working people. The army, whose main function used to be subduing other countries or defending our own, is being steadily redeployed to meet the challenge from within. The military and the police are becoming more and more a co-ordinated force. And the prison system - which shares with West Germany the distinction of having the largest prison population in Europe - is the cornerstone of the State's armoury of repression.

This is where the prisoners' struggle and the struggle of the working people coincide. PROP's responsibility is to break through the secrecy surrounding our prisons, to bring home to the people of this country the reality of the prison situation, to draw the links between what is happening inside and outside, and to explain that the developments now taking place within the prison system are a foretaste of what is being prepared for us all.

Cont'd on Page 3



### A PRISONERS' CHARTER

What has all this to do with the question of PROP, the National Prisoners' Movement, campaigning on a Charter for Prisoners' Rights?

In the present state of public opinion - of public awareness - the demand for a Prisoners' Charter would be a demand made into thin air. Only the people have the power to enforce such changes. And they will not have the will to use that power until they have the will to use their power in a much wider context - to change, not just the prisons, but the whole profiteering system of which they are an essential part.

Prisons cannot, on their own, be radically changed. Like homelessness, like unemployment, like inflation, we are stuck with them - until we decide to do something about the system that produces them all.

Apart from the unreality of campaigning on a Prisoners' Charter, there is also a very negative effect which such a policy would have. The Home Office of course has no intention of acceding to it. But the very existence of a Charter with a long list of demands does give the Home Office the chance - at any time that it feels under pressure - of seeming to be very progressive by acceding to one little bit of it at a time. It is a never-never land in which PROP will have provided the Home Office with a program which reaches into the far distant future.

Does this mean that PROP has no opinion on, say, overcrowding or parole - two of the most pressing demands in every prison reform group's campaigning program? Not at all.

### OVERCROWDING

Nobody who has experienced 3-in-a-cell conditions can do other than condemn them. But to actually campaign on such an issue is to lead, logically, to support for a new prison building program. This is why some of the strongest protest about prison overcrowding is coming from the Prison and Borstal Governors' Association (a branch of the CPSU). It wants more prisons - with better promotion prospects for governors, more jobs for the boys.

We must never forget that prisons are providing a living for a growing number and variety of specialists. So there are a great many vested interests in keeping prison as a growth industry.

### MORE MONEY FOR PRISONS?

Sometimes the 'rights' campaigners approach this question of prison conditions from the other end. For example, many prisoners' rights groups are at this very moment campaigning against the cut-backs in Government spending on prisons

- as if these cuts were the reason for the conditions in which prisoners are kept. Yet experience has shown, time and time again, that greater expenditure on prisons does not mean better facilities: it means simply more prisons.

And more prisons does not mean less overcrowding anyway - it means more prisoners. That is the lesson of Albany, Gartree and Long Lartin - new prisons which have left the old ones as crowded as ever. Similarly, what has the "progressive" open prison policy achieved - other than to provide additional prison places? It has done nothing at all to reduce the closed prison population.

### PAROLE

And what of parole? Parole is now generally recognised as the supreme carrot in the penal system - a form of control designed to keep a man subservient for year after year - a device to turn a man away from any social responsibility to his fellow prisoners which might conflict with keeping himself in the authorities' favour - a means of encouraging him to read the right books and think the right thoughts.

When Hull prisoners raided a Wing office and saw what had been written in their own files, it underlined once again the cynical manner in which parole prospects were dangled in front of men whose confidential records stated quite clearly that they were not to be released.

### WHY NOT CARROTS FOR ALL?

But, it might be said, even if it is accepted that parole is a carrot dangled in front of prisoners in order to control them, what is wrong with pressing for the carrot as an automatic right for everybody?

This is the same as arguing "Let's make everybody rich". Being rich doesn't mean anything unless other people are poor. One has to be rich in relation to somebody else, otherwise the word is a meaningless one. The only alternative is for everybody to be the same - nobody rich and nobody poor, but everyone sharing the wealth that everyone produces. That is fine, but it isn't going to happen by talking about it, or by making demands - but by doing something about it.

Similarly, to give everybody parole is to give nobody parole. Parole then becomes an automatic remission of sentence, and such a reduction would be immediately discounted by longer sentences being given in the first place.

### ALTERNATIVES TO PRISON

Campaigning on alternatives to prison poses very similar problems. And RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison) has, like PROP, found in its very title seeds of contradiction which it has had to come face to face with in order to avoid the trap of helping to extend the penal system by promoting additional - rather than alternative forms of coercion.

In developing its own policy, RAP, again like PROP, has moved towards the understanding that the question of prisons is a political one which, in a class society, inevitably means that it is a class question.

### THE HOWARD LEAGUE

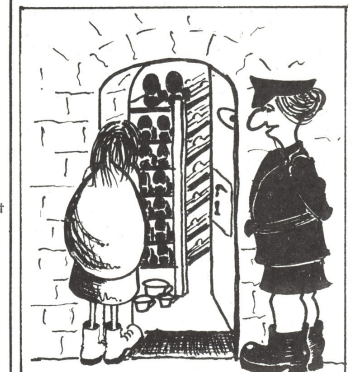
It is this approach that distinguishes RAP, as well as the new PROP, from the fundamentally reformist groups such as the Howard League or the section of PROP that separated from the parent body in 1972 and commenced a localised existence, first in Camden and then in Islington, under the name of North London Prop.

Like most groups which in fact operate on parallel lines, PROP has in the past spent too much of its energies in attacking others like NACRO or the Howard League. It is always the case that organisations with basically similar philosophies are tempted to exaggerate their differences in order to assert their identity. That is why the closest political - or religious - groups often spend a disproportionate amount of time attacking and "exposing" each other.

Now that PROP, the National Prisoners' Movement, recognises that its purpose is different from that of the re-

Cont'd on Page 4

## PIZZEY PUZZLER!



"IN YOU GO, PIZZIEY,  
NO OVERCROWDING HERE, EH?"

On October 6th the House of Lords, that senior body of English law, recommended conviction of Erin Pizzey for overcrowding her Chiswick Battered Wives refuge. The court sentencing her awarded a conditional discharge.

What, PROP wonders, would happen to Erin Pizzey if she continues to 'overcrowd' her refuge and therefore breaches her award? It is likely that she will have to spend a short spell in one of our prisons, which the State that prosecuted her has persistently overcrowded in far worse conditions for years with impunity.



formist groups, it no longer feels the need to try to outbid either the Howard League or anyone else. They can be safely left to do what they have always done - refining the prison system, gaining little concessions here and there, acting as the safety valve which allows the Home Office to blow off excess steam from time to time - and admittedly gaining for prisoners marginal improvements in their lot. It is quite unnecessary for PROP to deny that this has happened. Indeed, if only for the fact that the Howard League has been around for 200 years, it can give a headstart to PROP any day when it comes to the winning of reforms.

The case for reform will not go by default because PROP is no longer making it. PROP has more fundamental work to do, concerned not with tarring up the system but with expressing and explaining the urgent need to drastically change it.

#### HOW DOES THAT HELP NOW?

To those who would say "How is that helping anyone NOW?" we would reply that this is the limiting call which prevents any real change ever being made. People have been making piecemeal demands for reform for years. 10,000 prisoners in 1940 weren't allowed fountains or wristwatches. Now they are - but there are over 42,000 prisoners today. Simultaneously the average length of prison sentences has shot up, and it is surely no great advance that 4 times as many prisoners, serving considerably longer sentences, now have pens in their pockets or watches on their wrists.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE VICTIMS?

The question of "What are you doing NOW?" is of particular relevance to the cry aimed at all the prison groups, reformist as well as ourselves, that we forget the victims of crime.

The reformists' answer to this is to propose balancing reforms. Hence the calls for "compensation".

Yet how on earth do we compensate the victim? How does one unrape a woman or resurrect a man or give back an eye?

The reality of course is that these kinds of reform change nothing. Prisoners can wear watches, perhaps one day they can get conjugal visits as well. And victims can be compensated with cash hand-outs and other welfare assistance. But women will continue to get raped, and people killed and robbed until we do something about the antisocial behaviour which this society is breeding - and that means to tackle the problem at source by replacing the society that is producing in ever-increasing numbers these distortions in the human spirit. That is the real help for the victim - as for the prisoner - as for everybody.

#### SO HOW DOES PROP CAMPAIGN?

Does all this mean that PROP stands aside from immediate practical prison/prisoner questions? A look at the campaigns in which PROP (and its predecessor WP) has been involved should answer the question:

- 1 the Stephen Smith case
- 2 the Control Units
- 3 the Public Inquiry into the Hull prison riot
- 4 the current campaign on behalf of the Barlinnie special unit and the 'lifer' question.

In addition to the above, there is the ongoing work of the Legal Panel which has itself developed since its formation in the early WP days, and the publicity given to individual prisoner cases.

Let us take two concrete examples of campaigns in which PROP has been (or is) involved, and compare the 'prisoners' rights' approach with that of PROP - firstly the Control Units and, secondly, the Barlinnie special unit.

#### CONTROL UNITS

Immediately after the (first) announcement by Roy Jenkins, then Home Secretary, of the 'closure' of the control units in February 1975, a number of prison reform organisations sent a letter to Jenkins stating that "we welcome its demise and look forward to an early opportunity to work with the Home Office in the consideration of institutional policies".

\* WORKING PEOPLE, disturbed by this move on the part of the prison groups, published an open letter in its April 1975 issue. In May of that year, 3 more men were sent to the unit and WORKING PEOPLE launched the second stage of the campaign after being contacted by one of the prisoners families. At the end of October, after the men had been in Stage II for a couple of weeks - the stated minimum was 3 months - they were let out. WP did not see this as the end of

\*WORKING PEOPLE, a paper that was launched in 1974 and which from the start concerned itself with the situation of prisons and prisoners. Although never a prison paper, it published a 'Prison Notebook' - usually of 4 or 5 pages, and was regularly sold outside various prisons. From its very first issue, it included a serving prisoner and a prison teacher on its editorial committee. The same two of its members, now no longer 'inside', are amongst those who have joined Dick Pooley to develop PROP - The National Prisoners' Movement. Its Prison Notebook has been absorbed in the new bi-monthly PROP Newspaper.

the units - merely as a tactical success in a limited campaign - and continued to remind its readers of the units' existence. In May 1976 it announced the building of another unit at Gartree prison, more than 18 months before its currently scheduled opening.

#### BARLINNIE SPECIAL UNIT

It has been suggested (by one of the special unit prisoners) that PROP launch a campaign for 'special units' in all prisons. PROP's response has been that this is not its job, though it would lend its support to any such campaign by the various prison reform groups - who have had 4 years to get something started along these lines. (The fact that the Home Office would attempt to emasculate a campaign, as it is attempting now to emasculate the original unit, would give PROP a particularly important job to do in assuring critical support).

Why then has PROP initiated the campaign to keep the special unit open? Because the attempt to end the Barlinnie experiment is a political move on the part of the Home Office to destroy the one genuinely rehabilitative development our country's prisons (or those of Europe) have seen.

The Barlinnie experiment is at the heart of the prison/prisoner question - the question of socially responsible behaviour and the will to social progress. That such remarkable results can be achieved with men who, by their own admission, were murderously violent, calls into question the manner in which the rest of our prison system is run.

This is what lies behind the official attempts to end it. The campaign to keep the unit open - the immediate practical priority - must have as its aim a public debate on the nature of the experiment and the reasons underlying the attempted closure.

## PROP EXECUTIVE FORMED

With the steady growth of PROP - the National Prisoners' Movement, an Executive Committee has been set up to formulate and develop its policy. The Executive is made up of 3 ex-prisoners, 3 prisoners' or ex-prisoners' wives, a member of the editorial committee of Working People who is also an ex-prison teacher, a representative of RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison), a member of the PROP Legal Panel, and a member of the Inquiring Committee into the Hull prison riot. With the recent formation

of a Medical Committee it is intended that this too should be represented on the PROP Executive.

"Prison Secrecy" by Stan Cohen and Laurie Taylor will be jointly published by RAP and NCCL in January, price £1.25. It will be available to prisoners' families and to subscribers to PROP newspaper at the reduced rate of 75p. & postage.



# BARLINNIE SPECIAL UNIT

5

## A BREAKTHROUGH IN HUMAN AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Towards the end of 1969, a debate started inside the Scottish Home and Health Department - Scotland's equivalent of the Home Office - about the widespread violence in the country's jails. A working party, of prison officers, civil servants and psychiatrists, was set up. The result, 3 years later in January 1973, was the Special Unit at Barlinnie prison in Glasgow to which five of Scotland's, by their own admission, most violent, prisoners were sent.

In the nearly five years of the Unit's existence, the systematic violence of Scotland's jails has been effectively eliminated. In the Unit itself, there has not been a single instance of violence between staff and prisoners.

### SELF-CRITICISM

All staff in the Unit are volunteers, and a weekly Community Meeting is where decisions are made. When necessary, additional meetings are called. Everyone has a vote, and a prisoner's vote carries as much weight as a prison officer's. These Community Meetings are the foundation on which the Unit rests. It is there that mistakes are acknowledged and ways sought to guard against them in the future. No one escapes criticism when criticism is necessary. At a recent meeting, for example, an officer was in the 'hot seat'. He had failed to turn up for a previously arranged meeting, having at the last moment chosen instead to go for a game of squash. The officer acknowledged the prisoners' criticism that he had behaved irresponsibly.

It was at such a meeting that, in the first months of the Unit's existence, the prisoners' vote to remove the door to the punishment cell was finally carried against considerable opposition from a majority of the staff. It was that decision that marked the breakthrough in the early development of the Unit. To this day, the punishment cell has not been used.

Jimmy Boyle is one of the reasons the Special Unit was set up. At the end of 1967, he was sentenced to life with a minimum of 15 years. When, together with four other prisoners, he entered the Unit in 1973, he had already received a further 6 years for 'assaults' on prison staff and was at the time awaiting trial for the 'attempted murder' of 6 officers. That charge was finally dropped but 6 more years for 'assault' brought his total since entering prison to 12.

In his autobiography published last September\*, he speaks of the suspicions and doubts of the early days in the Unit

\* 'A Sense of Freedom'

which led him to petition for a transfer back to the regular prison regime: "The only way for me to get any peace of mind was to get out of it and return to the solitary situation as that was the method I could handle best. I knew where I stood there".

While part of him was pushing to go back to the violence of the regular regime, another part 'was screaming out for it (the unit), to accept it, while another part was saying that it had come too late, and regretted that it hadn't come along sooner'.

With the understanding and encouragement of the Unit staff, Jimmy stayed, thereby encouraging the other prisoners to do the same. Today, both officers and men are battling for the survival of the experiment that has allowed violent anti-social 'thugs' to develop into human beings of remarkable ability.

For almost a year, the Home and Health Department, supported by the Home Office, has been waging a concerted campaign to end this truly remarkable experiment. As we go to press, that campaign is reaching its climax.

A recent ministerial statement from Mr Bruce Millan, Secretary of State for Scotland, in which he is reported to have said that the running of the Unit is 'in principle' to remain the same reminds us of the statement made by Home Secretary Jenkins in January 1975 in which he announced the 'closure' of the 'control units'. Two months later, three more men were sent to the unit at Wakefield.

### OUTSTANDING SUCCESS

It is not surprising that the Prison Department is determined to end the Special Unit experiment. At the very least, its outstanding success challenges the entire repressive penal system. Each of the three men to date released from the Special Unit has now been out of prison for the longest period of his adult life. The only man so far released from the 'control units' - being built in England at the time the Special Unit opened in Scotland - is now back in prison after spending his short spell of 'freedom' in a psychiatric hospital.

But the strongest indictment of the repressive prison system is the example of Jimmy Boyle. Once dubbed 'Scotland's most violent man', Jimmy Boyle went to the Special Unit from the 'cages' at Inverness where he had been sent after a rooftop protest at Peterhead prison in August 1972. The Peterhead protest prefigured that of Hull last year when the prisoners were systematically beaten as they came down from the roof.

### THE 'CAGES'

Jimmy Boyle did not, in fact, take part in the Peterhead protest - he was in solitary confinement at the time and could only express his solidarity by beating on the door of his cell. Nevertheless, he soon found himself transferred to the 'cages' - Scotland's (less sophisticated) version of the 'control units'. Jimmy had briefed his brother on the beating of the Peterhead prisoners and had asked him to bring it to the attention of the press.

The following is a description of the 'cages' by a prisoner who spent several months there:

"Inverness Prison: There are six cells in this Punishment wing. Five of them have cage fronts inside and the prisoner enters the ordinary cell with concrete walls and steel lined door then is put inside a cage within this cell. Food is put to the prisoner through a two and a half inch gap at the bottom of the cage. The prisoner in order to eat has to sit on the floor and put the meals on his knees or eat straight from the concrete floor. There is no furniture except for a lidless chamber pot. Prisoners are searched three times per day. THREE TIMES, and body searches take place at all times. One book per week is given to the prisoner in these cages. There is a small window outside the caged area and this has double framework with opaque glass and a heavy grilled wire mesh over it so that its difficult to tell what time of day it is, day or night.

"The sixth cell is called the Silent Cell, and this is a concrete cell within a concrete cell, which means that one has to enter two sets of walls and two heavy doors to get into it. Once in there the prisoner hears nothing for it is what its name says Silent Cell. Prisoners lie in these for any amount of time with no toilet facilities whatsoever. The cell is so silent that a constant ringing in the ears is there.

"If and when given exercise prisoners are taken to the rooftop and allowed to walk up and down a few paces as this is where the exercise yard is. There is a wall on top of the roof covered with heavy barbed wire to stop the prisoner climbing up and jumping off.

"The staff ratio is five staff to every man as there is only one prisoner allowed out at any one time then there are five on. One Senior Officer and four basic grade.

"One toothbrush is left in the metal sink and all prisoners have to use this. A toothbrush isn't allowed in as it can be used as a weapon and this applies to

cont'd on Page 6



everything else including pens which are loaned for the one letter per week.

"The cages are built so that no one screw can open them on his own. The mechanism for opening the Cage is so structured that at least two screws have to open them, this is so that complacency doesn't cause slip ups on the part of the screws.

"The time element is no less than two months nor longer than six. A Board of Governors from the prisons of the prisoners in the place form the body who decide if the prisoner is fit to return to his normal prison. If during the two month period he gets in any trouble then he is kept for another two months. The six months maximum is utter rubbish as prisoners have been there from periods up to 22 months."

#### FROM 'BRUTE' TO HUMAN

Treated like a wild animal, Jimmy Boyle naturally responded like a wild animal and in the middle of December, after seeing a fellow prisoner lying beaten and bleeding inside an adjoining 'cage', he determined that if there were to be any protest 'the emphasis should be on doing as much damage to the enemy as possible. Earlier that month, I had managed to pick up the heel plate of a boot which I had sharpened and when my cage was searched that night I hid it in my mouth as I did whenever searches were given'. It was as a result of that incident that Jimmy Boyle was charged with the 'attempted murder' of 6 prison officers. No one, of course, was charged with his attempted murder though he remained unconscious for almost two weeks.

Jimmy Boyle's account of his years in Scotland's jails is an unbroken record of the brutalisation - of officers as well as men - inherent in every repressive penal system. Today, the 'brute' that was Jimmy Boyle has turned out to be, not only a sculptor of outstanding ability, but a man, capable like any other healthy human being, of love and affection. When treated like a human being, the 'wild animal' has turned out to be human after all.

To say that the Prison Department 'wants' violence, any more than it 'wants' the second highest prison population in Europe (West Germany heads the league) would be too crude. What it wants is a docile, unthinking prison population which will not dare question what it does in the name of 'authority'. The official justification for the 'control units', their name aside, made this clear:

"The units are not for the merely troublesome ... but for the prisoner having the actual capacity to encourage, persuade or coerce fellow prisoners to join in the challenge to authority."

The Special Unit has produced the opposite. By enabling men to take re-

sponsibility for their thinking and actions into their own hands, it has transformed them into socially responsible human beings.

A responsible thinking man, prisoner or non-prisoner, is a greater danger to class privilege than ten angry young men with guns - for it does not take him long to understand that prison exists to defend

### SCREWY THOUGHTS

It's six o'clock I must unlock, and free  
the overnight stench  
of human sweat and urine, it's enough to  
make you wretch.  
The inmates they will follow in the line  
of a half dressed queue,  
with pots in hand, like a 'Sanitary Band'  
they'll head towards the 'Loo'.

I can hear 'Reveille's chatter' as I watch  
the razors shine,  
15 hours to lock-up, it's a hellish long time.  
Today won't be constructive, they never  
are in here,  
I'll just hang on till lock-up, and then let  
out a cheer.

I wonder why we do this to these charges  
in our grasp,  
we seem to lose all interest, and refuse  
them all they ask.  
We're good at searching bodies and  
counting when they pass,  
this may look efficient, but it isn't quite  
the task.

Don't slag us 'Screws', we're not to blame,  
it's the system that never took the pain,  
to study human thinking that can become  
insane.

It's time we had this Unit, with the inmates'  
in mind,  
with avenues for their good, and allow-  
ances to be kind.  
They seem to grasp the meaning, for they  
all work like mad,  
to keep this experiment this system's never  
had.

We solve all our problems in this unit  
that is news,  
and it seems the only bugbear is the  
outside 'Screws'.  
It's just that they're still working in the  
years all gone by,  
but I'm sure they'll see our progress, when  
they find the time to try.

GRR

Reprinted from THE KEY (No. 2), maga-  
zine of the Special Unit, HMP Barlinnie,  
Glasgow.

class privilege. That is its basic purpose.

#### UNIT STAFF GIVE A LEAD

But there is another equally worrying aspect for the Prison Dept. It is not only prisoners who have begun to think for themselves. Prison Officers have also learnt from the experiment. The Unit staff

may have been exceptional men, both personally and in their understanding of human relations and behaviour - but ideas have a habit of spreading, particularly when they come from within a group.

Under the regular prison regime, a socially responsible prison officer must remain the exception. The very nature of his job demands that he must - at best - put human and social responsibility on one side, for his non-working hours. In short, the job demands that he behaves like an animal.

The exceptional officer is aware of this and tries to find ways to guard against it, like the officer who had taken a clerical job in the administration block of a large security prison. He'd formerly worked at an open prison and said that locking men up and giving them orders was not for him. At the suggestion that other officers might have something to learn from the Special Unit experiment, he smiled, "Others? 98%, you mean!"

#### SOLIDARITY

Essential to the maintenance of the class system which prison exists to defend is a whole body of ideas which are designed to keep working people fighting one against the other. One of the most basic of these is the myth of an 'unchangeable human nature', by implication violent and competitive.

The Special Unit, like nothing else before it in our country's history, has shattered the myth, and so provided a further step to continued social and human development. But it has been able to do so, and its outstanding success achieved, only through the closest co-operation and mutual support of the officers and men.

It is the determination of the Prison Department to smash this unity which lies behind its campaign to eliminate the experiment.

There are indeed many thugs in prison. The systematic beating of the Hull prisoners as they came down from the roof of the jail can leave us in no doubt as to who they are. The Special Unit, on the contrary, has united prison officers and prisoners in a common struggle towards a better, and a happier future - a future in which there will be neither thugs nor 'wild animals' and in which prison will have no part, where men will be united and not divided, and where all will work for the benefit of all, and not for the greed and profit of a few.

It is in the interest of all those concerned to help create that better and happier future to rise in defence of the Special Unit and in support of the officers and men battling for its survival. Failure to do so is to take the side of the thugs.

Let us learn from the officers and prisoners in the Special Unit and take responsibility for the future - our future - into our own hands.



# BARLINNIE : DEPUTATION AND DRUGS CONTROVERSY — Caroline Tisdall

As part of its campaign in support of the Barlinnie Special Unit, PROP took part in a delegation to the Scottish Office on Tuesday 8th November. The following is a piece which should have appeared in The Guardian on the day of the delegation. At the last minute, it was censored by the Editor on the grounds that 'it contained nothing new'.

PROP is grateful to Caroline Tisdall for allowing us to print her piece in full. Her journalistic courage is an example to all her colleagues.

The official enquiry into the running of the controversial Special Unit of HM Prison Barlinnie in Glasgow will continue for at least another week. Events that brought matters to a head in September were the death due to a drugs overdose of Larry Winters, and the publication of a revealing autobiography by Jimmy Boyle, both inmates of the Special Unit, though the enquiry was certainly planned as far back as June. Since the enquiry started wide support for the non-punitive methods of the Unit has been expressed by penal experts, sociologists and academics, as well as the secretary of the Scottish Prison Officers' Association, Mr John Renton.

## A REMARKABLE EXPERIMENT

Today this support will be reinforced by a delegation headed by Russell Kerr, Labour MP for Hounslow, Feltham and Heston, together with representatives of PROP. Mr Kerr recently visited the Special Unit. Meg Howarth, who accompanied him on behalf of PROP, was at the very last minute refused admission after Home Office instructions to the Scottish Prison Department, despite the fact that her visit had been officially agreed by the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland. The delegation will meet Harry Ewing, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, who was in charge of the official enquiry until it was taken over three weeks ago by Bruce Millan, Secretary of State for Scotland. The purpose of the delegation is 'to obtain an official denial of the rumours of impending changes in the running of the Special Unit, in particular the removal of the voluntary basis on which a balance of nursing and discipline staff are recruited, and the replacement of nursing staff by discipline officers.

The delegation will argue that this voluntary recruiting and balance of nursing and discipline staff has been essential to the success of the Special Unit. Its success can be measured by the fact that since it was opened five years ago to deal with the hardest cases there have been no outbreaks of violence in the Scottish pri-

son system. That is a pragmatic reason for the support of the Scottish Prison Officers' Association. The progress towards resocialisation made by the inmates, plus the fact that the three former prisoners who are now free have not got into trouble again are sound signs of the success argued by the Unit's supporters. The delegation wishes to make sure that the enquiry takes these supportive arguments into account as well as the negative criticisms of well-known adversaries of the Unit like Teddy Taylor, Conservative MP.

## DRUG ADDICTION

The deputation will also be seeking an answer to the controversial question of administration of drugs to prisoners. In this case it relates specifically to the case of Larry Winters: 'Why had Larry Winters, according to his medical charts been officially prescribed drugs and tranquillisers for almost nine years which during his time in the 'cages' of Inverness were certainly "in excess of the dosage given in closed state hospitals"?'

The circumstances surrounding Winters' death on September 10th have perturbed the officials conducting the enquiry. Much emphasis has been focussed on the fact that the drugs that killed him were not his official dose and therefore smuggled in. The deputation's question concentrates more on the Winters' addiction, formed in prison through the administration of Seconal, Sparine and Mysoline. These are respectively barbiturate, mild tranquilliser and epileptic controller. Since entering the Special Unit almost five years ago, Winters' dose had been diminished, and Mysoline dropped. As staff report 'From the first month on in the Unit his behaviour pattern changed dramatically'. A remarkable feature of the Unit's treatment is that administered drugs, apart from the inherited case of Winters, do not play a part. As a staff member said 'Five years ago we were charged with trying to find an answer to violence. We have eliminated violence and not by traditional ways. Changes in Unit practice will close doors to the possibility of getting away from the use of drugs. In the Unit I have never seen an inmate rolling around drugged. In traditional jails I have.'

## DEPRESSION - DEATH

Winters had continued to make progress until rumours of the impending enquiry started to place staff and inmates under increasing strain. Winters' case, his addiction and his death are described by a fellow inmate: 'Larry, life plus twenty six years for assaults on prison staff and riot-

ing, of which he had served thirteen years. While in prison he became dependant on drugs and relied on heavy, sometimes massive doses given to him by the authorities. He could never see himself getting out and drugs were his one sure way of escaping from his circumstances. Larry was making an attempt to cut his drugs down when the Unit was hit by proposals from the Prisons Department that radical changes in the staffing and regime of the Unit would take place within a year. As a result of this he upped his official dosage of drugs. Then he took an overdose, though not deliberately - in my mind anyway.'

'Sunday 11th September 77. Larry is dead. Putting my hands together thumped them down on his chest. Rigor mortis had set in. 'He's dead. He's fucking dead' and they all looked at me. 'Get the doctor for Christ's sake', and the staff member left to get the doctor. The inmates stood looking at me as I pulled at Larry to make sure. He lay there still in a crouched position with the plastic chamber pot still askew under his buttocks. Blood was in the pot, a smattering. Some trickles had coagulated on his nose, and some at his feet. Very little blood in all. His eyes were tightly closed, veins in his neck protruded, and the whole pose looked strained, as though some massive pain has overtaken him... Next to the blood at his feet lay some pills, sleeping pills.'

'Even in this small claustrophobic place he died alone. And in the midst of the crumbling facades of us all, some of us wondered aloud and tried to focus on the repercussions of the death. If it is an overdose, where does it leave us? Is this selfish when a guy is lying dead in a cell upstairs? No, it is reality and doesn't detract from what we feel for him. And so he passed me locked in a green coffin. I ran to the window and looked to see him pass. They carried the heavy coffin out and the gate locked behind him. Larry has left us physically.'

## ...THE NEED FOR A PUBLIC CAMPAIGN

### SCAPEGOATS

The results of the delegation to the Scottish Office were, as expected, unsatisfactory and served only to confirm the determination of the Home and Health Department to eliminate the experiment.

There has never been any question of closing down the Unit. That would

cont'd on Page 8



be too blatant, even for the Prison Department which would, as a result, come under heavy criticism for destroying the experiment that has shown, on a world scale, the practical way forward from violent antisocial behaviour, often of the most bloody kind.

Instead, the Home and Health Department wants to destroy the unit from within, and by the most publicly acceptable means. It has chosen the tragic death of Larry Winters and the publication of Jimmy Boyle's autobiography as the scapegoats for the introduction of additional disciplinary officers and the equivalent reduction in the numbers of nursing staff.

Such a change in the staffing of the Unit would be the end of the experiment, whose truly remarkable success is based on a positive approach to personal relations and behaviour which is the antithesis of the regular prison regime.

The Department intends to use the Fatal Accidents Inquiry (Scotland's equivalent of an inquest) to be held at the end of November, as a cover-up by diverting attention from the real issue - Larry Winters' medical 'treatment' before entering the Unit - onto the question of how unofficial drugs were taken into the Unit.

PROP does not support drugging of any kind, but it would remind its readers that unofficial drugs are just as much a feature of regular prison regimes as official drugging is widespread. Only recently, one of our more responsible prison governors expressed his concern at the problems he would face if he tried to stop drugs getting into his prison - the Home Office condones the practice as it 'keeps the men quiet'.

The question of how - and more importantly, why - unofficial drugs got into the Special Unit is a question which the staff and prisoners in the Unit must indeed answer - so as to guard against its happening in the future.

What those of us who are concerned to end drug abuse must guard against is allowing the Prison Department to use Larry Winters' death for its own more dangerous ends.

The Prison Dept was responsible for Larry Winters' drug addiction. It is the Prison Dept that is responsible for his death.

It would be fatal in the struggle to keep the Unit alive and developing to place any weight on the 'inquiry within the inquiry' - an internal 'investigation' into the running of the Prison Dept set up during the 'inquiry' into the running of the Unit.

To make a comparison with Sir Robert Mark's 'clean-up' of the Met, there is little doubt that the Met is 'cleaner' than it was - though how much cleaner is open to

serious debate. But it has not stopped the growing use of 'conspiracy' law, youngsters being picked up on 'sus' charges, the growing use of detention without charge.

#### NO DIFFERENCE

The clean-up was basically necessary to restore the credibility of the police, and therefore of the class system which they, like prisons, exist to defend. Likewise, getting rid of some of the cruder operators in the Prison Dept cannot, by itself, alter the repressive basis of the penal system - even were this the intention of the internal 'investigation'.

Similarly, the purpose of the 'inquiry within the inquiry' is far more likely to be the removal of those genuine progressives who helped in the setting-up of the Unit - for, while it is corrupt policemen who threaten the credibility of the police force, it is the very success of the Unit which threatens the credibility of the repressive penal system.

To continue to be successful and to develop, the Special Unit must be protected from the destructive efforts of the Prisons Dept and the Home Office by a mobilisation of public opinion.

## THE LIFER QUESTION

Readers of the last issue of PROP may remember the letter from the Mother of a prisoner now in the 12th year of a life sentence.

The letter below is in response to our request to hear from, or on behalf of, other lifers. Only those parts which might serve to identify the prisoner have been omitted.

Dear PROP,

Over the years I have been pretty active myself in the prison protest industry, more often than not for things that don't directly concern me. For once I intend to concentrate on something in which I have a strong vested interest - the present plight of life sentence prisoners. I would like your help.

For some time now I have been aware that whereas fixed sentence prisoners have been getting ever larger lumps of parole in ever greater numbers, this trend has been reversed in the case of lifers in general. There has been great secrecy in prisons for the past couple of years about the extremely long terms some lifers are serving. When I say 'some lifers', I mean a sizeable proportion of the whole.

The problem of getting reliable statistics is very difficult because it is a general prison policy (as with most things) to shroud such statistics with secrecy. It is difficult to get a true picture from those statistics that are published. They talk about 'average' life terms, but they don't make clear whether this is a mean, median or modal average. Obviously if one man serves one year and another serves twenty years, to talk of an average of ten and a half years is pretty meaningless.

All the information I have received has come from word of mouth and must be treated with caution. However, a very frightening (for me) pattern is emerging. I keep hearing that so and so at such and such prison has done sixteen years and has been knocked back for another two years at least. Rumours like this abound. I hear that by last year 147 lifers had served more than ten years. This figure must be looked at, not in the light of the present total of 1200 lifers, but in the light of the total of ten years ago when these men

started their sentences, which total was about 400.

What I would like you to do is to collect as much information about the length of life terms as possible. You will have to use both official and unofficial sources

The figures for this prison are as follows: 10 years - 6; 11 years - 1; 12 years - 1; 13 years - 1; 14 years - one; 15 years - 2; 25 years - 1; though this isn't a prison where lifers finish off their sentences. In fact only one lifer has ever got his date from here since it opened. You will need to get similar information from other prisons.

I would then suggest that you do a breakdown on how many lifers have at present served 10 years, how many 11, etc., right up to the upper limit, whatever that may be. Then I would like you to publish these statistics in PROP, WORKING PEOPLE, and wherever you can. The authorities have lulled the vast majority of lifers into thinking they will only serve a relatively short time. By bringing lifers face to face with the awful reality of the situation it might produce a ground roots reaction.

A prison governor once said to me that it was generally accepted in official circles that to keep a man in prison for over 10 years was immoral, and to keep him in for over 15 years was positively evil. As we know, the Home Office aren't above being 'positively evil' at times.

I personally feel I could survive as a functioning human being and still retain some spark of individuality for up to 15 years. The thought of 20 years to me is an unbelievably cruel obscenity. Beside this, capital punishment is almost a merciful release and I personally wouldn't want to survive to walk free after 20 years. A stranger in a strange world, bereft of family and friends, I would be an anachronism from two decades past. You know me, I have always tried to stand up to my sentence as a man. Perhaps I have misjudged the humanity of my captors. Ideally I should be allowed

cont'd on Page 9



# HAS ANY PRISON LET YOU SEE YOUR PATIENTS? — Dr Tony Whitehead

## ... a question for doctors

Below we reprint an article by Dr. Whitehead, the Chairman of the Medical Committee, which first appeared in 'Pulse', October 15, 1977:

It is extremely doubtful whether imprisonment has any positive effects other than keeping an individual out of circulation. But this is not a paper about crime and punishment; it is an expression of concern about the medical treatment of prisoners.

There should be considerable public concern about this. The following account of a rather celebrated case illustrates a number of areas on which concern should focus. The case is that of George Ince, who has fortunately been able to get considerable publicity. But the reader will realise that many other prisoners who are unknown, unpublicised and have no influential friends are possibly suffering the same fate as George, out of sight and out of mind.

I have managed to see George Ince three times and have obtained a lot of information about his case. He first became known in 1972, when he was arrested and charged with the murder of a Mrs Muriel Patience at the Barn Restaurant, near Braintree in Essex.

He knew the police were looking for him in connection with this murder and went voluntarily to Brentwood Police Station on November 27, 1972. In fact he was not involved in the murder, but was arrested and charged. He spent the next year in prison, during which time there were two trials.

At the second trial he was found not guilty - but he was at once re-arrested and charged with a bullion robbery. He was found guilty of this offence and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment.

He was clearly not guilty of the Barn murder, since others have been charged and convicted of this offence. He also denied any involvement in the bullion robbery and continues to protest his innocence - and there is considerable evidence to show that he was not involved.

He does not have a long criminal record. As a young man he was charged with three relatively minor offences, but after that he stayed out of trouble until his arrest in 1972.

After his conviction and sentence he was sent to Long Lartin Prison, where he settled in to prison life. But on the night of October 27, 1976 he was awakened and told that he was part of a plot to escape from the prison.

He was transferred to Bristol Prison, where he was placed in solitary confinement and put in 'patches' (distinctive clothing used to identify potential escapees). On November 16, 1976 he was transferred with two other escapees to Gartree Prison where again he was placed in solitary confinement.

On November 24, 1976, he was told that the alleged escape attempt was an error on the part of the authorities, but

he was not allowed normal prison clothing and remained in solitary confinement.

On December 27, 1976 he became desperate about his plight and cut his wrists. He was put in the prison hospital for one day and was given chlorpromazine.

The following day he was put in a strip cell of a rather special variety. It had a white floor and walls and measured 12ft by 10ft. There was no window and no bed. He had to sleep on matting on the floor. The lights were kept on 24 hours a day and the cell was beaten by a fan, which made a constant noise like an aeroplane propellor.

When he complained of the noise it was switched off. Since he was wearing only regular vest and shorts and there was no other form of heating, he became extremely cold.

He was still being forced to take chlorpromazine, and he lost track of time and became hallucinated. On January 6, 1977 he was placed back in an ordinary cell. Treatment with chlorpromazine continued. On January 10, 1977, he was returned to the strip cell and kept there for five days.

During this time he was given four injections per day of another drug. It has not been possible to discover what this drug was. He developed sores at the site of the injection and became hallucinated again. Treatment with chlorpromazine continued. While in Wormwood Scrubs, he had, at various times, been given Valium, Depixol, Chloral Hydrate and Mogadon. When receiving Depixol he also had Disipal to counter the side-effects of the former.

On January 15, 1977 it was decided to give him electro-convulsive therapy, but his family discovered this accidentally, were able to intervene and managed to prevent it. Next day he was removed to the prison hospital and 10 days later he developed pneumonia. Treatment with chlorpromazine continued.

Six days later he developed a deep-vein thrombosis of the leg and was transferred to Leicester Royal Infirmary. He received appropriate medical treatment for his pneumonia and deep-vein thrombosis, but it was found that he did not need chlorpromazine or any other psychotropic drug.

In February 1977, he was transferred to Wormwood Scrubs and I saw him there

Cont'd on Page 10

Cont'd from Page 8

to live like a man in some hope, or perish like a man before my human faculties degenerate until I am more akin to a vegetable than a man.

Don't worry, I don't write out of despair. If anything I feel strengthened by the knowledge that the morality of the situation is on my side. This isn't an essay prompted by a fit of depression.

That's all for now. Keep up the good work.

(A life sentence prisoner)

Why is PROP concerned particularly with the question of the lifer? Of all prisoners, it is the lifer who, during his time in prison, is most likely to develop into a socially responsible human being.

Uncertain of the future and free from the distractions of the outside world, he soon comes to question the prison system which offers him neither help nor hope.

In coming to understand that prison exists for the purposes of control, not change, he inevitably comes to question the nature of the society of which prisons are a necessary part.

It is precisely the lifer's understanding that increases his vulnerability - aside from publicity, the prison authorities fear nothing so much as a responsible thinking man. A lifer can only be released on "licence" - no reasons need be given for its refusal.

Even on eventual release, the lifer is 'on licence' literally for the rest of his life, which immediately makes of the released, as well as the serving, lifer a political prisoner. He can be recalled to prison without further conviction to serve a further unspecified term.

The question of the lifer will be discussed in the next issue of PROP.



on May 12, again on July 14. When I saw him first he was pale, haggard, tremulous, looked much older than his actual age and presented a picture of a severely institutionalised individual.

He described a number of odd experiences, which ranged from dreams to a continuation of these dreams into periods when he was fully awake.

#### WHEN I SAW HIM HE LOOKED HAGGARD PALE, TREMULOUS AND VERY OLD

At times his friend Dolly Grey was involved in the dreams, as were his mother and sister. For example, he thought that Dolly Grey was in a helicopter which had been attacked by the IRA and Mrs. Grey's leg had been severed. He also thought that his mother had died and other unpleasant things had happened to his family.

These experiences had begun when he was in solitary confinement in Gartree Prison.

I last saw George Ince at his wedding to Dolly Grey on September 7, 1977. The Home Office had given him permission to marry and the wedding was given considerable publicity and even more security. In spite of the circumstances, which included a plethora of policemen, arrival and departure in handcuffs and a prohibition on even one sip of celebration champagne, he was a changed man.

He looked much younger and was alert and cheerful and in every way a normal individual. They had stopped giving him drugs, had supplemented his diet and had given him a job in the kitchen. Apparently these actions produced the transformation that was publicly exposed.

George Ince's case illustrates a number of areas of concern in the treatment of prisoners. There is little doubt that he

should not be in prison, but that is a separate issue, relating to over-zealous policemen, inadequacies of the courts and the establishment's obsession with covering up its agents' short-comings, misdemeanours and mistakes.

Whether or not he is guilty, George Ince has received treatment that should be totally unacceptable in a civilised society.

But firstly there is the problem of prisoners and their families obtaining independent medical opinions. I was only able to see George because a solicitor had issued a writ against the Home Office, claiming maltreatment. Before this writ was issued, George's friends could not get an independent doctor into the prison to see him. In my experience it is virtually impossible for a prisoner to get an independent medical opinion.

I do not know whether a prisoner's family doctor is allowed to visit him in a medical capacity, and I would be interested to hear of any family doctor's experience in this connection.

A short time before I first visited George a friend of mine in another prison had found it quite impossible to obtain an independent medical opinion, and I was only allowed to see him as a friend.

The other significant feature of this case is the use of drugs, and particularly psychotropic drugs, in prison. There is considerable evidence that large numbers of prisoners are given psychotropic drugs, not because they are suffering from serious mental illness, but as a form of control.

It is claimed that in some prisons 70 per cent of the prisoners are receiving chlorpromazine or similar drugs. It is impossible to believe that 70 per cent of any prison population are suffering from serious mental disorders.

The use of these drugs can and does produce serious effects, quite apart from their normal side-effects.

They can produce acute and sub-acute toxic confusional states. Toxic confusion brings with it disorientation, anxiety and fear. These are the hand-maidens of aggression and it is well known that certain individuals, even the least aggressive, can become very aggressive in a confusional state.

Aggressive behaviour in prison may get the individual labelled as an aggressive prisoner, which will seriously diminish his chances of parole. He may also be punished, or given even larger quantities of drugs. He may even be labelled as an aggressive psychotic and the authorities may try to have him transferred to a special hospital. It is bad enough to be labelled a criminal but to be labelled a mentally disordered criminal is even worse.

Some time ago there was a lot of publicity about the use of so-called 'control units'. These units used variations on the theme of sensory deprivation and the Home Office finally closed them.

But prisons can use the techniques of control units without actually putting the prisoner in a specific unit and it appears that George Ince was exposed to a variation on the theme of control unit punishment. Not only was he punished - he was punished for something the authorities acknowledged that he had not done.

British prisons are grossly overcrowded, and there are many people in prison who should not be there, whatever philosophy we hold on crime and punishment.

This is an enlightened and relatively free society and I am glad I live in this country. But our prison system is scandalous. While we tolerate such a system, we do not have the right to cast stones at others.

## REVIEWS

# THE TAMING OF A REBEL

"ANGEL FACE - The Making of a Criminal" by Walter Probyn. Allen & Unwin. £4.95

Wally Probyn has spent over 30 of his 45 years in custody - enough to have dehumanised him several times over. Yet the only quality that shines through-out this book is humanity. And nowhere does his compassion glow brighter than when, in 1968, he wrote from solitary confinement in Durham prison about the case that was then the front page story in every newspaper - the sentencing to life imprisonment of 11 year old Mary Bell.

Despite, or more likely because of, his own predicament - he was then in the early years of a 12 year sentence - he wrote:

"I hope the case of Mary Bell lies as heavily on your conscience as it does on mine. I hope that, like mine, your sleep

is disturbed, your thoughts distracted and that you share my appalling sense of oppression that the whole might of society, the vast machinery of the law, the administration and the establishment have been marshalled to crush this pitiful child.

"I am a prisoner, I have no control over what happens to Mary Bell, but this does not allow me to escape my conscience. If I can't, how can you? . . . .

"Was it really in the service of society that this little girl was publicly flayed in the dock? To be compelled to face this vindictive denigration of her personality, to be called sly, cunning, vicious, wicked, dangerous, evil and innumerable other disparaging terms?

"Does society feel happy now that it has warped and crippled the unformed personality of this child and hung the tag of 'menace to society' round her neck?

"One must grieve bitterly for those innocent little boys who died, but will our grief be less by destroying the third surviving child of this tragedy? . . . .

"If all three of these children were your own, and this happened, would you destroy the surviving child, or would you acknowledge that, in some dreadful way, you had failed this child, and feel that if anyone at all was to blame, it would be yourself? . . . .

"Are we not, all of us, the parents of this girl in the sense that we have a

cont'd on Page 11



social responsibility to all children?"

Wally traces his social awakening to about 1964 when he received a 5 year sentence while on hostel, and was returned to Dartmoor with accumulated sentences of 14 years. "I began to think of myself as a political casualty of a social system that created criminals to justify maintaining its penal system. . . . With my growing political awareness I became even more embittered. I was sensitive to every class discrimination and injustice that I read about in the papers. . . . I used to work myself up into a rage about blatant injustices and I was furious that most of my fellow cons would never see the significance in such disparities, that they could not be made angry by it or feel any sense of responsibility for such victims. . . ."

Already the seeds of a private struggle against the system were apparent, and it was shortly after this that Probyn the rebel came under the influence of sociology. "During most of the time I was at Durham, there had been regular classes in the wing run by lecturers from the university. The subjects they talked about made a great deal of impression on me. I had left school almost completely illiterate, then taught myself to read and now was reading wildly to learn more and more". (At the age of 18, Wally had been certified as a moron under the Mental Deficiency Act.)

By 1969 Wally was writing to the Parole Board: "My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, For some time I have been making a conscious and determined effort to change my attitudes; the veiled hostility of my fellow prisoners in recent months indicates my success".

His distancing of himself from his fellow prisoners was now becoming more conscious, and six months later he petitioned the Home Secretary in the following terms: "Again I request that I be allowed to reform in conditions that allow reform, and which allow me an alternative to the companionship of the recidivist whose criminal attitudes I have rejected in my efforts to reform".

Perhaps these earlier appeals and petitions were written with his tongue in his cheek. Only he can say - and only those who have suffered really long term imprisonment have the right to criticise what may have been a tactical expedient to escape from feelings of hopelessness and helplessness.

But his decision now to publish his story, with its carefully preserved documentation of his long drawn out correspondence with the gentlemen of the Home Office and the Parole Board, removes any doubt as to his current attitude. In fact the turning point probably goes back to the end of 1970 when, he

states, "I began more consciously using sociology as a weapon against the authorities".

Sociologists are two a penny, but Wally Probyn are few and far between. Unfortunately, by 1971 the transformation of Wally the rebel into yet another detached academic was complete. It was as a sociologist, rather than as a prisoner, that he was now writing to the Home Office: "It is essential to reform that one must reject the shared values and attitudes of the criminal sub-culture of prison life, yet to 'facilitate' this rejection, you forcibly impose upon me the elite status of Category A, which forms the nucleus of the prison criminal sub-culture. You do not merely expose me to, you actively restrict me to, the circles of the most entrenched and hard-core criminals".

Wally Probyn knows as much about prison as any man alive - so much so that one can only approach with humility the responsibility for criticising what he has written. He is now in prison again - disillusioned, as Professor Stan Cohen remarks in a postscript, "by the failure of his attempts to find regular work in

the prisoners' rights movement and by what seemed the futility of all his political activity - his letters to the press, demonstrations, television discussions, lectures and meetings".

Yet it was asking for disillusionment to sidetrack him into a sociological approach to such work. The sociologists, the Howard Leaguers, the letter writers, the debaters - they all have a part to play, and overall it is a useful part. But to divert Wally Probyn into such channels is to waste a man who is better, and rarer, than any of these.

The capitalist society which Wally Probyn despises, with all the social injustices it brings in its wake, is not going to fall like the walls of Jericho because Wally, or a whole army of the sociologists whom he seems to take as his teachers, blow their trumpets. It is made of sterner stuff than to be debated out of existence.

PROP looks forward to his release from prison later this year, and to his active involvement in the struggle for a new society - but this time alongside, and not apart from, his fellow men.

GPC

## WPA - A TOOL OF THE SOVIETS

According to a report in 'Soviet Weekly' (3 January 1976), Dr. Denis Leigh, a leading Harley Street psychiatrist and Secretary General of the World Psychiatric Association, 'welcomed the emphasis that Soviet psychiatrists placed on prevention of diseases'. He said that respect for Soviet psychiatry was shown by the election of Professor Marat Vartanyan as Secretary of the WPA Executive Committee.

### CREEPING SCHIZOPHRENIA

In another interview with a TASS correspondent, reported in "Soviet News" (13 January 1976), Dr. Leigh stated: 'The Soviet Union has done a great deal to develop psychiatry and we believe it is important that it should participate at the international congress to be held in

Honolulu in 1977. The role of psychiatry and psychiatrists is growing, and consultations with psychiatrists are needed by practically everybody'.

Dr Leigh was less forthcoming in an interview with William Shawcross of The Sunday Times. When asked to comment on the advanced methods used by his Soviet colleagues in their treatment of dissenters in prison mental hospitals in the USSR, WPA Secretary Leigh said: 'I am not a person when I am working as Secretary General, I am a servant of the Association. All I can say is that the Soviet Society of Psychiatrists behaves perfectly properly as a member of the WPA.'

Dr Leigh was some time ago awarded honorary membership of the Soviet Society of Psychiatrists.

## THE GERMAN PRISON MURDERS

Three leading members of the Baader-Meinhof group have been murdered in a West German prison. A great deal of time and effort and money will now be spent - though money will no doubt be made too - in disproving the suicide story put out by the authorities.

It is one of the tragedies of the Baader-Meinhof tactics, and those of their copyists in other countries, that they have made the outcome of any such investigations irrelevant. If it could be proved that the German State murdered the three, it would alter nothing. The left is already convinced that it has done so. As for everyone else, and this in-

cludes all those people who must be won over if we are ever to change society, the attitude is increasingly becoming one of "So what?". Doubtless it will disturb some liberal consciences, but liberal consciences are pretty good at withstanding such suffering. And for many people the major criticism will not be of the murder, but of the clumsy manner in which it was carried out - and, perhaps, the fact that it wasn't done sooner.

The Group itself can scarcely complain at achieving what it has always set

Cont'd on Page 12



out to achieve. It's whole philosophy has been to provoke the authorities into revealing the true, repressive character of the State. The authorities have now done precisely that which was asked of them.

Tragic though such a waste of young lives is, there is an element of self-immolation about their end, regardless of who pulled the triggers. One result of their adventurist tactics is that the large and uncommitted section of public opinion which could have been, and needs to be, developed as a bulwark against the rising tide of fascism, has been turned instead to support for increasingly fascist measures and for the arming of the State to deal with a 'threat' which in fact is no threat at all.

The real casualties have yet to be counted, maybe in their tens of thousands, when those who will realistically challenge the State in order to build a new society find themselves face to face with a class enemy which has been armed to the teeth and strengthened in the eyes of the community as a whole by the adventurist antics of individual 'terrorists'.

## 50,000 INSIDE BY 1980

"The Government's Expenditure Plans, Vol. 2", published by HMSO last month, had some interesting things to say about Home Office forecasts for prisons. But first take a deep breath and remember what Home Secretary Jenkins said in 1974: "If the prison population reaches the figure of 42,000 the situation will become intolerable and drastic action will be inescapable".

We are coolly told that the average number of prisoners in custody is expected to rise from 46,200 in 1977/78 to 48,100 by 1980/81. It is pointed out that average numbers "do not indicate the maximum numbers the prison system may have to hold at any given time, which could be about 1,700 more". Just 200 short of 50,000 in fact! "There will be some decline in the conditions of prison life and the state of the buildings."

The report also makes it clear that the estimate takes into account the use expected to be made of non-custodial measures. In other words, the alternatives to prison are not alternatives at all but additions - as PROP has consistently pointed out.

PROP welcomes help with sales and distribution, particularly outside prisons. If there is a prison/borstal in your area and if you have a couple of hours each week/month to spare, please contact us at either of our addresses.

"There but for Fortune...", a report on Wormwood Scrubs by Maurice Hill, will be published by PROP in the New Year. Order direct from PROP.

# Prisoners and the Firemen

The firemen are on strike for a wage more in keeping with their value to the community. What has this to do with prisoners?

Like other uniformed and disciplined services the fire brigades could easily become just another agent of State power. Instead, they have traditionally set their face against political manipulation.

At Grosvenor Square in 1968, 100,000 men and women crowded in protest in front of the steps of the United States Embassy. It was the most savage period of the Vietnam war, when napalm and high explosives were being rained on a small country on a scale which exceeded the concerted efforts of all countries - allied and enemy - during the Second World War.

Fire engines of the London Fire Brigade were drawn up at the end of the Square in the streets flanking the Embassy.

Their crews were asked by the police to run out their hoses to face "the mob". After discussion between the crews, and also by the crews with the organisers of the demonstration, they made it clear that they were there solely for fighting fires and not as a Home Office water-cannon force. A few weeks later the Fire Brigades Union officially stated that their members would play no part in crowd control or in connection with civil disturbances.

The hankering of the authorities to use the fire service in a law and order role was again apparent during the Hull prison riot last September when the local brigade was approached to see if, under certain circumstances, it would make its hoses available for use against prisoners on the roof. Its answer was the same clear 'No' that had been given nine years earlier.

## HULL, THE PRESS & PARLIAMENT

Prisoners who put their faith in MP's - or the press for that matter - will be interested to learn that the question of Hull and the Fowler Report was raised in the House of Commons before it rose for the summer recess.

They finally got round to it at 5.49 am, when John Prescott, MP for Hull, made a 30 minute speech. He was answered - or, rather, not answered - at almost the same length by Mr Brynmor John, Minister of State at the Home Office.

Hansard does not list the other MP's present at the time, though 71 were there for the following debate on Pay for the Armed Forces. None of these MP's, who included many well-known "radicals", made any attempt to support Prescott. Nor did the press give even a line of coverage. It was in fact quite a good speech. But for all the impact it made it might as well have never happened.

What are the lessons of this non-event?

Public knowledge of the realities of Hull has come almost exclusively through PROP. So has nearly all of the recent publicity on drugging as a means of controlling prisoners. This informa-

tion, and the public pressure that it generates, was provided by a small number of determined prisoners and prisoners' relatives - in the interests of ALL prisoners.

It is only prisoners and their families who can make any significant breach in the wall of secrecy that surrounds our prisons. It cannot be done by anybody else - and PROP itself can do no more than act as a prisoners' mouthpiece.

## HOW KIND!

A recent article on prisons ended with these kind words (about Parkhurst): "There are heartening stories of kindness at this prison too: the men who are allowed out to die in civilian hospitals; the 80-year-old who burst into tears at his birthday party because it was the first birthday party he had ever had. And perhaps that is as fair a comment as any on prisoners and prison life."

PROP hopes that all its readers will be duly heartened by these tidings of comfort, cheer and compassion!

The PROP newspaper can be sent to you by post. Annual subscription (including new postal rates) £1.30.



**prop**



**the national prisoners' movement**

Chairman: Dick Pooley National Secretary: Geoff Coggan

Editorial Board: Geoff Coggan, Meg Howarth, Mike Jenkins

32(a) Park Road, Colliers Wood, London SW19 01-542-3744

10 Montrose Street, Hull, Yorks 0482-28379





# PROP

## paper of the national prisoners' movement

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 5

MAY 1978

ENLARGED ISSUE 15p



INSIDE

SEX OFFENDERS

THE PAROLE CARROT

PROP IN SCOTLAND

COUNCILLORS ON  
BOARDS OF VISITORS

FRENCH SPECIAL CELLS

PRISON OFFICERS

WHAT IS CRIMINON?

BRIXTON, PARKHURST,  
HULL, WINSON GREEN,  
MAIDSTONE, GARTREE

### CHELMSFORD PRISON ( photo: Anglia Press Agency Ltd )

As we go to press, Chelmsford prison has gone up in flames. Newspaper coverage of the event showed the press at its worst. The Daily Express decided, from the start, that it was a bomb. Nearly every newspaper headlined Chelmsford as a top security prison - which it isn't, except in the sense shared by other closed prisons. The Daily Mirror talked of a bomb made from shoe polish.

The Home Office's self-congratulation that there was no loss of life was widely reported. But no-one to date seems to have given a thought to what might so easily have happened. It is not the Home Office but British Summer Time that we must thank for avoiding a mass cremation. If the clocks had not been altered on the Saturday night, the bulk of the prisoners would have been locked away in their cells when the fire started. Our first eye-witness accounts speak of the frightening speed with which it engulfed everything. Prisoners who were in the canteen at the time had their first indication that anything was wrong when the roof suddenly blazed above them.

Few of our prisons would pass the standards for fire regulations which are demanded of any other types of building. The Home Office ignores them, just as it ignores Factory Regulations in its workshops, and approved standards of illumination in its cells.

Electrical breakdowns in our prisons are commonplace. Only days before the fire, visitors to Chelmsford had to use the main gates because the fancy electrically operated gates which had been installed had broken down. When the newspapers have had their fill of exploding boot polish and the like, perhaps they will point an inquiring finger in these and other directions.



1. PROP takes as its starting point the recognition that what goes on inside our country's prisons cannot be separated from what is going on in our society as a whole; that what goes on inside prison is a measure of the direction in which our society is moving.
2. The absence of prisoners' 'rights' should not be seen as a denial to prisoners of the 'rights' enjoyed by the rest of the population. Rather should it be seen that the conditions and treatment of prisoners are a measure of what democracy really means in our society as a whole.
3. The function of the prison system in our society can only be understood if we recognise the class structure of our society and see the penal system as designed to maintain that structure.

PROP's principal aim is to help develop this understanding amongst prisoners and amongst the working people of our country.

Further, PROP:

- (a) seeks to explain what crime really is - that it is one of the symptoms of a defective society, and that if it is ever to be ended society must itself be changed and people learn to understand and respect one another.
- (b) seeks through open debate to educate the public to the harmful effects of the existing prison system and to help develop a positive attitude to socially irresponsible behaviour.

To this end, PROP is a propaganda organisation whose main weapon is its bi-monthly journal.

## THE TURN OF THE SCREW

### • • • THE PRISON OFFICER IN PERSPECTIVE

Some friends of PROP have complained at our use of the word 'Screws' on the grounds that it throws open our views to charges of bias from the start. Well, we are biased from the start. Even to an outsider the job of locking and unlocking doors all day long is seen as, to say the least, an odd calling. If the outsider could actually see how the average screw is himself treated, he would be even more surprised that enough people can be found to do the job.

#### MEALY-MOUTHED LANGUAGE

Although we accept that we are biased, we can't agree that this is reflected in our use of the word 'screws'. To us it is just a word, like 'cons'. To speak always of prison officers and inmates is to walk halfway into another world - the world of the mealy mouthed which eventually leads to titles like the American 'correction officer', 'clients of the correctional system' (for prisoners), 'adjustment centers' (solitary confinement), or the word 'medication' which is now almost universally used, here as well as in the States, in an attempt to make the wholesale drugging of prisoners appear a little more respectable.

Screws and prison officers are to us one and the same thing. There is no special abuse implicit in our choice of words, and we have in the past referred to good screws just as we have to bad prison officers.

PROP does not see prison officers as the main enemy - even within the confined world of the prisons. And we believe that for us to say that from our position of admitted bias gives our words a

meaning which lifts them far above the platitudes of Home Office spokesmen who refer patronisingly to prison officers as public servants deserving of our admiration, while at the same time treating them like morons.

#### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

It is true that prisoners can be very much at the mercy of prison officers - but only to the extent that the Home Office allows and encourages. To think otherwise is to fail to place the responsibility for what happens in our prisons where it belongs. It is not National Front prison officers who cause the divide-and-rule tactics of racism in the prisons; it is the prison system itself which attracts the National Fronters. Nor in Scotland is it brutal prison officers who are responsible for the Inverness cages; it is the cages, and the viciousness they represent, that attract the sadists who are needed to service them.

Neither prison officers, nor for that matter policemen, are predominantly sadists. Only a minority are - but that minority understands perfectly well that not only does the system offer them opportunities to exercise brutality; it operates in such a way that their particular contribution is vital for its functioning. As for the others - the majority - they are required only to carry out a limited number of menial tasks and to react, like the alsation dogs that accompany them, to a simple set of circumstances.

The average prison officer is in many ways more of a prisoner - mentally at any rate - than those he guards. The system behaves towards those it employs as it wishes them to behave towards the prisoners. A

petty, authoritarian regime like Wandsworth demands that the staff, from assistant governors downwards, be treated with the same pettiness. The wonder is that grown men can be found who will voluntarily submit to such measures.

It is no accident that where conditions as at Barlinnie, have permitted humane and responsible attitudes to develop, these developments have taken place on both sides - prison officers as well as prisoners. But the Barlinnie Special Unit remains the exception that proves the rule. Indeed it is so much of an exception that the Home Office and the Scottish Home and Health Department are doing their best to stifle it before too many people recognise the clue it provides to much that is wrong with our society.

#### A DIFFERENT IMAGE

Now comes the news (page 8) that the Barlinnie Unit has been 'inundated' with applications from prison officers wishing to work there. How do we interpret this sudden surge of interest? It could be suggested that they seek to enter the unit in order to destroy it. Maybe such ideas lurk in the minds of some but we believe that there is a simpler explanation.

Amidst all the controversy over the Unit, sparked off by those who recognise its dangers, prison officers have found themselves being publicly discussed in an entirely novel way - as human beings, with intelligence and social motivations. A world away from the image of the thugs of Inverness, Parkhurst, Walton, Winson Green, Hull and the rest.

In any society that makes sense, there



will be no future for thousands of prison officers, anymore than for social workers or lawyers. But in every job, including these, there are people who want to work towards something more useful and satisfying than just passing the time in order to make money. Barlinnie seems to have stirred just such imaginations.

#### WHERE IS OUR COUNTRY GOING?

Under the banner of 'law and order' our society is moving very fast in an anti-democratic direction - with a steady build-up of the repressive measures which will be increasingly necessary in order to keep going a system which, year by year, satisfies fewer and fewer people.

One thing is for sure - our society cannot simply coast along without drastic changes in one direction or the other. We don't have that option. The whole basis of our economy rests on the exploitation of workers in other parts of the world who provide us with raw materials and basic foods at rock bottom prices. In return we supply them with manufactured goods at sky-high - and ever increasing - prices.

The third world is waking up to the fact that it is being ripped off. The miners of industrial diamonds (the other kind are really worthless), or of bauxite and copper, and the workers on sugar, tea or rice plantations are essential in that they feed either our faces or our machines. They are as fundamental to our economy as are, say, our own miners and power-workers. They are beginning to recognise it, and to recognise that they share the same basic human needs.

It is because of the profits made from slave labour conditions abroad that the

profiteers who run this country in their own interests have been able to buy off discontent here at the expense of workers in Africa, India or Latin America. That is how an unemployed family in London can be immeasurably better off than a working family on one of Brooke Bond's tea estates in Sri Lanka.

But already the pressure is on. Our society only knows one way of working - the profit way. And increasingly those profits will have to be made out of us. The days of sending gunboats to quell strikes and walk-outs in the colonies are over. Instead we are steadily retraining the police and army for the time when they will be needed to keep the lid on here.

That is what lies behind the development of the strong state, of additional police powers, the computerisation of details on each and every one of us, the growth - both in scale and unpleasantness - of our prisons, the anti-worker legislation and changes in the law which nibble away at 'rights' which we have won over centuries and now seem too demoralised to defend.

#### AS HITLER DID IN THE 30's

And behind it all, the racism which is deliberately fostered, as Hitler fostered it with the Jews, in order to divide and rule us and divert our attention from what is the fundamental reason for our troubles - a society which uses us all in the interests of big business financiers for whom the manufacture or building of anything is only a by-product of their appetite for profits. And not even a necessary by-product, as empty skyscraper office blocks, stripped out factories, and currency speculation have shown.

None of our established political parties are going to change such a system. They are all too much part of it and can only take us in the directions of the strong state. It is only arguable as to which one will get us there quicker.

Nor can one look with any confidence to the smaller groupings which do oppose what is going on - when they are not opposing each other. The confidence we need is anyway in ourselves. Without that confidence, and the leadership which will emerge from it and be controlled by it, there is no change in society which will not regress as it has regressed in every other part of the world which has attempted change for people, rather than by people.

#### SCREWS TOO

People, in this context, means all those - the vast majority - for whom this profiteering society does not work. And that includes prison officers as much as everyone else. (We are not talking about the Gestapo raw material who are present in every prison, every police force, every army unit - and who will eventually be lined up against their colleagues).

Far from turning our backs on the idea of screws or policemen or soldiers sharing a common interest with the rest of us in building a new society - which first of all means taking over the old one - we must recognise that it is only when prison officers and policemen start to question whose interests they are serving that we shall begin to approach the degree of collective awareness needed to challenge those interests. We don't think that prison officers, any more than prisoners, will be the first to get there. But nor will they be the last.

## PROP, SEX OFFENDERS AND PRISONS

On January 22/24, at the Law Courts, Mr. Justice May heard an action against the Home Office by a prisoner who was claiming damages and consequential loss for injuries received at Walton prison in 1967. Yes, 1967 - such is the speed of our legal processes where prisoners are concerned! The claim was based on the failure of the Home Office to safeguard the prisoner - a sex offender - against an attack by two fellow prisoners.

PROP was approached by the prosecution to give evidence on several counts - firstly that the risk to such offenders is a real one of which the authorities are well aware, and secondly that the lavatory recess, where the prisoner was attacked, is the most common location for attacks, and that they were therefore known risks against which the Home Office had failed to take adequate precautions.

Three prison officers were present to

give evidence. It would be true to character if they, or some of their colleagues, were now to try and spread the message that PROP's energies are being spent in 'defending nonces'.

We were in fact doing no such thing. It was the Home Office alone that was the defendant, and our appearance was for the prosecution. Nevertheless, we believe that it is necessary for PROP to have an attitude on this difficult and contentious subject, and to make that attitude known.

We believe that violence against the person is a perversion of the human spirit. We do not see that a motivation of sexual gratification rather than, say, monetary gain, makes it either more or less to be deplored, though there is a natural revulsion at the use of physical force against a weaker person, which is the category into which most rape and all violent offences against children fall.

#### PRISONERS THE SAME AS OTHER PEOPLE

The attitude of prisoners to offences against children is not, as was suggested in the Court, something peculiar to prisoners. It is the same response that a known child molester would meet if he or she were to walk down a High Street. Prisoners' prejudices and gut reactions are much the same as anyone else's.

Counsel for the Home Office tried repeatedly to press the point that prison is a violent place in which attacks are made not only on sex offenders but are a common occurrence amongst prisoners generally and are therefore, by implication, something beyond the powers of the Home Office to control.

PROP refuted this argument with equal



4. determination. We think we speak for all prisoners in saying, yes, prisons are violent places and the most violent people within them wear blue uniforms with silver buttons and peaked caps.

#### INSTITUTIONALISED VIOLENCE

The Home Office may or may not find it expedient to make scapegoats of the screws who attacked Hull prisoners in September 1976. If they do, it will be because they wish to obscure their own responsibility for what happened. But prisoners will not forget that the baton-happy thugs of Parkhurst in 1969, the murderers of Stephen Smith at Womwood Scrubs in 1974, the animal guards of the Inverness cages, the lynch mob that attacked Irish prisoners at Winson Green, and the Senior Officer who, in 1975, provoked an assault with an iron bar on an Irish prisoner, Kevin Dumphy, again at Parkhurst, are still serving Her Majesty's Prison Department, along with other heavies in just about every prison in the country.

The fact that these people are employed, and continue to be employed, shows that it is an institutionalised violence we are talking about. The man in blue who puts the boot in serves the Prison Department, the Prison Department serves the Home Office, the Home Office serves the Government of the day, and the Government of the day - whatever its complexion - serves the forces that are really in control in our country. The further one moves from the actual administration of the State's violence, the nearer one gets to the real responsibility for it.

#### THE EXAMPLE OF HULL

It is in the face of this underlying violence of the State that PROP believes that ALL prisoners should display solidarity and not permit themselves to be divided one against another. It can happen because it has happened - as on the roof of Hull prison where black and white prisoners, Irish and English prisoners and every category of prisoner, linked arms in protest at the beating of a fellow inmate.

#### THE DANGERS OF INTOLERANCE

Like every other section of our competitive society, prisoners erect their own status divisions. Amongst the aristocrats are to be found the bank robbers and master safe-blowers. Near the bottom the "gas meter bandits", and below the floor and beneath contempt are hidden away the sex offenders.

Prisoners draw varying lines between what is considered acceptable and what is not. Some will draw the line at child molesting, others will extend it to adult rape. But drawing lines at all is a dangerous exercise, especially for those prisoners who draw them the fiercest - the prisoners who are themselves in for violent offences, though not sexual ones.

The danger is that people outside prison also draw lines. And the line that they most commonly draw is the one that separates the violent offender, of every category, from all other offenders. At a time when PROP, together with many of the penal reform groups, are trying to get people to reassess the whole question of violence and of antisocial behaviour generally, it becomes extremely difficult to do so when prisoners themselves display a total intolerance towards a particular category of prisoner. They should not be surprised if they in turn find themselves on the wrong side of the line of other people's tolerance.

We accept that there are outrages so horrific that one feels physically sick merely to consider them. In such cases life imprisonment usually means imprisonment for life, and we believe that society will need to develop its understanding a great deal before it can be otherwise. And when that day comes we would expect that there will be far fewer cases to consider anyway because we shall have built a society in which kinder influences will be at work in shaping our attitudes towards one another than are present in society today.

#### A SOCIETY THAT BREEDS VICIOUSNESS

But, having said this, we cannot accept without protest what is happening today, when such a prisoner, who has already been denied his life's liberty, is given a second sentence by those around him and forced to skulk in hiding for year after year after year. If we actually enjoy inflicting this torture on a prisoner like Ian Brady it is because we have within us something of the same urges which drove Brady to his hideous acts. They are urges which are exploited weekly by newspapers like the News of the World, and which lie behind many of the screams for the reintroduction of the birch, the cat and capital punishment. And of course for harsher prison conditions generally.

We are not, here, agreeing with those who say that Man is inherently wicked - a beast within us all, red in tooth and claw. We do not believe that Man is inherently anything. The fact that hysteria can be whipped up so easily by the hanging and flogging brigade, the fact that the more X's a film gets after its title the longer will be the queues at the box office, the near certainty that public executions would draw larger crowds than a Cup Tie, do not contradict this neutral image of Man. Society can strike whatever chords it pleases in the human breast. The trouble with our one is that it strikes all the wrong chords.

Mary Whitehouse's answer - censorship - is no answer at all. Let's hide the symptoms and then perhaps we won't notice the disease. It's a bit like pretending that measles doesn't exist by painting over the spots. The Hippies of the 1960's had no answer either, though at least their

slogan of "Make love, not war" suggested something to look forward to - a more positive vision than the bans and proscriptions of Mary Whitehouse.

But looking forward doesn't actually take us forward. Love, gentleness and consideration are the values of a cooperative society. But we live in a society which is driven, and driven hard, by values totally opposed to these. We are conditioned from birth to compete with one another, to be greedy.

A society whose motive force is profit can develop in no other way. And struggles within society, whether by the labour movement or by particularly oppressed sections such as blacks or women, if they don't proceed from the standpoint of changing that society, eventually become struggles of the people against each other.

The oppression of women means something more than inequality of sexes. It means also an incompatibility of the sexes - and a host of problems for men as for women. At one time the total economic dependence of women kept the incompatibility under some sort of control. In a man's world woman accepted her place - in bed as everywhere else. If she didn't get much out of it - except non-stop children - well, she wasn't expected to. What is more, she was conditioned not to expect it herself.

Increasingly, women no longer 'know their place'. As a result sexual tensions are arising on a par with the racial tensions developing with the resurgence of black people, the world over, who likewise no longer 'know their place'. But the implications for mankind are likely to be even more devastating in the case of 'the sexual revolution' which is in fact, no revolution at all if it is separated from the struggle to replace the society which inevitably distorts everything within it. We have seen only too clearly how new ideas of sexual freedom have been immediately exploited for profit, with woman as a sex object becoming a commodity as never before.

Healthy human relationships, of which sex is merely one expression, cannot thrive in a society which sets not only man against woman, but man competing against man, and woman against woman.

#### THE EXTENT OF SEXUAL DISTURBANCE

Is it any wonder that we are being increasingly beset by 'personal' problems? A whole new industry of psychiatry is being developed in order to help people deal with the contradictions in their lives - not by resolving them but by coming to terms with them, usually with the aid of tranquillisers and sedatives. And many other drugs, especially of course alcohol, are self-inflicted to achieve the same purpose. Except for meths drinking none of these are exclusively linked with the des-



perations of poverty. On the contrary, the sexual self-consciousness which underlies so much of the unhappiness is very largely a middle class phenomenon.

In other words most of us are sex offenders in the sense that we offend against the sort of happiness we could be sharing. There is nothing exclusive about sexual disturbance, and there should be no surprise, in such a setting, that particular individuals, more damaged perhaps than the rest of us, carry their disturbances to extremes and actually put into practice what many other people delight in reading about.

We purposely illustrated our argument with one of the most extreme examples we could think of. But the majority of sex offenders in prison are nothing like Ian Brady, and many have been convicted for acts against children that by no stretch of the imagination can be classed as violent.

No human beings should be abused. And with children, even quite old children, we think that 'consent' does not rule out the question of abuse. But these are areas where all sorts of double standards abound. A male teacher provoking, inviting or accepting sexual embraces with a 12 year old girl is almost universally condemned. But if a woman teacher were to do or allow the same thing with a 12 year old boy, many of the same people would see it as a bit of a giggle. Certainly a common male response would be to reflect sadly that they never had such luck when they were at school. Yet, if the one is an abuse - and we are not suggesting that it isn't - then so is the other.

Almost certainly the greater abuse and the only lasting harm done to the child, is that inflicted afterwards by the questioning and the condemnation of the police, the courts and the family. But that probable outcome - understood by the adult but not the child - must itself be taken into account by those who place children at risk in this way. To fail to do so, in the present state of our society, surely constitutes an abuse in itself.

Or consider what would be the reaction to a court case in which a man was alleged to have kidnapped a woman preacher, tied her down to a bed, stripped her and forced her into various sex acts. When the same thing happened with the roles reversed the general newspaper response was to publish cartoons of men queuing to join the Mormon Church or asking "Is this where we come to be raped?"

In other words society is sexually, as well as in other ways, a mess. If it were not, there would be no such thing as a rape problem, nor would there be a ready market for prostitution. Broadly speaking there are as many women around as there are men, and the only imbalance is the socially produced one which has

distorted human behaviour.

#### A WAY FORWARD FROM VIOLENCE

As with violence, so with sex we are in deep waters indeed. There are no easy answers though the success of the Barlinnie Special Unit has demonstrated, so far as violence is concerned, that the answer lies in the direction of cooperation and trust. That of course is why the authorities are keen that we should all forget that experiment before we jump to conclusions that what works in a tiny corner of one Scottish prison would work if it were applied to society as a whole. Because once we grasp that fact we shall know what we have to do.

In Barlinnie it is prisoners and prison officers who have helped each other towards an understanding of what lies behind antisocial behaviour. Others have remarked on the extraordinary change this has effected on some of the prisoners. It will perhaps be understood why we, as ex-prisoners, find the positive development of the prison officers concerned in the experiment no less remarkable.

But the leadership in this experiment has come, and probably only could have come, from amongst the prisoners themselves. The prison authorities have a success on their hands and they don't know what to do with it. And there is of course a fundamental contradiction when a prisoner who has been fitted (or rather has fitted himself) 'to lead a good and useful life' is nevertheless still behind bars. It makes complete nonsense of the

5  
first of the Prison Rules and of the whole notion of rehabilitation to which the authorities pay lip service.

With such contradictions becoming increasingly obvious the Home Office and the Scottish Home and Health Department have enough problems on their hands with one Barlinnie Unit and we do not see them being in a hurry to open another one. In fact, last month's re-opening of the Inverness cages demonstrates that they are thinking on entirely opposite lines. But there are lessons to be gained from Barlinnie which do not have to wait on the Home Office - as Jimmy Boyle himself has made clear in his book 'A Sense of Freedom'. "An important lesson is that no professional psychiatric or psychological experience was needed to make it a success. Our basic ingredients have been some people, good will from all sides and with those we became the architects of a model that could be used anywhere".

#### FROM SEXUAL DISTURBANCE TOO?

We would like to see that model tried by prisoners themselves - and tried with the other category of prisoners of whom we have been speaking. All it requires is for a group of prisoners in one corner of one prison to say to their Rule 43 fellow prisoners "Come up, we are all in this together!".

Just as violent prisoners have shown us the way forward from violence, so too may we be helped towards an understanding of the sexual disturbance within society by those most severely disturbed.

## SECRET SIDNEY OF P.5

- THE 'SECRET' HOME OFFICE ADVISER

At the court hearing of Egerton v the Home Office (see page 3) the chief witness for the defence was the ex-Governor of Walton jail, Mr. Sidney Henderson-Smith. As he took his place in the witness box he was introduced by Counsel in the customary manner:

"You are Sidney Henderson-Smith of. . ."  
"Yes sir".

"In 1955 were you the Assistant Warden at so-and-so borstal?"

"I was".

(and so on, through a predictable prison career).

"And in 1969 you were the Governor of Walton prison in Liverpool?"

"Yes sir".

"You are now employed in an administrative capacity at the Home Office?"

"That is correct".

"And what is the nature of your present responsibilities?"

At this, Mr. Henderson-Smith leaned

forward in the witness box and asked the Judge if he might be permitted to write down the details. "I advise on certain matters which your Lordship may consider



to be irrelevant to the present case and not necessary to mention in open court". Secret Sidney then passed over a piece of



6 paper which the Judge glanced at, nodded and showed briefly to the two leading Counsel. It was then handed to the Clerk of the Court with instructions for it to be shown to no-one else. And Henderson-Smith, by now glowing with secret self-importance, began his evidence.

What is the nature of these mysterious duties? The Judge ruled that they were irrelevant to the case he was hearing. PROP thinks otherwise.

Henderson-Smith in fact works as a Governor (Grade I) at the Home Office building in Eccleston Square where he is responsible, amongst other things, for

security operations at all prisons, for the operational control of emergency situations at all prisons (i.e. the Hull riot), and for the security of prisoners in transit and at courts. He has another Governor (Grade III) as his Assistant, and three police advisers on hand - a Commander, a Detective Chief Superintendent and a Detective Chief Inspector. In other words our Sidney is quite a lad!

When a prison governor sends in a security, control or emergency report to Head Office, it is on Henderson-Smith's desk that it lands. (We know where he lives as well, but we are not in the business of en-

couraging harassment, or worse, of Home Office personnel. However, high up he is, he is no more than a servant of his political masters - and there are plenty more where he came from.)

The relevance of this information is to Mr. Henderson-Smith's competence at safeguarding anything. If PROP knows his 'secrets', then so, you can be sure, do lots of other people.

If he cannot look after his own security better than this, is it any wonder that he was unable to ensure the safety of a prisoner entrusted to his care?

## CRIMINON AND THE SCIENTOLOGISTS

We bring to the attention of prisoners and their families the activities of a 'penal reform' group called CRIMINON which has gained a certain reputation because a few prisoners who have attempted to correspond with it have had their letters stopped by prison governors. That of course is sufficient, in the eyes of some, to put such an organisation on the side of the angels. If the Home Office is against it, it must be good!

PROP is not in the business of attacking other groups and individuals. Indeed our policy is to work as broadly as possible - as is evident from the composition of our Medical Committee and our good working relationships with many organisations or individuals within organisations.

But we believe that people should know what organisations they are dealing with. After all, it doesn't take much to find out what NACRO is about, or the Howard League, or ourselves, or RAP, or NCCL, or the European Court of Human Rights, or the Probation Service. All have their limitations. Some may be little more than sounding boards for the Home Office itself, some may be very much part and parcel of the system and indeed financed by it. Others, like ourselves, suffer from a lack of 'respectability', an absence of any sort of consistent funding, and the necessity to work from the bottom up.

Despite the difficulties of working under such conditions, we would choose to work that way anyhow, because we think that it is only from the bottom upwards that our society is ever going to be changed. But the bottom stretches a long way and the realisation is growing that in terms of human happiness our society is working for very few people indeed. So we are not afraid to work with people of goodwill wherever we find them.

### WHAT IS THE 'CHURCH' UP TO?

We do not pretend to know why Criminon, or rather the 'Church of Scientology'

which is its parent body, has suddenly developed this interest in prisoners, in the Official Secrets Act, and in other matters in which the Home Office has its murky hand. Perhaps it is something to do with the fact that the 'Church' fell foul of the Home Office, as it has with governments in other parts of the world, because of its claims to be a religion and its search for charity status.

That, in itself, should not condemn it. Plenty of religious, scientific and political ideas have stood condemned by governments. Jesus was persona non grata in quite a few directions, so was Galileo, so was Karl Marx. So we mustn't rule out of hand the possibility that L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, is a great thinker, spurned by the established authorities around him.

There is of course an obvious difference. Hubbard is big business, with the yacht and the lifestyle to go with it. But, then, that might just be that he's better at it than the others we mentioned.

But prisoners are pretty good at sussing things out for what they are, and we content ourselves in quoting from some Scientology literature and leaving others to draw their conclusions:

### HOW TO MAKE PROBLEMS VANISH

"Put Scientology Technology to its Best Use . . . Become an Auditor." As a trained Auditor you will have the ability to put Scientology to its best use. That is to make a world without insanity, war or crime, a world where you have a purpose and others can gain one. All of this you gain on the Academy Levels."

The Academy Levels consist of five levels, and we quote from a few of them:

"Level 1, Problems gives you the data on problems and the cause and handling of them. You'll have the ability to take a preclear to Problems Release, one who can recognise the source of problems and make them vanish.

"Level 3, Freedom, trains you on the technology of ARC Breaks and ARC. You will learn to take a preclear to Freedom Release, and give him freedom from the upsets of the past and the ability to face the future.

"Level 4, Abilities, gives you the technology of service facsimiles, all materials on Listing and Nulling and all data on PTS and SP's. You will be able to take your preclear to Ability Release, one who can move out of fixed conditions and has the ability to do new things".

The costs of taking the Academy Levels are quoted as £248.06 each for Levels 0, 1 and 3, and £655.18 each for Levels 2, and 4. But don't worry too much because there is a special package offer which enables you to enrol for the lot for a mere £1,439.08.

### HOW TO OPERATE WITHOUT A BODY

Scientology helpfully provides definitions of some of the terms it uses:-

"Engram - a complete recording, down to the last accurate detail of every perception present in a moment of partial or full unconsciousness.

"Exteriorisation - the act of moving out of the body with or without full perception.

"O.T. (Operating Thetan) - An individual who could operate totally independently of his body whether he had one or didn't have one. He's himself, not dependent on the universe around him.

"Preclear - a person who, through Scientology, is finding out more about himself and life.

"Ridge - it's a standing apparent motionless of some kind or other, an apparent solidity, an apparent no-outflow, no inflow. That's a ridge. Flows have direction. Ridges have location".

### HOW TO BE FLUBLESS

The Academy Levels mentioned earlier aren't of course the end of the line. In



fact there doesn't seem to be an end of the line so far as money is concerned. Another advertisement is headed:

"HAVE CERTAINTY AS AN AUDITOR - a Course Graduate becomes an Auditor by Auditing.

Once you graduate your training course you begin the internship for that Course. On completion of the internship you are confident, competent and an expert auditor for that level. You will have drilled and audited all the processes for the level you are interning on until you are flubless" (sic) :

And how much does that little lot cost? £1,173.80 for a Dianetic Internship, £459.48 for Classes 0 to 4, and £646.88 for a Senior Class 4 Internship. All of which, we would guess, should leave you not only 'flubless' but broke - but perhaps that's what flubless means !

#### HOW TO GET YOUR LITTLE BLACK BOX

Oh, and one little thing we almost forgot. You will need an E-Meter - the little black box others have said is essentially the American lie-detector, but which the Scientologists describe as "a religious artefact developed for the exclusive use of ordained Ministers and theological students who are trained in its use in Church ministrations". It'll set you back a mere £195.00.

It might be argued that these quoted extracts refer to 'ministers' of the 'Church' and that these are merely the sort of fees to be expected of a theological college.

According to one recently lapsed member, the 'preclear' who is at the receiving end of the little black box is urged to move up the ladder of the 'Academy Levels'. Indeed, he advances through the stages of 'cleanness' in step with his own willingness to learn (pay for) and practice the auditing of pre-clears at a stage lower than the one he has himself reached. Each stage of cleanness thus qualifies him for the privilege of paying more money.

#### SCIENCE FICTION

Prisoners will recognise a classic pyramid selling technique in all this. And those who have a liking for science fiction, a smattering of psychological jargon and the imagination to dream up new words like 'dianetics' and 'thetans' may even think they can work out a better scheme. Because the one thing we are certain about is that there's money in there for those in the middle.

However, it is not our intention to put such ideas into people's heads. Apart from the fact that we think one "Church of Scientology" is quite enough to be going on with, there is the probability that non-registered 'disciples' would run into legal

difficulties over the patented use of the E-meter. The same Scientology leaflet mentions in small print that "the copying of the E-meter ... or attempts by unqualified persons ... to obtain or use one are actionable by law in the United States". That's something that Jesus, Galileo and Karl Marx didn't think of either - but maybe they weren't looking for the same things.

#### OUR CHOICE

That, then, is the basis of the funding of Criminon, which has hit the news once or twice with some totally false information about Wormwood Scrubs, a campaign for the setting up of an independent Prison Department separate from the Home Office (where on earth would that take us?), and a campaign against the use of drugs in prison - which is something on which we do agree but prefer to choose whom we collaborate with in fighting for.

So prisoners who wonder why we don't co-operate with an organisation which presumes to work in their interests must accept that, like the National Front, it is an organisation about which we have taken a conscious decision not to be associated, even if on certain localised issues it touches on subjects which concern us. That is our choice. It is for others to make theirs.

## PRISONERS FOR PROFIT

The 'World in Action' programme on February 20th focussed its attention on the exploitation by employers of mentally and physically handicapped people given work at rates "often as low as 1p an hour". That princely sum will not surprise prisoners as they too have for years received just such a sum, with occasional variations, for an hour of their labour.

Local prisons are a source of cheap surplus labour. Wholesale traders and small manufacturing concerns, usually touted by the Industrial Manager, have their plastic and metal components assembled in cramped, Victorian workshops by short sentence prisoners employed for an average 50 pence a week.

The majority of occupational workshops are concentrated in local prisons. Products such as carpet sweepers, feather dusters, toys and Cuticura soap (until a lot of it was reappropriated by the workers) are assembled and packed.

Despite low wage levels the occupational sector runs at a considerable loss. The knowledge that Industrial Managers are in a desperate situation through gross overcrowding allows manufacturers to force the acceptance of lower and lower rates for prison labour. In Strangeways Prison, Manchester, during 1969-70, a local tra-

der withdrew his custom until the labour costs were more to his satisfaction. Such withdrawals would mean prisoners being locked in their cells 23 hours a day, a situation disliked by the POA due to the consequent loss of overtime.

Private business has been aware of the advantages accruing from the use of prison labour for many years. Where it hasn't, Prindus (Prison Industries) has ensured it learnt of them directly enough. Because Prindus aren't allowed to advertise through the media due to a decision made at a joint meeting of the Home Office, TUC and CBI in 1972, circulars were distributed by post to companies explaining that reorganisation of prison industries had resulted in plant, labour and workshop space becoming available for sub-contract work which would prove advantageous to the profits of any company. Firms also benefit from a non-unionised labour force which has no control over the conditions of work.

The offer to sub-contract was not restricted to local companies. On the 24th October, 1975, a contract was received from Med. Equip. (agents for the Saudi Arabian Government) for 9000 beds and furniture valued at £367,193. The consignment was ordered on behalf of the Saudi Arabian Prison Department, and according to press reports at the time,

(Guardian, 13.11.75) would be used to furnish 15 womens' prisons. By using a total of 10 industrial prisons the contract was completed inside the stipulated 2 months ensuring Prindus would be in the running for future orders.

Prisoners are forced to work (even when they are sometimes not medically fit to) in conditions that frequently contravene the Factories Act. To complain or to 'refuse labour' is to sacrifice oneself to the mercy of the adjudicator. Prison labour is employed on contracts supplying equipment to the military sector, the private sector, the British penal sector and now to foreign powers developing their own penal apparatus !

We are not here talking about socially useful work which would make at least some sense out of prison labour, but of the placing of prisoners at the disposal of businessmen looking for a profit margin which can only be obtained through the use of captive labour.

It might be argued (we would not argue it) that prisoners, having 'done wrong', are fair game for such treatment. The fact that the disabled and handicapped are similarly used demonstrates that anyone who is vulnerable will be exploited for the sake of a quick buck. When profits are in command, human dignity and decency count for very little.





## IF YOU THINK ENGLISH PRISONS DON'T WORK - LOOK AT OURS!

Ninety-four percent of prisoners released from Scottish prisons will be back inside within 12 months (20% or so higher than in England). These remarkable figures are being widely quoted by Mr. Nicholas Fairburn, QC, MP (Kinross and Perth) as ammunition, not as you might expect, for arguing the futility of prisons, but in support of his call for prisons to be made more punitive.

Haven't the Inverness cages and their reverse image - the Barlinnie Special Unit taught some of our MP's anything at all?

### PROP/RAP PRISON PLAY IN SCOTLAND

CounterAct brought their play 'Screwed', sponsored by PROP and RAP, to Scotland for two weeks during March. It played to audiences in Inverness, Dundee, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Stirling, Edinburgh, and was accompanied during part of its tour by a PROP representative. Largely as a result of its success we hope to develop PROP in Scotland. Meanwhile, we, as Scottish friends of PROP, will be taking up the offer of a regular page in the PROP newspaper.

## CORNTON VALE WOMEN'S PRISON one week's supply of drugs

Though Scottish prison authorities seem to be slightly less drug orientated than our neighbours south of the border, there is every sign that we are catching up fast. Our reputation with the 'liquid cosh' may yet equal our name for dexterity in the use of the more traditional objects like riot sticks and boots.

It is only months since the death of Larry Winters as a direct result of the drug dependency acquired during nine years of massive dosages of barbiturates and 'tranquillisers', sometimes at a level - and certainly during his period in the Inverness cages - 'far in excess of the dosage given in closed state hospitals'.

Now PROP publishes the weekly order list of drugs used at the new women's prison of Cornton Vale, Bridge of Allan. The prison takes all categories of women prisoners and currently accommodates 55 prisoners, 35 young offenders and 40 borstal 'trainees'. To these must be added prisoners awaiting trial, making a maximum all told of 140 to 150. It is in the context of these numbers that the list of drugs must be read. We understand that many of the younger girls are being subjected to drug 'treatment'.

### Major Tranquillisers

Moderate injection	x 6
Depixil injection	x 10
Largactil syrup	2 litres (often 4)
Melleril syrup	1 litre (often 2)
Neulactil Forte	1 litre
Librium capsules	x 100

### Hypnotics

Chloral hydrate syrup	1 litre (often 2)
Hemineurin syrup	600 ml

### Anti Depressant

Leutizol capsules	x 50 (25/50 mg)
Anafranil capsules	x 50 (25 mg)

Tranxene capsules	x 100
Optimax capsules	x 50 (Vitamin)

The rest of the order is made up of the usual run of anti-biotics, aspirins, anti-diarrhoeals, etc. Other drugs have been ordered at intervals, notably Mogadon and Sodium Amytol.

The injections mentioned are long acting, like one every week or 2 or 3 weeks. We use the official phraseology 'tranquillisers' despite the purposely misleading impression it gives of peace and calm. The 'major' tranquillisers are so designated to differentiate them from minor tranquillisers which don't have quite the same mind-bending (psychotropic) effect. 'Hypnotics' are a fancy name for putting you to sleep.

## INVERNESS CAGES 'OPEN TO APPLICANTS'

The cages at Porterfield prison, Inverness were opened in 1966. Since the beginning of 1973 they have been unoccupied. Now a circular instruction has gone the rounds of the Scottish prisons, drawing attention to the availability of the Unit. It makes clear that 'there is no minimum period of detention in the Unit but no prisoner will be detained for a period longer than is necessary'. That very dubious assurance is further invalidated by the manner in which the regular reviewing body is constituted. "Each prisoner's case will be reviewed on the second Tuesday of each month . . . by a Unit Board which will comprise the Inspector or Assistant Inspector as Chairman, Governor, Medical Officer, Chief Officer of Inverness prison and two members of the Unit staff".

Rule No. 29 reads "Except for exercise periods and slopping out, prisoners will be kept locked up at all times". Segregation is total - Rules 22 and 28, "Prisoners will not work in association" and "not more than one prisoner will be exercised at any one time".

One important privilege denied to Unit prisoners refers to accumulated visits, "Prisoners in the Unit will not qualify for

accumulated visits, nor will the period in the Unit be counted towards the qualifying period for accumulated visits on return (to other prisons). Visits accumulated prior to the prisoner's reception in the Unit will not be taken into account".

When questioned by the Scottish paper 'Seven Days', the Controller of HMP Prisons Scotland maintained that these regulations signified nothing new - because the Segregation Unit had never been closed, but merely awaited suitable applicants! A strange justification indeed. In effect the Scottish Home and Health Department is saying "We can't be criticised for opening the cages, because in fact we never closed them".

### COMPLACENCY IS DANGEROUS

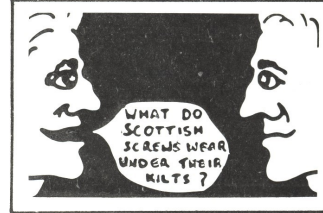
The existence of the cages, and of the Regulations for their use, are sufficient grounds for curbing any complacency over the apparent caution of the Department in proceeding with its plans for neutralising the Barlinnie Special Unit. Any weakening of the campaign to save the Barlinnie Unit can only play into the hands of those, like MP's Teddy Taylor and Nicholas Fair-



burn, who seek a more punitive prison system.

Such MP's are now only a stone's throw away from being in a position to bring in those measures.

As there seems to be an auction between the parties, as to who can shout 'law and order' the loudest, we are in for a difficult time if we just sit back and let it happen.



To close on a more optimistic note let us turn to prison officers of a different kind - ones who we think would jock the job in, rather than behave like some of their colleagues.

#### VOLUNTEERS FOR BARLINNIE

The Barlinnie Special Unit has been inundated with applications from prison officers who wish to be considered for any vacancies within the Unit. So, if the voluntary aspect of employment in the Unit is now altered, it is clear that this will be through choice, not necessity. The strength and extent of the campaign to save the Unit from closure has clearly put Home and Health Department officials on the defensive. But the embarrassment of the Unit's success remains and there are powerful forces, more subtle than Teddy Taylor, who would sweep it away at the first opportunity. The Inverness cages are not kept at readiness just for fun. If the Barlinnie Unit had really been accepted in high places, the cages would have been razed to the ground long ago.

# SPECIAL CELLS

## AN INTERNATIONAL TREND

FROM THE FRENCH PRISONERS' ACTION COMMITTEE

Over the past few months PROP has been in increasing contact with prisoners' movements of other countries. As a result we print below information received from the French Prisoners' Action Committee (Comite D'Action des Prisonniers) concerning the campaign over the introduction and operation of repressive measures, including maximum security units virtually identical, if not in a form, in effect, to the West German 'silent cells' and the English 'control units'.

Following the extensive and very violent prison riots during the summer of 1974, the French Government responded in 1975 with measures that blended repression with 'liberalism' making it ostensibly easier to run the prisons. This package, which failed to take into account any of the prisoners' grievances that led to the riots, officially introduced 'Quartiers de Haute Securite' (maximum security units) enabling the prison governor, as sole authority, to place prisoners in solitary confinement almost permanently. According to the CAP however, these cells and other measures have only been approved by the Prison Administration in various ministerial instructions and guidelines laid down in classified internal circulars and the French parliament has yet to be informed of their existence.

In July 1975, the CAP, supported by three lawyers and magistrates unions (le Mouvement d'Action Judiciaire, le Syndicat des Avocats de France and le Syndicat de la Magistrature), lodged an appeal against these repressive conditions but on September 30th that year a further circular was issued by Jacques Megret, then Director of Prison Administration, extending the use of maximum security cells to remand prisoners. In the subsequent 30 months many such prisoners have been held in these units.

#### DESIGNED TO DISORIENTATE

The maximum security cell itself measures 3m x 2m; its fixtures, bed, stool, table, and shelves, are made of concrete and extend from the wall or ground. The sun never penetrates the cell. The walls are white with one corner painted a light brown ensuring the glance never collides with anything but merely glides. The continual imperceptibility of contrast, nuance or relief disorientate the occupant and lead to anguish and hallucination. Everything is artificial as there is no contact with any living element. In essence they represent a living death since the prisoner is held in a tomb without possibility of sensory stimulus.

Until 1974, only Mende Prison cater-

ed for 'troublemakers', with a provision of 46 cells reputed to be the toughest in France. But in 1975, with the introduction of the more repressive measures, these facilities were extended to prisons in Bourgoin (30 cells), Briey (32), Evre (21), Tarbes (45), Tulle (30), and Lisieux (30), which were entirely given over to this form of detention, as well as a number of cells at major prisons such as Fleury-Merogis, Fresnes, Claivaux, La Sante, Les Baumettes, and many others. The CAP say that the 400 cells set aside for unconvicted prisoners are almost continually filled and more than 40 convicted prisoners are permanently held under such conditions.

#### PRISONERS LEAD CAMPAIGN

Unlike the English 'control units', which we have to admit never resulted in extensive counter-action by prisoners, indeed they were actually built using con labour, the French units have gained most of their publicity through the activities of prisoners themselves although a coordinating campaign has been waged by the CAP outside the prisons. Prisoners held in the maximum security cells managed, through a system of communicating by knocking on the pipes passing through the cell block, to agree a common text which was later published in 2 papers, 'Liberation' daily and 'Cap No. 51'. Later one of them, Taleb Hadjadj, was badly beaten up as a consequence.

On October 28th, 1977, six prisoners in Fresnes prison outside Paris began a hunger strike to protest against their conditions and attract public attention. Again, on January 2nd 1978, eight prisoners, some on remand, gave the press and other prisoners a week's notice of a planned hunger strike and called for others to support them. As a result from January 9th to January 11th between 700 (French Prison Authorities' figures) and 2000 (CAP figures) prisoners across France went on an internationally publicised hunger and work strike in support of the eight.

On January 16th prisoners in La Sante prison went on another hunger strike, but in sheer desperation at the lack of response from the Prison Authorities, 2 maximum security prisoners at Clairvaux prison took hostages of their guards. Following a short siege the 2 prisoners were shot dead by police marksmen.

#### SUPPORT FROM OUTSIDE

On March 29th 1978, the 'Lisieux Trial' begins at the Cour d'Assises de Paris. Four men who took hostages of

(Cont'd on foot of next page)



# 10 THE TORTURE OF A LIFE SENTENCE

## • • • The Case of Frank Marritt

Frank Marritt has been in prison for over 12½ years for the murder of a young woman during a drunken argument. If he had mown her down in a car while similarly drunk he would have been out long ago - if indeed he had been imprisoned at all. Yet, of the two outrages - and they are both outrages - the latter is surely the more serious.

They would only be comparable if Frank Marritt had gone, drunk, to the girl's house with a gun or knife - weapons as potentially lethal as a motorcar. But he did not, and what happened is a clear case of a sudden loss of control. And much nearer to an 'accident' than the road death which is so often described as such.

Behind both deaths lies the explanation of alcohol, the socially accepted and encouraged drug which is amongst the most addictive and dangerous of them all. But many other road deaths and mutilations have no explanation except selfishness and a callous indifference to other people. Yet those are the violent offences where even the confiscation of a driving licence - not liberty - is looked upon as an injustice.

We are not making excuses for Frank Marritt, or for any antisocial behaviour. It is not excuses but explanations which we believe must be sought for such acts if we are ever to understand them and learn what to do about them.

Nor are we asking for droves of killing and maiming motorists to be sent to prison, though that is what does in fact happen in some other countries where they are a little more consistent in dealing with crimes of violence.

### WHO ARE THE LIFERS?

We make the comparison in order to offer some sort of perspective on what is happening. Most murders are domestic - involving people very close, and arising out of that closeness. Most involve drink, and could happen to almost any of us under conditions of similar stress at a time when our critical and control faculties are besmudged by drugs of one sort or another.

(Cont'd from page 9)

their guards in order to escape the inhuman conditions of their detention are being tried. Almost all the Trade unions representing lawyers, magistrates, social workers and protestant priests are in support of the defendants (this must not be read in an English context where the position and roles of, for example, magistrates are very different) and have protested over the underlying reasons for them having resorted to such action - the conditions in the maximum security cells.

Yet, someone has only to raise the subject of the young lifer in prison - and Frank Marritt was young when he first went in - and papers like The News of the World trot out one of the mercifully few horrendous crimes as if it were these we would be risking by releasing the prisoners in question. Prisoners as a whole are much the same as people outside. If the population of Wormwood Scrubs were to be dressed in their own clothes and lined up in a cinema queue, nobody would know any difference. And none are closer to the average man or woman in the street than are the majority of those on life sentences.

### OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

What hope is there for a man like Frank Marritt? Our society has brushed him under the carpet, out of sight, and is no longer interested in him. Periodically he comes up for consideration for release on licence. Repeatedly he is turned down, with no explanations given.

What more can he do? What more can his recently widowed Mother, who has waged a ceaseless struggle to rouse the public conscience do? She is 72 years old and has busily prepared a home for his release. Week by week, year after year, she writes to MP's, to clergymen, to penal reformers and prisoners' groups, to lawyers, to newspapers, to charities, to political journals. There is scarcely a paper, down to the smallest duplicated news-sheets, which has not heard from her.

### ON THE ROOF

A few weeks ago Frank briefly hit the headlines when, in desperation, he broke out onto the roof of Medway Wing at Maidstone prison. An instant newspaper item drew attention to his plight - and it was then just as instantly forgotten. He is caught in a trap. The more he reacts to his sense of hopelessness the more his depression or occasional outbursts give the prison authorities the opportunity to say that his behaviour does not suggest a capability to look after himself outside.

Frank is not unique. And in drawing attention to his case we draw attention at the same time to the whole torturous business of parole and licence, where hope is for ever dangled in front of prisoners and then shattered, year after year, without any explanation or any suggestion of what is being asked of them, or of their families outside. And many prisoners don't have families outside after 12½ years, let alone a fighter like Frank's mother.

### NO EASY ANSWER

We don't have an answer. People have other things on their minds than

caring about other people. Our society sees to that. And it is only when people decide to have done with such a society that we can start to face such questions with the power in our own hands to do something about them.

Some of the groups to whom Mrs. Marritt has appealed are now combining to try and push Frank's case before the public. We of course are with them - but we must be careful not to hold out hopes we cannot fulfil. That would be to repeat the tortures which the family already undergo at the hands of the Home Office.

Of course it is right to fight. We are sure that that is what keeps Mrs. Marritt going. And it is alone what can keep Frank going. But how easy that is to say from outside! What would most of us be like after 12½ years? Yet the alternative is to give up and surrender one's body to the Home Office and one's mind to the prison doctors.

### THE CALLOUSNESS OF THE HOME OFFICE

The ongoing case of George Ince has demonstrated just how callous and unyielding the Home Office can be. No individual case has ever received more support or such wide support. His campaign is helping prisoners everywhere by highlighting, in a particularly gross form, the manner in which the prison medical service tries to break men's minds. And George is now fighting and refusing the drugs which had brought him to the pitch where there were fears that he would eventually be released a broken man.

There is of course another, ever present danger in allowing the prison doctors their way with drugs. And that is the possibility that a man might eventually be so affected that he can be weighed off under Section 60 of the Mental Health Act.

To fight is the only way to avoid being beaten.

Frank's case is coming up for review again - we believe in July. A charitable organisation in Hull, catering for the homeless and ex-offenders, has offered him a life-long home, with all the additional support of re-integration in addition to his mother's preparations for him.

The manner in which the Home Office arrives at its recommendations is a mystery. But if Frank Marritt is turned down yet again, it will be quite clear that the decisions are not being taken on grounds that have anything to do with the suitability of the arrangements prepared for him outside.



# BRIXTON 'SUICIDE'

## Questions that must be asked

The family of Nicholas Brett-Smith, alleged to have committed suicide in Brixton prison on Saturday 11th February do not accept this official version of his death.

### OUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE

Aged 38, Brett-Smith was awaiting trial at the Old Bailey on charges of conspiracy and possession of drugs. Bail had been opposed by the police because of a claimed 'suicide attempt' while in custody at Earls Court police station. When his mother, Mrs. Evans, saw him after that 'suicide', "his face and body were bruised and there was puss coming out of one arm". The police explanation for this was that they had found him hanging and "had to punch him back into life". Every doctor that we have mentioned this to is aghast at the idea.

### PRISON AUTHORITIES INSTRUCTED TO TAKE SPECIAL CARE

It was on such incredible grounds that Brett-Smith was refused bail when his solicitor applied to Judge in Chambers. The Judge, in refusing the application, instructed the prison authorities to take note of Brett-Smith's condition and to accommodate him accordingly.

That is how Brett-Smith came to be given an F Category ('suicide risk') and placed in the medical wing at Brixton where he should have been under special watch surveillance at maximum 20 minute intervals.

### MOTHER REFUSED VISIT

When his mother visited him shortly before his death she was at first refused entry to the prison because her son was 'sick'. Mothers are not easy to fob off in so casual a manner and she stood her ground, refusing to move until she was taken to see her son. The prison authorities changed their mind and the visit

took place. Mrs. Evans states that Nicholas was not at all himself and scarcely knew what day it was. He had apparently been drugged.

### A BEATING?

Meanwhile PROP had received information from inside Brixton prison about the death of a prisoner which had been preceded by a beating up in cell 32 on the Number 3 Landing of F Wing. As reported to us, three prison officers - Long, Jones and Martin - went into the cell half an hour after lock up. He was stripped naked and beaten up and then carried down to the strip-cells below. His removal was seen by other prisoners who were able to catch glimpses through badly fitting flaps to the 'judas holes' in their cell doors. Screams were heard for half an hour after the prisoner's removal to the segregation cells.

Other prisoners in the segregation block later saw a limp body being carried out from one of the strip cells. One prisoner speaks of "prison officers entering the cell after the body had been removed, in order to "set it up" before the police arrived".

### ONE INCIDENT OR TWO?

The prisoner's name originally given in these reports was 'John Commander', but the Southwark Coroner's office informs us that there has been only one death in Brixton since Christmas. Are these therefore two separate incidents - one in F Wing and one in the segregation block - which have been telescoped into one. Every prisoner will understand just how difficult it is to follow any occurrence from one part of a prison to another.

### HOME OFFICE MUST EXPLAIN

The questions which we hope will be pursued at the resumed Inquest (on April 5th) are:

1. Was Brett-Smith really likely to have taken his own life?
2. If in fact he was, how did he manage to do so while under special watch on Category F, reinforced by the specific recommendations of the Judge in Chambers?
3. If it was Brett-Smith who was earlier attacked in his cell, what were the reasons for this?
4. Is there any connection between this tragedy and the recent suspension of Brixton prison officers pending investigations of a 'drug ring' there?
5. What medical treatment was Brett-Smith receiving that could account for his incoherent state when visited by his mother?
6. Did the post-mortem check for traces of drugs?
7. Wasn't his obviously incoherent state, from whatever cause, an added reason for the strictest observation of Category F surveillance?

### THE NEED FOR PUBLICITY

Brett-Smith's family, understandably shocked by his death, did not follow-up the initial newspaper interest in the case. That publicity, if it had been sustained, would by now have resulted in smuggled information which might have cleared up some of the confusions surrounding the original reports. It is, in our opinion, the only way of making any breach in the wall of secrecy that surrounds prison life.

The family now wishes to use every means to get at the truth and we appeal to Brixton prisoners through their relatives to pass us any first-hand knowledge they have of what occurred that weekend. It is very late in the day now to get evidence in time for the Inquest, but the important thing, however long it takes, is to get at the truth. It is in every prisoner's interest that yet another prison death is not hushed up.

The poltergeists are at it again. It is not so long ago that Irish prisoners were badly beaten up by Winson Green prison officers who were subsequently charged and found not guilty at a trial which should certainly never have been held in Birmingham if justice was intended. The verdict meant, in effect, that Irish prisoners had been beaten up - because the fact of their beating was never in doubt - by nobody. Or, as one Irish newspaper remarked at the time, by fairies.

We print below, exactly as received, a letter from 28 prisoners at Winson Green. Each signed his name and added his prison number. The letter, though without the

## WINSON GREEN

### More beatings - 9 screws named

signatures, has been circulated to the press and selected journalists have been briefly shown the original. (We would like prisoners to always signify their intentions in this respect. Unless stated otherwise, we will always assume that such names are meant for our eyes only. If non-prisoners feel that this detracts from the credibility of the letter, we can only reply that a spell inside would quickly change their minds).

"We the inmates of this prison Winson

Green, want to draw your attention to the systematic beatings carried out in the segregation unit and hospital wing of this prison.

"At approximately 7.40 am, Tuesday 7th March, the staff were seen kicking, punching and hitting with their truncheons a prisoner. When this man became unconscious and fell to the floor they continued to kick him.

"Some of the staff who were involved are as follows: Principal Officer Robinson,



more significant - and therefore far more likely to be hamstrung by restrictions at the very start.

#### WORRYING

Two things particularly worry us. Firstly, the uncritical support, and therefore credibility, which is being given to these moves by some prison reform spokesmen. And, secondly, the curious assumption that Labour representation on Boards of Visitors would, of itself, "alter their reputation as conservative, secretive, JP dominated bodies" - to quote from 'The Guardian' report again.

It seems to be forgotten that Labour Governments have consistently provided the most reactionary, conservative and secretive of our Home Secretaries - Clynes in the '30s, Callaghan, Jenkins, Rees. And as the Hull prison riot demonstrated, the present House of Commons was not even interested in finding out the truth of what happened, let alone acting on it. The prisoners' demands for an official public inquiry fell on deaf ears.

Also forgotten, as the reference to "JP dominated bodies" makes clear, is the fact that present magistrates include many councillors, from all parties. The political parties in fact comprise one of the main recruiting grounds for the Bench. Similarly, there are plenty of trade unionists already sitting on Boards of Visitors. There is nothing very new about it - and they are all Home Office appointees to a man.

#### THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

That is the crux of the matter. The right of Manchester Trades Council to submit names for consideration takes us nowhere. It is a 'right' which they already hold, along with everybody else. There is nothing to stop anyone suggesting the names of candidates for the Bench or for prison Boards of Visitors.

But consult any authority you like as to the manner in which magistrates are actually chosen, and everywhere you will read sentences like "the procedures by which magistrates are selected are something of a mystery".

Like so much else of what is passed off as democracy in this country, the real decisions are taken behind closed doors after a 'democratic' process which is no more than play-acting. By participating, or seeming to participate, in these games Trades Councils run the risk of shoring up the Home Office's pretence that a Board of Visitors, even as at present constituted, is "an independent body of representatives of the local community" (from the recent HMSO publication 'Prisons and Prisoners').

We are sure that Manchester Trades Council members recognise that last statement to be false, which is the reason why

they are interesting themselves in the situation at all. We are equally confident that PRAG - the local Prisoners Rights Action Group which has done so much to alert Manchester people to conditions in Strangeways - will see to it that their initiatives will not now be cynically diverted into harmless channels.

#### REAL INDEPENDENCE OR NOTHING

What is necessary is that Trades Council members should insist on appointing, not just nominating, their own

representatives on the Strangeways Board of Visitors - representatives who must be answerable to the Trades Council itself, which would in turn back them in any subsequent difficulties with regard to the Official Secrets Act.

It may be argued that such conditions rule out any possibility of Home Office acceptance. We would say that, if this be the case, Manchester Trades Council will have rendered a useful service by showing up the Boards of Visitors for what they really are - creatures of the Home Office.

## THE GERMAN PRISON MURDERS

### CRITICAL RESPONSE TO PROP ARTICLE

The following letter was sent to us in response to an article published in the last issue of PROP. Immediately following the letter we print a reply which we hope clarifies our position and answers all the points raised by the correspondent.

The article in PROP Vol 2 No. 4 "The German Prison Murders" is a shock as PROP claims to be a prisoners rights movement. The cynicism of the article which expresses no shock or anger over the continuing murders in West German prisons clearly shows that PROP has sold out as a prisoners group. It has now become the platform for opportunist 'lefties'. The language used in the article is a clear indication of the corruption of PROP.

"Baader-Meinhof Group" instead of Red Army Faction shows a readiness to take on the wording of psychological warfare i.e. the State's definitions. The wording is an insult to the other fighters of the RAF and to our murdered comrades

Going on how that proving - as if it needs proving - that they were murders would alter nothing. What if you do 'prove' that Hull prisoners had shit beaten out of them, or Irish comrades in Albany, or that prisoners are murdered in British prisons? Would it all alter something? Or if it doesn't would you blame it on the "adventurist" tactics of the IRA - for lack of being able to blame it on yourselves or something else.

The RAF has taken up arms against a state which is an aggressive agent of American imperialism. These comrades have put their solidarity with other anti-imperialists into practice, attacking at home. They do not do it because they want to become heroes/heroines/martyrs, they do it out of belief and conviction that armed struggle is one of the ways of attacking imperialism.

I suggest that PROP re-assesses its role, and what side it's really on, then it may become something else than a Piss Right Over Prisoners group.

(Because of uncertainty whether this let-

ter was intended for publication we have chosen not to publish this reader's name and address. Because of lack of space we have also shortened it slightly).

#### .....AND OUR REPLY

For the benefit of new readers who will not have seen the original article we should make it clear that its starting point was the fact that prisoners had been murdered by the state. That is something we accept. The alternative explanation of suicide defies commonsense.

We are criticised for expressing no shock or anger at "this tragic waste of young lives" (our own words). But why should we be shocked when the German Government behaves towards the Baader-Meinhof Group as that Group has always set out to show it would behave? We would have been more surprised if it had reacted in any other way.

As for anger, this is much more an admission of impotence than a spur to effective action. Anger is bred of frustration. It is difficult, for example, to read the case of Frank Marritt (page 10) without getting this same urge to lash out at those responsible and at the smugness of those who let it continue. But in fact it is we who are responsible and we who let it continue - and it is only in the raising of awareness in that collective 'we' that we are ever going to change things. We already have the power. We lack only the self-confidence and the will.

We don't apologise for using the words Baader-Meinhof Group, rather than RAF ("Red Army Faction"). Our purpose in publishing anything is to communicate, and we don't believe that the letters RAF carry any meaning - or at any rate that meaning - for the majority of people.

Anyway, the titles that matter are those that are bestowed on people by others, not those that they stick on themselves. And the title that will need to be won - to be earned - by any military group that has the slightest chance of helping the people forward to the control of their own lives is the title 'Peoples'

(Continued on back page)



The question of parole occupies the thoughts, almost from the day of conviction, of nearly all prisoners serving sentences of more than 18 months. That is how the prison authorities like it. It's true the operation of parole does help to reduce the prison population (the official reason for its introduction) but the size of that reduction is insignificant. Like every reform, both existing and proposed, the real aim of parole is control. Home leave, hostel, vocational training courses, education classes, all depend upon the ability of the prisoner to satisfy the prison staff and are therefore control mechanisms directly operated by the staff. Parole though is not operated by prison staff and does not seem correlated to how responsive a prisoner is to the regime.

## BOUGHT OFF OR SOLD OUT?

The paradox of parole, like prison itself, is that its existence does not encourage socially responsible behaviour - quite the contrary. The belief is fostered that in return for turning a blind eye to abuses by prison personnel, silent acceptance of squalid conditions, and a temporary display of respect for the legitimacy of authority and property, prisoners are given the possibility (and it is no more than that) of an early release having served one year or one third, whichever is the greater. Prisoners who refuse to accept these terms and adopt a positive attitude to their circumstances are labelled 'subversive' and spend a considerable portion of their sentence in the segregation unit under the section of Rule 43 catering for offences against 'good order and discipline'.

It would appear that prisoners have a straightforward choice; to conform and perhaps get out earlier or develop and serve the lot. But how much is the former what the prison authorities want prisoners to believe rather than the actual criteria

upon which parole is granted? If a prison file PROP gained possession of is anything to go by, then conformity is not the potential password everyone is led to believe.

## FILE CONTENTS

The parole dossier contains 25 items - an index card, 6 outside reports, including police report, previous convictions and home circumstances reports, and 16 inside reports, including 'special' information (the political expediency of release perhaps?), progress reports, prisoners representations and Local Review Committee reports. All the usual aspects of a prisoner's life are examined - attitude to work, work done, general behaviour in prison, relationship with family, ties, personality and character, understanding of weaknesses and faults, response to the 'social' and 'community' life of the prison and plans for employment. But the answers to these questions appear to have only limited relevance in determining suitability for parole. The most important factors seem to be how the Parole Board interprets the information, and expediency.

The parole reports in our possession bear this out. On the first two occasions that parole was applied for the prisons' reports were good and unanimous in recommending release but it was refused. On the third occasion these reports were uniformly bad and unanimous in rejecting early release but parole was granted.

## DIFFERENT VIEWS

The turnaround from good to bad is interesting. A different prison, a different set of staff and a different view of the prisoner changes the whole tenor of the reports. In the first reports we find - "This man has a great future, very intelligent, .. we feel he should be paroled", "well motivated", "changed and improved attitude. I would recommend parole; at this time", "has a forthright manner and a realistic attitude to life. Is prepared to listen to advice and accept constructive criticism".

But in the final reports this becomes - "An intelligent subversive type who appears very smooth on the surface but is cunning and devious", "An intelligent man who will never feature directly in any trouble but will certainly be at the root of it. Not suitable mat-

erial for early release on licence", "Works well but instructor is of opinion he is subversive amongst other prisoners", "I find it difficult to say anything positive about this man", and so on. Even the Welfare Officer, that supposedly independent element injected to assist prisoners with their problems, felt strongly enough after the event to add; "... I am doubtful that the granting of parole has been wise. He sees it as a triumph over the establishment he abhors" (sic)! No doubt where their loyalties lie!

## CONTROL AND SUPPRESSION

The unpredictability of parole is something prisoners have always been aware of but the extent to which internal reports can affect the chances of parole has remained unknown. This naturally gives the staff every advantage and allows them to use the threat of a bad report to suppress argument and contradiction.

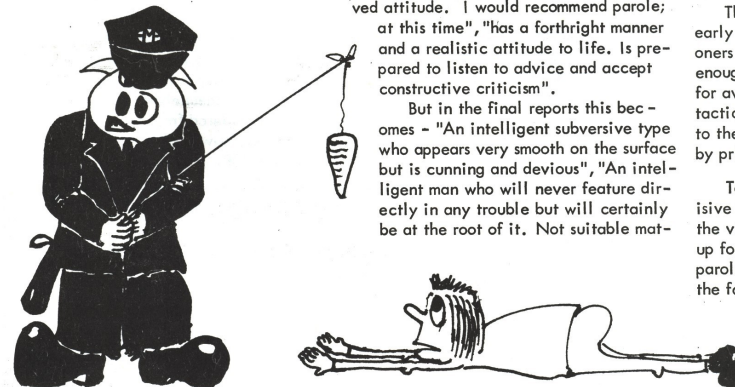
The case focussed on in this article shows that just as favourable reports certainly do not guarantee parole, neither do unfavourable reports prevent it. That the whole system of parole is both intended and exploited as a control mechanism is obvious. But to see individual prison officers as having a deciding influence on this - or on anything else - is to see them as a great deal more important than they are. Anyone who has seen them lining up for inspection at Wandsworth will know that they are nothing of the sort.

Parole certainly is a carrot - always dangled in front of a prisoner but usually out of reach. Such is the weight given to the Trial Judge's recommendations that in many cases the whole procedure is nothing more than a heartless charade which can do nothing to alter a predetermined conclusion.

## DIFFICULT SITUATION

The very sensible desire to be released early - or in the case of life sentence prisoners to be released at all - is a good enough reason (there are plenty of others) for avoiding adventurist and exhibitionist tactics, and particularly avoiding rising to the bait so often provocatively thrown by prison officers.

To suggest prison officers have a decisive voice on anything is to encourage the viewpoint that it is only by covering up for their abuses that the golden key of parole can be obtained. Quite apart from the fact that many prisoners would consider this far too high a price to pay, our evidence suggests that the real situation is anyway a great deal more complex than that.





(Cont'd from Page 14)

Amy' - an army displaying something of the humility, humanity and common purpose of the English New Model Army of the 1640's or the Chinese Peoples' Liberation Army of the 1930's and 40's. We cannot accept that in the hijacking of airline passengers, in the current West German situation, there is the beginning of that image.

Our correspondent attempts, dishonestly, we think, to introduce the question of Ireland - implying that we are making a blanket condemnation of paramilitary actions anywhere and everywhere in the world. We neither said nor implied any such thing. We see a considerable difference between the situation in West Germany and that in Ireland, or Palestine or Southern Africa.

One man's "terrorist" is another man's "freedom fighter" - as most of us would

## International drug companies

The last issue of the PROP newspaper focussed attention on the use of tranquiliser drugs to control prisoners thought 'aggressive' and too vocal in their demands. But an interesting dimension is added to these medical-control techniques by the activities of major pharmaceutical companies in Europe and America. In Thomburg Prison, Switzerland, Hoffman La Roche have been testing some of their products on prisoners for more than 15 years. Volunteers for the research are easily found as the £50 bounty paid for their services (1976 figure) is the equivalent of a years' wages in the prison.

More recent reports in the press disclosed that pharmaceutical companies in the United States have been carrying out similar 'research'. The two major companies involved described the experiments as 'opportunities for prisoners to do something useful in their lives'. Suggestions were also made that prison administrators frequently accepted money from the companies to promote research programmes.

Prisons have always been of interest to pharmaceutical companies since worldwide they are one of their largest markets. Their preoccupation with profits means they are constantly looking for inexpensive guinea pigs for research projects. (The extent of these profits was revealed when La Roche were ordered to repay £3½

million to the British National Health Service in 1975 through excess profits accumulated from over-charging on the tranquilisers Valium and Librium).

This preoccupation was heavily criticised in a report - 'Who Needs the Drug Companies?' - published by the Hasle - mere Group on the 13th May 1976. These multinationals used the Third World as a trial ground for drugs as well as markets for drugs banned by industrialised nations, it noted.

A particularly interesting report from a Canadian prison suggested that the drug companies and most prison authorities are barking up the wrong tree in their assumption that 'a drugged con is a quiet con':

"Dr. D.G. Workman found that inmates in Milhaven Penitentiary, Ontario, committed three to four times as many aggressive acts when they were on tranquilisers. Doctors call this effect the 'paradoxical reaction'... sleeping drugs and sedatives had similar effects, but anti-anxiety drugs, especially Valium, were the worst offenders". (Sunday Times 2.5.76).

Dr. Workman's findings were immediately denounced as unscientific by La Roche Products, the makers of Valium and Librium. Nevertheless, "Ontario Prison Department has cut down their order for these products and the result seems to be that we have much less trouble".

## 'SCREWED'

A PLAY ABOUT PRISONS

The CounterAct Theatre Company's Play, "Screwed", sponsored by PROP and RAP (Radical Alternatives to Prison), has been on tour since December.

It is a play, in Agitprop style, about Law and Order, the police and prisons. Starting in the streets, it moves through a series of linked episodes to a Detention Centre, a Borstal, the new Holloway, a first day in Wormwood Scrubs, and the Hull riot and its immediate aftermath. Some of it is emotionally highly charged, other parts - particularly a Court scene in the form of a masked quadrille - very funny.

Lasting a little over an hour, it is accompanied by an exhibition of photographs and prisoners' smuggled letters about the Hull riot, and is usually followed by a discussion. PROP or RAP representatives have joined the Company wherever possible in order to take part in these discussions.

The play will tour until May and the places, dates and times of presentation can be obtained from CounterAct in London on 01-251-4978. There are still a few dates available for new bookings.

## HASPIN

During the last year a PROP member has been party to the setting up of a new housing association for single people in need and ex-offenders (HASPIN). Although acting in an individual capacity the PROP member has been involved with a view to eventually placing ex-offenders in property belonging to the association with other single people on a communal basis.

At this stage there are at least five properties available, in the Lewisham area, on which rehabilitation grants are being negotiated. Applicants for places must have a commitment to communal living in houses probably including children and must be prepared to do a lot of the rehabilitation work themselves.

Initial selection must be according to need but with some concern for social harmony in the houses. Later we hope that those living in the houses will select new members themselves. Applications can be considered from early summer and further details will be printed in the next issue of PROP.

PROP welcomes help with sales and distribution, particularly outside prisons. If there is a prison/borstal in your area and if you have a couple of hours each week/month to spare, please contact us at either of our addresses.

The PROP Newspaper can be sent to you by post. (Annual subscription rates: £1.30 including post and package).

"PRISON SECRECY" by Stan Cohen and Laurie Taylor is available through PROP, Price £1.25 including P & P.



**prop**

the national prisoners' movement



Chairman: Dick Pooley National Secretary: Geoff Coggan

Editorial Board: Geoff Coggan, Mike Jenkins

32(a) Park Road, Colliers Wood, London SW19 01-542-3744