"PRISONERS IN REVOLT: THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRESERVATION OF THE RIGHTS OF PRISONERS (PROP),
THE BRITISH PRISONERS UNION"

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INTRODUCTION

Recent years have witnessed an upsurge in prisoners' protest. In contrast to earlier times, such militancy has increasingly been channelled into collectivised and controlled strikes and demonstrations. There has been an accompanying change in both the content and style of presentation of inmates' demands, reflected in the explicitly political rhetoric of their 'manifestoes'. One particular feature of this 'new' militancy is the attempt by prisoners to organise themselves (often with outside support).

This dissertation is about prisoners' movements; i.e. with the inmates' efforts at organisation to protest about and challenge not only the material conditions, but also the fact of their incarceration. Increasingly, prisoners have sought to question the intentions of those who hold them in penal institutions, and to transform the terms in which they, as a social problem, are discussed. Following the earliest 'union' in Sweden, there have been concerted efforts to unionise in a number of American and several Western European countries. This study is specifically concerned with the emergence of Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners (PROP), the British prisoners union, founded in May 1972. To help further this understanding, a comparative analysis with the movement in the USA is undertaken, and the whole thesis is informed by the work of Thomas Mathiesen,
and the Scandinavian experiences.

In the introductory chapter, a brief history of imprisonment is presented to raise the question of why people are imprisoned. This leads into a discussion of more recent developments and possible future trends of British penal policy. These directions are shown to be consistent with the penal aims outlined in the introductory section. Chapter three outlines present prison conditions, which, it will be argued, provided much of the impetus for the emergence of an organised prisoners' movement in the early 1970's in this country. Extensive use is made of prisoners' letters, which, because of their content, had frequently to be smuggled out of the institutions. Chapter four provides a brief historical sketch of British prisoners' protest, looking particularly at the Dartmoor Mutiny of the 1930's, and the Parkhurst Riot of the late 1960's. It is against this background that the origins and development of Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners are traced.

The section on PROP is largely documentary. As a founder member of the organisation, I was directly involved in the earliest campaigns, and have tried to record what was really happening within the group, in contrast to how it was being presented in the media. In an effort to highlight or resolve some of the issues raised in this discussion, the sixth chapter looks in detail at the rise of the prisoners' movement in the USA, particularly in California. The apparent failure of PROP underlines the need for this type of research, and the concluding
section seeks to draw out the main obstacles confronting an emergent prisoners' organisation, and to place its activities firmly in the political sphere.

Many people have helped directly and indirectly with the preparation of this study. Without in any way implicating them in the weaknesses of this dissertation, I would like to thank Stan Cohen, Thomas Mathiesen, Laurie Taylor, Ian Taylor and Jock Young. Professor Joe Banks has been a most encouraging and patient supervisor. Thanks to Audrey, Lillian and Carol for typing it all up, and to Ashra, my wife, and John Muncie, who kept me going through many a dark hour. Finally, this has been written for the people inside Her Majesty's prisons, and for those on the outside, particularly Ted Ward, who have worked so unselfishly for the past three years to provide a prisoners' voice.
CHAPTER 1

The Functions of Imprisonment
Prisons have not always been there: they are a comparatively modern innovation. Gaols had existed, but only as "transit" institutions for those awaiting trial, exile, mutilation, or execution. There were a few exceptions, most notably the Tower of London, but these were almost exclusively used for holding political prisoners and 'enemies of the State' whom it was believed too risky to put on 'open' trial.

Although 'prisons as we know them are of recent origin, institutions designed to dispose of other groups 'expelled' from the society had long existed. Michel Foucault has shown that in twelfth century England and Wales over a million and a half lepers were shut away in two hundred and twenty 'leper' houses. By the turn of the century, however, these houses began to be closed down for 'lack of custom'. In 1342, for example, the hospital at Ripon was empty. Six years later the once great leprosarium at St. Albans contained only three lepers. One of the oldest and most important, St. Bartholemew's at Chatham, established in 1078, cared for only two patients during the reign of Elizabeth I and was finally closed in 1627. But as Foucault has underlined, what doubtless remained longer than the disease and the leper houses were the values and images attached to the figure of the leper as well as to the meaning of his exclusion. The places vacated by the lepers were to be taken up by other groups of expelled - the poor, the vagrant, and 'deranged minds'.


Foucault's work has largely been ignored in this country. By extensive quotation this chapter hopes to stimulate wider interest in Foucault's ideas.
The origins of the incarceration of offenders in England and Wales are remote and difficult to ascertain. One of the earliest indications of the new trend towards lengthy imprisonment was an act passed in 1575 providing for the building of "houses of correction" in each country "for the punishment of vagabonds and the relief of the poor". These were very much at the bottom of the scale of punishments, and had a range of functions, only one of which was the detention of petty offenders serving definite periods of confinement. Whilst these "bridewells" were originally financed by a public tax, private donations had also been encouraged, and the houses were soon transformed entirely into the private sector. Indeed, it was not even necessary to have official permission to open a house of correction; anyone with sufficient interest and resources might do so. At the turn of the seventeenth century, however, there was a general tightening up and reorganisation. Judges were henceforward to decide who was to be sent to the houses, which were to provide work for the inmates, and any Justice of the Peace who had not established such an institution in the area within his jurisdiction was to be fined five pounds. The development of these bridewells was very limited; the system, for example, never reached Scotland. Of more importance were the workhouses dating from the second half of the seventeenth century. An act of 1670 had defined their status, appointed officers to oversee the collection and administration of taxes to finance them, and entrusted
supreme control to the local Justice of the Peace. The Gilbert Act of 1792 not only reinforced this authority, but facilitated the establishment of a wider network so that by the end of the century there were 126 workhouses. And, unlike the bridewells, the system spread throughout Europe to such an extent that John Howard undertook to investigate it towards the end of the eighteenth century, his travels taking him to Holland, Italy, Spain, Germany, and France. Howard made regular pilgrimages to all the chief centres of confinement (hospitals, prisons, jails), and was horrified by what he found. He complained of the variety of people to be found within the same walls - male and female, the young, the criminal, the insane. As Foucault emphasises, Howards exhaustive documentation provided evidence that within 150 years confinement had become an "abusive amalgam of heterogeneous elements." (2)

What was happening, for the first time, was that purely negative measures of exclusion were increasingly being replaced by confinement. No longer were penal institutions to be at the bottom of the scale of punishments, but rather they were to be a direct substitute for systems very much at the top. Moreover, it is important to recognise that it wasn't simply that the Enlightenment frowned on 'barbaric' punishments. Rather, the unemployed, the criminal and so on were no longer to be simply driven away, executed, or mutilated, but rather they were to be taken into custody.

(2) John Howard, "The State of the Prisons in England and Wales, with preliminary observations and an account of some Foreign prisons." (London, 1784)

(3) Foucault, (1967), op. cit. p.45
at the nation's expense and the personal cost of their liberty. An implicit system of obligation was thus established between the individual and society: he had the right to be fed, but in return had to accept the physical (and moral) constraints of confinement. For Foucault, the origins of confinement throughout Europe came to hold a similar meaning, and constituted one of the seventeenth century answers to the economic crises affecting the entire western world. In England and Wales, poverty had continued to spread rapidly despite the various pressures taken to avoid unemployment (including severe cuts in wage levels). In 1622, in a pamphlet "Grievous Groan For The Poor" Thomas Dekker, outlining the nature and extent of the danger condemned the general negligence in alleviating the situation:

"Though the number of the poor do daily increase, all things yet worketh for the worst in their behalf, ... many of these parishes turneth forth their poor, yea and their lusty labourers that will not work ... to beg, filch, and steal for their maintenance, so that the country is pitifully pestered with them". (4)

In 1630, a royal commission set up to ensure stricter observance of the poor laws produced a series of "orders and directions", which recommended the prosecution of beggars, vagabonds, and "all those who live in idleness and will not work for reasonable wages or who spend what they have in taverns." (5) Such people were to be punished by confinement in houses of correction. The commission also recommended the investigation of those who claimed to have

(5) quoted in Foucault, (1967), op. cit. p.50
wives and children to ascertain if they were legally married, and the children baptised, "for these people live like savages without being married ... nor baptised, and it is this licentious liberty which causes so many to rejoice in vagabondage."(6)

These problems were not resolved with improving economic conditions. In Cromwell's time, the Lord Mayor complained of "this vermin that troops about the city, disturbing public order, assaulting carriages, demanding abuses with loud cries at the door of churches and private houses." Outside of the crisis, the houses of correction took on a new function: they were no longer merely to contain those without work but henceforward were to provide work. The confined were to contribute to the growth of a more general prosperity. Thus, the importance of the houses of correction is made clear. In periods of full employment and high wages, they were to provide a source of cheap labour, in times of depression by reabsorbing those forced into illness and extreme poverty they were to provide social protection against rebellion. In emphasising this dual role we should note that the first houses of correction were built in the most industrialized parts of the country. The disappearance of these institutions by the beginning of the nineteenth century is testimony that they didn't play this double function particularly efficiently. Absorption of the unemployed did afford some social protection by hiding the most obvious disadvantages of emerging industrial

(6) quoted in Foucault, (1967) op. cit. p.50
capitalism, but at the same time this system created unemployment in neighbouring regions. The effects on production costs were also severely limited; whilst undoubtedly providing a source of cheap labour the costs of confinement itself more than offset any saving.

But the houses of correction played a crucial role in providing a moral underpinning for the new economic order. In the first phase of industrialism, work was by and large divorced from the problem it provoked. On the contrary, labour was seen as a general solution, "an infallible panacea" to all forms of poverty. This solution was generated not simply as a consequence of the economic lengths which ensued but by the moral "up-lift" which characterized work. This belief in the moral enchantment of work, moreover, was derived from and reinforced by the Bible: ever since Adam had eaten the apple, man had accepted labour both as a penance and as a means of redemption. Thus, the genesis of confinement was not simple economically determined, it was sustained by a moral perception. In proposing the house of correction as the means to render the poor useful, it was made quite clear that the cause of poverty was neither scarcity nor unemployment but rather the "weakening of discipline and relaxation of morals". (7)

The prisoner who could and would work was released not solely because he was useful to society again, but because he had accepted and now subscribed to the essential

(7) Foucault, (1967) op. cit. p.59
morality of work. Thus, in Plymouth, a "pious, sober, and discrete" schoolmaster was to be appointed whose tasks were to include leading prayers at a set time each morning and evening. Every Saturday afternoon and on holidays he was to address the assembled inmates, exhorting and instructing them "in the fundamental parts of the Protestant religion, according to the doctrine of the Church of England."\(^{(8)}\)

Prisons today are still sustained by this morality, although it has taken a slightly different form, and as penal institutions throughout the western world increasingly come under attack from both conservatives and liberals we must carefully consider the bases from which these attacks are launched. Such critics generally pose the question "Do prisons work?", answer "No", and proceed to look for ways of making them work. The prison reformists, for example, from John Howard onwards have assumed that the prison is not only an indisputable institution, but also, potentially at least, a good and useful one. We should therefore be concerned to emphasize at the very outset of this analysis of the development of a prisoner's movement in this country that merely to look at the general criticisms levelled against the present system of incarceration and conclude that prisons don't work is inadequate. Rather we must go on to argue that essentially it doesn't matter that prisons don't work, perhaps they were not designed to. Having examined the nature and extent of the apparent 'failure' of this country's prison system we should move on to pose

\(^{(8)}\) Foucault (1967) op. cit. p.61-62
the additional question "Are prisons useful?" that is, to whom and in what ways in an industrial capitalist society are prisons useful? It is in the response to this question that the significance of the rise of a prisoners' protest movement in recent years will become clear.
DO PRISONS WORK?

We have seen how in the earliest stages of industrial capitalism, because poverty was portrayed as being grounded not in scarcity or unemployment but in permissiveness, confinement came to be determined not simply by economic but, more crucially, by moral forces. Incarceration from its origins was thus characterised by efforts to instill physical and mental discipline, found primarily in the redeming influences of work. The purpose of the prison regime has altered little during the past two hundred and fifty years. In 1895, the Gladstone Committee reported that the object of imprisonment should be to send the prisoners out "better men and women physically and mentally than when they came in."\(^{(9)}\) The Criminal Justice Act of 1948 provided that:

"the purpose of training and treatment of convicted prisoners shall be to establish in them the will to lead a good and useful life on discharge, and to fit them to do so."\(^{(10)}\)

Almost word-for-word, Rule 1 of the present Prison Rules (1964: England and Wales) lays down that the "purpose of the training and treatment of convicted offenders shall be to encourage and assist them to lead a good and useful life."\(^{(11)}\)

\(^{(9)}\) quoted in Playfair and Singleton "Crime, Punishment and Cure" (London Secker and Warburg, 1965)

\(^{(10)}\) quoted in Playfair and Singleton (1965) op. cit.

Such aims have been faithfully mirrored by the penal reform organisations during the past fifty years and more. Each group has some vague aspirations towards treating prisoners as 'human beings', and somehow making rehabilitation the basis of the prison programme. Such a platform fits in comfortably with the official purposes of imprisonment, and the reform groups are even useful to the prison authorities when they produce schemes to make prison management easier, and contribute to the "good order and smooth running" of the institutions.

Apart from this overall, generalised aim, the prison system is seen to have a number of specific objectives, all intertwined and linked to this central moral precept. Such functions include the 'protection' of society, punishment, deterrence and rehabilitation. In discussing these aims, one must recognise the centrality of control and security, which is a derivative of the 'protection of society' argument. A former Director of the Prison service, William Pile, wrote:

"First, the aim is to hold those committed to custody. We can't escape this one."

But apparently some of the prisoners can, and when a man does escape, the obsession with security is clearly visible. The prison is immediately locked down and put under a state of internal seige, the press provide the clarion call for the man-hunt, and massive policy resources are deployed looking for the escapee. However, it is not only a break-out which
reveals the importance of security. Stan Cohen and Laurie Taylor have vividly described the reaction at Durham jail to the arrival of three of the Great Train Robbers. The preparations included "electronic surveillance, day run, armed guards, gas masks, and (according to one report) the siting of a machine-gun nest on the external wall" (12)

In November 1967, the troops were called in to guard these three men, and the "paranoid escalation" was crowned by the Chief Constable of Durham when he observed to a press conference that:

"I am satisfied that Goody's friends were prepared to launch something in the nature of a full-scale military attack, even to the extent of using tanks, bombs, and what the Army describes as limited atomic weapons. Once armoured vehicles had breached the main gates there would be nothing to stop them. A couple of tanks could easily have come through the streets of Durham unchallenged. Nothing is too extravagant." (13)

The notion that prisons exist to protect the outside society is both curious, and untenable. From those few surveys which have been carried out, (and bearing in mind their limitations), it is clear that we all commit crime. Crime is not by any stretch of the imagination the unique characteristic of the imprisoned. On the contrary, criminal activity would appear to be a 'normal' activity in this society. In the USA, the President's Crime Commission conducted a national survey in 1965 which found that 91 per cent of all adult Americans admitted that they had committed acts for which they might have received jail or prison sentences." Moreover, the massive law-enforcement


(13) Cohen and Taylor, (1972) op. cit. p.13
and penal agencies considerably exacerbate the criminality they are supposed to be controlling. Ramsay Clark has referred to prisons as "factories of crime."

"Jails and prisons in the United States today are more often than not the manufacturers of crime. Of those who came to jail undecided, capable either of criminal conduct or of lives free of crime, most are turned to crime." (14)

Clark also points out the fallacy of the nation that prisons afford long-term protection for the "rest" of the society. According to his statistical summaries roughly half of the people released from American gaols eventually return and more than eighty per cent of what Clark regards as "serious crime" is committed by 'repeaters' - by those with previous convictions. (15)

Similarly, in this country, prisons are commonly regarded as "universities of crime". In 1962, for example, Terence Morris wrote an article in "Twentieth Century" which began "Perhaps the biggest breeding-ground of British crime today is the British prison," and went on to argue that "there is little evidence of the effectiveness of prisons." Figures from the 1960 Report of the Central After Care Association bore his commentary out:

"... of the men discharged from corrective training since 1964, over 60% had been reconvicted by the end of 1960 - nearly 2 of them while under superisory after-care - of the men released from long-term sentences of preventive detention (5-14 years) over 60% had been reconvicted by the end of 1960 (and again nearly 3 of them while under supervision). 59 per cent of young prisoners discharged in 1954 and 58.8 per cent of those discharged from Borstal in that year have been reconvicted."(16)


(15) quoted in Gordon (1973) op. cit. p.167

(16) quoted in Peter Ford, "Prisons: A case for abolition," in 'Anarchy' 87
As well as casting doubts about the nature and extent of the protection that penal institutions afford society, such recidivist statistics undermine the deterrent function of prisons. The notion of deterrence is based on the idea that if certain acts are followed by a great deal of unpleasantness for the perpetrators, there is a strong probability that people will refrain from such acts. Such a view raises immediate problems. As Gary Wills has pointed out:

"If deterrence worked, the more people we had in prisons (thus the more teaching examples there were), the more would their lesson be conveyed across the walls. But today we have record numbers of men and women in prison, and a record crime rate — one growing not decreasing. Even if you grant all the questionably contentions of the deterrence theorists, you still have to add one incontractible fact at the end of their demonstration. The education has not educated. The deterrents have not deterred."

The notion of deterrence is untenable because it is predicated upon a view of crime which is palpably false. The decision to commit crime is generally not a 'rational' one, arrived at by weighing up in advance the consequences of an act. (And even in cases where that decision is made 'rationally', certainty rather than severity of punishment is likely to be a more important factor. Since most acts recorded in the crime statistics remain unsolved certainty of a crime being discovered does not exist). As Dr. Desmond Curran argues when dissenting from his fellow members to the Wolfenden Committee when they proposed that the maximum punishment for a paedohiliac homosexual

offences should be raised from two to ten years:

"I see little reason to suppose that the possibility of the maximum punishment of ten years as opposed to two years would have much, if indeed any, appreciable effect on deterrence. Only a small minority of the population know what is the maximum penalty for indecent assaults. Only a minute fraction of the population know their criminal statistics and what punishments are awarded; and if more did, they would know that the chances of getting more than two years for indecent assault would be small (about 1 in 10). Can it seriously be supposed that those who are guilty of indecent assault work out 'betting odds' of this kind before they indulge in their acts? And if they did, what deterrent effect would it be likely to have?" (18)

As well as doubting that imprisonment deters "law-abiding" citizens from committing crime, we have incidentally undermined the credibility of the idea that imprisonment deters the prisoner from further crime. Nigel Walker has argued further that, amongst other things, reconviction studies have shown that "other things being equal, the more previous convictions an offender has the more likely he is to be reconvicted", and "the more time he has spent in penal institutions on previous occasions the more likely he is to be reconvicted". (19) Walker's observations are borne out by the following table, based on data reproduced in "People in Prison", and showing "the number of Adult male prisoners who have been previously in various types of institutions (excluding those committed to prison on default of payments of fines)."


### PREVIOUS INSTITUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>1967</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No previous institutional experience</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved School</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>No information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detention Centre</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borstal Training</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a similar vein, the Statistical Report of the Work of the Prison Department (1974) reported the findings of a two-year follow-up of discharges from custody in 1970, which concluded that 65.2% of all borstal discharges, 53.6% of those released from detention centres, and 64.7% of prisoners under the age of 21 had been reconvicted within two years. *(21)*

The deterrent argument has always had a peculiar history: in the light of today's debates about the reintroduction of capital punishment as the "ultimate deterrent" against terrorism or the killing of a police officer, it is worth recalling that it was confidence in the reality of deterrence that led late eighteenth century English reformers to campaign against the death penalty. During the eighteenth century, the penalty structure had grown more harsh providing for the execution of large numbers of petty offenders. At the same time, the increasing popular reluctance to hang the petty thief led to consequences discussed by Dr. Johnson in 1751:


"... the greater part of mankind, as they can never think that to pick the pocket and to pierce the heart is equally criminal, will scarcely believe that two malefactors so different in guilt can be justly doomed to the same punishment ... till we mitigate the penalties for mere violations of property, information will always be hated, and prosecution dreaded." (22)

Victims declined to prosecute: juries refused to convict. Given that certainty of punishment was believed to be a more significant part of the deterrent threat than its severity, the low conviction rate which resulted from overly severe sentences was blamed for rising rates of crime. The reformists argued, therefore, that more lenient sentences would produce a higher conviction ratio and thus, ultimately, a fall in crime.

Punishment of the wrong-doer is usually presented as the primary 'raison d'être' of prisons. One of the oldest views on punishment is the Old Testament's "eye for an eye". It is a very basic idea: people must "pay" for their wrongdoing, and yield a payment which society exacts in the coinage of suffering, great or small, whether it be death, imprisonment, fine or whatever. This view of punishment is predicated upon the idea that no-one should "get away" with wrong-doing. Most people believe that the State has both the right and the obligation to punish violators of the law. If the law was to be brought seriously into disrepute by violations going unpunished many people believe that anarchy and chaos would necessarily follow. A man who is convicted must "pay his debt to society", and if pain

(22) Samuel Johnson, in 'The Rambler, No.114' (1751)
and suffering has been inflicted, an equivalent measure of pain and suffering must be exacted from the offender. Prison, therefore, was brought into existence as a place of punishment, geared to inflicting pain—mental if no longer physical. Prisons are designed deliberately to cause suffering: loss of liberty, family, income, friends. And as long as prisons have existed, there have been voices raised in protest against their being too soft. In 1831, a Gaoler remarked: "There has been a sort of ultra philanthropy towards prisoners, which has made them that they are the aggrieved party." In 1863, Lord Chief Justice Corkhum observed of the prison regime:

"Moderate labour, ample diet, substantial gratuities, with a remission of a fixed part of the punishment are hardly calculated to produce on the mind of the criminal that salutary dread of the recurrence of punishment that may be the means of deterring him."

"The Spectator" of 1877 wrote "The chief fault ... of our treatment of prisoners is probably that it is too lenient." Ninety years later, Mr. Duncan Sandys believed that "Prisons are becoming more and more like rest homes." For some people, however, this view of punishment appears uncomfortably too much like revenge. As one writer has observed:

"Thousands of adults and children are kept in custody at public expense partly for the gratification of a morbid wish that people should suffer."

To the notion that an offender must pay his debt, the reformists thus added the more palatable idea that such punishment might also improve the offender. At least at
the level of rhetoric, many modern penal administrators have come to consider are one of the most important functions of imprisonment to be "rehabilitation", which involves the improving of the defective individual so that he can be returned to the society to lead a good and useful life. (See, for example, the official aims of the Home Office Prison Department, quoted above).

The idea of "reforming" the criminal has, however, been in evidence from the very outset of confinement. Previously with so many offenders being executed, the question of their returning to crime didn't arise. But with the introduction of widespread imprisonment, the problem of recidivism had to be faced. In England and Wales, this problem seemed to be particularly acute, because existing practices were believed to actively encourage crime and the transmission of criminal knowledge and skills. With prison increasingly taking the place of the gallows, it became necessary to eliminate the influences of incarceration, and to take positive steps to rehabilitate criminals to the ranks of the law abiding. One of the drawbacks of the "Hulks" system in the 1830's had been recognised by a House of Commons select Committee sitting in 1785. The Committee realised that a convict sent to the Hulks was only temporarily out of sight:
"After expiration of sentences, convicts return into the mass of the community, not reformed in their principles, but confirmed in every vicious habit. No parish will receive them, and no person set them to work..."

The crisis in the British prison system created by the American War of Independence, and the interruption of transportation, provided the opportunity for the introduction of new ideas of reform. The Penitentiary Act of 1779, written by Howard and others, called for the creation of penal establishments whose aim would be:

"by sobriety, cleanliness and medical assistance, by a regular series of labour, by solitary confinement during the intervals of work and by due religious instruction to preserve and amend the health of the unhappy offenders to inure them to habits of industry, to guard them from pernicious company, to accustom them to serious reflection, and to teach them with the principles and practice of every Christian and moral duty."

Jeremy Bentham's views were similar, and endorsed in his proposed "Panoptican", described by Bentham himself as "as mill for grinding rogues honest." Through its architecture and internal organisation it was to provide the means by which "morals would be reformed, health preserved industry invigorated, instruction diffused, public burdens lightened ...". The prison reformists had few doubts that abstention from hard drinking, isolation from the contaminating influence of vice and debauchery and exposure to hard work and religion would produce a general repentance and change. Rehabilitation was believed to be compatible with the other functions of imprisonment that prison work was to be "of the hardest and most servile


(25) quoted in Greenberg (1974) op. cit. p.7
form" satisfied the demands of deterrence and retribution. (26)

We have already discussed the massive recidivism produced by the penal system, and accumulating evidence has made it clear that the outcomes of rehabilitative methods has been neither reformed prisoners nor a cut in the crime rate. Prisoners have found it no more advantageous to be considered "sick" than to be considered bad. It is of crucial significance that it is the prisoners themselves, burdened by rehabilitative penology, who are taking the initiative in forcing a re-examination of the goals of corrections.

The failure of British prisons is increasingly well-documented. But as the emerging prisoners movement in the USA, Scandinavia and this country have discovered it does not really matter that prisons do not work: fundamentally, they are not designed to. Thus, to argue that the reform of the offender can be better secured by "alternatives to imprisonment" is somewhat irrelevant. The time has come for a re-assessment of the penal reformists' position, and the view of imprisonment he adheres to. As David Gordon has pointed out, the liberal believes that improvements in crime prevention and the treatment of criminals would flow from a rationalization of the system of enforcement and administration of justice. What is needed is "more research, more analysis, more technology, more money, better administration, and more numerous professional personnel." (27)

(26) quoted in Greenberg (1974) op. cit. p.8
(27) David Gordon (1973) op. cit.
Thus, in America, the Commission on Violence concluded:
"We reiterate our previous recommendations that we double
our national investments in the criminal justice process..."

But this view of imprisonment is invalid: the debates
about "punishment", for example, have traditionally been
concluded as though punishment existed in its own right.

But as Rusche and Kircheimer have argued:

"Punishment as such does not exist: only concrete
systems of punishment and specific criminal practices
exist. The object of our investigation, therefore,
(should be) punishment in its specific manifestations,
the causes of its changes and developments, the
grounds for the choice or rejection of specific penal
methods in specific historical periods. The transformation
in penal systems cannot be explained only from changing
needs of the war against crime, although this struggle
does play a part. Every system of production tends
to discover punishments which correspond to productive
relationships. It is necessary to investigate the
origin and fate of penal systems, the use or avoidance
of specific punishments, and the intensity of penal
practices as they are determined by social forces
above all by economic forces and fiscal forces."(28)

Prisons have to be seen not as existing outside of
this society, but as an integral part of the control apparatus
of industrial capitalism. As Foucault has argued:

"the penal system in its entirety and ultimately
the entire moral system, both were the result of
a power relationship established by the bourgeoisie
and constituted an instrument for exercising and
maintaining that power." (29)

We need to address ourselves therefore to question "Are
prisons useful?", and to try to show to whom and in what
ways they have important role to play in this society.

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(28) Rusche and Kircheimer, "Punishment and Social Structure"
New York, Columbia University Press, 1939, p.3-7

(29) Foucault, "The Intellectuals and Power", in 'Telos'
ARE PRISONS USEFUL?

In discussing the development of KROM, the Norwegian prison reform group, Mathiesen has argued that so long as KROM remained an isolated and traditional academic group trying to influence the authorities through the accepted, legitimated channels, the prison department and relevant sections of the media remained rather indifferent. When, however, the association tried to make direct contact with prisoners, the authorities, the articulate public opinion, and the press reacted "angrily and deeply provoked." Mathiesen concluded that such contact between prisoners and the outside disturbs not only some of the important functions of imprisonment, but also some of the main features of the social system. In answering the question "Are Prisons Useful?", we will examine some of the social functions of imprisonment and their relationship to the wider social matrix.

SANITATION

In an industrial capitalist society, productivity is increasingly geared to activity in the labour market. At the same time, according to Mathiesen, the social structure "increasingly creates groups which are 'unproductive' according to this criterion." Such unproductive elements must be effectively disposed of not only because their

(30) Thomas Mathiesen, "Politics of Abolition" (London Martin Robertson, 1974) p.76
The following section follows the classification suggested by Mathiesen, p.76-78.
presence "creates inefficiency in the system of production," but also because they clearly reveal the inefficiencies and inequalities inherent in the capitalist mode of production. (31) One way to render such "waste" invisible is to criminalise their activities, and imprison them in social dustbins. The criminalising process has been viewed as some kind of machine, through which offenders pass to emerge eventually in the shape of such products as "the hardened criminal" or the "recidivist." (Foucault, for example, discovered that Attica is an "immense machine") (32)

In the early days of prison building it was widely believed that this machine would produce "socially useful and well-adjusted" virtuous men. Now, as we have already noted, even penal administrators are coming to see that there is no substance behind the rhetoric of rehabilitation. The machine does not help people to lead a "good and useful life", on the contrary the penal machine is as Foucault has observed, a mechanism of "circular elimination"

"Society eliminates by sending to prison people whom prison break up, crushes, physically eliminates, and then once they have been broken up, the prison eliminates them by 'freeing' them and sending them back to society, and there, their life in prison, the way in which they were treated, the state in which they come out insures that society will eliminate them once again, sending them to prison, which in turn... Attica is a machine for elimination, a form of prodigious stomach, a kidney which consumes, destroys, breaks up and then rejects, and which consumes in order to eliminate what is already eliminated." (33)

(31) Mathiesen (1974) op. cit. p.77
(32) Foucault, "On Attica", in 'Telos' Spring 1974, p.154-161
(33) Foucault (197) op. cit. p.155
The use of prison to eliminate "unproductive" members of the lower class has its own rationality, and is as Pearce has suggested, functional for maintaining the class structure in three distinct ways(34).

Firstly, "it strengthens the individualistic ideology." Criminals are viewed as failures in an open, competitive, hierarchical class system in which anybody can succeed. Their criminality is thus seen as a consequence of personal inadequacies/lack of discipline, etc.). This pathological explanation of criminality coupled with the individualistic treatment-oriented rehabilitation serves to mask the profoundly political character of the society's deliberate elimination of these people.

Secondly, "by defining them as non-citizens with no RIGHTS to employment, education, etc., the system's failure to provide these for them (independently of their criminality) is obscured."

Thirdly, the system can neutralize the 'unreproductives' potential for realising their own situation by criminalising their activities and consequently treating them as anti-social and amoral. Prison reinforces this process by making both the organisation and the development of a common understanding of their situation extremely difficult for the eliminated. This particular function is not limited to the penal institutions, increasingly, preventative activity is being conducted on the outside.

by both the police and welfare agencies. It is no longer a matter simply of elimination by confinement into prisons, but rather elimination and control is being extended right into the community, where people are scattered, isolated, and constituteless a class and more a mass of individuals.

The crucial importance of the sanitation function of imprisonment rests in its reinforcing the prevalent ideology that it is individuals not social institutions that are to blame for social problems, and for social failure it therefore serves to legitimise the basic institutions of capitalist society. By keeping the 'unproductive' out of sight, the prison provides an ideological veil to obscure the brutal consequences of our productive process.
DISTRACTION

The distracting function of imprisonment operates on two specific levels. On the one hand, the massive incarceration of petty offenders from the lower-class (over 90% of the present prison population is from the working class) diverts attention away from the criminality of the rule-makers. In summarising what limited research has been done in this field, Pearce has concluded that:

"It appears, then, that the most economically significant crises are the least publicised, investigated, and punished ... capitalist societies do not even abide by their own criteria of reasonableness."(35)

His verdict was fully substantiated by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, whose studies indicated that the economic losses caused by the crimes of the capitalists "are far greater than those caused by the three index crimes against property."

On the other hand, the punishment of lower-class offenders serves to distract attention away from acts which are exceedingly more harmful to the population at large, but which are not criminalized. As Mathiesen has argued "acts dangerous to fellow human beings are increasingly being committed. Largely, however, these acts are committed by individuals and classes with considerable power in society."(36)

(36) Mathiesen (1974) op. cit. p.77-78
Tony Platt has argued that one of the foremost requirements is a "redefinition of subject matter, concerns and commitments. In the past we have been contrained by a legal definition of crime which restricts us to studying and ultimately controlling only legally defined 'criminals." (37)

As Taylor Walton and Young noted, there has been an increasing amount of "exposé" work in recent years, designed to show up the inadequacies of the present legal and penal systems. They have argued that although such activity is useful in "demasking the crime-free facade of the ruling class, and in pointing to inequalities in apprehension, definition and punishment", it has very serious limitations. Particularly, it is based upon "mindless, atheoretical and moral indignation", which expresses real or feigned amazement at the double standards of the ruling class. Such exposes moreover are tied to the positivist traditions of criminological research. The legal order is taken very much for granted, the legitimacy of the powerful over the powerless is never challenged. Little attention is directed towards questions about why law exists. Concern is expressed about the equality of the system, rather than about whether such a system should exist in the first place. (38)


(38) Taylor, Walton, Young "Critical Criminology in Britain: Review and Prospects", in 'Critical Criminology', (London RKP., 1975) p.29-33
Most importantly, "exposes" of ruling class crime or "miniscariages of justice" are presented as exceptional cases rather than as "regularized activities which can only be removed by more fundamental and radical change. To take but one example. On 4 May 1975, a march was held in London to protest against the imprisonment of George Davis, sentenced to twenty years for a crime it was claimed he did not commit. The leaflet produced to publicise the case and the march argued that "British Justice is not perfect ... sometimes innocent men face our courts and are found guilty ... George Davis is one of these men." The pamphlet concludes "With your help we can free this innocent man ... and restore some of the faith we all have in British Justice ... George Davis must be freed for his family, for himself and for British Justice."

Similarly, the distracting function of imprisonment serves to present crimes of the powerful as isolated cases rather than as a "normal" activity of capitalist society.

The Poulson case in this country was largely presented in these terms. That Poulson was prosecuted at all was perhaps, as Sueegy has argued, because the state may be pressurized to prosecute the wealthy if:

"their criminal practices become so egregiously offensive that their victims may move to overthrow the system itself. In those cases, the State may punish individual members of the class in order to protect the interests of the entire class." (39)

One such celebrated case in the USA was the "Great Electrical Industry case" of 1961, referred to as "the biggest criminal case in the history of the Sherman Act." The charge was conspiracy to fix prices, rig bids, and divide markets in a series of secret cartels on electrical equipment valued at $1.75 billion annually. The conspiracies dated back at least to 1939, and according to some observers to 1896. But what attracted special attention was the unusualness of jailing twenty-four of the defendants. However, most of the sentences were suspended, and short (around thirty days! - the usual police-court sentence for disorderly conduct).

Such cases provide ample evidence of the regularized double-standards of the criminal and penal system. Other examples abound. According to the "Guardian" report (18th October 1973), a solicitor, aged 50, was ordered to pay debts of over £1 million at a bankruptcy hearing. He was given 4,704 years to get out of debt at a repayment rate of £5 per week. The solicitor promised "to increase his rule of payment when his circumstances change." As Taylor, Walton and Young, pointed out, such a decision has to be understood against the background of "a society which will constantly imprison working class defaulters for debt for amounts of £50 or less." Some twenty per cent of all receptions into prison that year were for default of fines, and over 2,000 maintenance defaulters were fined.

(40) Frank Pearce (1973) op. cit. p.27
(41) Taylor, Walton, Young (1975) op. cit. p.31-32
Such distinctions between offenders from different class backgrounds are an everyday occurrence in criminal prosecution and punishment. To take two cases, both of which appear in the Guineas Book of Records.

The Great Train Robbery of £2,595,998, for which those involved received massive sentences of up to thirty years, seems peculiarly amaturish compared to a couple of "City gents" who stole £12,707,726 over a period of twelve years, and were sentenced to four and five years respectively. Of course, the double standards also operate to protect powerful people from prosecution. A former Recorder of Bristol, who had underpaid income tax by several thousands of pounds was not indicted, on the grounds that a criminal prosecution might undermine the confidence of the public in the judiciary. (42)

Again, class differences are clearly visible in the prosecution and punishment of income tax and death duty evasion, and fraudulent social security claims. Adam Raphael found that between 1972-1973 there were only 17 prosecutions in Britain for income tax fraud (as against some 70,000 cases settled without prosecution). There were over 12,000 prosecutions by the DHSS in the same period for fraudulent claims by working class clients. Raphael pointed out that the amount recovered from the DHSS cases was less than 15% of that recovered by the Inland Revenue in its 17 prosecutions.

(42) Taylor, Walton, Young (1975) op. cit. p.31
Similarly, there were 1,240 recorded cases of death duty evasion between 1960 and 1970, and in only five was any action taken. (43)

Such use of imprisonment also serves to distract attention away from these laws which are designed to afford some limited protection to industrial workers but which are rarely enforced. It should be pointed out that such regulations as exist are very narrow, some six million people in this country presently work in places not covered by statutory safety standards. And even where such standards are laid down, they are officially disregarded. Thus, Chapman has shown that although many local authorities have by-laws designed to make window-cleaning safe for window cleaners, and for the general public in the street, including prescribing for the use of ladders, cradles, safety belts, etc., many new buildings have been erected without any safety provisions whatsoever. (44) In 1964, a survey showed that there were only 1,242 convictions for infringements of safety regulations, with an average fine of £38. In the same year, some 2,000 workers lost their lives as a result of industrial injuries and the number of reported accidents rose by 31%. With almost monotonous regularity, Her Majesty's Inspector of factories notes that "the accidents were mostly avoidable by known and tried methods of accident prevention" (1964), and "Perhaps the greatest obstacle in the way of future improvements is the sheer

(43) Adam Raphael, 'The Guardian', 17 December 1973
indifference of some companies to the safety of their workers" (1971)

But as well as serving to distract attention away from the criminal activities of the powerful, imprisonment of predominantly working class offenders also serves to distract attention away from acts which are particularly harmful and dangerous, but which are either not criminalized or which are subject to extremely limited, and rarely enacted legislation. In a discussion of crime and the wealthy, Lundberg lists over two dozen 'crimes' committed mostly by the propertised and the wealthy in the NORMAL course of running their businesses. The offences listed include embezzlement; restraint of trade; misrepresentation in advertising and in the sale of securities; infringements of patents, trademarks, and copyrights; industrial espionage; violation of trust; secret relation and kiklocks; misleading balance sheets; false claims; use of substandard materials; price fixing, and rigging markets.

The important point to emphasise is that such activities should not be viewed with some sort of moral indignation. On the contrary, they represent essential and routine practices in capitalist society. Rather than feeling outraged or cheated we should agree with one of the defendants in the Great Electrical Industry conspiracy (mentioned above) who argued in his defence:

"It's the only way a business can run. It's free enterprise." (46)


(46) quoted in Lundberg (1969) op. cit. p. 96
Similarly, when looking at some of the Watergate revelations, we should not be surprised at what the various grand juries and congressional hearings revealed. On the contrary, what was most fascinating was the surprise and indignation of many of the conspirators that their activities should be challenged. Thus former Attorney-General, John Mitchell, recently convicted on a number of accounts in the Watergate affair, said under testimony, "I have never stolen any money. I did nothing mentally or morally wrong." Similarly Ronald Reagan, Governor of California has argued that "criminal" is too harsh a word to describe those involved in Watergate. He suggested that these men are not "criminals at heart", but rather "well-meaning individuals."

Again, we should not be shocked by the methods used to raise Nixon's campaign finds: his methods were fairly standard political practice.

Thus, Robert Allen, a Texas oilman, donated 100,000 dollars to the campaign. One of Allen's companies was being pressed to install new and expensive equipments to control pollution by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). On receiving the donation, the EPA pressure was immediately lifted. Three days after the American Milk Producers Incorporated, a cooperative with more than 30,000 member farmers, contributed over 750,000 dollars to the re-election fund, the Nixon administration raised government milk support prices. An equally common practice was the appointment

(47) quoted in Mike Fitzgerald "The Crimes of the Powerful" (unpublished) 1975. p.2
(48) quoted in Mike Fitzgerald (1975) op. cit. p.3
of Ambassadors based on political favours. Ruth Farkas paid 300,000 dollars to the funds, and Ruth was made Ambassador to Luxemburg; Walter Arnenberg continued on as ambassador in London for Nixon's second term, after paying 254,000 dollars to the campaign funds. Rather than expressing horror or dismay, we should be concerned to use such examples of institutionalised business and political practices as indicators of the type of society in which we live. Instead of indulging in moral outrage, we should be concerned to recognise and to demonstrate to others that such practices can only be eradicated by fundamental economic, political and social change.

A final role of the 'distracting' function of imprisonment is that certain acts which are criminal to most people, are not even regarded as illegal. What is needed, as Tony Platt has argued, is a definition of crime which

"reflects the reality of a legal system based on power and privilege, (for) to accept the legal definition of crime is to accept the fiction of neutral law." (50)

Mathiesen has similarly held that there should be no doubt that pollution, exploitation, forms of production which ruin the standard of living of the working class, are "acts for which the most powerful members of society are in the last analysis responsible." (51) We should be concerned to shift the focus of discussion about crime away from the working class petty offender and towards an examination of

(49) quoted in Mike Fitzgerald (1975) op. cit. p.11
(50) Tony Platt (1974) op. cit. p.5
(51) Thomas Mathiesen (1974) op. cit. p.77-78
imperialism, racism and other systems of exploitation which contribute to human misery and deprive people of their human potentiality. Only by conducting such research can we hope to counteract the distracting function of imprisonment which as long as it is allowed to remain, will continue to re-legitimate the existing social order and social institutions.
SYMBOLIC FUNCTION:

We saw at the beginning of this chapter how the values and images attached to the figure of the leper doubtlessly outlived the leper houses, and became attached to the poor, vagabonds, criminals and 'deranged minds.' That is, imprisonment came to represent the same values and images as the leper houses. The prison came to represent all that is "bad" and "evil". It is no coincidence that the first prisons in France were actually located in the former leper colonies, because prisoners came to symbolize the same values attached to the leper, the "untouchable". Symbolically, prisons represent most visibly the conquest of "good" over "evil", of "right" over "wrong", and have been invested with a carefully maintained aura of mystery and terror, which was meant to deter people from challenging the legal order.

David Rothman has argued that in America, the asylum appeared at a moment in history when traditional ideas and practices appeared outmoded. The asylum came to represent a way of assuming the cohesion of the community at a time when the emerging nation was trying to work out the problem of the colonial legacy. In a revulsion against the chaos of Jacksonian democracy, the lost virtues of colonial order could be re-instituted. Such virtues were invested in both the asylum and the prisons which were conceived and designed by "moral architecture" to ensure a sense of order.
and hierarchy. The internal order of the prison was developed not merely to maintain stability within the institution, but also as a reflection of the hierarchical relations, and the system of rewards and punishments that characterized emerging industrial capitalism. Symbolically, prisons have come to have a three-fold ideological and political importance: firstly, to socialize the confined population into submissive acceptance of hierarchical divisions, secondly, to deter potential challengers of the social order on the outside with a social metaphor that is at once terrible and recognizable, thirdly, to perpetuate control over the institutions themselves by an established and readily identifiable power structure.

In one of the few studies of prison architecture, Norman Johnston has drawn on an encyclopaedia article of 1826 to emphasise this symbolic function of imprisonment:

"The style of architecture of a prison is a matter of no slight importance. If offers an effectual method of exciting the imagination to a most desirable point of abhorrence. Persons, in general, refer their horror of prisons to an instinctive feeling rather than to any accurate knowledge of the privations or inflictions therein endured. And whoever remarks the forcible operation of such antipathies in the vulgar will not neglect any means, however minute, of directing them to a good purpose. The exterior of a prison should, therefore, be formed in the heavy and sombre style which most frequently impresses the spectator with gloom and terror." (53)

Prior to this, in 1785, Francesco Milizia, in his "Principi di architettura civile," had set forth the now familiar principle that the form of a prison must go


along with its purpose. Melancholy should be seen in the civil prisons. In the institutions for more senior offenders, the style should be heavier; "... high and thick walls with savage-like appendages which throw forth the most horrible shadows", "uninviting and cavern-like entrances" and "frightful inscriptions." Everything must impose "darkness, threatening, ruins, terror." (54)

Johnston himself concludes that the history of prison architecture:

"stands as a discouraging testament of our sometimes intentional, sometimes accidental degradation of our fellow man. Prison structures have continued to be built in a way which manages by one means or another to brutalize their occupants and to deprive them of their privacy, dignity, and self-esteem." (55)

Prison still holds that symbolic function. As Ron Philips has argued,

"For more than a hundred years, today's massive smoke-blackened walls have brooded over their surrounding landscape of terraced houses, existing not only to prevent the escape of those inside, but perhaps more importantly to invest the institution with a carefully maintained air of mystery and terror, which entered deeply into the proletarian consciousness." (56)

Angela Davis has supported and developed this enunciation of the social metaphor that is prison:

"The penitentiary was projected as the locale for doing penance as an offence against society, the physical and spiritual purging of proclivities to challenge rules and regulations which command total obedience. While cloaking itself with the bourgeois area of universality imprisonment was supposed to cut across all class domination; the institution has in reality operated as a means of prohibiting the have-nots from encroaching upon the haves." (57)

(54) Norman Johnston (1973) op. cit. p.27
(55) Norman Johnston (1973) op. cit. p.54
(57) Angela Davis "If They Come In The Morning" (London, Orbach and Cahmbers 1971) p.34
CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In his analysis of the forms and extent of resistance amongst black slaves in the Southern states of North America, Genovese has argued that,

"In modern societies, at least, the theoretical and moral foundations of the legal order and the actual, specific history of its ideas and institutions influence, step by step, the wider social order and the system of class rule, for no class in the modern Western world could rule for long without some ability to present itself as the guardian of the interests and sentiments of those being ruled." (58)

Each ruling class, that is, must institutionalise fundamental class antagonism by gaining the assent to rule of those it exploits. Necessarily, it has at some time to confront the problem of coercion in such a way as to minimise the necessity for its use, and "disguise the extent to which state power does not so much rest on force as represent its actuality." The law and the legal system, in which imprisonment plays a crucial role, is not merely an expression of class interest. Rather, it is a mechanism by which the most powerful group within the ruling class imposes its viewpoint upon the class as a whole, and guides and educates the masses.

The significance of the penal system lies in the fact that prison is one place where this state authority is not masked, it is not mediated, nor does it hide. Rather, by manifesting itself nakedly in the society's system of

imprisonment, such authority reveals the essential hegemonic function of law, and its own exploitative and repressive class basis.

For too long, orthodox left-wing political groups have either ignored or been hostile towards those portrayed as on the 'margins' of industrial, capitalist society. The Left, particularly in this country has been reluctant to move beyond its traditional, insistent focus on the building of the working class movement, and embrace the struggles of minority groups, such as prisons, mental patients, gay liberation. Foucault has identified three major reasons why the prisoners' struggle has largely been seen as outside to the proletarian struggle.

Firstly, many of the people generally involved with the prisons are, to a large extent, outside of the 'normal' working class sphere - particularly the factories. Related to this, it is only very recently that prisoners' opposition to the capitalist state has begun to take the form of collectivised organised demonstrations and strikes designed to bring economic pressure to bear on the authorities. Secondly, the prison fraternity has frequently been used against the organised working class, most notably as strike breakers. In 1973, for example, inmates at Coldingly prison were being given laundry work from hospitals whose workers were on strike for better pay and conditions. The strike was ultimately broken. Finally, both the working
class and the prison population have "largely been imbued with the bourgeoise ideology concerning morality and legality, theft and crime." (59)

The emergence of organised prisoners' movements in the USA, Scandinavia, Western Europe and Britain has provided the possibility of realigning the prison population with the outside working class, the class to which most prisoners belong, and with which they have most interest in common. The impetus for this shift, it must be understood, has come less from the orthodox left and predominantly from the prisoners' organisations. Particularly in this country, the development of a prisoners' 'union' has been a visible response to existing prison conditions rather than to any ideological and politicising activity undertaken by left-wing groups. But it is vital to realise that to hold out the possibility of the realisation of organised groups such as prisoners is not to argue, as many have, that these groups, collectively or individually are, or might become the new vanguard for revolutionary change. It is however, to suggest that the traditional relationship between established working class movements and these groups is in the process of being re-defined to bring them closer together. This thesis looks at how and why this is beginning to happen within the prisons.

(59) Foucault, (1974) op. cit. p.160-161
Chapter 2

British Penal Policy: past developments and the shape of things to come.
On the 24 July 1974, Tom Ellis M.P., in a written question, asked the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, when the control units referred to by Mr. Carr, the previous Home Secretary, would come into operation. He was told that the unit at Wakefield was to open, on an experimental basis on 1st August. No date had been fixed for the opening of the one at Wormwood Scrubs. The first public discussion of these control units came only at the beginning of October, following an "Insight" investigation by the Sunday Times. The paper argued, incorrectly I believe, that the existence of these experimental units had been kept secret, that the Units were "far tougher than any other prison institution", and represented a "new departure in British prison practice".

According to a confidential document of the Prison Department which formed the basis of the "Sunday Times" "Insight", the control units were designed to provide a strict regime "where the facilities are deliberately austere", and the organisation so structured that the troublemaker would "come to realise" that only by co-operation with the prison staff could he regain his normal privileges. The control units would take men from other prisons to provide what the Home Office referred to as "temporary relief" from disruption. However, the document went on to make it clear that relief was anything but temporary. For, the minimum amount of time a man would spend in the control unit was

1 HANSARD, 24 JULY 1974, p.492
2 SUNDAY TIMES, "INSIGHT", 6 October 1974
six months - divided into two phases, each of 90 days. The first 90 days represented the "basic phase", during which the prisoner would be held in solitary confinement for twenty three hours a day - the remaining hour being for two half-hour exercise periods. Normal contact with the staff - for meals, "slopping-out", etc. - would be reduced to a minimum and personal facilities severely limited. Prisoners would not be compelled to work, but the document made it quite clear that prisoners who didn't agree to sew mailbags would not even begin to qualify for the second phase, so would serve the first phase indefinitely.

If at any time the prisoner was seen to misbehave - if he stopped working, for example, broke things in his cell, or was disrespectful to an officer - he would revert automatically and immediately to day one. Only after 90 days of "good behaviour" would he be eligible to go on to the second phase - the "associative phase" - which included mixing with other prisoners in the unit for work and leisure. There were to be regular tests of his readiness to co-operate with the prison staff. Again, if at any stage in this second phase the inmate was seen to have misbehaved or been unresponsive, then he would begin day one in phase one all over again. Only after 180 days of continuous good behaviour and work was the prisoner allowed back into the normal prison routine.

Reaction to these revelations about the units can be roughly classified into three: the conservative, the liberal, and the radical. The conservative response was in evidence from the very beginning, and is clearly visible in the tone
and style of the original question to Mr. Carr which brought the announcement about the setting up of the units.

Mr. Hayhoe, M.P., asked Robert Carr:

"if he is yet in a position to announce the outcome of his review of ways and means in improving techniques and facilities in prisons for containing violent and dangerous men." 3

Mr. Carr replied that he had decided to take steps which included the setting up to two control units whose purpose would be:

"to provide a strict regime for the control of intractable troublemakers whose behaviour has been found seriously and persistently to disrupt prisons which have to contain them. The object will be not to keep such prisoners in these units permanently but to return them as soon as can be justified to normal prison life. Placement in these units and discharge from them will be a central responsibility. When these two units are in operation I shall consider whether there is need for a third." 4

One of the assumptions of both Carr and Hayhoe is that there are a few, easily identifiable, men and women in our penal institutions who cause most of the trouble, and pose the most significant threat to the 'good-order' and smooth running of the institution. The converse idea is that with the removal of this small minority, the rest of the prison population would quite contentedly get on and serve their time. Its the old philosophy of the few 'rotten' or 'stinking' apples in an otherwise O.K. barrel.

The response of the interested liberal elements was to concern itself with specific abuses in the system rather than looking at the nature of the system itself. Thus, Pat Hewitt,

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3 HANSARD, 12 MAY 1973, p.215-6
4 HANSARD, (1973) op.cit. p.215-6
Secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties, pointed out in a letter to 'The Times' that:

"Extended periods of isolation and the fear that a fixed term will become endless is a form of ill-treatment so dangerous to physical and mental health that it almost certainly falls within the category of 'inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment' outlawed by the European Convention on Human Rights, to which this country is a signatory. It is a policy which should never be allowed in a country which still takes pride in the quality of its justice."  

Again, according to the "Sunday Times", what especially worried lawyers and penal specialists they contacted was that prisoners had no right of appeal against allocation to the control unit. Indeed, there was no due process at all. But this worry can be expressed about all aspects of prison life, particularly the internal disciplinary proceedings. In the internal disciplinary courts a prisoner is not allowed to call witnesses, is not allowed legal aid or advice, and cannot appeal against the sentence of those sitting in judgement. The liberal reformists seem to have no understanding of the fact that the administration of British penal institutions is well-protected by deliberate design from outside interference, and that the control units are merely another step in this well-trodden direction. To protest specifically about the abuse of due process within control unit allocation is almost irrelevant within a system that pays no respect to due-process in any of its dealings and merely serves to illustrate the liberals' concern, to identify and isolate abuses within the present system, rather than looking at the nature and seeking to explain the functions of these arrangements.

The radical response included an attempt to locate control units within the context of British penal policy as it has

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5 'TIMES', 12 OCTOBER 1974, p.13
developed during the past ten years in particular and the last 150 years in general. There was a concern to locate the introduction of the control units against a background of increasingly well-organised and articulated prisoners' protests. As we shall see the summer of 1972 witnessed over one hundred collective protests by prisoners, publicised by an outside organisation (PROP) and including the first-ever national gaol strike on 4 August, involving some ten thousand prisoners in thirty penal institutions. The control units must be viewed as only one part—albeit an important part—of the most general system of repression which has been developed not only in the prisons, but in the wider society during the past ten or fifteen years. In this section, I will argue that the control units represent not a new departure, but a logical extension of penal policy in this country. I will examine particular features of both this policy and the context in which it has emerged, and then move on to outline the present trends of imprisonment and their implications for the incarcerated.

INCREASING SIZE OF THE PRISON POPULATION

As can be seen from the Home Office graph reproduced below, the prison population has increased quite dramatically during the past ten years. In its original estimates, the Home Office anticipated over 67,000 people in penal institutions at any one time by the end of the 1970s. Although this figure has been revised down, following a temporary stalling of the increase, the probation officers' association, in the summer of 1975, are voicing fears that the numbers would reach well
over 42,000 by the end of the year. The Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, had already said it would "approach the intolerable" if this figure was reached.

Graph Showing the Receptions(1) and Average Populations in Prisons, Borstals and Detention Centres(2) in each of the years 1920 to 1971.

The average daily prison population in England and Wales in 1972 was 38,328. It is these figures, together with the

6 'TIMES', 4 AUGUST 1975, p.1
7 "REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE PRISON DEPARTMENT, 1971, STATISTICAL TABLES" /"HMSO Cmd 5156 7
8 "REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE PRISON DEPARTMENT" (1972) /"HMSO Cmd 5375 7
original prison building programme of £110 million (before the recent cutbacks) over the next five years, which cast doubt on the Prison Departments' rhetoric about finding 'alternatives to prison'.

From the point of view of the emerging prisoners' union, the increase in the prison population has a number of important consequences. Firstly, the escalating numbers have placed enormous extra demands on the prison officers, already, by their own definition, seriously understaffed. In 1970, for example, the net growth in the size of the prison officer class fell short of the target of 750 by some 350.9 It should be remembered that penal institutions are "labour intensive", according to the 1969 White Paper 'People in Prison'; the total staff now approaches 19,000, and their salaries and wages account for over half the total cost of the prison service.

Secondly, the number of people remanded in custody awaiting trial or sentencing has also increased. In 1972, accused persons remanded in custody awaiting trial numbered 44,501 (31% of all prison receptions) of whom 2,186 were found 'not guilty' when tried. In addition, 15,648 (35%) people were given non-custodial sentences on conviction. Of the 23,885 convicted, but held in custody awaiting sentence, half were in the event, not given a prison sentence.10 The length of time spent in custody awaiting trial is also increasing. A former Conservative Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham, has expressed some concern about the waiting period: "In spite of new courts and new judges, the backlog of cases

9 "REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE PRISON DEPARTMENT" (1972) op.cit.
10 "REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE PRISON DEPARTMENT" (1972) op.cit.
awaiting trial in London is still growing at an alarming rate". Described in the "Men in Prison" section, the conditions in which remand prisoners are held are often worse than those for convicted prisoners. The majority are locked up two or three to a cell. The significance of this is that the remand prisoners were amongst the first visible supporters of the newly formed prisoners' union. They were also the group who inspired them to militant action by holding out in the face of great provocation and hostility to wring concessions from the penal authorities. On an individual level, a number of men who figured prominently in those strikes by remanded inmates were subsequently convicted and transferred to other institutions where they immediately began to help organise similar protests.

Thirdly, the escalation of the prison population has meant that overcrowding has become the classic feature of many British prisons - particularly in the remand and local ones. Over a third of the present prison population is housed two or three to a cell designed to hold one person. Whilst the Home Office Research Unit has as usual served its political master by producing evidence to show the "beneficial effects" of overcrowding (see, for example, a review of the work of Dr. Dorothy Speed in the 'Sunday Times' of October 1973), there can be no doubt that such conditions lead to a significant reduction in exercise, visiting, association and recreational facilities. At the same time, the Home Office is closing down a number of 'open' prisons for alleged lack of custom. Such a paradox added much fuel to the smouldering dissatisfaction felt by prisoners in 1972.
INCREASE IN THE LENGTH OF SENTENCES

The average length of sentences imposed on convicted prisoners rose from 130.9 in 1971, to 131.4 in 1972, based on an index of 100 in 1968. In 1970, the prisons held 225 men serving sentences of ten years and 218 serving more than ten years. The number of 'lifers' has also risen dramatically, particularly since the abolition of the death penalty. In 1971, there were 770 people incarcerated at Her Majesty's pleasure, compared with 89 in 1955. More importantly, the average length of time served by lifers has also risen sharply. At the end of 1968, the number of lifers who had served over nine years was forty-seven, at the end of 1969 it was fifty-nine, by the end of 1970 it was seventy-one, and by the end of 1971 it had increased to eighty-five, of whom sixteen had served more than thirteen years. At the beginning of 1973, the Criminal Law Revision Committee on the Penalty for Murder showed that in August 1972, nearly 100 of 896 life-sentence prisoners had served nine years or more.

Stan Cohen and Laurie Taylor have argued that the probability of 'life' meaning more than nine years has been formalized by the increasing tendency of judges to "incorporate in their sentences 'recommendations' for a minimum term of anything up to thirty years". Mr. Justice Chapman, in October 1971, sentencing two men to life imprisonment for murdering a police detective, recommended that one should be kept for twenty-five years and the other till he died: "My recommendation to the Home Secretary will be that those

11 COHEN, S and TAYLOR, L, "PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVIVAL: THE EXPERIENCE OF LONG-TERM IMPRISONMENT"/HARMONDSWORTH. PENGUIN BOOKS 1972_7 p.15
12 COHEN, S and TAYLOR, L. (1972) op.cit. p.16
dreadful words I have just used should have their awful, dreadful meaning. In other words, life should mean life". It was the first time that a trial judge had officially recommended that a man should be held for the rest of his life. As Cohen and Taylor point out, the Home Office has already stated that, whilst such recommendations are not binding, they "will be given the fullest weight". The statute which abolished capital punishment also provided for the Lord Chief Justice to be consulted about the release of a lifer, and for the views of the trial judge to be obtained if they are available.

At the same time that life sentences are getting larger, so the number of fixed long sentences of fourteen years or more is increasing; between 1964-8, over fifty men were sentenced to such long terms (including seven sentences of 21-25 years, and another seven of thirty years). Prisons in this country, therefore, contain an increasingly large proportion of people serving over fifteen years. The POA have already expressed grave fears about the presence of such a large group with "nothing to lose attitudes" for whom remission for good behaviour, and the possibility of parole, are even more irrelevant and remote. With the continuing abolition of capital punishment, the increase of what is presented as organised and professional crime, and the escalation of direct political offensives against the English ruling class, there should be no doubt that the time to be served by both the lifers and the fixed long-timers will steadily increase. It should be pointed out, however,

\footnote{COHEN, S. AND TAYLOR, L. (1972) op.cit. p.17}
that, from the point of view of the prisoners' union, there is no evidence to suggest that it was these "few", "hard-core", "desperate" people who whipped up the trouble in 1972. On the contrary, such people as a group do not appear to have played a leading role in the organised protests.

THE MOUNTBATTEN REPORT

The importance of the Mountbatten Report lies in the halting of what was perceived as the 'treatment' trend in British penal institutions. The immediate consequence of the Report was an obsession with physical security and overt control, which as we shall see, had a direct influence upon events at Parkhurst, culminating in the 'riot' of 1969.

This enquiry into prison security was set up following a series of sensational and politically embarrassing escapes by top-security prisoners. Between 1955 and 1964, the number of escapes and attempted escapes (expressed per 1,000 prisoners) rose from 35.8 to 72.0. An added feature of the escape bids of the early 1960s was the breaking into prisons by outsiders to aid the escape. In August 1964, for example, a group of men broke into Winson Green jail in Birmingham and freed Charles Wilson, serving thirty years for his part in the Great Train Robbery. In July 1965, Ronald Biggs, another train robber, escaped from Wandsworth, London, again aided by outsiders, (Biggs has still be recaptured). A year later, five men escaped from Wormwood Scrubs, and in October 1966, George Blake, a master spy sentenced to forty years, broke out. Politically, this was the most important of the series, and the most embarrassing.


15 THOMAS, J.E. "THE ENGLISH PRISON OFFICER'Since 1850" / LONDON HKP 1972 p.213-14
The immediate government response was the setting up of an enquiry into prison security under Lord Mountbatten. For the prison officers, it represented a massive blow. The major criteria of their 'success' is the maintenance of internal order, and the prevention of escapes. The inability of the prison staff to perform their most basic task had already been publicly underlined during 1965, and early 1966, when a number of measures designed to improve security were instituted or extended. These included the use of armed police to guard Leicester, and of the army at Durham.

The importance of the Mountbatten Report then is that it visibly represented a shift from "treatment", back to rigid control and security. For the prison officers, it was exactly what they wanted. They had helped to fire the increasing public concern about the 'state of the prisons' through constant "exposures" of alleged defects in the system. The POA carefully presented the escapes as a direct outcome of the loss of control by the uniformed staff, and were quick to locate and identify the sources (as they saw them) of this loss. They argued that too much freedom had been given to the prisoner, particularly as a consequence of increased association and recreation. The intrusion of social workers and others had disrupted the friendly, informal relationships which the POA claimed had existed between officer and inmate. As Castell, General Secretary of the POA put it, the officer had been combining the custodial and rehabilitative jobs for years - with great success.16 Social workers and other professionals "find it difficult to get down to the level of the ordinary prisoner

16 CASTELL, F.G. "THE PRISON OFFICER TODAY: TURNKEY OR SOCIAL WORKER?", "Cambridge Opinion", number 38, (JUNE 1964)
and really talk to him". A third source of this loss of control, the POA claimed, was the system of privileges, particularly automatic remission, which had been developed. According to the prison officers, the value of privileges as incentives to "good behaviour" and "hard work" was lost.

Mountbatten reinforced the POA's arguments by re-establishing the pre-eminence of control and security (if, indeed, it had ever been lost!). Most importantly, the Report provided a four-fold classificatory system for prisoners, in terms of "security risk", which has provided for a massive increase in classification and segregation in British prisons.

**INCREASE IN SEGREGATION AND USE OF CLASSIFICATION**

Because Mountbatten's recommendation that ALL top security prisoners be detained in the single "Alcatraz-type" institution has so far been rejected by the Home Office (who accepted the advice of the Radzinowicz Report, 1968), it is widely assumed that there has been little or no increase in the segregation and classification of prisoners in this country. As Stan Cohen has pointed out, considerable segregation is already an important feature of penal institutions, being achieved primarily through three policies.\(^{17}\)

Firstly, the formal categorisation of prisoners in terms of danger and security risk. Mountbatten had set up four categories for the prison population.

- **Category A:** Those whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or the police or the security of the State.
- **Category B:** Those prisoners for whom the very

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highest conditions of security are not necessary, but for whom escape must be made very difficult.

Category C: Prisoners who cannot be trusted in open conditions, but who do not have the ability or the resources to make a determined escape attempt.

Category D: Prisoners who can be trusted in open conditions.

Of particular importance is the existence of the top-security Category A group who are subjected to severe and special deprivations. 18

Secondly, there has been the setting up of concentrated separate institutions, of which the control units are the latest. Previous attempts include C-Wing at Parkhurst, following the 1969 trouble, and the security wings which existed before Mountbatten. The Report itself saw these as, "in my view no more than a temporary expedient. The conditions in these blocks are such that no country with a record of civilised behaviour ought to tolerate any longer than is absolutely essential as a stop-gap measure". 19

These wings, not surprisingly, continue to exist, for example at Leicester and Durham (although the latter has been re-vamped as a special unit for top-security women prisoners).

More recently, in May 1973, the Home Secretary, Robert Carr, announced his plans for increasing this segregation and classification. 20 These included the setting up of the two control units, the re-organization of the six 'dispersal' prisons on a wing or unit basis, the strengthening of the

18 COHEN, S. (1974) op.cit
19 MOUNTBATTEN REPORT (1966) op.cit.
20 HANSARD (1973) op.cit.
perimeters of these prisons, and the setting aside of a small number of suitably secure cells in local prisons to which "troublemakers" could be sent from the dispersal prisons at short notice for a "cooling off" period. As we have noted, no provisions were made for the prisoner to appeal against his dispersal or allocation to the control unit, or against his designation as a "troublemaker".

The third means of increasing segregation has been the segregation of offenders WITHIN the same institution. This is achieved by the increasing use of strip and isolation cells, punishment blocks, etc. These are effectively "prisons within a prison". The increase in classification and segregation is one of the most important pointers to the direction of current penal policy in this country.

PAROLE

Allied with that more direct manifestations of the extension of the control ideology, has been the introduction of a parole scheme which, whilst operating primarily as another mechanism for increased regulation of the imprisoned both on the inside, and the outside, has been hailed as a radical innovation in penal policy.  

The present system of parole was developed in a number of government publications, particularly the White Paper, "Penal Practice in a Changing Society" (1959) and a report of the Advisory Council on the Treatment of Offenders published in 1963. Significantly, both of these documents drew attention to the inability of the penal institutions to handle the rapidly increasing number of prisoners. Parole,

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then, was introduced as an additional method for disposing of more people. It did not emerge from a radical rethink of penal policy, as the Home Office spokesmen claimed. Rather, the parole system was an appendage added onto the existing and totally inadequate arrangements. As Pauline Morris and others have pointed out, evidence of the way in which parole was 'tacked on' to the penal system:

"is adduced by the fact that no consideration appears to have been given to the wisdom of linking it to a system of (largely) determinate sentencing, in stark contrast to the situation in the United States, where parole has become the major form of release from prison and operates within an indeterminate sentencing system. It seems inevitable that the attitudes of paroling authorities will be very different towards those serving determinate sentences as compared with attitudes towards those serving partially or wholly indeterminate terms of imprisonment". 22

In this country, the fact that most men and women are serving specific periods, and have a final date of release inevitably removes many of the pressures to grant parole which generate in the USA. In England and Wales the main responsibility of the paroling authorities is to consider possible release before the prisoner's usual date. The White Paper, "The Treatment of the Adult Offender" argued that there comes a time when many prisoners, especially long-timers, reach a "peak in their training", and when, therefore, it is inadvisable to continue to hold them for fear that they will regress. 23 (This was not, it should be pointed out, used as an argument against the increasing length of sentences, but rather to justify the introduction of a parole scheme.) Yet each report of the Parole Board has indicated that parole, as a means of guaranteeing that a person

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22 MORRIS AND BEVERLY (1975) op.cit.

23 MORRIS AND BEVERLY (1975) op.cit.
will not be confined for longer than is necessary, is patently inept. /The original White Paper argument is also fallacious./

Morris has also suggested that the decision to introduce parole within a system of virtually automatic remission was "possibly even more debatable", because it greatly reduces the flexibility of the scheme, and fails to take account of any differential effects of imprisonment:

"men cannot be considered for parole in the first third of their sentence despite the fact that no useful purpose may be served by their continued incarceration. Equally some offenders whom it is thought might benefit from a longer period in custody may be granted parole only for an extremely short period if at all, and such men are likely to interpret the delay or refusal as a further punishment". 24

Apart from these and other theoretical considerations, there are an ever-growing number of arguments being levelled against the way in which parole actually operates. These include:

1. It is purely arbitrary. Under the 1967 Criminal Justice Act, a prisoner may be released after serving 'one third' of his sentence, or one year, whichever is the longer. But how can it be reasonably maintained that while a man sentenced to three years may reach the peak of his training after one year, a man serving 30 years cannot possible reach the peak of his training until he has served ten years?

2. Parole leaves the judiciary free to defeat its purpose by passing proportionately longer sentences. Simply because Lord Chief Justice Parker has declared himself opposed to any such policy, it does not alter the fact that the judiciary retains the power to defeat the purposes of parole. To give

24 MORRIS AND BEVERLY (1975) op.cit.
but one example: on May 14, 1973, Lord Justice James, considered an application for leave to appeal, made on behalf of Paul Storey, James Duignan and Mustafa Fuat, (who had been sentenced to 20 years, 10 years and 10 years respectively for a "mugging" offence) for a reduction in sentences. He refused leave to appeal on the grounds that the boys would be eligible for parole, and that it was unlikely that they would serve anything like their full sentences. On 28 June, in the Court of Appeal, Lord Chief Justice Widgery upheld Lord Justice James' decision, and refused leave to appeal.25

Rupert Cross has referred to significant increases in the average length of sentences between 1938 and 1958 and suggests that one cause may have been the increase in remission: "Even if remission is something which the judge ought not to take into account ... it is difficult to believe that an increase in its amount would have no effect on sentencing over a period".26 In like manner, within a mere two years of the introduction of parole, the average length of sentences increased by approximately one-third, and the magistracy in particular have opposed any alteration in the scheme to facilitate the speedier releasing of prisoners.

3. The Parole Board is politically vulnerable. Lord Hunt, former Chairman of the Parole Board, has maintained that the Board is politically independent. This can be challenged on the grounds that the Board is not empowered to consider recommending any prisoner for release on parole unless and until the Home Secretary requests it to do so, and also because the Home Secretary is not obliged to accept a


recommendation for release by the Board. In 1972, the Home Secretary overruled twenty of the Boards recommendations.

4. The Parole Board is not and cannot be solely concerned with the question of fitness for freedom. It is also influenced by statistics and deterrent considerations, and these are especially influential when the Parole Board discusses "notorious" prisoners. Morris and others have shown that very often,

"the Board does not, in practice, make the sort of individually based decisions that theoretically it might do, but rather feels compelled to put what it considers to be the interests of society, and of the parole system generally, before those of the individual offender". 27

5. Despite the judiciary's remarks to the contrary, it has been clearly shown that prisoners serving long sentences do NOT have their sentences drastically cut by parole. Christopher Nuttall, of the Home Office Research Unit, concludes that his work,

"verifies our idea that the parolees serving the longest sentences would only have a short period on parole, and gives no support to the view that long-term prisoners are released after serving only a short-time in prison!". 28

Few people, as a proportion of the total prison population, are on parole at any one time, and the Parole Board has continuously been charged with "over-caution" in its practice. The success of the scheme has generally been seen in terms of lower reconviction rates, which has made the Board very conscious of possible "failures". The cost of such excessive caution is, of course, borne by the individual prisoner.

6. Prisoners have themselves expressed dissatisfaction with the existing system of parole, as evidenced in the

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27 MORRIS AND BEVERLY (1975) op.cit.
28 NUTTALL, CHRISTOPHER, in "BRITISH JOURNAL OF CRIMINOLOGY" JANUARY 1973 p.44-45 /"Review articles on parole/"
"Men in Prison" section. They are concerned mainly about the tension, depression, uneasiness and insecurity it brings. It is significant that in 1971 some 6 per cent of prisoners opted out of first reviews, and over 12 per cent opted out of second or subsequent reviews.29

According to the Local Review Committee Rules, 1967, a prisoner does not appear before the full L.R.C., but if he wishes must be interviewed by a member of the L.R.C., and be given a "reasonable opportunity" to make any representations which he wants the Parole Board to consider. In practice, such interviews appear to last for under five minutes.

7. Prisoners' families have similarly expressed concern about the uncertainty and tension which the parole procedure fosters. Many wives have specifically asked their husbands NOT to apply for a review. (see first Report of the Parole Board, para.141.)

8. The procedure of the parole scheme is unnecessarily cumbersome, bureaucratic, and, as we have already argued, overly-cautious. Each decision can take anything up to six months, and the average is three to four. Prisoners and their families are subjected to long periods of acute anxiety. Much of the blame for this administrative delay can be laid at the door of the Home Office on whom the Parole Board is dependant for all information about individual prisoners. Allied to this, the people involved in the parole process are almost without exception middle class, and there can be little doubt that despite professional differences between them, members of the Boards share similar values of both the offenders and their offences.

29 HAWKINS, KEITH, "PAROLE PROCEDURE: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH", in 'BRITISH JOURNAL OF CRIMINOLOGY' (JANUARY 1973) p.6-25
9. Prisoners themselves play little part in the selection process, and if they do not have an initial interview they actually play no part at all. The release decision is completely removed from the inmate's control - in keeping with the rest of penal practices.

10. **SECRECY:** The whole workings of the Parole Board are shrouded in secrecy. Prisoners have no access to reports made on them, and are given no reasons for rejection. Prisoners are categorised and stigmatised by "experts", to whose opinions they have no access.

11. Parole does not change his status as a prisoner when an inmate is paroled. As has been pointed out in a discussion of the Californian system, the prisoner remains on licence, and subject to immediate recall. Parole is merely part of the prison sentence.

12. To refuse to disclose the reasons for a "knock-back" ensures that the prisoner has no effective means of constructively working towards his release. Experience of the practices of some American board members show that they are prone to make decisions on hunches. One researcher, for example, was at a hearing in one state when a prisoner was refused parole because the chairman of the panel thought "he seemed a spooky kind of guy".

13. Prisoners are unable to appeal against a decision by the Parole Board to refuse parole. In the words of The Report on the Committee on Immigration Appeals:

"It is fundamentally wrong and inconsistent with the rule of law that power to take decisions affecting a man's whole future should be vested in officers of the executive, from whose findings there is no appeal". 30

30 quoted in HAWKINS, KEITH (op.cit) p.10
So we find again, this time in the guise of enlightenment, those elements which were to be found in the control unit plans - "KNOCK-BACKS", administrative decisions unresponsive to public or legal scrutiny; no access to appeal procedures; a need to rigorously conform to the institutions every rule; a massive potential for arbitrariness and injustice on the part of the prison officers and Home Office administration.

The parole scheme, therefore, despite the liberal rhetoric, has been and continues to be used primarily as a management tool to further control over the incarcerated. It is designed to control people's behaviour; prisoners are explicitly warned that people who cause "trouble" will not qualify for parole. When it was introduced, it was also anticipated that the scheme might substantially cut the number of prisoners and thus the costs of the prison service. Due mainly to the caution of the Board, these goals have yet to be realised - although successive Home Secretaries are still trying. In August 1975, Roy Jenkins announced changes in the parole scheme to facilitate more releases, and to ensure that the prison population did not continue to expand at the current rate.31

There can be no doubt then that far from being a radical innovation, parole in this country has been designed to stem the rising number of imprisoned, and to negate the need for the projected massive building programme. Most significantly, the introduction and planned extension of the scheme will prepare the way for more insidious forms of control and repression currently being developed and perfected not only in the USA but in this country and throughout Western Europe.

31 "TIMES", 5 August, 1975
PRISON INDUSTRY

According to the 1971 Report of the Prison Department, "The aims of prison industry may be summarised as the provision of work for all persons in custody who are assigned for industrial employment, such work to be purposeful and efficiently organised and suited as nearly as possible to the needs of prisoners ... so employed". 32

The following year, the annual Report revealed that an increasing number of prison products are being sold on the commercial market. Prison industries have grown from producing £3 million worth of goods to over £15 million worth in eight years. Sales of prison produce between 1971/2 and 1972/3 rose by one million pounds. The industries have been undergoing profound changes recently, and have been reorganised into "Prindus", a department specifically concerned with the advancement of prison industries. It is hoped to turn last year's loss of £½ million to a profit of £200,000 on a turnover of about £13 million. By 1976/7, the department plan to reap between £½ million and £1 ½ million profit from an annual turnover of £10 million. 33 What remains of the original prison building programme is heavily oriented towards the expansion of Prindus and its activities. Despite the claims of the prison authorities that they do not exploit prison labour because "We charge market prices" (a most peculiar argument) the section on "work" in "Men in Prison" reveals the true nature and extent of this exploitation.

Nowhere is the trend towards industrialisation more in evidence than at Coldingley prison, discussed in detail by Rod Caird, who was imprisoned there. Coldingley, according to the manual issued by the Home Office, is based on the hypothesis that for a certain type of prisoner, the most

32 "REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE PRISON DEPARTMENT, 1971"
33 "REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE PRISON DEPARTMENT, 1971" op. cit. see also CAIRD, ROD, "A GOOD AND USEFUL LIFE", LONDON. HART-DAVIS, 1974_7 particularly on Coldingley
important part of his training is to learn to work in an
efficient, well-managed industrial organisation; to have to
work under supervision and against the clock in achieving
economic levels of output and quality, to earn more or less
according to how hard he works and his own abilities will
allow, and, finally, to enjoy the rewards of his own action.
Thus "training", and the "enjoyment of the fruits of his
labour" are to be the principles behind a man's imprisonment
at Coldingley. Within the confines of the prison, men are
"interviewed" for the job; can be sacked, and made to
"sign-on" as unemployed; have to clock-on and clock-off;
and are able to work overtime, (in practice, overtime is
compulsory; and the "fruits" of a man's work are limited
to under two pounds a week).

The trade union movement has a little publicised interest
and involvement with prison industries. There is a formal
CBI, TUC, and Home Office Joint Consultative Committee, set
up to "provide guidance on the implementation of a fair
competition policy". The TUC delegates have been surprisingly
silent about the most overt exploitative practices adopted by
the prison department, including the coercive use of
inmates as strike-breakers. At Appleton Thorn near
Warrington, for example, during a national dock workers'
strike over containerisation (in the course of which five
dock workers were imprisoned), prisoners were being used to
load containers for twenty five pence a week.

From the point of view of the emerging prisoners'
movement, this development of prison industries and particularly the
increasing amount of contracted work, will possibly make the
British penal system even more dependent on inmate labour and
cooperation. Any large-scale strike action would thus have a potentially serious disruptive effect on the prison economy.

It is against the background of these considerations that the advent of control units must be understood. The direction of prison policy in this country is becoming increasingly apparent: more people will be imprisoned for ever-growing periods of time; at the same time, a rapidly escalating number of people on the outside will be controlled either directly or by coerced involvement in community-based 'alternatives' to imprisonment. These developments should not be received as being in opposition to each other; on the contrary, as the Younger Report on Young Offenders makes abundantly clear, they complement each other.

The control units represent one of the clearest signposts of the first theme - the imprisonment of people for longer periods of time. In order to understand the potential of these units, it is worth looking at comparable developments in American correctional facilities during the past four years. New York's "Adirondack Correctional Evaluation and Treatment Center" (ACTEC), for example, was created in the aftermath of the Attica rebellion in 1971, as a countermeasure to future acts of resistance and politicized protest among prisoners. The ACTEC's programme has as its official purpose "the diagnostic evaluation, assignment, control, and intensive treatment of selected inmates who have failed to respond or adjust to the routine in other correctional facilities or who present a continuing danger to themselves, other inmates, personnel, and the administration of correctional facilities".34

The programme's main feature, as outlined in the departmental memorandum describing it, is a system of "graded levels" designed to achieve an "adjustment of attitude and behaviour" among inmates of New York prisons whose behaviour is considered "disruptive", "dangerous" and otherwise "undesirable". Upon careful scrutiny, it becomes clear that this system of graded levels has as its bottom level, called "Level I" or "non-participant idle", a situation which is similar to that of the control units and identical to the worst conditions and deprivations of solitary confinement; after which a "participant", as he is affectionately called, may work his way up through a series of accumulated privileges (in terms of freedom of movement and association with other prisoners) until he reaches the "top" level or "open prescription" which is none other than return to the general prison population. The memorandum explains, however, that "progress toward and back between levels is not directed towards punishment for violation of rules but towards encouraging acceptable behaviour by the use of positive and negative reinforcement for positive and negative behaviour".35

Ironically, in other words, as in the control units, ordinary prison life is here converted into a goal to be sought after, a REWARD.

In all the special American institutions, there is a clear underlying theme of quarantine and segregation of individuals who are most obviously threatening to the institution and its internal discipline and authority patterns, i.e. those who would be called "serious management-problem prisoners" by the authorities.

35 HOLLANDER, LYNNE S (1971) op.cit.
Such emphasis on isolation and segregation is hardly accidental, having first been proposed at a seminar in Washington for prison wardens and their staffs, sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 1962. The subject matter of the seminar revolved around methods of inducing behavioural change, the chief instruction comprised an introduction by Dr. Edgar Schein, associate professor of psychology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's school of industrial management, to his theme entitled "Man Against Man: Brainwashing". This consisted of a definitive analysis of techniques allegedly used in North Korea to induce radical alteration of behaviour in American and other prisoners of war, including "physical remand of prisoners to areas sufficiently isolated to effectively locate or seriously weaken close emotional ties", "segregation of all natural leaders", "punishing those who show unco-operative attitudes", "systematic withholding of mail", "preventing prisoners from writing home or to friends in the community regarding the conditions of their confinement"; "placing individuals into new and ambiguous situations for which the standards are kept deliberately unclear and thus putting pressure on them to conform to what is desired in order to win favor and a reprieve from pressure".

The implication was clearly that these tactics would be appropriate for use in the United States' domestic prisons, and the new facilities such as the National Detention and Behaviour Modification Research Center in Butner, North Carolina, Vacaville and ACTEC were set up to research into how much techniques might best be implemented. As a consequence,

techniques of behaviour modification are to be found in many American prisons, particularly the top-security institutions. Wayne Sage has argued that behavioural scientists have spent many years "punishing and rewarding flatworms, rats and pigeons and now have them going in and out of mazes at their bidding. Wardens, eager to do as much for prisoners, are revamping American penitentiaries with behavioural schemes so elaborate and eclectic that behaviour modification behind the walls has come to connote just about any procedure that aims to modify behaviour.  

Behaviour modification practices have been brought into prisons at a time when they are increasingly under attack, particularly from within. Lessons learnt inside prisons have already been transferred to outside purposes: the use of Anectine on the Tupamaros guerrillas of Uruguay was largely responsible for their ultimate decimation as a fighting force.

As we continue to imprison more people for longer periods of time, and consequently, the prison "problem" will be seen not as the short-termers, those trapped in the revolving doors, but in the existence of an increasing number of long-term men and women who pose entirely new difficulties of control, security and discipline. These people will be seen as the hard-core, the bottom of the barrel, those for whom one can do nothing more than shut them away in dispersal prisons or security wings. For such people, prisons are destined to become "human warehouses", places where people are stored until society can think of something else to do with them.  

In the light of this discussion, I will move on to discuss the possible implications of future prison policy.

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Firstly, American experience indicates that the "human warehouse" will be increasingly used for experimental purposes. Jessica Mitford illustrates how the fact that prisoners are "cheaper than chimpanzees" has led to their being used for a whole host of experiments which are not only scientifically invalid, but also highly dangerous, resulting in substantial physical and/or mental harm to the participants. Interestingly, it has recently been suggested that prisoners be used in I.C.I.'s smoking experiments instead of beagles because the experiments are considered to be extremely harmful, "inhumane" and "cruel": that is, inhumane for dogs apparently but not for prisoners. As a reward for their sufferings prisoners, who like their American counterparts, would volunteer for such experiments should be given early release on parole.

A second important development is the increasing use of drugs both within and outside the prison. On the inside such drugs as librium and valium are not used for any medical purpose, but purely as a "management tool", to assist in the "good order" and smooth running of the institution. Now the use of drugs within penal institutions is not new; since the early nineteenth century, penal administrators have used opium and other substances freely to repress and pacify inmates viewed as "unco-operative". In the U.S.A. one of the most widely prescribed drugs, Thorazine, is seldom characterised even by the medical staff as having any direct therapeutic or medical (as opposed to managerial) value. It is given out because it substantially depresses the moods and spontaneous motor activity of inmates. As one American study put it,

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MITFORD, JESSICA, "CHEAPER THAN CHIMPANZEES" in "KIND AND USUAL PUNISHMENT: THE AMERICAN PRISON BUSINESS" / NEW YORK. KNOPF, 1973
"... the fact that such high dosages are necessary for Thorazine and other anti-psychotic drugs to have any significant effect results in their tendency to create a pharmacological strait-jacket, wrapping the patient's entire mind in a cocoon of stupefaction". 40

Other drugs, such as Prolixin can be more than just sedatives. Sage quotes E. R. Squibb, the manufacture of the drug, who bills it as a "highly potent behaviour modifier" capable of inducing a "catatonic like state" and a "pseudoparkinsonian syndrome" that "in some patients appears to be irreversible". In other words, permanent brain damage can be inevitable. The drug also produces side-effects rarely discussed. A prisoner, quoted by Sage, was placed on Prolixin at Vacaville and has described the results:

"There is no other feeling like it. Nothing to relate it to, no experience anyone would normally go through in their life... You get muscle spasms, predominantly in the legs, but also in the other parts of the body including your facial muscles. You get lockjaw; you can't control your tongue. You get leg cramps. You get so tired you lie down. But you can't stay down for more than three or four minutes. Your thoughts are broken; you can't hold a train of thought even for a minute. You start to roll a cigarette, drop it, pick up a book, take a shit, forget to wipe your ass. Your mind is like a slot machine, every wheel spinning a different thought". 41

The use of drugs will have far-reaching consequences for the human warehouses, significantly altering the nature of these social control institutions and the social relationships within them. To the extent that drugs can be administered which are capable of both internalising and automating control functions, then they hold the potential for completely breaking down the bonds of solidarity that exist within the institutions. There is, therefore, the potential for completely atomising and individualising social relationships inside prisons. In

40 SAGE, WAYNE (1974) op.cit. p.19
41 SAGE, WAYNE (1974) op.cit. p.19
recognising that this potential exists, we should realise the ambiguous double-edged nature of such drug administration. Some drugs will become a part of the reward system of the warehousing prisons, and to the extent that they are able to provide a temporary escape from the alienating conditions of the institution, will be positively welcomed by the prisoners. It is for this reason, for example, that at one long-term maximum security prison there already exists a high tolerance level for librium and valium.

The situation has already reached the stage where behaviourists are claiming to be able to restructure the entire personality of prisoners. James McConnell, psychologist at the University of Michigan, has stated,

"I believe the day has come when we can combine sensory deprivation with drugs, hypnosis and astute manipulation of reward and punishment to gain almost absolute control over the individual". 42

The important lesson to be learnt from these American institutions, then, is that the use of the language of "behaviour modification" or "adjustment" is not simply a substitute terminology for already existing practices, but rather that this language is meant to provide theoretical justification for a whole NEW set of techniques and practices, still in the "experimental" stage, whose effects will be more specific and predictable than those of traditional psychiatry. These institutions, in other words, and possibly the control units, are to function not only as detention centres for "troublemakers", but more importantly, in the long run, as laboratories and proving grounds for the most advanced methods of social control.

42 SAGE, WAYNE (1974) op.cit. p.22
We should remember, however, in any discussion about the uses of drugs and other control techniques in penal institutions, that the discovery, development and use of tranquillizers, for example, has not signified an understanding of personal anxiety and aggression. When discussing the "operational effectiveness" of such techniques we should go to great lengths to stress that this is in no way an indication of their scientific vigour. From the authorities' viewpoint, the techniques have still a long way to go before they are fully operationally effective. Prisoners in a number of institutions have managed to organise themselves and publicise their situation; (there is evidence that the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) was spawned by escapees from Vacaville).

Paralleling the warehousing of people for longer periods of time, there will also be an escalating number of people on the outside who are under constant surveillance. Three inter-related developments are I believe, already in motion which have the potential to make such large-scale and long-term control a reality.

Firstly, the theoretical basis for such control is being well-laid. Recent years have witnessed a marked resurgence in the "personal defects" explanations of deviance and criminality. Today, there are even more attempts to show the genetic basis of personality, schizophrenia, "deliquency-proneness", and so on. What is of particular significance is that unlike in Lombroso's day, there have been numerous sophisticated technological advancements in biochemical, genetic and neurological analysis which lend a distinct precision and authority to such theories. What this return to pathological explanations of deviancy implies is already well-documented: and includes the
attributions of deviant behaviour to some personal defect; an increasing need to formulate individualised "remedies" or "cures" on the basis of some sort of medical diagnosis, as the most powerful method of controlling behaviour, and the increased legitimacy both of those making such diagnoses, and of the claims that such treatment is "in the individual's best interests". These will combine to grant the self-styled experts even more screening from public visibility, and to give them further immunity from effective accountability to anybody other than themselves.

Secondly, whilst conventional methods of treatment and control have been increasingly written off by institutional staff and penal researchers as ineffective in reducing recidivism among offenders, because, amongst other things, they assume a degree of co-operation on the part of the inmate, and are often sufficiently loose and imprecise for inmates to manipulate, new techniques have been developed which are more efficient for behaviour control and modification. The potential use of these far more sophisticated techniques to modify behaviour has reached an unprecedented level in advanced industrial societies. "Technological progress" is itself, of course, an inadequate explanation for the application of particular techniques in particular contexts. It is clear that such developments have taken place not only in a certain medical or technological context, but also within a definite historical and social period. It can hardly be coincidental that pathological and personal explanations of deviancy begin to win renewed support during a period of massive protest, including student and youth revolt, prison rebellion and a
marked resurgence of both industrial sabotage and strike action. Particularly in the U.S.A., these can be correlated, too, with massive funding of research into "the cause of violence" in general, and specifically into the alleged psycho-biological "bases" of violent behaviour. Such research has received huge grants from the U.S.A. government as well as the military and law-enforcement agencies.

Thus, two 'liberal' criminologists can positively rejoice in the knowledge that:

"In the very near future, a computer technology will make possible alternatives to imprisonment. The development of systems for telemetering information from sensors implanted in or on the body will soon be able to make possible the observation and control of human behaviour without any physical contact. Through such telemetric devices, it will be possible to maintain twenty-four-hour a day surveillance over the subject and to intervene electronically or physically to influence and control selected behaviour. It will thus be possible to exercise control over human behaviour and from a distance without physical contact". 43

As well as the theoretical justifications and the development of the technological hardware, a third factor will facilitate the growth of widespread community surveillance. The present emphasis on community-based "alternatives" to imprisonment, reflected in the extension of community service orders; and the Younger Report on Young Offenders, might eventually provide the ideological rationale which will reinforce the economic arguments for such surveillance and control. Such a trend will be substantially furthered by the presentation of such alternatives as being "humanitarian" and "progressive". This orientation towards the community and away from the institution will provide the perfect

backdrop for the introduction of new methods of surveillance and telemetering of behaviour.

Taken together, these facilitate a broadening of the state's capacity to control both the confined and the unconfined populations, particularly as there can be no doubt that the techniques of control currently being developed can be applied not only in the prisons, but also, for example, in schools. (Already in the U.S.A., the proposal by Dr. Leon Kass to screen all school children for "criminal tendencies" has been seriously studied by the President and his correctional agencies.) The increasing use of tranquillizers to control "problem" children in this country comes as no surprise to anyone aware of these trends, for it is clear that the object of such action is not merely the immediate pacification of troublesome children, but also the elimination, as far as possible, of tomorrow's deviants, rebels, and dissidents.
CHAPTER 3

Men in Prison
This chapter is concerned to record the prisoners' view of imprisonment. The material was provided by people who have spent, or are serving time inside Her Majesty's penal institutions. That follows seeks to illustrate the daily living conditions of the imprisoned. Although it might not be endorsed by all prisoners all of the time, it tries to reflect the situation which confronts most of them most of the time. Crucially, it is conditions such as these which provided the breeding ground for the embryonic prisoners movement in this country. One of the chief objectives of Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners was to obtain maximum publicity for the situation described here.

A friend received a letter hastily written on paper torn from a prison exercise book and smuggled out. It explained the significance of the seven pieces of toilet paper in the envelope.

"Dear,

This is a covering stiff for the strange document accompanying it, very briefly, I will give you a wee explanation.

When I was shanghied from Albany, I was kept in a London prison for a day. During this brief period I got down to the hospital wing
on pretence of ill in the tooth. My intention was to see this guy I knew. I got onto the wing in question but at the last moment, I could not go onto the cells where he was locked up as a remand.
The need to see the friend I knew was great, yet because I had let this guy down I could not confront him. Because in doing so, I confronted my guilt. Of course, here I am a coward. I came back from the hospital. I am really feeling down man. And I am wondering if he is aware of my presence in the nick.

As I came back from this hospital place my name is hitting the breeze and wow! who do I see - a pal from way back in the days of ass pants. This guy is a really great poet, and a learned guy, but man so terribly violent.

He knew the guy I had tried to see... told me of a stiff he got off him and he gave it to me, for it had a deep call in it. Anyway, as you'll read, you'll dig, and you'll dig why I am so uptight over things.

It is written on toilet paper. 7 pages of anguish. Because of our inbred hypocrisy, I was not able to clearly assess the tremendous strain this guy was under. I assessed the crippled psyche but I rejected it. Thinking in some pussy headed fashion my actions were so totally ignorant. I do not want to analyse everything he other than the above. Dig it. Keep the indictment.

As you can guess this letter is unofficial. I had to do it this way or I would not have got it out to you. I have written through unofficial channels before, one must do when they want to pass out documents that are not allowed through normal channels. I merely gave it to my visitor and all they did - I hope! - stamp and post.

Funny is life when you are the problem and the solution, how is the enigma solved?...

You should understand all the stiff. There ain't much idiom in it. Soul bra. "Soul" is a deep yell of friendship. "Era" means
brother. Well, you should handle the rest. I'm gonna do something for the comrade."

The accompanying stiff was indeed a strange document. Then serving a previous sentence, the man had asked for psychiatric treatment recommended by the courts, on several occasions. It was refused. That follows is a terrible indictment of the British penal system which you and I have allowed to continue, unchanged, for so long.

"Soul bra -

... That guy should be out now - he and I grooved a lot on Revolution... I'll tell you - he is PURE Revolutionary and as such devotes his all to it. Consequently, he don't dig sex. He feels it detracts ones energies which can be re-directed to better pastimes - well he got hung up about me coz I dig sex - like with my wife. Anyway I still dig the cat but like I say he ceased to rap with me. I don't hold that against him for he didn't realise the full score though he was "aware" I was sick - he hated it rather than understood it - we'd spend hours literally talking revolution - his ideas are good - I just wish that guy well - if you ever see him tell him. I dig I only wish I wasn't sick in the head - God why can't I be like any other guy I was OK I just was under appalling mental pressure and I cracked up when I got out it was even worse than hell - save for my wife who understands and tried her best but didn't realise just how ill I was until I exploded - God forgive me I just hope I can get well for her Bra - I love her.

I've a terrible fear Bra that they won't ever let me out - God I pray Bra I pray I'm 35 now I couldn't do ten never mind 20 years - my whole life is my wife Bra I live only for her and my child. Don't let them destroy her as well -

Soulbra - you know - I know my wife she is ill with worry fighting for me herself her child all on £7.00 a week. - I'm gonna try and get
bread for her - but that ain't it - she has suffered before. I wanted to have her suffer no more - lean on me rely trust me to provide her every need. I never got chance now all I can do is write words on paper and my mind ain't alert to language right now. I feel full of my own problem of wanting to avoid a life sentence if I can and you know bra what respect can I ever expect I killed a 14 year old girl - a heinous murder. If done by intention I could feel guilty I'd deserve all I got but I didn't kill by intention - none the less I killed her - nothing can bring her back. A woman's natural urge would be to hate me loath me - I hope my wife never even remotely does this. I doubt she will coz she understands the pressure I was under but my soul is not quietened even with this knowledge. Writing don't come easy here and now - IF I love my wife, if she cracks up - which she could so easily I'd die - I could not forgive myself. She is very sensitive - she loves for she knows I love and respect her and our little girl. She's been pushed around pillar to post. I gave her all I could - she began to relax unwind and open up to me and in reciprocation likewise - Soulbra you don't know just how much I love my wife and child - how much I want to give to them. I had a dream like Martin Luther King - Peace love unification of mankind - no borders no wars no politics - just people of the universe at one with each other in God. Soulbra - my soul is in chains for what I did - even though it aint all my fault - but I shoulda been stronger like and I weakened at the winning post. I can't forgive myself for that. I've caused two parents and a brother grief of a lost sister/daughter. My mother is ill now - shattered blaming herself heading for a final crack-up. My wife the same my daughter too will suffer for now she wants to see me. Who else must suffer Soulbra who else. If they give me Life they destroy all those other people too - statistics on paper, Me? - I need help. They? They need help. The only help is HOPE for me - that they see JUSTICE & TRUTH - MERCY AND understanding help - now.
I pray God will be kind Soulbra coz my heart is heavy. It hurts coz I can't help no more till I'm free and well. How long is how long? your Soulbra...."

COMING OF AGE AND GRADUATION : APPROVED SCHOOL - BORSTAL - PRISON

Bill A.

"Fighting within the family started very soon after I was born. I think I was about 5 to 6, they were always fighting, day after day. Me, that is the rest of my family, could hear my mum screaming at night, it was very frightening for all of us. It is a bad thing when your mum is being hurt and you cannot do a thing about it. Then the police would come to take my dad away and then there would be more fighting and that is what happened all the time. I think at that age, about 6, we could not understand why my dad was taken away. I think it was from then on the mixup started and I was aware that police could take you away from home.

I cannot remember feeling deprived, in fact I was not. What I mean is, I always got my way, toys, sweets and that kind of thing. I was deprived of a warm upbringing, because of all the fighting. I think it did a lot to me, and I think at that stage my mum and dad didn't realise just what they were doing to us. I think they thought we were too young to understand what was going on, and that is where they made a big mistake, because we did.

I can remember all about my accident. The day it happened, Sunday, something was going on at the school and I was dressed up in nice clothes. When I came home from church I didn't get changed, I just went out to play in the bus garage. We were playing a game, I
ran across the garage and fell, then the bus came in and ran over my legs. I was screaming, the man got out and wrapped my leg up in his vest. He said he would get me some sweets, but he didn't, the bastard!

When I was in hospital I got a lot of visits and all the things I wanted. It was later on that I started to steal, age about 6. I took money out of my mum's bag a few times and when they found out they fucking belted me and from then on I have never stopped. There was no point, I was always blamed whether I did it or not, even to this day, I am blamed if things go missing. Like yesterday, I went into my mums, she said; "have you took 5p off the side?", I said "No." She said: "it was you or Paul." So what can you do, if your family think you did it, what do other people think, and that is the kind of thing that has gone on all my life, and I am sick of it. Like you said, if they treat you like it, you will act like it, and it is fucking true.

When I first started to steal. I was not trying to attract attention, but it was not long after when it started, about 12, after I came out of my first proovey, I think it was then. I used to beg my mum and dad not to fight and stealing was the only thing I knew that might stop them, but it did not. I damaged myself more than anything else, because I think I have fucked my life up good.

I feel crime starts between the age of 7 and 10. That is what people think it is, but I know it is not, it is a stage in life when kids know that money will buy them toys, sweets and things of that kind, and if they cannot get it from their parents they will take it. When caught they are chased as a thief, and the rest starts from there. The other kind is if the family, that is Mum and Dad are fighting all the time, that could start you off stealing to attract attention on to oneself to try and make them understand just what they are doing to the rest of
Then comes the day when a boy of 9 to 11 goes to a proovey, that is when it really starts. I know because it happened to me. When you get there you are very frightened, because at that age you don't know what is going on. All kinds of things happen to you like bullying, boys taking your meals, making you do a lot of things you don't want to do, like polishing their boots, stealing cigs and many other things like that. Proovey in my mind is a very bad thing for, as I have said, it is not right that a boy of that age, should start looking after himself and if he is weak he can go through a very bad time and I mean a bad time, it turns your mind.

Then there is a stage when you come out of proovey, you think you are hard, so do all your friends. Then you have to do a lot of things you don't want to do. By that time you are on the right road to prison or borstal and all you know is prison life and that is what people think too. You just have not got a chance if you have not got a trade or something like that or are a bit backward. What can you do? No one will help you, you are too big a risk, risk is not the word, they think you are too far gone, and helping you would be a waste of time and money.

After proovey, then comes borstal and that is a load of shit. You just start to hate the kind of people that send you away, the nobbs and your own kind, so all I can say, is that borstal and prison are the same, they are not a deterrent. You don't use your brain, everything you do you are told. You are treated like a pig, so you act like one. You hate them and they hate you. So what can you do? Well, it just goes on and on, and that's the way it will always be for some people, a lot of people, unless someone can do something like stop proovies and places like that. If you can do that there will be a lot less in prison and borstal."

"I always played with kids older by a year or two than myself. Of course, in this situation I was never the leader and can't ever really remember wanting to be so. I used to fight older boys and don't remember having any fear of doing so. Being big - or tall I should say, because one nickname I had was "skinny." The kids I played with were in the senior school when I was still a junior and they would say things like, "You must be the best fighter in your school." I would say Norman so-and-so can fight, and they would get me at it to fight him. However, Norman, who had plenty of personality, would be such a nice geezer I would find it hard to pick a fight with him as I didn't like to hurt his feelings. I wouldn't have minded punching his nose, but I wouldn't have wanted him to feel bad about it. Looking back now, I see myself as realising things and seeing things as if they were all happening outside my own body. I was never precocious enough or uninhibited enough to push myself to the front. I wasn't even much good at doing anything for myself. I would never make a burglar or anything else that you need to be self-reliant for. Working with someone else, or with a gang, is a necessity for me.

Before I went on the "Stork", we all ran around in gangs. They were usually small gangs from one street or square, etc. We used to have quite vicious brick fights or pellet guns even. I can't ever remember being frightened by these either. I think I was doing what was expected of me. I was doing my duty! The word 'duty', no 'duty' itself is a substitute for fear and feelings of right and wrong. I would have made the perfect member of a prehistoric community. I can imagine those people defending their walls, against other tribes intent on exterminating them, without any fear at all. The only fear they would have is that they would let themselves down in front of their own people. This is one of the reasons they wouldn't show emotion.
I remember when my mother was dying of cancer, and she was no more than skin and bone, visiting her in hospital; standing there expressionlessly. I wanted it to end because it was too strong for me. I wanted everything to be as normal. Make out it wasn't happening, not because my mother was dying, but because things were abnormal. I hated the change, yet at the same time, I wanted to get out into what I thought would be an "adventurous world". I believed the world was as in books, etc.

You might see them, as I can see or imagine, a tall, thinish, fair-haired kid without a lot of expression, but who would do anything. I couldn't say 'no' to any sort of thing, scrumping, thieving, brick-fighting, or running away from home, which I did twice. I didn't do any of these things because I was unruly, or brave, or adventurous, or that sort of thing. But I would do anything because someone suggested it, and I wonder at it now that the reason I did it, was probably because, as I've said, it was a duty.

Before I went to the "Stork", a training ship, I remember stealing also because it gave me a good feeling to have plenty by stealing it. My mum certainly kept us clean and well fed, but we never had much pocket money, if any, and it was a good feeling to have something in your pocket. I never knew what a pang of conscience was, though I would never steal from our home.

When I went to the "Stork", the first day, I went to school ashore in Hammersmith with the other boys. I suppose they had been told to show me the way. The next day, however, they all disappeared, and left me to it, and I can remember how worried I was because I couldn't find the way. This happened at least twice. As I said before, all the kids were thieves so you can guess that any person with a bit stronger character than my own would be only too glad to show the others that he wasn't scared to keep in with them. If they had all been footballers or actors,
I would certainly played football or acted myself. It isn't in my
make-up to be the man apart, unfortunately, so you can imagine how
relieved I would be to be allowed to roam with the other kids and
steal with them. It meant nothing to me fear-wise or conscience-
wise, only relief that I could go to school with the other. The
terrible beating from the Captain a kid named Godwin got for stealing
a watch from a shop awed us, but didn't make us change our ways.

Godwin had a friend named Kent, who gave me probably my first
aesthetic taste of something beautiful, I think. At least, it's the
first instance I can remember of being stirred in that way. Every
evening, it was his job to play lights out on the bugle. He would
go to the bow of the ship just as it was getting dark, or it might be
sundown. Lights would be twinkling along the Thames with the river
rising and the mud sucking and gurgling. Kent could play it beautifully,
and wouldn't rush it. Do you know how it goes? It is lovely and sad
and peace giving. You felt all warm inside and quiet and aware of things.
You could smell the mud and the water and hear the click of the balls
on the pocket billiards table, and smell the cocoa for supper. You
could feel the canvas of the hammock wrapped round you. Every single
thing just was.

But I hated the ship. I hated having to steal back from a ship
boy the swimming costume I had lent him, and had belonged to my dad.
I needed plenty of courage to do it as I would have had a right seeing
to. It was a geezer named Big George who borrowed it. I hated having
to wear the silly uniform. I hated having to go back there after a
weekend at home where I knew everyone, and was familiar with everything.
People should never have to go away from where they are brought up.
When they do, it is the breaking of everything; it is the beginning of
an act for someone like me.

When I left the "Stork", I didn't thieve for a few years. Now I
think of it, it is probably because I didn't need to, plus the fear of getting caught. This, of course, hadn't stopped me on the Stork, but then fear of getting caught wasn't the stronger factor. Nowhere near it in fact. Eventually, I started work, and my first job was in a hand setting printers, high on a hill at Belvedere in Kent, overlooking the Marshes where the Gypsies lived. I could see from the window the passenger ships lovely and white and gleaming, passing up and down the Thames, and like most kids, imagined the countries and the smell of the seas they had to cross to get to them. I always fancied joining the Merchant Navy, and when I was 16, I went to Leaden Hall Street in the city where they told me I was too tall to be a steward, and would have to wait 'till I was 16½ to enter training school to be a deck hand. Six months at that age seems like six years.

A geezer I worked with came from Welling in Kent and gradually I started going over there at the weekends with a couple of my pals to the dance hall and pubs and the picture house every Sunday afternoon. Being big, or at least tall, I was soon welcome in the local firm of which every area had one on those days. The top man was a geezer called Big Benny (what else!) How I first got in with them, and wasn't I pleased about it, was one day over the fairground, we were hanging about and Benny came up to me and said they were expecting some aggro and would we look them up - would I?! The aggro turned out to be one sailor about 21. I suppose, and two or three others, who were having a joke with one of the local birds. She had hit the Matlow with her bag, breaking a camera or something she had in it. I also think he had given her a slap, I'd be surprised if he hadn't.

Anyway, being proud of my new found status of "Wellingboy", I went up to the Matlow and gave him a tug. Probably lucky for me he swallowed. The 30 or 40 chaps I had with me probably helped him make up his mind and I hadn't learned then, that 30 or 40 geezers, like jackals, wouldn't have
struck the first blow, but if someone had and the geezer had gone down, they would have kicked him to pieces as well as tried out the razors on him. Even when I learned this, I didn't feel any conscience about the geezers who got hurt, but would do anything to be respected by the others.

Actually, I did my share of swallowing like everybody else, but always had an excuse for it. I had two or three special pals, one of whom, Albert, who was about nine years older than us, came from the Angel. This really gave his status with us, as the Angel boys were one of the top firms. I used to wish I came from there, and never missed an opportunity to go up there for the weekend, where we had terrific times...

Billy

"Staff - it's just a job to the staff. There's no one to go to if you feel homesick or scared or anything. If you grass on someone, they will get cautioned maybe and then it'll go on worse, they wasn't sympathetic. At the age of 11 everyone gets up to some mischief and they try to be strict. But it's the other kids who make all the difficulties and there aren't enough staff to be everywhere at once. To give the older lads responsibility could make 'em feel less like bullying. They bully you into doing things. They always mess you about, make a fool of you if you are new. There was a bit of queering, but not much and if you report a guy he get's caned and you have to face him again sometime. One of the staff was bent with the guys, he used to pick the really soft ones and let them watch the television in his room. There was prefects and they were bullies. You meet a lot of good guys that you like and when you come out you lose them. Another bad thing, there was practically no women around at all. If you are good for a long time, you's get to go out. There was sports, yeah, and a sports day when your parents come and all.
I learned enough - I did - but I just didn't keep it up when I left. They teach no art or crafts or anything. If you didn't learn proper you'd get a slap in the mouth. You just don't think for yourself, your brain is just shut. You come out and you find you haven't used your brain. You don't have to think and then you come out and it's difficult. Things aren't the same, but you've changed. When you go to prison just accept you've done things and look forward to getting out. You shouldn't accept it.

You've all got to be together, so you can't read a book or anything. Visits are really horrible. You get it into your head when you're talking to them that they can do something, they can get you out, but then they just go. Parents can do fuck all. You can stay there for 4 or 5 years if they don't think you're getting better.

The brothers are really bastards. They were bastards! They knock fuck out of you. They don't mess about.

Guys go around in gangs, steal money or cigarettes off you; so you had to get tough so as you could steal back from someone else. I can't remember any people taking exams. They didn't really bother much. I don't value myself much. I got the impression they didn't worry whether I was here or there. It was only when I got in trouble that the tears'd come and a few hours later they'd be arguing again, and I'd something wrong and get belted. So they weren't really worried so I went off and stole some more.

It's always in your mind that you're a criminal. I don't think it's big to be a thief. I look down on myself educational wise, but it makes you think you're different, you know everybody doesn't do what you do. It's a laugh and you do a lot of things people expect you to do. Everyone thinks you's a hard case 'cos you've been in a proved school. If I got the cane I wouldn't cry or take my hand away. So you're on a pedestal. If there's a fight you can't get out of it or
be aggressive, without me doing something back. I don't want to be aggressive, look for fights and all that - I don't want to you know. I know what it's like to be hurt physically - it's horrible. So I don't want to do it because I didn't want to fight with people and act hard, but I had to have it because people wanted to bully me. If a guy knows you'll fight back, there's a chance they won't do it. I don't need violent people. If I went back inside, I'd fight and you have to, to make it easier to make a few pounds of tobacco. There's quite a few inside who can't read, thank God I can - I'd go mad otherwise.

When I came out I did a lot of screwing, me and my brother. Like the police tried to follow us, but it was a big joke cos we could lose them. Being caught just didn't fucking worry you. It was what you could do with money that made me do it. I didn't think about my family; I'd already got the impression they didn't care. They were just destroying themselves. I was sick at having been taken away from my friends and all. So get some cash - why not? Go to the cinema, get some fags. I just didn't think about getting caught again. Mum was a bit embarrassed but to a small limit. There was a bit of it in that area where I was. When I was about 8 or 9 she took me to see a psycho, she thought I was mad, cos I was always in mischief, but then after my first proovey she just gave up. Not bothered no more. She just accepted that I'd go back to proovey and borstal; and nobody would do anything to stop it, and if me dad pinches stuff, what can you expect. But I've got another brother who's never been in trouble, never, never. Got a job when he left school and he's still in it and he'll stay there.

When I found that he wasn't me real dad - I didn't have any respect for him, couldn't see why he should thump me about. But when I started to go to proovies and things, my real father didn't want to know me; my stepfather was a bit better.
Being smart in school, thumping prefects about, I'd be cheeky to the teacher, if she spoke to me wrong, I'd answer back, tell her to fuck off, throw chairs around, which I've done. Screwing and spending money. I used to sag quite a bit after me first proovey. There was teachers in that school who didn't know me, because I'd just never been there. When you come out of proovey and just don't want to be told what to do, do this, do that, take a bath, take a piss, change your socks.

I put down to do a course in plastering before I went down last time, but they wouldn't let me. You have to put down what you've done in the last five years, but I was refused because I've been in quite a bit of trouble in the last five years. It was a Government training thing. I thought I'd be bound to be able to get on. It made me sick as a pig when that committee got my form and turns it down. I shan't apply again. When people give me a form to fill in, I just turn it down cos of my complex about spelling.

Not long ago, I got a job in a supermarket, sometimes looking through a two way mirror and also collecting stuff from the store. When I was interviewed I didn't say I'd been in trouble, but he wasn't the main boss. So I started and I really liked it; it was clean and there was lots of birds around. But after 3 days they called me into the office, gave me a week's wages and my cards. Someone had been in there and told them I'd been in prison and all. So what could I do? Just one of the things that happens. I don't want to be a scivvy, working from 7 a.m. till 5.30 and get me gold watch. I want to do somethin in life - somethin I can say I've done. I don't want to look back at myself and just see a scivvy. At one time I was really anti-social against people who were making so much money out of forcing me to work - they have swimming pools and houses and holidays abroad but I can't even get to fucking New Brighton for the day.
If people just let you be normal - not have big cars, things like that - just normal, trust you, try to understand that what you've done in the past is gone and you change, that they wouldn't look down on you. If I went back home tomorrow in a car, most people would think I'd stolen it or something.

When you're picked up and you're in the police station, you really feel sick now you know what's going to happen to you, you're going to go to Court and you're going to feel small, you're going to feel little and people'll come and look at you and then you'll go to prison and there reception and doctors and stripping and unstripping and all that shit. It's boring and a drag and it's terrifying. But you just accept it; it's too late.

Hope of achieving something in life, if somebody helped - not even helped, just tried to understand that you're not really bad and all that bollocks. If a person trust you, you won't thieve off them. If you suspected me of thieving money out of your purse all the time, I could do it.

There's nothing there, there's no outlook - just nothing. You've got no aims in life and you just feel anti everything. Anti social, anti everything, anti authority and flashing cars and stuff the nob's have which you can't get. Who says it's right that a man should have £1,000,000 and babies starve? The man with the million pounds of course. He doesn't fucking care. So you go and rip the aerial off his flashy car. Most people have got just no hope at all. They just thieve and thieve auld arses. A man of 40's got no chance; it's too late to turn back. Nobody cares, nobody does anything about it - they just become auld arses. That's not fucking happening to me.

It's expected of me - my type - to work in a factory or a building site; and if I wanted to do say, ladies hairdressing, they just wouldn't accept it. I'd rather just not work and be poor. I don't see why just
because I've got a record, I should be a scavvy for the rest of my life. Making money for the boss, while I can't afford cigarettes - I'd rather let him pay taxes and me live on the dole. I'm not working just to get some silver plated watch.

Abortions are legal - but if my wife wanted one, who wouldn't get one because she's lower class and they'll say she's healthy, but we can't afford another child. That's sickening. They decide whether you're going to have your child or not. And who is this doctor, just another fucking person.

There's no reason why two people can't be happy together, having no money, if they love each other, money doesn't come into it; but it's not like that, you're trapped.

If I see fucking Dixon of Dock Green I'll fucking kill him. You look at these police beating up people and thieving. 3 bobbies shared £300 from the boot of a stolen car - but they fucking nick you for stealing a toothbrush. I test people to find out whether they are genuine, that's it. If you get people who reckon they are genuine, who do you favours, you will test them to find out if they are having ego trips."
RECEPTION INTO PRISON

"Admission to a prison is a complicated procedure requiring an entire reception wing, usually separated from the rest of the prison by some distance. The core of this ritual which usually occupies some hours, is called 'stripping'. The term describes very precisely, what happens to the man.

Each batch of prisoners, brought into the prison by the police, shackled in twos, is handed over to the officer in charge of reception. Each prisoner is locked in one of a series of 'boxes' (about the size of an old fashioned privy) to await his turn for stripping. When his turn comes, he is unlocked and taken to a large table where two reception officers, attended by a prisoner clerk and several prisoner orderlies, take his particulars and process him.

In a stupor of tiredness and boredom, the prisoner makes his initial contact with his custodians, and it is at this point that the black prisoner will often receive his first intimation of what lies ahead.

The writer was one of three black men admitted in a batch of about twenty-six, to Strangeways in Manchester. None of the three were left in any doubt as to where they were to stand in the prison's hierarchy.

"Name!" barked the reception officer.

"Gordon James,"

"Gordon James, What?"

"Gordon James, man, just Gordon James"

"Not just Gordon James you stupid black twat! Gordon James, sir!"

"Gordon James, sir"

"What religion James?"

"Church of God"

"Church of God? Church of God? What the fucking hell's that?"

"Well sir, its....."
"Don't tell me what it is! I don't want to know what it is! You've got no religion! You're a fucking Moss Side Ponce! That's your fucking religion!... We got fucking hundreds of you bastards in here... everyone a fucking ponce! It's a fucking religion with you blokes. If I had my way, I wouldn't nick you, I'd fucking well top the lot of you! While you're here you'll be Church of England and like it!" "Empty your pockets!"

The contents were laboriously written by hand into a huge ledger.

"Get your clothes off and stand on that scale over there."

Each article of clothing was recorded as it came off, and prisoner orderlies packed them away in cardboard boxes. Stark naked the prisoner signs the ledger and walks over to stand on the scale where he is weighed and measured by a prisoner orderly, then through to the bath house. After a bath, he is issued with his prison clothing and kit. Then he waits in another room until the whole batch has been processed.

Generally, medical examination is done the following day. But sometimes on the morning admission, the men form a line to be inspected by the doctor.

"Next!"

"Stand still there! Drop your trousers."

"Any illness?" says the doctor. "Cough" says the doctor, taking hold of the prisoner's scrotum.

He inspects the prisoner's anus with the aid of a small light.

"Right," says the doctor, "next". That's it.

For one thoughtful and articulate man who took part in a television documentary about prisons, screened quite recently, this reception drill was the hardest part of his sentence to endure. So much so that after serving a number of years, he refused to go home for a week-end leave, because he felt that he could not face the humiliation of the reception. He preferred to finish his sentence, and then leave for good. Everything
that made him a person, a man, his dignity, his name, his possessions, his self respect, was taken away from him.

Fortunately for them, the majority of prisoners are at that moment, too dazed, too tired, too confused to react very strongly to stripping and reception. A larger number of men are hit by the full realization of imprisonment, only after they have been marched with their kit to the main prison, lined up and counted on the 'center', then allocated to a cell on one of the wings radiating from that sacred spot.

The radial wing design, following Haviland's Philadelphia model of 1829, allows a single officer to stand on the center and survey all the cell doors of each wing in turn. In this prison, it is accounted a serious offence for a prisoner to stand or walk on the grille marking the exact center.

Few sounds can be more heart stopping than the noise made by the closing of a cell door. It is a sound which can neither be described nor duplicated. That sound is the final denial of a secret appeal to magic. Up to this point, some corner of the imagination has nurtured the faint suspicion that the court will have discovered its mistake, that the judge will have relented, that the bus taking this batch to jail would crash, allowing all the prisoners to escape in the confusion. The sound of a cell door closing banishes these fancies. With the closing of the door, the prisoner knows that he has ceased to be a father, a brother, a husband or a son; from now on he is - a prisoner.¹

ON BEING IMPRISONED

1. "There is a furious agitation in the city's life and in the lives of those who live there. Yesterday you had a thousand worries, a bustling schedule of activity; the hours rushed by, you were barrelling along in the subway, pushing your way through the living sea of the avenue; you were surrounded during the day by thousands of faces; you had newspapers, the motley lure of the billboards, the persuasive voice of books. Yesterday, in the very centre of life, there were your women, your child, your friends, your comrades. People and objects surging forth in ceaseless motion, like you, with you. And all at once: nothing. Silence, Isolation. Inactivity. The dullness of empty time... In the total disorientation of his inner life, everything is thrown out of proportion; things in the foreground become exaggerated. The slightest worry aggravates itself, becomes an obsession. The imagination immediately flashes out thousands of hypotheses that the normal mind disdainfully discards... Every man who is thrown into a cell immediately begins to live in the shadow of madness..."

[Victor Serge, "Men in Prison"]

2. "I am here because I was a naughty boy and could not live by society's golden rules, and was considered anti-social, "an odd-lot", and it was necessary for me to undergo a period of treatment to prevent me straying from the fold again. Everyone, including Mr. Justice McKenna, really believed that this was the case and that I would be safely brought back into the fold again. It's all so romantic, and just, and fair play, and rehabilitation, and understanding to them. But in reality, I am locked away like an animal, treated like an animal so that one's logic and sense of reality would tend to produce the feeling that I don't belong to your society (or to the guy who's spying on this letter for that matter)."
So why should we keep up all this pretending about it, about society "saving" us lot. Let's just accept that it just isn't for some of us, we've no desire to be just like everybody else. Which brings us back to the fool on the hill.

"Day after day, alone on the hill, the man with the foolish grin is keeping perfectly still. And nobody seems to like him, they can't tell what he wants to do and he never seems to notice, but the Fool on the Hill..."

3. "A lot of cats shoot this line about the prison situation and how it can slip your grip with your concept of reality. I agree. All circumstances within or without of nick have a general degree of unrealism. My position now ain't all that much different than a whole heap of cats who think they are free, 'cos they can get laid and go to bingo. No I ain't holding too much 'cos the society I was brought up in had just as much fuck up pressure as nick; in actual fact it wasn't much different from nick!"

4. "I am gradually finding myself in a position of detachment from what I am told is everyday life, away from all the trivialities and unrealities to which people attach great importance. But as yet, I have not become completely able to achieve such a position. But I've made a sort of pact with myself. All that is required is some action by me or other people which will enable me to say, 'Right, this is all unreal and valueless, there is no motive or purpose to live a decent, respectable, disciplined life. Nothing outside myself matters.'

I don't quite see how you can make so much fuss about people being lonely.

Everybody's lonely, we are born alone, and we die alone, and really we live alone for most of our lives. It's only at odd times when we actually come into contact with other people, then we recede into
our own useless existence. But its one thing being alone, and not really knowing about it, and another thing to be alone and realise it. Its the same as people thinking they are free, really think it, they are full of life and goodness; they are decent, lead a disciplined life and imagine themselves to be well respected by society. They serve society, obey its leaders, because they believe it to be for the general good. One has only to look around to see then, thirty years ago, the same people, in another country, speaking a different tongue, loading Jews into the gas chambers without any second thoughts.

But people begin to be unhappy when they realise they are not free. Many people feel unhappy and discontented with their way of life, and try to regulate their life to make themselves happy. But the reason is, because they are not free, they live in a society which imposes restrictions on their freedom of action. This restriction is the price they must pay for a security, for things like T.V.'s radios, houses, schools, and all other material benefits. If they want a T.V., a radio, or a car, they must be prepared to work in a production line, or elsewhere when work in a society is divided up. They must conform. The trouble arises because they want all the little trappings of civilisation, but they also want to be free. And this is impossible.

So the way out is to do without all luxuries and grab four freedoms. But try telling this to people, they will think you are mad, they say all those things are necessary. Well if that is so, it is necessary to have factories where they slave away, with an authority which runs their lives, of which they are afraid. It is necessary to have lying, corrupt politicians and lots of other things, including places like these.

The reason why they think all these luxuries are necessary is because
they are spiritually rotten, they are empty shells. If one takes away all their little possessions, and tell them "Go claim your freedom, man" they will all be lost. They've got nothing to believe in, nothing to drive them on. And yet people who are devout churchgoers repeat every week, "I believe in God...", and say, "I have got a belief, a religion". They haven't got the slightest inkling of a belief, of what is meant by God, of what a religion is. They also are rotten inside, they also are shells, hollow people, like shadows flitting around.

This is what it all boils down to, a belief in something. Not something outside oneself, but something inside oneself. This is what Vaslaw Nijinsky meant when he said: "I am God". The words mean nothing if one tries to understand them by comparing them with the language of the Church because that too is meaningless....

5. "I'm a bit near the surface tonight, I'm afraid. I've been pursuing the old policy of "dust-off and let the time pass", recently, which does seem to be necessary occasionally. It's an interesting thing that unlimited opportunity for thought, combined with the inability to put the fruits of that thought into any kind of action acts as a slight deterrent to thinking".

6. "Living in prison... a man is all but dead".

7. "I now have, a much better understanding of why I am here. Before I was only aware of certain factors which were all isolated. In the last year I've been able to bring about a synthesis of all these factors which explains why I am here. Being at Grendon was a help in that it was an attempt by the power structure, with their application of psychiatry to brainwash me."
They tried to put all the blame and responsibility onto myself, labelling me as a deviant, psychopath, etc. This puts me totally in the wrong in society's eyes. It maintains the status quo in that their society was, no, is perfect and that I am wrong. It was just a continuation of the brainwashing process with much more coercion, which kids undergo when they are trained, "brought-up", civilised, etc. I am now confident that the whole thing must be looked at in reverse. I do not wish to say that I was morally right in what I did, it was a very unfortunate happening and I do feel sorry for what happened now. I can see it was a mistake because it did not solve my problems and at the same time someone suffered.

However, then they tried to isolate me, and try to make me think of myself as some sort of monster, something unnatural. This is the way they keep the rest of society into line, by brutalising people who do not conform to their demands. I have now identified what I was fighting and struggling against all those years from when I was about three or four until now. I could feel I was being oppressed, that my freedom was being taken away from me at a very early age.

The power structure demands that the individuality and thinking faculty be beaten out of kids so that when they are old enough, they will accept automatically that they must slave for eight hours a day on the assembly line. Some kids, like myself, were plucked from their home and security and because we showed some talent by passing their silly 'eleven-plus', put into grammar schools with a totally different value system. This is more of their exploitation, economic exploitation - we were kinds who could be useful to the power structure later on. We could help them make their poxy money because they would train us to do their dirty work. They didn't care that at that young age, we were forced to listen to poxy middle class teachers, stuff poxy middle class values down our throats which were alien to our working class values.
This created a conflict, in me at any rate, between home and school. I was often in trouble in school and this was put down solely to me being "bad". Those short-sighted bastards could not see where the problem lay, and of course, one could not expect a twelve or thirteen year old boy to understand all this. The natural result was much confusion in me, because I could feel myself being oppressed, moulded, or brutalized by invisible, ubiquitous forces, which were attempting to beat my freedom out of me. Of course, I hit out, first at school, later at the community which I thought was oppressing me. But I now see these are only symbols, that the real enemy is the greedy, brutalizing middle-class minority, who control the system through their power structure. They are what I was fighting against for all those years..."

8. "I never used to attach much importance to birthdays: in fact I used to take what I thought was the 'principled' approach of deliberately ignoring them. However, having discovered the absurd feeling of warmth when, unexpectedly, people react to them in future, I shall think twice".

A young prisoner, reacting to the sackful of cards on his first birthday inside.

9. WAITING
Door clangs shut
Silence
Despair
Thinking
Lounging Aching
Light snaps Out
Reverie
Fantasy
Sleep
Dreams
Phantoms
Bell claps wild

Awakening
Hating
Chafing
Hoping
Daydreaming

Waiting
Waiting
Waiting
Waiting
Waiting

Seasons pass by

Aching
Longing
Despairing
Hating
Apathy

The day Dawns

Exciting
Waiting
Waiting
Waiting
Waiting

After the long

Waiting
Waiting
Waiting
Waiting
Waiting

Endless waiting
Empty Waiting
Wasteful waiting

10.

THE LIFER

IF I COULD JUST RUN NAKED IN THE RAIN,
WITH NO BARRIED GATES OR WALLS TO BLOCK THE WAY,
DASH MADLY OVER GRASSY FIELD, THROUGH TREE LINED ACRES,
AND LOSE MY MENTAL WHEELCHAIR, FOR A DAY.
DISCARD THE CRUTCHES THAT THE STATE IMPOSED,
AND TWIST THE CALIPHERS TO HANDLED SCRAP.
JUST LET ME ONCE MORE FEEL THE BEAT OF FREEDOMS WINGS,
THEN GLADLY I WILL DIE WITHIN THE TRAP.
11. For the vast majority of prisoners, the shock of being 'weighed off' (sentenced) imposes a shattering change upon all the patterns simultaneously.

"The very first time", says George Jackson, "it was like dying".

The value of an hour changes, and all the apparatus built up over the years for dealing with the passage of time suddenly becomes obsolete. In normal life, few hours are entirely without incident or interest. In prison, many hours might pass, in which nothing happens. It becomes possible to look at a clock without receiving any information from it. It is not that time becomes irrelevant. In many senses, it becomes more important, for in the end, that is what it's all about. No. It is merely that measured as the outside world measures it, time becomes intolerable. The prisoner has to learn how to deal with the passage of time in a different way.

The power of decision suddenly disappears, for anything which happens to the prisoner, including the most personal functions, happens because, or when someone else decides that it should. And with it goes the illusion of control over the personal destiny. The prisoner is all at once assailed by a realisation of his own impotence.

Most terrible of all, the value of a human being, as judged by his own value changes out of all recognition.
Prisons, more so than other institutions, have an inflexible routine which is rigorously adhered to each day. The complexity of the routine depends very much on the individual prison. In many respects, conditions for the prisoner on remand in custody awaiting trial are the most repressive. It was no coincidence that prisoners on remand in Brixton were amongst the first to support the newly-formed prisoners union in May 1972. Although remand prisoners do have certain extra privileges, these can be and frequently are withdrawn at the authorities discretion.

Following the attempted escape at Brixton in May 1973, the 'Observer' reported that,

"Despite privileges, many prisoners believe that it is worse than serving time as a convicted prisoner. There is no suitable work - only 100 men are working in Brixton. Men are locked up for long hours in their cells, and they become anxious and frustrated."

The South London POP group's report on the Brixton escape attempt and its savage and vicious suppression by the prison staff quotes the mother of a man who had been on remand for over six months without trial: "it was the long period of uncertainty which got the men down". In retaliation for the escape, privileges for those on remand were withdrawn. Even men who had not been involved were kept in their cells for twenty-four hours a day. Visiting time was cut to fifteen minutes, and visits were 'closed', that is, in cubicles, with the prisoner and his visitor separated by a solid glass screen. One wife said:

"My husband has been locked up twenty-four hours a day. The last few days he has been given an hour a day exercise. I wait over an hour every day to visit my husband, then to see him for nearly fifteen minutes on a closed visit. We can't hear each other talk. Visitors on the open visit stand behind me waiting for their visit and prisoners on my husband's side queue up waiting to go on their visit. You have to talk through a grille with a glass partition between us. It's heartbreaking. Surely there is no need for this closed visit like this."

The 'News of the World' reported a "sharp increase in security measures". Wives complained that during their visits they were forced to wait outside
the gates instead of going straight to the waiting room inside.

The prisoner on remand, therefore, spends most of his time in his cell. His cell? Most unlikely; some 14,000 prisoners of a prison population a little below 40,000, are locked up, two or three to a cell. Clause 14 (1) of the Prison Act, 1952, requires the Secretary of State to:

"satisfy himself from time to time that in every prison sufficient accommodation is provided for all prisoners."

One wonders how long it is since the Secretary of State discharged this duty. Prison routine under such conditions consists of "slopping-out" in the morning, and perhaps half an hour's exercise, weather permitting, in the middle of the day. The rest of the day is spent in a cell thirteen feet by seven feet, usually with a bunk bed, a single bed, two tables, one picture board, two small cupboards, three chairs, three chamber pots, and a tiny, barred window, giving little light and no ventilation. Only one of the three inmates at a time can stand up to stretch himself.

It is argued that this sort of situation is confined to prisons built in the Victorian era. It is also the case that only six of the major prisons have been built since 1900. The other forty-three were all constructed in Victorian times.

In local prisons, these conditions are, often at their most extreme, but one can occasionally find a slightly complex routine, where some sort of workshop is available. For example a prisoner at Oxford, one of the less oppressive prisons, will find himself locked up for only sixteen hours a day. His routine will be something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a.m.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>Taken by prison bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>Unlocked by landing screw, slopping out of twelve hours exercise - under supervision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>Collect breakfast, take it back to cell. Thrown razor blade to share. Locked-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>Cell unlocked, returns blade, and is escorted to work by another officer. Work comprises in the main, sewing mailbags.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>Escorted to exercise yard, under supervision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.15  -  Back to cell.

p.m.  
Noon - Queue for lunch - locked in cell until 1.30 p.m.
1.30  -  Half an hour's exercise
2.10  -  Work
3.50  -  Leave work, back to wing of prison
5.00  -  Queue for tea. Eat in cell. Banged-up for rest of night, except for a brief period between six and seven, when may get more water in a jug.

8.30  -  Lights out.

A prisoner in Oxford is allowed one visit of one hour a month, one letter a week, one change of clothes and one bath a week (unless he has a visit, then the prisoner keeps the same clothes for two weeks).

In the more modern Hull prison, the routine is more liberalised.

A day in the life of Dick Pooley, maximum security prisoner in Hull went something like this:

a.m.  
7.00  -  Cell doors unlocked and prisoners "slop out". Collect breakfast, which "wasn't worth eating".
8.00  -  Set to work on allotted job in the machine shop, woodwork room, or kitchen.
11.30 - Walk around the exercise yard in a circle for half-an-hour.

p.m.  
Noon - Lunch
1.00  -  Back to work, and perhaps half an hour of exercise late in the afternoon.
5.00  -  Tea, followed by evening classes from six until seven-thirty, (when available).
7.30- 7.00  -  Association, including television
9.00  -  Locked up for the night.

One of the most complicated routines is to be found at the "industrial" prison, Coldingley. A day in the life of an inmate was described like this:

a.m.  
6.30  -  Woken up - usually with a "Good morning, kid!" (Counted)
6.45  -  Must be up.
7.15  -  Breakfast - line up in a queue, given a tray, eat the meal in hall (counted).
7.30  -  Clean cell, make bed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>Work call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>Walk from the wing through a corridor of screws to the workshop. Counted out of the wing and into the workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>&quot;Clock-in&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>&quot;Clock off&quot;, counted out of workshop, searched (&quot;rubbed down&quot;) on way to wing; counted into a wing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.15</td>
<td>Lunch, followed by a voluntary, half an hour period of exercise, or taken back to cells.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>Line-up in wing (counted) and taken into workplace, (counted).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>Counted out work, rubbed down, counted into wing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>Banged-up for one hour, a &quot;quiet period&quot; of cell searches, interviews, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>Tea and biscuit in wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>Banged-up 'til next morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A prisoner is counted at least thirteen times every day, and officially, the night-watchman checks on cells every half an hour. Cells are searched every two weeks, and everybody is searched twice a day on leaving work. How this routine works in practice can be seen from this account of life in Coldingley, sent out by a young prisoner serving, amongst other things, for assault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;This is what is known as an &quot;industrial&quot; prison, the only one of its kind, in this country, whose main concern is to lead the prisoner into a good &quot;work habit&quot; and to instil in him respect for the concept of a &quot;fair day's work for a fair day's pay&quot;; also to attempt, as far as is possible within the confines of prison life, to prepare the prisoner for the fulfillment of an outline and useful role in society. To this end there is an extensive educational department, and such things as committees to decide on which films to show, which T.V. programmes to switch on, etc. This is a very interesting experiment, and someone will show you the little yellow book which is issued to visitors which explains the theory on which the place is based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are two factory buildings: one of which is concerned with the construction of, among other things, interlocking shelving and road signs. I am, at the moment, repair man in the road sign shop. The other building...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
houses an industrial laundry which does work for local hospitals and other government institutions. We do an eight-hour day, five days a week and are paid up to thirty-five shillings a week, on a piece-work basis. This compares well with other prisons - at Wormwood Scrubs I got four shillings a week.

It is a great relief to be here as against the Scrubs, where one is bound up for twenty-three hours a day - here we get out all day. The Scrubs in general, is a nasty place, although I had the advantage of sharing a cell with two people I already knew.

It's possible (actually 'necessary' is a better word) to rationalize a term in prison as an invaluable experience in terms of finding out a great deal about oneself and a certain amount about other people. I wouldn't go so far as to recommend it, but one has the chance to do a great deal of talking with some extraordinarily interesting people. One learns (for example), a little about how one's personality reacts when placed in an entirely new and inescapable situation; a lot about adaptability, resilience, trust, suspicion, and that kind of thing. You learn a lot about approach and methods of argument. Much of what I am finding out is alarming. But, on the other hand, when one makes a correct choice about some matter it gives a disproportionate amount of satisfaction. The most important things are to keep your mind working and at the same time to learn how to keep it under control, and in gear, as it were. In some ways, it is a kind of forced course in growing-up; some of which always has to be redone, I find...."
WORK

For a large number of prisoners, there is NO work at all. The majority of work which is available is of the most basic, most monotonous, and most soul-destroying type. Cleaning, gardening, kitchen work, sewing mailbags, putting gifts into cereal packets, assembling plastic components, making Government fall-out jackets, tents and sleeping bags, components for aerosol sprays, shipping cable, or dismantling telephone equipment, and tearing up rags - these are the mainsprings of modern prison industry. Average weekly pay is often under fifty pence a week for anything up to forty hours a week.

In the summer of 1973, PROP compiled a report on prison industries in Strangeways Prison, Manchester, with the help of serving prisoners. Inmates pointed out that the workshops were not subject to visits from Her Majesty's Factory Inspectors, and were consequently cold, dirty, inadequately ventilated, overcrowded, and dangerous. The work carried out was for both private enterprise, and for the prison and other government departments. The report, providing a picture of prison industry relevant to almost all British prisons, listed the following employers and jobs:

EXPRESS PRODUCTS LIMITED:

This company supplied work which consisted of counting and packing dustbin liner bags and chicken roasting bags to be retailed by Woolworths. The work was to count the bags into bundles of five (dustbin liners) and eight (chicken bags). These bags were then folded with wire sealers and placed in presentation boxes, sealed and then packed into cartons holding twelve boxes each. The cartons were sealed and stacked on pallets holding seventy cartons. Eighty cartons per day were being completed between eight men at the time of my release. But it has been known to complete more upon the demands of Longworth. The pay was a fixed rate of 72½p for 25 hours per
week for eighty cartons per day (between eight men). This same output
was still expected even if some of the prisoners on the job were on the
various call-ups i.e. parole, sick, visits, etc.

ULTRA: Manchester.
This company supplies the work but the actual destination of all completed
work is not known. Shirt boxes destined for Bobby Moore Fashions and Concord
golfing glove boxes have been done from time to time, also first aid 'band aid'
boxes, destination unknown. The work consists of folding and gluing shirt,
golf and driving glove boxes. Task rates have varied. Golf and driving
glove work has been on a fixed rate of 45p per 1000 per day at 25 hours a
week usually in group work. Shirt boxes have been paid on both the fixed
rate and the task rate from time to time, as for glove boxes. Task rates
were worked on 30 per hour per person at 25 hours for 25p a week, the pay
rate being scaled up to 9000 per week per person for 79p maximum.

NELSON LABELS (MANCHESTER) LIMITED:
This firm supplied the work which entailed threading and stringing labels.
Different degrees of work (relating to various types of labels) e.g. 100 an
hour, 150 an hour and 200 an hour per person at 25 hours per week for 25p.
Although the maximum possible earnings by anyone in no. 6 shop is 79p per
week it was found that the average pay was actually 25p-35p per week.

NORMIS END, MANCHESTER:
This company supply the work which included the wiring and assembling of
electric light drops. The expected output for a group of eight men
working 25 hours per week was 300 dozen per week for 72p per man.

METAL BOX COMPANY:
have supplied work assembling sifter tops and soap powder container tops.
This was short term contract work and no other details were available.
But pay would have been less than 50p per week.
JOHN MOORES MAIL ORDER:

supplied work during the summer of 1973. The work was to stick voucher stamps onto special offer contract forms. Task rates were 100 an hour per 25 hours a week for 25p scaled up to 79p per week per person.

GOVERNMENT WORK IN THE PRISON:

MAILBAGS:
The repairing of old and dirty mailbags by hand was done by some 160-200 prisoners in number 8 shop, acknowledged to be the worst and most depressing workplace in Strangeways. Prisoners had to repair 75 completely whole mailbags for 25 pence for a minimum 25 hour week. This work load had to be completed regardless of the state of the mailbags. Prisoners who worked on the mailbags, but with sewing machines, were paid up to sixty pence for the same work load.

WEAVING AND TAILORING:

This work entails the weaving and tailoring of prison clothing. Average earnings were around one pound a week - the highest possible wages in Strangeways. A prisoner had to pass an aptitude test, and have more than nine months to serve before being accepted in this shop.

SORTING AND SQUEEZING OF DISUSED PRISON CLOTHING:

This work was carried out in number 11 shop by the majority of prisoners. Average pay was 25-35 pence for a twenty-five hour week. Unwanted and damaged prison clothing was sorted, shredded and bagged for disposal to waste material merchants.

In conclusion, then, as far as could be ascertained, in the summer of 1973, the majority of prisoners in H.M.P. Strangeways, Manchester were earning less than fifty pence for a minimum working week of twenty-five hours.

With this in mind, it is worth recalling the words of the Hon. Acton Ayrton, M.P., the Chairman of the Society of Arts:
"If we had a great variety of employment for prisoners we should not commit the error of turning a great number of persons upon only one branch of industry, which they could not follow when they left prison, by providing them with various branches of industry, we should open to them a career of usefulness which they could pursue out of prison under the same conditions as they pursued it in prison... If we employed prisoners under conditions which they would not find to exist when they became free, all that we had built up while they were in prison, must fall to the ground...."

The Hon. Ayrton was speaking at a dinner on 19 May, 1871.
RECREATION:

"The big treat of the week is the cinema. Its the big reward, they use it as a bribe, All week they dangle it before you, to make you toe the line. At the cinema we let off steam, and the proof that that's what it is intended for is that the screws leave us more or less in peace. When the cat's away, the mice will play. During the film we get up, change seats, go and join our mates, barrack a bit, make a noise, and they don't say a word. The advantage of the cinema is that you meet guys you don't normally see, your friends who don't have the same exercise period as you. And then, there are women in the films. Then there are real tough guys in a film, you know, those who right wrongs, we cheer them on.

In the cinema, in the dark, there are also geezers who get people to suck them off. Its a rather delicate topic, but there is a tremendous amount of homosexuality in prison, its inevitable. Men who have never gone in for homosexual practices before they came into the nick, and who won't be queer once they's re out, do go in for it in prison."

Prisoners usually pay for the films from their prison earnings (this can be as much as eight pence per film). Other facilities such as table tennis, weight training, football, draughts, dominoes and television are available during the "association periods". Association usually runs from 5 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. Some prisons, particularly the local ones, have few recreational facilities, and in some cases, prisoners are not allowed to associate freely, mixing and talking in each other's cells. Cell hobbies are available in prisons catering for long-termers, although there are strict limits imposed on the type of hobbies allowed, and frequent cell-searches for contraband materials. It is common for stuffed toys sent out to a prisoner's family to be pulled apart in the name of security.
EDUCATION:

Some of the period set aside for recreation and association is taken up with educational courses. Courses offered, quality of teaching, availability of books, and facilities for taking external examinations vary enormously from no facilities at all, to full-time study instead of work. The educative process is viewed by the Prison Department as an important method of making better men and women. Officially, therefore 'education is a tool for a job, an aid to living'; it helps a man to acquire a skill or a profession, and helps to 'illumine the personality'.

Education is a constant source of tension and conflict between the poorly educated screws and the more articulate prisoners. Inmates who achieve any sort of academic qualifications often feel they do so DESPITE, and not because of the prison staff and facilities.

In many ways, education in prison appears to be designed to prevent the prisoner from acquiring an understanding of himself and his situation. Inside the front cover of every prison exercise book, for example, you will read that you are not permitted to write about yourself, prison conditions, your offences, sentences, other inmates' lives, or methods of committing crime. You must not depict the prison staff, prison conditions, or other prisoners. Naturally enough, you must not write, paint or draw anything obscene or against the security, good order and discipline of the prison.

Imagine for a moment that you have served a year inside, spending twenty-three out of twenty-four hours every day, every week in your cell. What could you produce in that exercise book which did not contravene the rules?

It is interesting to note the effects which full-time study can have on a prisoner. A lifer wrote:

"I spend my day now reading and writing essays, and observing the people around me living in the day-dream world of an academic
 institution. There are guys down here doing all sorts of courses, and who have notions and ideas of what students ought to be, and how students ought to act, so they put up all sorts of fronts. They talk about with clean pressed gear, ties, smoking pipes, assessing what Heath is up to, and condemning society, left, right and centre, and all the time slaving away to get some qualification which will enable them to be some sort of success in that society. They don't study and read books and articles because they enjoy it, buy only as a means to an end".

But not all the educational facilities are as innocent as they seem. A prisoner explains:

"One of the reasons I started studying was to help me get out sometime, but it seems that the result has been just the opposite. But what is even more irritating is the fact that one is being used to justify the set-up here (read the report of the Prison Dept. for 1971). To complicate matters, we are now in the middle of a private purge and clampdown which has had the effect of interrupting study habits which I have got used to for the last nine months. Again this is diabolical because I've got exams in four weeks. An irritating point is that I know I am being used by them but when I try and get some sort of compromise from them, it's made clear that I'm a convict. Well, o.k.

In that book of Sillitoe's ('Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner'), this kid at Borstal was a good runner. Every year there was a cross-country race involving all the local schools and the Borstal. Now this kid was a dead cert to win it, so they made him train for about six months, getting up at six in the morning, etc. He agreed to cooperate with training because he enjoyed running, and it got him out for a couple of hours. Everyone was expecting him to win, he could win the blue ribbon and bring honour, glory, etc. to the Borstal and to the staff. Anyway, the race came and he was far ahead as he approached the winning tape. All the staff were cheering wildly, and generally looking pleased with themselves. The kid ran to a couple of yards from the tape, and stepped. He refused to cross the line.

For suppose that I'm angry about something, I will get a call-up from the hospital to have a talk with the psychiatrist for a few minutes "Because he enjoys having a talk with me." Why is it that every time I am involved in some scene or other I get called up for a chat? I had a visit a few weeks ago when my visitor was selling PROP magazines outside the gate. The next day, I was called, almost immediately, I was asked, in an indirect way, about how my friends were getting on or something like that. Now I don't mind talking about myself but I do resent it when people start attempting to pry into my friends.

Anyway, I've decided to take my exams this year and then leave them 'til I get out. Part of the reason that I am in a vulnerable position is that they have control over the access to relevant knowledge and information, i.e. we are kept in the dark.

The only methods they feel able to use are coercion and threat. Even when there is no threat on my part, the fact that I've been quite successful and cooperative with my work means absolutely nothing. The fault inevitably lies on our side, there's no chance of a discussion, it's a one way monologue from above. My is it
that the only method they can adopt is coercion? What personality variables are involved with people like that?

Sometimes it is called pro-social aggression, extreme adherence to rules to attack other people. They are afraid to be anti-social, so they use rules, etc. to attack and damage people, only this way they get medals. Sometimes its called an Authoritarian Personality, which is said to arise out of extreme parental rejection leading to repressed hostility. This hostility finds expression in adult life in attacks on minority groups, Jews, Negroes, young people, convicts, etc. The authoritarian personality pattern includes highly conventional behaviour, destructiveness and cynicism, desire for power, etc. Now I'm sure you know lots of people who are highly conventional and conforming, adopt hard attitudes to minorities, rely on officially sanctioned power and coercion to give expression to their hostility.

We are imprisoned, investigated, treated, psycho-analysed, punished, etc. for giving expression to hostility. Well, let us have some equality here. Let us have those people investigated, treated, psycho-analysed, imprisoned, etc. . . .
FOOD:

Food in prison is generally awful. It always has been, and no doubt always will be a massive sound for prisoners' complaints. The diet is restricted and uninteresting. What may sound quite delightful when printed up as a menu (a typical Home Office ploy to counteract complaints about the food) is often revolting. Many prisoners would echo the writing of Victor Serge, discussing food in French prisons:

"Around four o'clock, a second meal. The same soup, plus a dish of vegetables, alternately beans, mashed green peas, mashed potatoes, rice. These vegetables are boiled, salted, apparently without any fat added; this is bare subsistence, a tasteless nutrient which you absorb out of necessity. The mashed purées are gelatinous, shiny like glue. Sometimes they serve you kidney beans which break your teeth and make a lovely metallic clank when you drop them into your mess-tin from a height of a few inches. On Thursdays and Sundays, the little bit of meat juice which they add to this administrative pittance is enough to make it delectable. On the latter day, 'eighty grammes of cooked beef' are added to the evening vegetables: a few thin scraps of cold meat strung out on a wooden stick, or threaded on to a tough piece of tendon."

(Victor Serge, "Men in Prison").

The weekly rations in prison are listed (approximately) in the table below. The diet is carefully designed to provide little more than basic sustenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ration</th>
<th>Weekly Rations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacon</td>
<td>5 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans, haricot</td>
<td>4 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>4 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custard Powder</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dripping</td>
<td>½ oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>6 lb 13 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit, dried</td>
<td>3½ ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jam</td>
<td>3 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmalade</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrup</td>
<td>2 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margarine</td>
<td>12½ ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat, preserved</td>
<td>2 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats, rolled</td>
<td>8 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas, marrowfat</td>
<td>3½ ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas, split</td>
<td>1½ ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sago/Semolina</td>
<td>2 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1 lb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>2½ ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinegar</td>
<td>1 fluid oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Vegetables</td>
<td>1½ lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>10 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions</td>
<td>3 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>7 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other root vegetables</td>
<td>4 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish - headless</td>
<td>1 lb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat, fresh per head per week</td>
<td>23p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat sausage</td>
<td>6 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>3½ pints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>2 ozs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prisoners discussing prison meals have frequently complained that some foods are served in "a dirty state", particularly the vegetables. Meals are often presented in a 'pig-sull' fashion, meaning, for example curried stews and dumpling stews are thickly mixed with vegetables and all other non-eaten (foods returned from the wings) or wasted foods. It is impossible to determine the exact contents.

In June 1972 one prisoner wrote:

"Keeping me from some nice grub would indeed be a suitable punishment at the moment, as for the last two or three weeks, I've not been going to meals but living on what I can buy which, as you can guess, isn't a lot. The reason is because the food is diabolical that to face it everyday is a wind up. I am not eating it again until it gets better, and to tell the truth, I don't care much whether it does".

In November 1972, 'The Times' reported that, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, the Minister concerned had stated that:

"It costs £2.50p per week to feed each of the six security dogs at Leicester prison, but only £1.20p per week for each prisoner".
LETTERS:

A convicted prisoner is normally allowed to send one letter a week. He may purchase a "canteen" letter which costs full price, in most prisons, and in a few, he may send more than one 'canteen' letter a week. Officially, a prisoner is allowed to receive one letter a week, although most prison regimes allow him to receive more. A prisoner is only allowed to write to, and receive letters from relatives and close friends. Outsiders who are not relatives are required to ask permission of the Governor to correspond with the inmate. A man is not allowed to write to his M.P., to write to his legal advisers, or to petition the Home Office unless he has been given permission to do so by the Governor. All letters, incoming and outgoing are censored by a prison officer, who is empowered to recommend to the Governor that a prisoner rewrites a letter or that a letter be stopped altogether from leaving the prison. Similarly, he can prevent an incoming letter reaching the prisoner. In theory, the inmate is supposed to be told if any mail has been stopped; in practice, prisoners are often unaware that mail has even been sent to them. This causes unnecessary stress particularly to their families and friends.

Communication between the prisoner and the outside world is limited enough as it is, without the unnecessary restrictions put on letter-writing. At Plunderstone, a highly successful experiment was conducted allowing mail inside and outside the prison without censorship. The report and recommendations of the Advisory Committee leading the experiment have yet to be acted upon. In the meantime, letters continue to be stopped for the most trivial and absurd of reasons. Interfering with an inmate's mail is one of the most insidious forms of coercion and punishment.

"I wrote to you on Monday, but to-day, (Wednesday), I was handed a letter sheet by an officer who feebly told me I had to rewrite it because 'there must have been something wrong with it'. I was going to find out this afternoon what it was all about, but there's been some trouble, so I'll leave it until tomorrow, It appears that
someone objected to something in my letter, but I have not been
told by anyone in authority what is objectionable or why. I
haven't been told why the letter was detained for more than forty
eight hours before I was told to rewrite it.

It's getting a bit too much, but this time I'm going to take it
further. I'm getting a bit tired of my personal mail being
interfered with. It is a further example of arbitrary misuse
of power, but at the same time they wish to hide from the outside
that they do inspect, censor, and interfere with personal mail.
There are certain things which they object to being written, but
they do not wish anyone outside the prison to be aware of their
activities.

The supposed idea of prison is to bring about a resocialisation
and rehabilitation of people like myself. We are supposed to develop
a trusting relationship with people in authority, and they are
supposed to help us and explain to us rationally and logically why it
is that our behaviour is not acceptable to society.

They are supposed to function as acceptable citizens on whom we
can model our behaviour. It serves no purpose whatsoever if they
adopt an authoritarian, coercive role and command obedience and
compliance in all situations. In that last letter, I was complaining
bitterly about their actions concerning my mail. Nothing I wrote was
untrue as I saw it. The rational and logical explanation I receive
concerning my behaviour is 'you've got to rewrite this'. This in its
totality is meant to convey to me what is unacceptable and why. Then
I asked why I had to rewrite it, the logical and rational answer was,
'they say you've got to'.

The only resocialisation or rehabilitation I've ever enjoyed have
been through my own efforts, and about half a dozen other people.
Almost all I've ever received from prison is brutalisation, oppression,
and brainwashing. I've encountered an authority which believes it
is always correct by some divine right.

But they are not always right, in many cases they are wrong and I will
not accept their explanations fully, unless they appear to be based on
reason. Their mode of life, their beliefs, etc. are O.K. if one
has been brought up to be a robot or automaton, who will unthinkingly
accept orders and commands, but it is not O.K. for me."

Some prison officers take great delight in recalling the private and intimate
contents of prisoners' letters. They often stop letters which they regard
as 'sloppy', (the inmate expressed his love for his wife in a way that
didn't appeal to the screw). Other excuses border on the absurd. A
prisoner noticed that one of his letters had a series of small holes down
the left-hand side of the paper. He guessed that something had been seen
on, and read that his girlfriend had sent him a tiny piece of the material
of which she was making a dress. He asked the officer why this material
had been removed. 'On the grounds that it might be impregnated with drugs',
came back the reply. The material was put into the prisoner's 'property' to be collected on his release!

Laurie Taylor and Stanley Cohen, in "Psychological Survival", took a random selection of the reasons for letters written by prisoners being referred to the Governor by the censor: 'A disturbed letter'; 'Complains and moans'; 'Page 2 of letter to brother in Borstal. Talk of C.I.D. pig'; 'Complains about no tea for visitors. We are inhuman'; 'Applying for two books on occult. Not knowing this inmate, I wonder about their suitability for him'; 'Top of 2nd page "Three quarters of the staff are idiots"'.

The authors were led to the belief that:

"The whole subject of letter-writing can easily become one which involves the prisoner in endless frustration. A form of censorship operates which in effect prevents the prisoner from writing about the one subject that matters most to him: his own situation."

The following letter was originally stopped:

"The weather has been beautiful and I've been getting outside in it quite a lot. It's good to see the trees sprouting... Its amazing the difference a bit of sunshine can make to one's general morale, well-being, etc. The birds are doing hazardous things like building nests in the top of barbed wire fences; and there is a totally insane pair of thrushes which has decided to set up home on the top of the main search-light tower in the compound..."

The official reason this lyrical piece was prevented from reaching the outside world, was that it mentioned details of the prison security, which could be used in an escape attempt.

Many letters are censored for being "obscene", usually meaning that four-letter words are in evidence. A prisoner was quick to note a ruling in the U.S. Supreme Court:

"I have just read an interesting little piece in the 'Guardian' on Tuesday which I thought you'd be somewhat interested in..... It said, "The U.S. Supreme Court ruled yesterday that the word 'fuck' is constitutionally protected speech and may not be made a criminal offence. Last week a London magistrate also ruled that 'fuck' was not obscene."

This particular man had been having a lot of trouble with his nail; it was being interfered with for no apparent reason. On asking about a letter posted to him, on or around 23 May, he was told by the censor, "we
have no record of receiving a letter for you on or about this date."

The prisoner then requested permission to write to the C.P.O. to ask if they could trace this letter which was posted and correctly and legibly addressed. Permission was refused.

Later in the year, he was told to rewrite yet another letter.

"As you can see by the bit of classified code at the top of the page, this letter is a 're-write', which means that the original letter was censored because it was in defiance of some Home Office regulation, etc., and that if I continued "to use such objectionable language the letter will be forfeited." Again, I was not told which part(s) were objectionable, so I assume that no-one is under any obligation to say what is objectionable. It would be interesting to know the legal position concerning the validity of classifying certain words and expressions as objectionable, insulting, or whatever, especially when a certain four-letter expletive was recently judged not to be offensive. It seems to put too much arbitrary power into parts of the bureaucracy, because their interpretation appears to be in direct contradiction to the judgement of one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace."
VISITS:

A prisoner is allowed one visit of one hour every eight weeks, according to the Prison Rules of 1961. Frequency and length of visits vary from prison to prison almost as much as the facilities available for visitors. In places such as Wormwood Scrubs, prisoners have a 'closed' visit, which involves sitting in one of a row of cubicles, separated from the visitor by a thick sheet of glass. In order to hold a conversation one must shout, above the general din of everybody shouting; no physical contact is allowed. In the modern prisons, visits take place in the canteen, at a table with a cup of tea, to promote a more informal atmosphere. Three people may come in on a visit, although this can create problems.

"I really enjoyed seeing you, John and James last weekend. I have a kind of love-hate relationship with visits. It's unbelievably good to see people every fourteen days, but correspondingly hard to communicate. The more you look forward to something the more divorced from expectations when it actually arrives. However - just one of the hassles involved; I do think it will be made easier by keeping numbers down somewhat, as I explained in my last letter."

At all visits, prison officers are present. Some try to stay out of sight, but others make a point of listening to every word, and generally making their presence felt. At every prison, visitors complain about the lack of a waiting room; many, with young children, have to line-up outside the prison wall, in all weathers, rain, hail, snow or shine, waiting for their visit. There are few facilities for families which have to travel long distances to see inmates. One of the greatest strains in the family stability can be the difficulty of visiting and keeping in personal contact with each other. A report by MACRO in July 1970 emphasised this, and concluded:

"Too many prisoners' wives have the bitter feeling that no-one involved in the penal system has any concern for them, nor any understanding of their need to preserve personal dignity and respect in situations which they can see to be just as difficult and embarrassing for others as for themselves."

In such a situation, imprisonment extends across the walls to ensnare the family of the convicted. The growth of prisoner's wives action groups
is partly in response to the refusal of the prison authorities to seriously review the present arrangements for visiting.

**PRISONERS' FAMILY:**

In one of the few studies of prisoners' families, Pauline Morris found it significant that the marital status of prisoners is considered so unimportant that the Home Office Statistics Branch has no record of how many men in prison are married, divorced, separated, or single. The problems facing the prisoner's wife are enormous, and for many, insurmountable. The wife of an ex-prisoner has written a clear account of the difficulties and torments she suffered whilst her husband was inside. Her analysis focuses on three particular hardships and deprivations: financial, emotional, and paternal.

**FINANCIAL:**

Her full-time job paid only £13 a week (1971) and her weekly budget included:

- £1.00 Gas
- £1.00 Electricity
- 50p Rates
- 50p Insurance
- 1.25 Fares to visit husband (per month)
- 35p Milk
- 2.00 Food
- 50p H.P. re. clothes for son and self

£6.10

On top of this she paid £5 per week in nursery fees and fares to work. This left less than one pound a week from her net wages for emergencies.

She wrote:

"But due to increased fuel bills during the winter to heat such an old cottage (an extra 50p per week for paraffin), a rise of 50p in the nursery fee, increased fares to and from work and my husband's transfer to Strangeways, Manchester, my financial state was becoming disastrous. I had claimed Family Income Supplement and so was now entitled to free milk (1 pint daily) but my fares to visit my husband had increased dramatically from £1.00 to approximately £3.00. I also had to meet a bill of £100 for essential repair work to my house. I was fortunate in that I was able to borrow the money interest free from a relative with a monthly repayment of £10.00. This, however,
I should not have been able to meet had it not been for the fact that the matron of the nursery was extremely kind in reducing the fees (not at my request) for me to £2.00 or sometimes £3.00 per week. Nevertheless, my food bill had to be reduced so I allowed £1.50 weekly to feed myself and my son for the last 18 months of my husband's sentence.

My largest item, however, which was quite unable to be met from my income was my child's clothing. I had budgeted 50p a week for my own and my son's clothing including repairs and cleaning bills. And though this was the maximum I could afford it was totally inadequate. However, the Probation Office was able to assist with items of good second-hand clothing for my son but items such as children's shoes and coats at £2.00 and £4.00 respectively were an enormous drain on my meagre resources.

EMOTIONAL:

Unlike any other group of women alone, for example widows or divorcees, the prisoner's wife does not find sympathy from those with whom she comes into contact. Society finds the prisoner's wife 'guilty through association'.

"As a prisoner's wife I was extremely isolated socially. I have often thought that I may as well have been locked up too. Our home became my prison. I did not meet other people of my own age through my employment, I had no contact with neighbours and in fact my only visitor was the voluntary worker from the probation office, whose visits dwindled quickly to approximately half an hour every two or three months until half way through my husband's sentence when, due to her own marital problems, she stopped coming."

PATERNAL:

Little or no advice or information about possible 'paternal deprivation' is made available to the prisoners’ wife by the official bodies. Occasional references to the possible undesirable effects of bringing a child to visit him or her father were made, but there was never any advice about the consequences of a child not visiting the father for a number of years. In her account of her existence, the prisoner's wife noted how her two year old son appeared to associate his father with sorrow:

He began to have nightmares always resulting in him crying bitterly for his father. His behaviour at nursery changed; whereas before
he mixed freely with the other children, I was told that now he would isolate himself to a corner and be found to be talking to his daddy. By this stage I had told him that daddy worked away. He appeared to accept this, and of course we visited my husband, so there was no question that he should think daddy had rejected him as perhaps might be the belief of a child of for example divorced parents.

There were occasions when I literally did not have the fare to go to visit my husband. Consequently our half hour visit had to be postponed for as long as three weeks on one V.O. This meant that it was often 6-7 weeks before we saw him instead of the regulation 28 days permitted. And to a child seven weeks of being deprived from seeing his father is a great length of time. Visiting to Armley Prison, Leeds was straightforward and involved about an hour's travelling each way. However, when my husband was transferred to Strangeways after 8 months of his sentence we then faced a 3 hour journey for one half hour visit followed by a 4 hour journey home as after waiting in the prison for sometimes as long as an hour, we had missed our train connections. Invariably after travelling for 3 hours plus the waiting time in the prison, the last idea to appeal to my son was to sit still for yet another half hour with his father.

In the summer of 1973, the wife of a prisoner serving eighteen years set up the first "Prisoners Wives Union", (FWU), to "campaign for better conditions for ourselves, our families and our husbands." The nine-point charter of demands included "Trade Union rates of pay for work done in prisons by our husbands, to enable them to support their wives and families, and fully franked insurance cards upon their release; better visiting facilities, allocation to a prison nearer home, and the abolition of censorship of mail." Perhaps the most controversial demand was for "Compulsory and more home leave for our husbands, and special facilities for long-term prisoners to enable us to fulfil our marriage vows."

At the request of the FWU, Michael Meacher M.P. asked the Secretary of State responsible for prisons, Mark Carlisle, whether "in view of the desirability of preserving the marriage relationship for the purposes of rehabilitation, of the needs of prisoners wives, of the need to reduce homosexuality in prison, and because of the "trend towards longer sentences" he would look at a limited experimental introduction of conjugal visiting."

To Conservative cheers, Mr. Carlisle rejected any introduction of such
facilities because the idea of conjugal visits is one "which is wholly unacceptable to a great many people". Conjugal visiting facilities are available for certain categories of prisoners in a number of countries, including U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Scandinavia. Dr. Norman Haynes has described the facilities available in Mexico as

"a realistic method of dealing with the sex problem. Not only does it combat homosexuality, it often changes the entire behaviour of a convict... the family is regarded as a fundamental institution. Anything that tends to destroy the family unit meets with opposition, anything that strengthens it is supported. It is believed that the conjugal visit keeps couples together."

At the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, where conjugal visiting facilities have been available for more than sixty years, the prisoners built their own "family visiting" quarters, inside the prison boundaries. The prison superintendent, John Collier, has found few complaints, and over half of the 164 prisoners at Parchman included in a survey to discover the effects of conjugal visits, rated "keeping marriages from breaking up" as the most helpful result.

The Prisoners' Wives Union now campaigns actively for the setting up of family visiting centres akin to those established in California's "Family Visiting Project", begun in April 1971, and initiated at San Quentin, Soledad, Tehachapi, and the Corona rehabilitation centre. Again, officials are careful to point out that the visits are intended to nurture the family unit.

In August 1971, "Life" magazine ran a feature on the Soledad programme, and recorded the views of one of the first Soledad inmates involved in the 48-hour visits. The only restrictions on his visit were that he had to physically present himself to a prison guard three times a day, and he was not permitted alcohol. This man was convicted of shooting a guest at a neighbour's party in 1968. His sentence is five years to life. To him, his visits with his family mean that "some of the identity that a prison and a uniform take from me has been put back." His marriage is better:
"Even if you have a solid marriage when you get arrested, you soon start wondering just how long your wife is going to hold out. This programme has enabled me and my wife to talk about the problems of being apart. And it's given me a taste of what it's like to be my own master again."

This man spent three days, eating his wife's cooking, just relaxing, playing with the kids and growing closer to his family.

Lawrence E. Wilson, deputy director of the Department of Corrections, California has said:

"Our parole agents, in conducting the field investigations prior to parole release, find deep cleavages and almost inseparable estrangement of wives and children towards the husband and father who is away in prison. It is our contention that we do not protect society by contributing to the dissolution of the family unit. Family visiting is an attempt by the Californian prison administrators to provide an opportunity for the inmate to visit his wife and children in a relaxed, normal-like family setting."

Many wives have expressed to the prison staff at Tehachapi that they were not at all sure that they wanted, or felt able, to continue their marriage. However, after having family visiting, they were able to strengthen their marriage and have abandoned separation plans.

The Prisoners' Wives Union wholeheartedly endorsed the ideas of Dr. Peter Reddaway, senior lecturer at the L.S.E., when he wrote:

"Is it really so difficult to equip prisons to provide for conjugal visits? And could it really not be left to the couples to decide whether or not to put up with any embarrassment or indignity which might be involved? To put it another way, should not the cost of personal unhappiness and potentially bad social consequences which the present system constantly incurs outweigh the financial and administrative cost of reforming it?"

In the meantime, thousands of wives would echo the sentiments of one young woman who has argued,

"The prisoner's wife commits only one crime: we love our husbands. And for this you punish us and our children, as much as you punish and demand retribution for our husband's crime."
"While you are in prison, your welfare officer comes to worm out your secrets. What did you do? Why did you do it? You're here for your own good. We'll soon see that you get put in the right category. They are like a one-man court, looking at your record, passing judgements and giving out pep-talks."

Increasingly, these prison administrators are used as the "soft guys" by the authorities. It is a bit like the old police routine of interrogation. Two officers, one shouts and bawls, threatens to lock you about. The second officer comes in, offers you a cig. Smoothes things over. "Watch that other fellow, he can be a bit nasty. But you can tell me... I'll see you alright...." It is a tired and tried technique.

One of the most important of these people is the psychiatrist.

"I got a call-up from a psychiatrist last week, who must be about the twentieth psychiatrist I've seen in the last seven years. I think I have had a little experience in handling psychiatrists. Anyway, he said he had had this message from the doctor here which said that I had "personality difficulties" in dealing with staff, aggressive, anti-authority feelings, etc. I was a little puzzled about how all this could be said about me because I have been here for two years, and have had one ten-minute interview with the doctor since then. I remember filling in a routine personality inventory when I first came here but that is all.

I cannot understand on what evidence they can draw such conclusions. I suspect that staff on the wing put reports in about me, the contents of which I can only speculate. It seems fairly logical to assume that these may be responsible for a doctor being able to produce a personality report on me. It seems a little strange, not to mention being unscientific, for a doctor to accept the psychological opinions of unqualified people without interviewing me to discuss and examine me in some way. Furthermore, it appears a little arrogant of these people, something of which I am accused, to assume that "the problem" lies solely within my personality. They assume immediately that there is no objective basis in reality for my feelings towards authority.

The basic idea, supposedly, of a penal system is to produce a logical, scientific diagnosis of an individual's problem and to produce logical and scientific and objective treatment programmes. Here this system breaks down is in the rigidity of the system and some of the people in it. Ideally, the system should act in a rational manner, but the fact is that in many instances it is wrong. It must, however, maintain the image of infallibility and consistency. It must never be seen as changing its policies as a result of external pressure or criticism. It is because of this, I suspect, that they have made me see a psychiatrist.

They read the things I write in letters, they see I don't choose to relate to staff of all kinds and they have only one
category, a stereotyped category, to put me in. Arrogant, uncooperative, personality difficulties, etc. They don't ask me anything before such a diagnosis, only after, when I've been categorised. I can't help suspecting that the events of the last couple of months have had some effect on all this. In certain cases, I have asked for explanations of their behaviour, I've criticised them and complained about them. I have written to an M.P. about them. I've put forward rational criticisms and asked rational questions and asked for rational explanations. All I've got is irrational dogma, which I can't accept. I don't want a one-way relationship with them. I'm not interested in a monologue with the people in authority here. Communication is a two-way thing but here they want it all their own way. Because of this, I don't want to play their silly games, they can't help me because they are frightened to relate to people like myself in a rational manner. As a result of all this, the system looks at me and my questions and criticisms and comes up with the solution that I have personality difficulties with authority.

I have difficulties with authority because they are irrational, dogmatic and insensitive, not because I may have hated my father as a child of three months or whatever. This is what I meant before about psychiatry and psychology being culturally biased in favour of the middle class power structure.

Obedience, cooperation, compliance, acceptance of authority are middle class values and hence are thought to be normal. Thus, anyone who questions, criticises, opposes authority is defined as abnormal, having personality difficulties, etc. I don't deny there's a problem there, but I disagree with them about who is chief cause and how it can be remedied. Why does psychiatry need to use grossly inclusive labels of behaviour such as "psychopath", "personality problem", "anti-authority", etc.? Do they fear being exposed as charlatans?...."
MEDICAL CARE:

Every prison is responsible for the health of all the inmates. The prison doctor is supposed to be readily available and co-operative. His task is difficult, one recognises that, but this does not excuse the gross neglect on the part of some doctors which has caused untold suffering, and been a direct cause of the death of a prisoner, on many occasions. Examples of what is criminal neglect are recorded below.

Timothy Noonan, one of those involved at Parkhurst, was told that he will spend the rest of his sentence in solitary confinement. On Monday, 26 June 1971, he suffered a heart attack in his cell at Gartree's maximum security block. The ever-vigilant warders called the prison doctor, who diagnosed Noonan's condition, and ordered the standard prison cure - ASPIRIN water.

The next day, the senior medical officer accused Noonan of malingering, but still ordered more aspirin water. Noonan called to the warders, rang his alarm bell, but was totally ignored. By the Thursday, Timothy Noonan was unable even to lift a finger. His neighbour finally attracted the attention of the warder by smashing on his door with a heavy chair. Immediately, this prisoner's cell was filled with the "heavy mob" of prison officers. He somehow managed to convince them of Noonan's plight.

Having exhausted their supply of fully qualified medical practitioners, the hospital, were forced to call in a doctor from the Royal Infirmary at Leicester. This doctor examined Norman, immediately concluded that he had suffered a heart attack. Within 20 minutes the prisoner had been rushed to Leicester Royal Infirmary and connected to a heart machine.

Timothy Noonan later died whilst under prison medical care.

A prisoner's wife complained to the Home Office that the Governor of a London prison ignored her husband's request for urgent medical attention. She finally won her battle, and the prison doctor diagnosed a harmless tumour on the prisoner's body surface. He added that there was no illness, but that the inmate would be taken nonetheless to see a
surgeon in another prison. Eighteen months later, the prisoner's cries for help were finally acknowledged, and he was taken to another prison. Later that week, his wife received a letter explaining that her husband had had his operation - for a small abdominal hernia. The note added that the woman should not worry, because her husband was only being given light work to do.

"I was thinking last night how much places like this really do brutalize people. I had noticed this before, that prisoners seemed less sympathetic towards suffering, etc. Or perhaps that's not fair, but what I mean is that they learn not to do anything like protesting against forced suffering. None of the Good Samaritan thing here because somehow the faculty of sympathy and outrage and suffering seems to be impaired in many prisoners. I am sure this is produced by prison itself. There are many examples I could quote, but one particularly disturbing example happened on Wednesday night.

All I know about it is hearsay, but what apparently happened was that an elderly prisoner fell ill during the night. It is suggested that he rang his bell to get some help but that this was ignored by the people in charge. It appears that he continued to ring his bell and bang on the door, but it seems he was ignored. He then collapsed on the floor. It has been suggested that he was not attended to until seven the following morning, when we are unlocked. It is again suggested that medical attention was further delayed until around nine o'clock, when an ambulance was called for. Apparently, he died on the way to hospital.

Now there are several extremely disturbing aspects about this incident, but it seems very few people are willing to do anything positive about it. It seems to be accepted as "just something which happens in prison", and when one talks to the staff about it, one gets that "don't want to know" look. Of course, it's extremely difficult for us to initiate any protest. But what should one do about a case like this where there are grave moral principles concerned? Now I was punished and sent to prison for causing the death of a man, I had offended against society's written legal, and unwritten moral codes. If it is proved in this case on Wednesday that there has been some sort of negligence, what is the position then? Is not one entitled to feel bitter and cynical in such a case?

There seems to be a choice of action here. Either one feels outraged and angry about possible negligence in which case one is forced by one's principles to do something about it. Or, alternatively, one can acquiesce, to the norms of the prison situation where one does not complain or protest because of the implications of such action, in which case one is allowing other people to make one's decisions. It would be acting in very bad faith. So really there is no choice, is there?...."

"I wrote on Thursday night, and as far as I know you should get this letter O.K."
Everything is just groovy here, everyone is so helpful, and as all those middle-class rear-admirals and country gents are complaining about in the papers, we convicts are having a great time in here. The food is excellent and really we have it too easy. I mean, I am only here for about ten years which is no time really.

I suppose you are overcome with grief over the latest national tragedy at Blackpool. Of course, its much worse than N. Ireland because the only people being shot there are thieving Catholics who are in open revolt against the Queen.

I noticed the other day in the papers, the reports and pictures of all those civic funerals for those Catholics. They had the brass bands playing, the crowds in their thousand singing 'Abide With Me'. All the respectable middle classes in England were voicing their outrage against those trigger-happy soldiers who have murdered a dozen or so Catholics. I noticed also they're begun a petition for the re-introduction of the death penalty for soldiers who use Irish Catholics for shooting practice.

I remember also, a couple of months ago, how they were in uproar over the death of an escaped Borstal boy. He happened to die from brain damage which was quite unrelated to the incident, a few days before, when his head was battered against a lamp-post a dozen times by the police who arrested him. They had to use force, naturally enough, because the kid was resisting arrest. That kid also got a civic funeral with the brass bands and 'Abide With Me'."
PAROLE:

From the 1 April 1968, a parole scheme was introduced into British prisons. It was pointed out by the Home Office in an "information to Prisoners" sheet, that nobody would be entitled to parole. The method of selection involved a local review committee for each prison. A member of this committee would review the applicant giving him a chance to say why he deserves parole, rather than judging the inmates' suitability. The applicant could also make a written statement to add to this interview. The Committee would then report to the Home Office, and it would be the Prison Department who decided whether or not to refer the case to the parole board. Their recommendations, after interview, would be final. There is no right or privilege of appeal, no provision for legal aid to fill in the application. No question of calling witnesses to support one's case.

The Home Office strenuously denied that parole was a "carrot" for all the good asses who obeyed all prison orders, without question. However, the 'Information to Prisoners' sheet did point out that, whilst parole could not be earned simply by keeping out of trouble when inside, people found guilty of serious misconduct were unlikely to be paroled. In practice, prisoners are kept on tenterhooks waiting, often for four months, to hear the result of their application.

A prisoner recalls a letter he wrote on making his first application:

"I'm in a rather bored and strangely listless mood, so I really don't know what's going on. I think part of the reason is I've been having some flu, etc., which is always a little depressing physically and mentally. However, I suppose that's only part of it. I think I know what's causing it, but I'm not sure how to tackle it yet.

I had an interview with a member of the local review committee, concerning the parole thing. It is only a formality really when we are asked if there is anything which we wish to add to what I wrote on my representations. I filled four pages in, giving reasons why I thought I should be released. I put forward such a perfect, logical case that they have absolutely no logical reason for not giving me parole! Unfortunately it doesn't always work like that. Anyway he (the interviewer) said I should hear in about four or five months, which seems somewhat optimistic."
However, I am pessimistic about the outcome, mainly because of the apparent inability of there being objective reports compiled.* I have always said that people here don't understand me or people like me. The thing is that they have no objective evidence to support their views and superficial observations, they are influenced by purely superficial factors, and have some psychological predisposition to misinterpret people like me. It is a similar situation outside, there are obviously groups of people who are recognizable as being different from "them". We act as a kind of scapegoat for their psychological inadequacies, a convenient group who can be morally judged and stigmatized. I think that we seem to show some signs of disorder, anti-convention, etc. which makes them uncomfortable; and they must impose some sort of order on us. We should conform or be made to conform because it is their God-given duty to act as society's guardian.

The real reason is that we frighten them because our disorder, anti-conventional attitudes, which rejects much of the phony part of life, reminds them of their unconventional, "anti-social", immoral behaviour, feelings, and desires. They only glimpse these undesirable parts of themselves occasionally, when they see people like us. They tell themselves that we are wrong, anti-social, sick, etc., and that our anti-social beliefs must be controlled.

But it is not our beliefs that they think should be controlled, they are fighting to control theirs which they dare not express. This is what they are controlling when they become irrationally authoritarian. They do have what is called an authoritarian personality, they show excessive deference or respect towards authority (Police, Queen, Government, etc.), are excessively conforming (immaculately dressed, shaven, perfumed, etc.), and are excessively sensitive to the opinions of their group. They are morbidly concerned with superficial appearances, hence their conforming dress, short hair, clean face, etc. They hold popular, well accepted opinions. The thing is they are vitally concerned to put on a conventional, superficial appearance to hide from other people, really only other people like themselves. The sad fact is that what they are trying to hide is not all that bad at all. If they would only be themselves, they would be much happier, they are only half alive.

So I can understand why I am not understood, and try not to feel bitter about it, because they are unconscious victims of a sick society, just as I am a conscious victim...."

As he presumed, the writer did not get parole on this occasion. He was given no indication whatsoever as to why his application had been rejected. He was not allowed access to the reports made about him, and was not able to answer any of the criticisms which must have been made against him.

* The "Information to Prisoners" sheet omitted to mention that reports from the landing officer, the principal officer, the probation officer and others would also go to the Parole Board, as part of the application.
For the prisoner who is on parole, life is not always easy. He must report regularly to his probation officer, live and work in approved conditions, and disassociate himself completely from contact with other criminals. Until his parole runs out, and he is formally discharged, he can be recalled at any time, for any offence, or 'attempted' offence, and be re-imprisoned without any trial, and without any opportunity to defend himself.

Home leave prior to release gives an opportunity for the prisoner ending his sentence to come out for a few days to help in the transition from one world to another. Again, the procedure for selection is open to abuse. Nonetheless, many prisoners have found this parole useful, particularly if going for an interview for a job on release. What is it like to emerge into the outside world after perhaps years locked away in a "total institution"?

"Well, that was strange. So that's what it is like to be outside again. Or maybe it isn't - because it was distorted by the consciousness of being about to come back. But anyway, it wasn't at all what I had expected. I may sound peculiar, but it was both more than and less than I'd thought - bigger in the sense of being a powerful qualitative steam-hammer, and smaller in the sense that everything, including myself, seemed to be very much the same as it was. For some reason or other, I thought that my feeling would colour and change the appearance of things, which it didn't. Perhaps there are these two elements - firstly, the massive change of being out in a position of freedom; and secondly, the small change of nearly being back in the same world. The main result I think is that the edge will have been taken off the actual day of discharge; I've got some idea of what to expect now. But it was one hell of a funny feeling, and I got some odd looks in tubes and trains for the 'inner debate' which my expressions bore witness to...."
"Many screws consider that, generally speaking, they are not just there to guard villains. They see it as their duty to punish them, to avenge society. Others just do their job without trying to understand what its all about. A tiny minority are appreciated by the prisoners; those, who, without going out of their way to be friendly, are at least polite, call the prisoner 'Mrs.', speak to him about the family... The youngest warders are often more rigid..."

"On Monday, I did not receive a letter from you, and first thing this morning (Tuesday) on being unlocked, I saw the P.O. on my landing, and I thought that he was going to give me a letter which had either arrived late Monday, or for some reason, or other, had been held up till then. I jokingly asked him if he had it, expecting him to take it as a joke, and give it to me. But he did not have the letter, and still joking, I showed your telegram of Saturday telling me that a letter was in the post. He then said, 'Are you saying I have got your letter and won't give it to you?' Still thinking it was a joke, I replied, 'Yes'. Anyway, next thing I knew, he has me placed on a report for making a false accusation against him by saying he was withholding the letter. I still thought he was joking.

If he had pointed out that he had taken me seriously, and that if I was really serious in what I said, then he would report me, I would have told him straight away that I was joking.

Well, I was before the deputy governor on that report, and I explained the misunderstanding, and showed him the telegram in question. I stressed that I had only been joking, and that one had to have a sense of humour in these places, especially locked-up as in my case day after day, month after month in solitary. Some officers take it as a joke, others might not appreciate it, but you don't put a prisoner on report for it. It would be an unhappy world if everybody is going to be like that.

I pointed all this out, but of course, the P.O. wouldn't admit I was joking, and the Deputy Governor remanded me to see the Visiting Committee the following day. So far as I can see, the screws are determined to mix it for me. A joke is a joke, not a crime...."

"It's not only the thumpings, its the petty restrictions they find to needle you with. Sometimes you feel you would rather have the thumping than the needling. I could fill a book with examples. For instance...

Nearly always to get anything you need, you have a real hassle with the screws. And they always rub it in, what a bloody nuisance you're being. If you don't insist, they 'forget' you have asked them; and if you insist too much, they bawl you out and 'forget' just the same. Of course, its the same for them with their bosses. When the head screw shouts at the screws, they take it out on the prisoners. There are some who complain they are at the beck and call of both the prisoners and their chiefs...."
The Prison Department has recently undertaken a massive national advertising campaign to recruit new staff. The advertisements, carried in all the media, offer "Security as a Prison Officer". The position offers free housing (or rent allowance), good pay (£50 a week in the first year, including uniform allowances), and "most of all - real security". The basic requirements are that you are a British subject, between 22 and 45 years of age (49 for women), at least 5 feet 0 inches in height (without shoes, 5 feet 3 inches), and are in good health. The "essential qualities" of a prison officer include humanity, firmness, maturity, patience, understanding, leadership, and a sense of humour. Any candidate has to take four short written tests. The following examples of the tests, taken from Jonathan Marshall's "nick survival" guide, are to be found in the official information sheet sent with the application forms:

In Test A (10 minutes), sentences are given with a choice of words in two places. You have to underline the correct words. Example: 
1. He flew to America as this was more convenient from flown in going by sea.
   - flew
   - flown
   - in
   - going

2. The garbage was littering the street
garbage littering
   - garbage
   - littering
Test B (10 minutes) is designed to show everyday knowledge and practical commonsense. You are given a choice of four different ways to complete an unfinished sentence. Example:

The morse code was devised to:
1. transmit messages quickly.
2. control moral standards in films.
3. widen the range of the radio telephone.
4. break through the short-wave barrier.

Test C (10 minutes) is a general intelligence test. Series of words, letters or numbers are given, and in each question a part is left out, indicated by asterisks (one asterisk for each missing letter or figure). You are meant to discover what is missing. Example:

1. 3 6 9 12 15 ** 21
2. Rough smooth fast slow rich poor young ***
3. A EB CCC **** ZEEE
Test D (15 minutes) is a test of simple arithmetical in two parts. Examples:

Part A:
1. Add 1357
   246
   9713
   8261

Part B:
1. A firm employs 135 factory workers, 3/5 of them being machine operators. If there are 2 office workers to every 9 machine operators, how many office staff are there in the firm?
2. If a man smokes 230 cigarettes in a fortnight, what is the average number he smokes daily?
3. In a small village, 250 people go out to work. Of these 75 go by car, 25 by bicycle, and the remainder walk. What percentage of the people walk to work?

If a candidate successfully completes the examinations he is invited for an interview. He then passes out as a prison officer. After less than six weeks training, he will be allocated to a prison and will take up full duties immediately. His training is to say the least, rudimentary. No guidance is given, for example, on how to handle a truncheon or other riot equipment: just a friendly word of advice - try to hit the man about the shoulders.

Few screws command the respect of many prisoners. Any positive relationship between prison staff and inmates can quickly sour. In August 1972, when certain prison officers threatened to go on strike at a particular gaol to support their demands for a "toughening-up" of discipline, a prisoner articulated the feelings of thousands of others when he wrote:

"Anyway, if the screws go on a go-slow, it would be one of the few times in history when a section of the people have gone on strike not for more money (though this is probably behind it) nor for better living conditions, but to inflict more discomfort and punishment on another section. It is the same as assistant torturers in the old Tower of London going on strike because the rack wasn't being used violently enough. If more money is behind this crap then what do you think of people who use a helpless section of this community as purchasing power...?"
Tension between prisoners and screws is always high, and frequently explodes. On many occasions, the conflict results from charges of brutality levelled against screws, charges which are rarely heard, let alone answered. One of the most notorious instances of a "whitewash" occurred at the inquest into the death of Stephen Smith.

The seventh issue of "Up Against the Law" (UPAL) ran a full length feature on the case, and the information recorded here is taken from that article.

Stephen Smith was found hanged in his cell during the first week of August 1971. A letter smuggled out of Wormwood Scrubs a week later demanded an independent enquiry into Stephen Smith's death, and went on:

"There are the facts as we've been able to piece them together. In the middle of last week he (Stephen) returned from the 'segregation' unit (the block) to the allocation wing - 'C' wing. He was taking no shit off screws, and on Friday a con heard a screw boasting that he'd pushed Stephen Smith into his cell and broke his glasses and his radio.

Saturday just before lunch time, it went off again, and he was taken to the bare segregation cell at the end of 'C' wing. A con heard him being beaten and rushed off to tell the P.O. in the control box that was happening, but this merely prompted a whole lot of screws to rush down to the segregation cell and lay in. Sometimes in the early afternoon, two screws emerged, their shirts torn, and Stephen Smith was carried off to the segregation unit situated at the end of 'A' block.

Later in the afternoon, a con in the segregation unit heard three screws boasting they'd given him another kicking. At 6.30 the same afternoon, he was found hanged."

The inmates asked for an independent enquiry and pathologist, stressing that the Home Office enquiry would be a whitewash. The prisoners' distrust of official enquiries is hardly surprising. According to UPAL, not one Home Office enquiry has ever pointed the finger of blame at the prison authorities. Yet there are a series of crucial questions raised by UPAL, which remain publicly unanswered, and which cast reasonable doubt on the "suicide" claim, persuading the jury at the inquest to return an "open" verdict. These include:

1. If Stephen had committed suicide, if no allegations suggesting otherwise had reached the ears of the authorities, then why, on August 6th, three days before UPAL received a letter smuggled from the Scrubs, did the Home Office find it necessary to hold a full investigation?
2. And if they heard the allegations of brutality, then surely it would have been in their own interests to see that the body was not cremated. That way they could have substantiated their own claims that there wasn't a bruise on the body and counteracted the allegations that Smith had received a brutal beating a few hours before he died.

3. Did the Home Office have so little faith in the Coroner that it felt it necessary to hold its own investigation into a suicide which both the father and the press were given to believe was completely straightforward? Or is it a matter of course that full Home Office investigations are always made into prison suicide? If so, why?

4. Is it possible that Home Office investigations are merely formalities, arranged to fob off the rightfully suspicious minds of the public. If these investigations take place before the Coroner's inquest, is it unfair to presume that certain controversial, embarrassing facts need to be sifted and sorted. In that way they can present the best possible defense of the Prison Authorities and avoid implicating the Home Office.

5. The lowest bars on the window are just over 7 feet off the ground. Stephen Smith was 5'11". He could not have jumped off the bed, because he was hanging on the side of the window furthest from the bed. He could not have stood on the heating pipe, because his feet were at least 6" above it when he was found. He could not have used the table or cupboard, because they had not been moved. If he had used the chair to jump off, it would have ended up near the body, and the screws who found him would have remembered its position. Neither of them, however, could remember where the chair was when they came in.

So the mystery remains. If he did hang himself, how did he do it?

6. The noose around Stephen Smith's neck was a strip of cotton duck, from one of the sheets on his bed. (N.B. Cotton duck is a coarse, heavy-duty material, almost impossible to tear). The hem end of a sheet had been torn off. The question is, could Stephen Smith have done this?

In one of the most dramatic moments of the inquest, Ian MacDonald, counsel for the family, handed the sheet to Mr. Bayard, the Coroner's officer. Originally, the Coroner had supplied another sheet, which he said was the same. Counsel, however, declined the substitute, and asked Mr. Bayard to use the actual sheet from which the noose had been allegedly torn.

Mr. Bayard is a strong, 14 stone police officer. He was asked to take the other end of the sheet and tear a strip off. He tugged and heaved at it several times, and then looked up at Counsel and announced that IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.

"And you don't have any disability in your right or left hand?" said Counsel. "No, sir," replied Bayard.

There was some disagreement among witnesses over the degree of Stephen Smith's disability. But his family and all THE DOCTORS WERE AGREED THAT HE DID NOT HAVE FULLY CO-ORDINATED USE OF HIS RIGHT HAND.
If a fully-fit Mr. Bayard could not tear a strip off the sheet are we to believe that an unfit Stephen Smith could do so? He had nothing in his cell to help him. All his utensils were made of plastic. He had no knife and no scissors. On the evidence before the jury, it was impossible to see how he could have done it.

Not one of these very serious questions has ever been answered by the Prison Department. For UPAL, "Michever way you look at this case; (1) if you believe that Smith was murdered; (2) if you believe he was driven to suicide by the beating he was given; (3) even if you reckon he somehow managed to hang himself, the prison authorities and the Home Office must bear the responsibility."
DISCIPLINE:

"There's only one Catch and that was Catch 22."

RULE 47, PRISON RULES, 1961:

"A prisoner shall be guilty of an offence against discipline if he:

1. mutinies or incites another prisoner to mutiny;
2. does gross personal violence to an officer;
3. does gross personal violence to any person not being an officer;
4. commits any assault;
5. escapes from prison or from legal custody;
6. absents himself without permission from any place where he is required to be, whether within or outside prison;
7. has in his cell or room or in his possession any unauthorised article, or attempts to obtain such an article;
8. delivers to or receives from any person any unauthorised article;
9. sells or delivers to any other person, without permission, anything he is allowed to have only for his own use;
10. takes improperly or is in unauthorised possession of any article belonging to another person or to a prison;
11. wilfully damages or disfigures any part of the prison or any property not his own;
12. makes any false and malicious allegation against an officer;
13. treats with disrespect an officer or any person visiting a prison;
14. uses any abusive, insolent, threatening or other improper language;
15. is indecent in language, act or gesture;
16. repeatedly makes groundless complaints;
17. is idle, careless or negligent at work, or, being required to work, refuses to do so;
18. disobeys any lawful order or refuses or neglects to conform to any rule or regulation of the prison;
19. attempts to do any of the foregoing things;
20. in any way offends against good order and discipline; or
21. does not return to prison when he should have returned after being temporarily released from prison under Rule 6 of these Rules, or does not comply with any condition upon which he was so released."
These rules are of such an all-embracing nature that Joseph Heller would undoubtedly been proud to include them in "Catch 22". Thus, one unfortunate prisoner wrote to PRO in 1972 that he had failed to respond either quickly or smilingly enough to the officer who woke him with "Come on lad! Don't lie around all day!", and had been charged under Rule 47, sections 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, and 20. The prisoner was foolish enough to complain to the governor and was subsequently charged under section 12 ("make any false or malicious allegation against an officer") and section 16 ("repeatedly makes groundless complaints"). At no stage could he call witnesses - the other two men in his cell - receive legal advice, be legally represented, or appeal against either the judgement or the punishment. As we have seen in the Stephen Smith case, the administration of the prison is well-protected by deliberate design from outside interference.

"I was put on a Governor's report on Friday last, for threatening to make a complaint to the Governor. I was placed on Rule 48 (solitary confinement, 'Chokey', down the punishment block), pending the hearing of the above charges. The civil who placed me on report is the shop instructor, where I have been working, did not turn up to state his charge against me.

As a result of this, I was placed in solitary confinement on rule 48 'til Monday morning, when the case against me would be dealt with. This meant that I was undergoing punishment, before I had even had a chance to state my case to the Governor. I was locked away from all other prisoners, deprived of my weekend film show, deprived of watching my football games. As a protest against the deputy Governor doing this to me, I barricaded myself in the cell. Force had to be used to get me out. Damage done to the door amounted to five minutes work and half a dozen nails. I was stripped and put in a strip cell for the night.

The following morning I was placed on report for causing damage to Government Property, by force having to be used to get me out of the cell. I went quietly to the strip cell, and at no time did I make any threat to any of the staff present. The original charge which I was put on report for was dismissed, and I was cautioned. I was then to answer the second charge (damage to government property) which was before the Board of Visitors (V.C.). I gave a four-page document on how all this trouble came about and how it led to my appearing before the V.C.

For what good my statement was, it did not make any difference to them. It might just as well have been burnt, because I was sentenced to twenty-one days loss of remission. I have been on hunger strike since Friday, and fully intend keeping it up in
protest against the severity of the sentence. May I also inform you that at least eighty per cent of the prisoners staged a sit-down protest on Friday. I was sorry not to have been with them. Reason being, I was staging my own protest behind a barricaded cell door. I would just like to inform you that as a direct result of the sit-down, everyone in the prison here lost ten pence from their earnings. And also since this incident, twelve men have been placed on reports for minor incidents.

The majority of the staff are picking men for the least little thing, because of the sit-down strike on Friday. Nevertheless, they all seemed to have enjoyed it. Pity the weather wasn’t so good, it rained for quite a spell here.

Yours sincerely....

P.S. I have had to smuggle this letter out of the prison. I guess you will understand why".

Alone 23 hours out of 24 - CHOKEY - September 1972:

"You spend your time waiting for food, exercise, bedtime, waiting for someone to come by. You are pleased to see the screw, even if its only for a few seconds. The rest of the time, you prod round and round your cell; you listen to your own heartbeats. Solitude makes you do weird things. You examine your body minutely, you prod yourself, you watch yourself growing older minute by minute. You end up knowing every inch of your cell, but you keep going over it again and again, you can’t help it. I used to multiply the number of tiles on the floor, then I would check my total by counting them. Or I would reckon up the amount of bird I still had to do, then my mate’s. Then I would change them into months, years, then it would change every day, so I would start again. All the guys are either depressive or else tense up, because they are full of energy that they can’t get rid of. There are periods when everybody talks of cutting their veins or else killing the screws.

People don’t realise it, but prison is really the worst. You get terrible fits of depression, it comes over you without any warning.

I stay in my cell now, and talk on and on. I talk to my moth. Yes, I am not joking, I have a pet moth. I have had him for a couple of months now, he doesn’t need any special food; he has a bit out of an old jail shirt, or an old letter. I can see him on the wall now, he hasn’t moved all day....

You feel yourself moulding away. Guys are wanking four or five times a day. Some make holes in their foam rubber mattresses. I know one geezer who used to put a bit of nest into the hole. What I do know is that when you first come in, you dream at night about what you used to do on the outside, but as time goes by you dream about nothing but the prison, the screw, the cell door, the gate, the yard. Prison is your whole life....

I am still in solitary confinement. Apart from a few days off, I have done 1,000 days in solitary on the 25 October. I certainly shall not celebrate it... I have heard from my M.P. he
sent me a letter he received from Viscount Colville of the Home Office. One of the lies that Colville tells is that I was off solitary for nineteen days last October, but, the distinguished Lord Colville says, I began threatening other prisoners during the nineteen days, and was accused of fighting with another prisoner and put back into solitary. He hinted that I would have to stay in solitary confinement. He told my M.P. that I attacked an officer last November. It is no use telling him that I have yet to go on trial for the "alleged offence". I don't go round threatening other prisoners, what they are saying that for I will never know. I have spent the last three Christmases in solitary, and on the first one they wouldn't even let me pin up my xmas cards on the cell wall in Parkhurst. Security reasons they said....

How can one talk pleasantly on twenty four hours a day solitary? Yes, twenty four hours a day on my own since October 1969. It has been an uneventful 1,000 days. I am entitled to one hour a day on my own, with an escort of five officers and a guard dog. I don't go out now. I got fed up with the five of them glaring at me, but the main reason was because I was embarrassed. I have got into the habit of talking to myself, and as I walked round, I was forgetting I was outside my cell, and would start speaking to myself.
GHOSTING:

In the case of the prisoner's cell, familiarity doesn't breed contempt. On the contrary, a prisoner begins to feel that this is his 'home', the centre of his world. A well-known technique of secret police to "break" a prisoner is to move him from his own cell to a strange one, in another prison, quite arbitrarily, in the middle of the night, and without warning. This procedure, 'ghosting' is an accepted and common practice in all British prisons. No attempt is made to communicate details of a prisoner's removal to his family and friends. It is not uncommon for a young wife with children to travel half way up or down the country to visit her husband, only to be told at the prison that he has been transferred.

"I don't know if you know by now that I have been moved here. I arrived on Sunday after travelling from the Moor (Dartmoor) on Saturday morning to the Ville (Pentonville) where I stopped overnight and came here. I had no idea I was being transferred from the Moor until we were on the way, and even then I had no idea I was stopping at the Ville for just the night. You can imagine my surprise when the escort from the Moor told me on Sunday I was on the move again. Naturally, I thought they had gone back, or were having a joke after stopping overnight before going back. I had never heard of a transfer on a Sunday, except for someone appearing in court next day or similar to that. Then when I realised they were telling the truth and it was to here, you can bet I did go off, especially after being in all the trouble I was in, when I was here earlier...."

No doubt you probably noticed the change of my address. I was moved to this boat (prison) on Thursday, 13th at 5,15 in the morning. I was fast a kip in my cell, when all of a sudden my cell door flew open and five screws surrounded my bed. I asked them what their bleeding game was, and the principal officer said to me, "It's alright, you haven't been nicked. But we have got orders to take you to another prison."

I told the screws to get outside my cell and while I got dressed and packed all my personal gear. At about ten past six, while it was still pitch dark, I was in the security van and the escort was bringing me here. I am only choked that I couldn't shake all my pals' before I was slung out the boat...."
RELEASE:

On his release, the prisoner is given the princely sum of twelve pounds, a set of clothing (if his own is unsuitable), an unfranked national insurance card, his "property", and a travel warrant to get him home. To over ten thousand prisoners released each year, the travel warrant is of little value, they have no home to go to.

The last few months and weeks before release can be the most exasperating in the whole prison sentence. A prisoner with one month to serve wrote:

"I had a bit of a rough week myself last week. My mental state changes in a way not unlike the progress of the business cycle: cheerfulness followed by tension followed by time-dragging followed by depression. The cycle is beginning to get rather rapid as my release date gets closer - and I am decidedly tense and jumpy."

This prisoner was lucky, there were people ready to help him, and he was very capable of making his own way. For thousands of others released every year, there is no alternative; they are trapped in a vicious circle which will bring them back to face imprisonment again and again.

"One night it all ended and when the morning came they let him go home. As soon as he got out people wanted to know how it was and what it was like. He told them that he thought he had gone a little mad, because of it, but that at other times he thought he had become exquisitely sane, also because of it. They listened to him, and when he had told them what it was like and how it was, they all said, well its all over now. And then he smiled and he told them it wasn't"

/ Martin Lewis/
Chapter 4

British Prisoners Protest: An historical introduction
For as long as penal institutions have existed in this country, prisoners have protested against the fact and conditions of their incarceration. Protest has taken many forms: individualistic and collectivised; violent and non-violent; destructive and non-destructive; spontaneous and planned; short-lived and long-term. Perhaps the most common style of protest (although not usually presented as such) is individual self-mutilation. An ex-Holloway prisoner speculated on why protest, particularly amongst women prisoners, is predominantly spontaneous and individualised rather than mass organized.

"Generally the women have shown dissent only by individual freak-outs - the regular fights between a woman and a screw, the even more frequent 'cutting-up' scenes, where women take out their aggression on themselves by slashing their arms, perhaps because they don't feel enough power to attack the real cause of their frustration, and can only deflect it on themselves."

Every so often the women do act in solidarity to support an individual's protest. To take one example:

"Last November there was another demonstration. It happened when a black girl who was walking down a narrow corridor refused to stand aside for the P.O. She was given a 'report' for this - very probably if she had been white she would not have been given one for something so petty. (When you get a report you have to go and see the governor, who then dishes out the prescribed punishment.) The black girl pretty naturally felt it unfair to get a report for this, so started arguing over it, and very soon was involved in a full-scale row. The P.O. dragged her off and locked her in her cell, and left the girl banging on the door and screaming.

Eventually, she set fire to her cell, and people on the wing could see the smoke coming out through the door. They rushed off to the P.O. and demanded that she be let out, but the P.O. replied: 'If she wants to burn to death that's her business' - and still refused to let her out. When this happened it was teatime, and a large number of women were out of their cells, and on the wing. When they heard this, about 30 women got on to the wires, i.e. the netting across the landing.
Eventually, the assistant governor came down, and let the girl out of her cell - she was still unharmed. But, although quite a lot of people still tried to bargain - refusing to get off the wires until there were assurances that no one would be punished - it didn't work: those who tried to hold out were dragged off the wires. Several girls lost remission, and some were dragged off to the strips, i.e. the punishment cells, including the black girl who had been locked in her cell."

In every penal institution, there have been, and will continue to be countless incidents of self-mutilation by prisoners; of people, for example, driven to spend two or three days rubbing their own excrement all over themselves and the cell walls; of men and women who have slashed their wrists, deliberately disfigured or even killed themselves. Little research has been undertaken into this particular type of protest. It urgently needs to be done.

Collective demonstrations have occurred with ever increasing frequency and intensity. The methods of demonstration have changed little. Writing in 1884, Arthur Griffiths described a 'mutiny' which culminated in prisoners climbing out on to the roof of Millbank prison to continue their protest:

"Early in the spring the whole of the inmates broke out in open mutiny. Their alleged grievance was the issue of an inferior kind of bread.

The committee having thought fit to alter the character of the flour supplied, soon afterwards, at breakfast-time, all the prisoners, male and female, refused to receive their bread. The women complained of its coarseness; and all alike, in spite of the exhortations of the visitor, Mr. Holford, left it outside their cell doors. Next day, Sunday, the bread was at first taken, then thrown out into the passages. The governor determined to have Divine Service as usual, but to provide against what might happen, deposited within his pew 'three brace of pistols loaded with ball'. To make matters worse, the Chancellor

1 "Inside Story" (number 8) March/April 1973 (no page numbers)
of the Exchequer arrived with a party of friends to attend the service. The governor immediately pointed out that he was apprehensive that 'in consequence of the newly adopted bread the prisoners' conduct would not be orderly, as it had ordinarily been'. At first the male prisoners were satisfied by raising and letting fall the flaps of the kneeling benches with a loud report, and throwing loaves about in the body of the chapel, while the women in an audible tone cried out, 'Give us our daily bread'. Soon after the commencement of the communion service, the women seated in the gallery became more loudly clamorous, calling out most vociferously, 'Better bread, better bread'. The men below, in the body of the church, now rose and stood upon the benches; but again seated themselves on a gesture from the governor, who then addressed them, begging them to keep quiet.

Next morning the governor informed the whole of the prisoners, one by one, that the new brown bread would have to be continued until the meeting of the committee; whereupon many resisted when their cell doors were being shut, and others hammered loudly on the woodwork with their three-legged stools; and this was accompanied by the most hideous shouts and yells. In one of the divisions, four prisoners, who were in the same cell, were especially refractory, 'entirely demolishing the inner door, every article of furniture, the two windows and their iron frames; and, having knocked off large fragments from the stone of the doorway, threw the pieces at, and smashed to atoms the passage windows opposite'.

But as long as the demonstrations remain, or can be presented as, isolated and sporadic, they are almost accepted as a legitimate means of letting off steam - for both staff and prisoners. In his study of the English prison officer, Thomas argues that pre-World War II incidents such as the Dartmoor mutiny were tolerated because they were unrelated to each other, and their proportions "were accepted as a reasonable risk by the community, which was led in its opinion by groups who were interested in, and sympathetic to what the prison service was trying to do". The significance of the 1972 prison protests derives in part from their being linked and apparently

2 Arthur Griffiths, "Memorial of Millbank" London. Henry S. King. 1875 2 volumes
co-ordinated by an outside prisoners' group, Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners. Prior to 1972, British prison demonstrations had been short-lived, small, poorly organized, inarticulate, and frequently violent. The disturbances of 1972 were on a larger scale, issue-oriented, more disciplined, escalating and passive, with little damage to person or property. They were thus perceived as posing a greater threat to the "good order and smooth running" of the institutions.

In this section, we will look in some detail at British prison protest. We shall be particularly concerned with the events at Dartmoor in the 1930's, and at Parkhurst in the late 1960's. We will examine these protests from the viewpoint of the Home Office, the prison officers, and the prisoners, and note the similarities of the official and uniform staff responses to these riots and the 1972 demonstrations. We shall show how the authorities attempted to dislocate each action, and provide a standard monocausal explanation.

Vernon Fox, in conducting one of the few systematic surveys of USA prisoners' demonstrations, has argued that such protests are often hard to find. Penal administrators try to withhold details for a variety of reasons, including overtly political considerations. Whether or not a demonstration is reported, therefore, depends upon a variety of inter-related factors, including the size and nature of the protest, and the activities of the media. In Britain, access to information is even more problematic. The Prison Department at the Home Office is well protected by, amongst other things, the Official Secrets Act, which prevents employees past and present from publicly discussing prison matters. Journalists and newsmen, up to 1972,

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VERNON FOX, "WHY PRISONERS RIOT", in 'FEDERAL PROBATION', 9 (1971) see also RICHARD McCLEARY, "CORRECTIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND POLITICAL CHANGE", in LAWRENCE HAZEL RIGG (ed) "PRISON WITHIN SOCIETY" (~NEW YORK. DOUBLEDAY & CO., 1968~)
had no alternative and consistent source of information about what was happening inside British gaols. "Inside Story" an 'alternative' newspaper, shed some light on the reality of the Home Office's deliberate suppression and censorship of information about institutions.

On 11 September 1972, Jill Tweedie wrote in her "Guardian" column: "One journalist prepared a 'Which?' review of prisons, the way they were run, the attitudes of the governors. The Home Office made it clear that if this report was published they would no longer co-operate in any way with the newspaper concerned".

Two days later, the journalist Jonathan Sale himself wrote in "Punch": "Whenever a lens or a ballpoint stir, Prison Department offices must mull over the finished product before it can be released. When I pleaded guilty some time ago, to a magazine assignment and was sentenced to research into the subject of prisons, I spent several mornings in unrewarding activity". 5

The Home Office shows itself to be deeply offended when a book or newspaper includes material 'leaked' from the inside. Thus, the controversy surrounding the publication of Stan Cohen's and Laurie Taylor's "Psychological Survival" had less to do with the content of the book, and more to do with the ways in which the information was collected. This almost total monopoly of information enables the Home Office to distort or even deny activities and events within the prisons. Thus, during the demonstrations of 1972, PROP was frequently able to denigrate the Home Office, and enhance its own reliability by providing an alternative source of information.

5 "INSIDE STORY" (number 7) January/February 1973 (no page numbers)
In the style of presentation of penal affairs the Prison Department is merely continuing the tradition established by its forerunners. Thus, back in the eighteenth century, a picture of the early days of the hulks system was presented which portrayed these prison ships as part of an orderly, carefully worked out and stable penal policy. The prisoners were described almost without exception as acquiescent. In reality, according to Branch Johnson, these first years of the hulks were turbulent ones: "Repeated attempts to file away or knock off the chains about the convicts' waists and ankles led to floggings galore, extra irons, imprisonment in the Black Hole".  

Life aboard the hulks was indeed stormy and violent, and punctuated by frequent attacks upon officers and the captains. Johnson quotes one particular incident in September 1773, when the Captain of the hulks was warned of the impending danger to the lives of himself and his officers. According to the "Morning Chronicle":

"The Captain upon this warning immediately went to the shore, where about 250 convicts were then at work, and cautioned his people, who were placed to guard them, to be prepared. Shortly after 4 o'clock in the afternoon, about 150 of them assembled in a body, having first armed themselves with pikes, taken from the 'chevaux de frize', with axes and spades, and proceeded to the only pass there they could effect their escape, which was firmly guarded by about 20 well-armed men. The Captain remonstrated strongly, and repeatedly endeavoured by gentle means to dissuade them from such an attempt, which, if persisted in, must cost some of them their lives. This had no effect on their desperate leaders, one of whom instantly attacked and wounded the Captain, still pressing forward to the pass, throwing showers of heavy stones, and threatening to murder all who opposed them. At last the ship's people were obliged to make
use of their firearms, which, with the assistance of those of a party of artillery, obliged the convicts to retire. Two of their leaders were killed on the spot, and seven or eight more were much wounded."

Like the rest of penal history, the story of the hulks reveals a variety of methods used by the convicts, individually and collectively, to register their dissent. On Christmas Eve, 1846, there was a serious disturbance aboard the "Warrior" at Woolwich. The men and their belongings were searched with greater thoroughness, and the living quarters were examined and "forbidden articles" seized whilst the men were at work. According to a guard, the men on discovering the search of their rooms were in "a sort of mutinous state towards all the officers". They were, however, already locked up, and confined to shouting and throwing missiles at the guards throughout the evening. The situation became so tense that the Overseer went down and promised not only to return the property taken, but also to provide a barrel of drink for the Christmas dinner (although such action was illegal). The guards themselves appear to have been quite unreliable - there were frequent dismissals for drunkenness and neglect of duty, as well as a great deal of fiddling.

With the abandonment of the hulks system, the protests moved into the mainland prisons. We have already quoted an example from the "Memorial of Millbank", and in the 1930's occurred the infamous Dartmoor mutiny.

**THE DARTMOOR MUTINY**

At the time of the mutiny, although a number of changes in the regime had been made, Dartmoor was still a very tough place. Apart from seven hours a day at work, the inmate was

7 W. Branch Johnston (1970) *op.cit.*
locked up alone for the rest of the time. He had to serve
to-and-a-half years before the long hours in the cell were
broken by certain privileges such as reading the newspapers;
four years before he could have a smoke and a limited amount of
association. These privileges depended upon constant good
behaviour, the idea being that the type of future relaxation
of restriction would induce good conduct. Stuart Hood, in his
book "Shades of the Prison House", published in 1932, provided
the following description of a Dartmoor cell just before the
mutiny:

"Imagine, if you can, a small cell only 9ft. by
5ft., the walls of which were of undressed black
granite, down which the water trickled day and
night, needing to be mopped up every time you
entered it. The floor was so constantly wet
that, in order to save the bedclothes getting
saturated, one had to place the bed planks on
two supports consisting of the stool laid flat
at one end and a washing-basin at the other.
This raised the plank about nine inches; but
if you wriggled about in bed too much the whole
collapsed, precipitating you on to the sodden
floor. The window was really an embrasure
set so far back into the thickness of the wall
that the part of it obscured what little light
there was. It had two rows of panes, each
being about five inches square, heavily barred.

There was a clear space of twelve inches
between the cell door and the floor, for the
purpose of admitting hot air and passing one's
boots out to be greased on Sunday afternoons.
As the hall was very cold and draughty, it will
be understood that this space added to one's
general discomfort." 8

One of the principal targets of the prisoners involved in the
mutiny were the "special cells". These were sound-proof and
fitted with unbreakable furniture. In this "cell within a
cell", the prisoner spent twenty-three hours a day along, with
little light. Exercise was taken in a small, specially covered
yard. One of the accused men, who was later acquitted at the

8 STUART HOOD, "Shades of the Prison House", quoted in
W. P. Macartney, "WALLS HAVE MOUTHS" (LONDON. GOLLANCZ, 1936)
trial following the mutiny, testified that he had been in a special cell for nearly the whole of his sentence:

"They are really meant for men under punishment, and also for those who have tried to escape. There are really no lights at all. There is a kind of box within a box, apparently to prevent other prisoners knowing what is happening when the warders come in to mishandle you." 9

The "cause" of the mutiny has been widely identified as the food. However, not the food generally; only on particular days. According to the Du Parcq Report "the official enquiry", on Friday, January 22, 1932, the governor, Mr. Roberts, had received complaints about the porridge. It was found that the porridge had not been properly cooked, and the governor suspected it had been tampered with. Extra rations of bread, potatoes, and margarine were reportedly issued. At midnight, the Governor returned to the kitchen and checked that the porridge for the morning was all right. But by breakfast time, the Deputy Governor reported it was bad. Amidst banging and shouting, Roberts agreed to revise the diet and to talk to the prisoners 'en masse' in the chapel that day. The Report makes it quite clear that it believes the convicts to be tampering with their own food. At no time was the officer in charge of the kitchens ever questioned. There was more trouble at dinner: the deputy-governor was forced to conclude again that the meal was inedible. Alternative rations (the same as breakfast) were issued. The Du Parcq Report concluded that whilst the porridge was bad, the potatoes bad, the stew inedible, the food was generally good, and thus not a cause of complaint. The Governor meantime had called in officer reinforcements, and told the police to stand-by. This seems

9 W. F. Macartney (1936) op.cit. p.237-258
rather an over-reaction since Roberts had telephoned
Major Lamb, an assistant commissioner, and stated that he
had addressed the men in the chapel and taken steps to ensure
that the food improved. However, Roberts also said that some
"six men" were behind the trouble. Later on, when the police
were called in, these six had become "possibly thirty or forty".

On the Friday a more serious incident had occurred.
Du Parq reported that a "model prisoner" (according to the
Governor) slashed with a razor a very popular officer - for
no reason at all. The next day, as we have already seen, the
food was again inedible. At dinner, the men refused their
meal, made much noise, and sang "The Red Flag". Early on
Sunday, the noise continued, the Red Flag was still being
sung and it was decided to remove the troublemakers to the
special cells. As McCartney has observed: "As hardly any
of the convicts would have known the words or the tune of
'The Red Flag', I wonder if it really was 'The Red Flag'.

However, this fits in with the "conspiracy" and "professional
agitators" theme of the Report. The trouble began in
earnest when officers arrived to remove a prisoner called
Brown. Brown resisted, and was eventually knocked unconscious
and taken to the hospital. According to the official enquiry
Brown had tried to slash one of the officers, Uddy with a
safety razor. Uddy called reinforcements. Three warders
then entered the cell together. They claimed that Brown
continued to threaten Uddy and then that one of the three
officers was forced to strike the prisoner on the head with a
truncheon, and knock him out. Prisoners in nearby cells had
heard the scuffle and the blows. One said he saw Brown being

10 W. F. Macartney (1936) op.cit.
dragged unconscious along the floor to the hospital. Word was passed around of the brutality. Following the parade later that morning, the order to fall out was ignored. According to Du Parq, only about fifty prisoners refused to obey orders, the rest were marched back to the cells. However, they refused to go into the cells, "for fear of reprisals by the mutineers should they gain control and find them there". /"Atholl /

The mutiny had begun. Despite all his precautions /all his officers on duty, some especially armed with rifles and revolvers the governor was faced with a staff which panicked. "Hurried consultations" were held with the deputy:

"It was more than obvious that no reasoning would have any effect on a mob so out of control, and it appeared equally obvious that two of us had no hope of holding that mob. We held a hurried consultation and decided that it would be wiser for all concerned to take shelter in the old prison, I having my keys (master pass)". 

Within ten minutes then, the governor and staff, despite all the forewarning, had fled; Colonel Turner, the Prison Commissioner, had locked himself and a bodyguard in a cell.

After freeing the men in the special cells, the prisoners embarked on what the Solicitor-General called "just a great big rag". There was indeed extensive damage to property, but no officers were seriously hurt. The "get tough" officers in the chokey section considered discretion the better part of valour and put up no resistance. As McCartney lucidly commented:

"when the odds are six to one in their favour, they are able and willing to 'man-handle' half-starved convicts, but when the shoe is on the other foot they go down on their knees and beg for mercy, as happened in the punishment cells on that January 24th, although this was not related in the Report." 

11 JUSTIN ATHOLL, "PRISON ON THE MOOR" /LDON. JOHN LONG LTD, 1953 p.118-132

12 W. F. Macartney (1936) op. cit.
But although no officers were hurt, many prisoners subsequently were. One was shot through the neck and consequently paralysed for life, and made dumb. The official Report had the following to say of this shooting:

"A man who was on the twine shed apparently trying to get rope for the purpose of escape fell to the ground. He was seriously injured and is still in hospital at Plymouth, where he has received highly skilled surgical assistance, but is not, I am informed, out of danger. His injuries were partly caused by a shot wound in the neck, partly by his fall. It would probably be difficult to say which of the officers fired the shot which struck him, but in any case I do not think it proper in the circumstances to make any investigation into this matter. It must not be taken that I have formed an opinion that blame is to be imputed to any officer in respect of this incident." 13

The twine shed was some thirty yards from the outside wall, so it is ridiculous to suggest that the prisoner, Mitchell, was trying to escape. Another convict who climbed up to help his colleague was also shot. A third man who was going to the assistance of the other two was shot at. The prison officers had seen fit to fire coldly and deliberately at unarmed prisoners. They even shot and wounded a prisoner in the boiler-house who was helping other members of the prison staff.

Reinforcements arrived and within fifteen minutes, these "vicious brutes", who for two hours had terrorized well-armed prison staff, and effectively controlled the prison, had surrendered and been locked up again.

There are a whole series of issues raised by the Dartmoor Mutiny, which are to be found again at Parkhurst, and in the demonstrations of 1972. Firstly, the Home Office were reluctant to admit to any trouble. The general surrender of the prisoners had been at eleven in the morning, but it was after six o'clock in the evening before the Home Office made

13 W. F. Macartney (1936) op.cit.
any kind of official statement on what Atholl has called "not merely one of the biggest 'news stories' of the decade, but also a matter of great public importance". The Home Office statement was typically terse, stating baldly that about one hundred prisoners had broken away, and that the prison staff had lost control for a time. It added that no prisoners had escaped, and that no-one had been seriously hurt. A similar statement was issued on the following day. Secondly, attempts were made to manufacture the mutiny into a mass escape attempt. Thus Du Parcq can justify the shooting of prisoner Mitchell on the grounds that one officer, in the midst of the riot, heard a solitary prisoner over thirty yards away and on another building, say, "Get the ropes from inside, boys". This theory of an "escape attempt" is expounded by Thomas who has written that:

"When prisoners tried to scale the walls, the pointing of revolvers was followed by the firing of carbines. Two prisoners were wounded, one seriously, and this both angered and deterred the mutineers. Eventually they were contained." 14

It represents a disingenuous game of word-associations: twine - rope; roof - escape. Harley Cronin ex-General Secretary of the Prison Officer's Association, expounds a similar thesis in his autobiographical account of the Dartmoor incident, arguing that the intervention was not needed:

"Of the steel-helmeted troops, in full war equipment and armed with machine-guns, who had been standing-by in Plymouth to deal with the fearsome situation that would have arisen if the break-out had succeeded and hundreds of savage criminals had been running amok through the countryside." 15

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14 J. E. Thomas (1972) op. cit. p.158
15 HARLEY CRONIN, "THE SCREW TURNS" /"LONDON. JOHN LONG LTD. 1967/
Thirdly, the official and officers explanation of the mutiny were various, and predictably had nothing to do with conditions at the prison. It was argued that the mutiny was "inspired and led by a number of young prisoners who had seen 'The Big House', and took from it the idea of a mass mutiny and break-out".16

According to the 'Prison Officers' Magazine' of March 1932, the mutiny and the need for an armed attack to crush it was easily understandable: "'Personality' does not count where communists and bandits are concerned. The only 'personality' they respect is lead or cold steel". 17 A later issue claimed that the Prison Department was to blame for reducing staff numbers. A fourth point to note concerns the staffing of the prison. Du Parcq concluded that:

"When so much depends upon discipline being maintained, it is plainly essential that the officers should be men of the highest character and reliability." 18

This clearly was not the case at Dartmoor in 1932. In several instances, officers from other prisons who had been suspected of breaches of discipline had been transferred to Dartmoor. There was considerable evidence of brutality and other offences by prison officers before the mutiny, and at its conclusion, even Du Parcq was forced to admit some staff must have been guilty of serious and dangerous offences.

Finally, the prison staff tried to avenge itself on the prisoners. As Macartney points out:

"The Penal Servitude Act allows for the Prison Authorities having to deal with mutiny, and lays down specific punishments for mutiny and incitement to mutiny, which include flogging."

16 HARLEY CRONIN (1967) op.cit.
17 J. E. THOMAS (1972) op.cit. p.160
18 W. F. MACARTNEY (1936) op.cit.
Such a competency granted in law to the Prison Commission implies that mutiny in prison is always a possibility; and yet, on the occasion of the only big mutiny in an English prison, men are not dealt with by the Act specially passed to meet mutiny in prison, but are taken out of gaol and tried under an Act expressly passed to curb and curtail the Chartists — a revolutionary movement.

Why was this? Was it because a panicked administration, a staff that ran like hares when the works turned, sought to regain their lost faces by staging a trial which ended in consolidated sentences ranging from twenty-two years' penal servitude being given to men whose actions were described by the Solicitor-General as a 'great big rag'?

The disturbance of the peace was proved by a warder's wife saying on oath that her dinner was spoiled. The mutineers of Invergordon were not treated like the Dartmoor convicts, who, poor and friendless, and inspired only by the energy of despair, were fit subjects for the retaliation of a surprised, frightened, and angry Government Department. After the trial their criminal records were read out, and the Scotland Yard man was allowed to make a running commentary upon each man's character, and to give his personal opinion of what the mutineers intended to do.

And now it is all by a memory. Years have passed. The Silver Jubilee came, Accession came, and no amnesty. In ten years' time - 1946 - men will still be serving sentences in prison for the Dartmoor mutiny.

Mitchell is still paralysed and dumb. Ibbotson is still insane at Broadmoor. And the mutineers are still in gaol.

Nevertheless, they did more to secure some alleviation for the convicts than most reformers." 19

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PARKHURST

On 24 October, 1969, the worst riot since the Dartmoor mutiny erupted at HMP Parkhurst. Once again Thomas, in attempting to explain the Parkhurst riot, has argued that "the refusal to condone escape as a release from institutional pressure must result in internal disturbances. This will

19 W. F. Macartney (1936) op.cit. p.255-6
happen in the English system, as security is increasingly strengthened". His thesis is supported by the Sunday Times "Insight" team:

"The first essential point about Parkhurst is that, isolated on the Isle of Wight, it is very hard to escape from. It is thus the natural place in which to house men whose departure would be particularly unwelcome. The second point is that Parkhurst is quite unsuitable to house such men." 21

The excessive concentration of top-security prisoners was a consequence of the lack of facilities elsewhere. According to the Sunday Times, the Prison Department was aware of the dangers of such over-concentration, and had laid down plans "in the long term" for building or re-constructing jails at Hull, Chelmsford, Gartree, Albany, and Long Lartin.

"But throughout 1967-68 they saw no option but to overload Parkhurst. For a long period Parkhurst, out of a total prison population of little more than 350 had 50 'A' class men not counting the other 12-20 in the top-security block. At times the proportion went even higher ... It was a recipe for disaster." 22

The "Insight" team found it extremely difficult to pin down precisely what was happening in Parkhurst between 1966 and 1969. They argued that the Mountbatten Report had produced tensions inside the prison of which the Prison Department were unaware. According to Brian Stratton and Tony Blyth, who were imprisoned at Parkhurst during this period, it was not that the Home Office were unaware, rather they chose to ignore the worsening situation. Mountbatten produced a few changes to the prison: barbed wire, floodlights, guards around the walls, dog patrols. But the most important changes which produced the real danger, according to the Sunday Times, were

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20 J. E. Thomas (1972) op.cit. p.229-30
22 Sunday Times (1970) op.cit.
to the daily prison routine, encroaching upon the most trivial, yet often the most sensitive parts of inside life. Outside working parties were cancelled, and the prisoners made redundant were forced to sew mailbags. Football matches, even the digging of the Governor's garden and the prison allotments, all were cancelled in the wake of Moutbatten. But what was really happening was that the prison officers were taking the opportunity to toughen-up, by re-interpreting Moutbatten for themselves. The Report had posited the notion that increased security on the outside would facilitate the loosening of internal security arrangements. But at Parkhurst, as at other prisons, the prison officers seized on the opportunity to avenge themselves for what they believed to be the "soft" regime which had been instigated during the "treatment" emphasis of the past few years.

In February 1969, 120 prisoners signed a "round robin" about the brutality in Parkhurst. Brian Stratton explained the idea behind this type of letter:

"The signatures are in a circle so that no-one can look at it and say, 'Well, obviously as the first signature was Stratton's then he must be the ringleader. We shall nick him'. As it is impossible to decide whose is the first signature then no ringleader can be singled out. We obtained 120 signatures to this document which was far more than we hoped for. We had to be extremely careful who we approached and asked to sign. No-one was threatened or pressurized into signing, as was later suggested by the screws. Everyone who signed the document read it first so that they knew exactly what they were doing. We had to be extremely careful that not one word of what we were up to filtered back to the screws or it would have been over before it started." 23

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The document read:

"We, the undersigned, all prisoners at Parkhurst Prison, wish to bring to the public's notice the brutality that is occurring at this prison, and to protest about the inhuman treatment and beatings-up that Timothy Norman is suffering." 24

It went on to name the screws responsible, and to demand action to curb those prison officers' activities. If nothing was done, the end-result could only be serious violence. The latter listed "privileges and perks" which had been withdrawn post-Mountbatten. These twenty grievances included no pet birds in cells; no hamsters; no toilet articles to be sent in from outside; radio batteries henceforward to be bought from prison wages, (in 1969, weekly wages at Parkhurst averaging six shillings were among the lowest in the country); various classes of hobbies were forbidden to the A-men and hobbies were no longer allowed in cells; ill-fitting prison clothing was not be altered and made more comfortable by the inmates.

But, as already suggested, the main dispute centred around the brutality of the prison officers in general, and of those in charge of the punishment block in particular. As at Dartmoor, the ensuing riot involved both the staff and inmates of these special cells. In a three-part article published in "Inside Story", Tony Blyth has spoken virulently against the officers and conditions in Parkhurst's punishment block. The cells were filthy and bare, the means cold and irregular, and the beatings vicious. 25 In the same vein, Brian Stratton's "Who Guards the Guards", details the treatment meted out to Timothy Norman and others. 26 The Sunday Times "Insight"

24 Brian Stratton (1973) op.cit.
25 "Inside Story" (number 7) January/February 1973 (no page numbers)
26 Brian Stratton (1973) op.cit.
similarly recorded the allegation that "Parkhurst guards were using the gauntlet ... the screws would line the corridor leading from the cell blocks to the recreation rooms and beat prisoners filing down the corridor with riot sticks".27

The round robin drew immediate response from the Home Office. The Home Secretary, James Callaghan, ordered an internal enquiry into the allegations, and appointed a three-man team, headed by an Assistant Prison Director, Michael Gale. The enquiry was greeted with contempt by the prisoners. According to Stratton, Gale had been a governor at both Wandsworth and Camp Hill in the early 1960's, and in both places brutality was rampant. Stratton commented on the proposed enquiry, "I was absolutely gutted over his appointment. We all know it would be a whitewash job".

In the meantime, the harassment of those whose signatures were visible, and the undermining of the validity of the complaints, began in earnest. All those who had signed were immediately placed in segregation, food was irregular, and mail delayed. Pressure was brought to bear on individuals to withdraw their allegations on the promise of a transfer or parole. Reports appeared in the "Daily Express" stating that most cons had signed the round-robin because "they thought it was a plea from the good prisoners of Parkhurst to restore capital punishment for the murder of policemen or prison warders". Another story fabricated and publicised was that prisoners believed the letter to be a petition association with the "Save the Argylls" Campaign.28 However, despite the pressure, many men gave evidence to the enquiry.

28 Brian Stratton (1973) op.cit. p.74-5
By June 1969, the report of Gale and his associates was with the Home Secretary. The findings of the enquiry have never been made public, but the Sunday Times "Insight" concurred that "according to a high political source, Gale decided that the allegations probably had some basis in fact. We are told that Gale found that the charges of assault could probably be laid against four prison officers - though he warned that proof would be difficult. And, of the 50 or so prisoners who had come forward to talk to him, Gale thought that only four - of whom two were mentally ill - could reasonably be accused of making malicious and unfounded allegations.

To remedy this state of affairs, Gale proposed a re-shuffle of Parkhurst staff - in particular, he said that the whole system of duty on the prison punishment block should be changed. He also said that the system under which prisoners were given punishment at all should be altered. And, broadening his recommendations, Gale proposed virtually the same limited rebuilding programme in the punishment block for which Miller /the governor/ had been pressing".29

The Home Secretary did issue instructions to reorganise the staffing of the prison, and of the block in particular. But no steps were taken on the rebuilding, and, most significantly, Callaghan decided that there should be no prosecutions levelled against prison officers. This decision meant for Stratton that, "the one who emerges as responsible ultimately for the riot must be the former Home Secretary, Callaghan, because he suppressed Gale's findings. If, as Gale recommended, the four screws had been prosecuted, the cons would have thought something had at last been achieved and the brutality would have stopped, thus easing the atmosphere in the prison tremendously as early as by 1969. There would have been no riot - of this I am sure." 30

30 Brian Stratton (1973) op.cit. p.95
But not only was the inaction on prosecutions to lead to an escalation of the violence; the directive to reorganise prison staffing was by and large ignored, particularly on the punishment block. When MP Stan Newens visited the prison in September, a matter of days before the riot broke out, a guard told him that he had been on the punishment block duty for over two years. Apparently the reshuffle was "taking time".

Less than three weeks later, Parkhurst erupted into the worst British prison riot since 1932. Thirty-five officers and twenty-eight prisoners were injured. Some of the prisoners were savagely beaten. Tony Blyth, for example, was one of the most severe casualties in the riot, receiving thirty-seven stitches. Frankie Fraser lost his sense of balance and his eyesight was ruined. At the ensuing trial, most of the "ringleaders" received additional prison sentences. Noonan was given three years; Fraser, five; Frape, six years. In sharp contrast, the outcome of the prisoners' prosecution of prison officers has still to be determined. Both Fraser and Blyth have allegedly been offered money by the Home Office "settling out of court" if they drop the charges. At the close of the trial of the prisoners involved in the riot, Mr. Justice Bean pointed the finger of blame firmly at the prison authorities when he said: "I commend to the Parkhurst authorities a careful look at the administration of the punishment cells. No greater source of discontent has shown itself in the long hearing before me".31

The protests at Dartmoor and Parkhurst epitomised what has been happening in British prisons for the past two hundred years. Thousands of protests, both individual and collective,

31 Sunday Times (1970) op.cit. p.9
by prisoners have been suppressed "officially", and the grievances ignored. When the Home Office has been forced to admit prisoners' protests, it has been at pains to isolate and localise the "incident" and its "causes" to avoid any suggestion that protests might be inextricably linked. The walls of a prison are as effective in shutting out the enquirer as they are in hiding away the prisoner. Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners was formed to publicise and to co-ordinate the escalating prison protest in 1972. It did not initiate prisoners' demonstrations, either peaceful or violent, massive or individual. PROP was born of an on-going process, which is why when the organization's influence was failing at the end of 1972, the protests were, and are, continuing inside Her Majesty's prisons.
Chapter 5

The Origins and Development of Preservation of the
Rights of Prisoners
The consequences of the Home Office's monopolistic hold on access to information about prison were clearly illustrated during the first part of 1972. Between January and May, there were some fifty collective prisoners' demonstrations. The Prison Department publicly acknowledged less than one third of them. Officially, then, for all intents and purposes, the majority of these peaceful protests never took place. The press either ignored or were unaware of them.

The first demonstrations to receive publicity were the protests organised by prisoners on remand in Brixton prison. As discussed in "Men in Prison", the conditions of remand prisoners are often worse than those of convicted men and women. At any one time, some ten per cent of the total prison population are being held in custody awaiting trial or sentence. The people in Brixton had organised massive peaceful demonstrations aimed at highlighting their situation. It was in the middle of these protests that the announcement of a prisoners' union was made. On 11 May, 1972, the national media gathered inside a small public house, "The Prince Arthur", on the Caledonian Road opposite Pentonville Prison. They listened as Dick Pooley outlined the demands of "Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners" /"PROP_7/, the newly formed British prisoners' union. With Pooley there were other members of the Executive Committee all of whom had served time. Pooley himself had spent almost half of his life, some twenty years, in penal institutions of one kind or another. He was recognised as one of the top safeblowers in the country, and was actually
on parole, finishing off a ten-year sentence. Ted Ward, the London organizer, had served various sentences, including one of two years for breaking into Dartmoor to assist in an escape attempt. For several years he had been closely involved in community grass-roots political activity in the Islington area, and had had considerable experience with the Claimants Union. Douglas Curtis was the group's Press Officer, although in the initial stages was trying to keep his identity secret / " for personal reasons. He had served time for petty theft and fraud, but was currently at Cambridge University, having arrived from Dartmoor where he had passed his A-levels. Pauline, a housewife with three small children, had also served time, and, with Ted Ward, had been involved in community action. The other member of the group was myself. I was also at Cambridge, and was the only member of the group gathered that day who had not been imprisoned. In the "absence" of Curtis, I was acting as Press Officer.

In response to the degrading, dehumanising, and ultimately debilitating conditions inside British gaols, Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners had been formed to:

"preserve, protect, and to extend the rights of prisoners and ex-prisoners and to assist in their rehabilitation and re-integration into society, so as to bring about a reduction in crime."

The organisation's "Statement of Intent" continued:

"For this purpose application has been made to the Charity Commissioners for the registration of a charitable trust to raise funds and assist PROP in its efforts to:
Campaign for a Prisoners' Charter of Rights;

Secure the right of unimpeded access to Britain's penal establishments by Press and Public;

Bring about an end to the mis-application of the spirit and original intent of the Official Secrets Act;

Take action to bring about the eventual abolition of all prisons and the substitution of alternative methods of dealing with offenders;

Establish local hostels, job-placement schemes and educational projects to be run along non-institutional lines by local committees with Associate Members' support;

Provide legal assistance for members in court proceedings, internal disciplinary processes, parole applications and any other matters pertaining to their general welfare;

Establish and maintain contact and co-operation with the Trade Union movement;

Negotiate with the Home Office on behalf of all prisoners;

Liaise with other penal reform bodies in Great Britain and all other countries of the world where such bodies exist.

The Charter of Rights listed some twenty-six demands arising out of the common situation of British prisoners which was outlined in the "Men in Prison" section. The preamble to the Charter began:
"The following demands are made by PROP (Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners) on behalf of all prisoners who are or have been or will be inmates of penal institutions in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. PROP calls upon the Crown, Parliament, Her Majesty's Government, the Home Secretary and the Prison Department to accede to these demands and to initiate such legislation and issue such directives as may be necessary to secure the early establishment and effective implementation of the following rights of prisoners:

The Right to membership of PROP and the right to communicate with, consult, and receive visits from, representatives of PROP;

The Right to conduct elections within penal institutions on behalf of PROP with a view to the appointment of local representatives of that body and the election of delegates to its national committees;

The Right to stand for election as a local representative of PROP and once elected to participate in the decision-making process, to attend all policy and staff meetings within the prison and to act as a spokesman for his or her members in all matters relating to their pay, working and living conditions, leisure pursuits and general welfare;

The Right to canvass and vote for local and national PROP representatives;

The Right to vote in national and local government elections;

The Right to trade union membership and the right to have their pay and conditions determined by negotiation between the Home Office and the prisoners' elected representatives;
The Right to institute legal proceedings of any kind, including actions against servants of the Crown, without first securing the consent of the Home Office;

The Right to contact legal advisers in confidence without interference, intervention or censorship by the penal authorities;

The Right to be legally represented and to call defence witnesses in internal disciplinary proceedings to which the press should have free access;

The Right to parole, provided certain well-established and widely-known criteria are met. This Right to be supplemented by the Right to receive expert and independent assistance in the preparation of parole applications, to be present and/or legally represented at the hearing of applications, to have access to all reports considered by the Board from whatever source and the opportunity to refute allegations of misconduct or unsuitability, the Right to a reasoned judgment on the Board's decision and the Right of appeal to the High Court against that decision;

The Right to communicate freely with the Press and public;

The Right to consult with a legal adviser before being subject to any judicial proceeding, including hearings by Magistrates of applications by the police for remands in custody;

The Right to be allocated to penal institutions within his home region;

The Right to adequate and humane visiting facilities within all penal institutions, including the ability to exercise their conjugal rights;
The Right to send and receive as many letters as the prisoner requires without censorship;

The Right to embark upon educational or vocational training courses at the commencement of any custodial sentence, including the Right to sit examinations and to be given adequate and appropriate facilities;

The Right to demand an independent inspection of prison conditions, including hygiene, food, working conditions, living accommodation and the provision of adequate leisure facilities;

The Right to adequate exercise periods and the provision of recreational facilities;

The Right to consult an independent medical adviser;

The Right to enter into marriage;

The Right to attend funerals of all near relatives;

The Right to own and sell the products of their leisure-time activities, including hobbies, fine arts and writing;

The right to receive toilet articles for personal use as gifts from relatives, friends and organisations;

The Right to adequate preparation for discharge, including:

i) Programmes of pre-release courses devised in conjunction with prisoners and their families to assist them with problems of Housing, Employment, Education, Marriage Counselling and Child Care related to their special needs.

ii) The right to home leave to be extended to all prisoners.
iii) The right of allocation to an open prison and followed by the right of allocation to the pre-release hostel scheme.

iv) The right to a fully-franked insurance card on discharge and the supplementary rights thereby to full state benefits.

v) An equal right with all other applicants to employment in state concerns whether they be run by central or local authority.

The Right to have all criminal records destroyed within five years of discharge irrespective of the sentence last served.

There were to be two classes of membership. The history of penal reform is filled with the largely futile efforts of middle-class liberals to improve the conditions inside prisons, without involving or even consulting with the prisoners themselves. As we shall see in our discussion of prisoners' unions in the USA; and as Mathiesen and Foucault have proven in the Scandinavian and French movements, it is essential to recognise that prisoners understand their own situation, and are aware of where their best interests lie, even though they are largely hidden behind walls and bars. Whilst acknowledging the important role that academics, penal reformists, and other 'lay' people involved might play in the administration of British justice, PROP was first and foremost an organisation of prisoners and ex-prisoners. To this end, full membership of the group (including voting rights) was opened only to people who are, or had been, incarcerated. Officially then,

"Full membership of PROP will be open, without payment of subscription, to any person who is or has been an inmate of any detention centre, remand centre, approved school, borstal, prison or other penal establishment in England, Wales,
Scotland or Northern Ireland. Full members will be entitled to attend and speak at any local or General Meeting of PROP, to stand for election to any committee, to canvass and vote for any other candidate for election, to inspect the accounts of the fund-raising body, and the Finance and General Purposes Committee of PROP and to make full use of any services and facilities offered by PROP to its Full Members."

For those who had not been inside "associate" membership was available. This involved a fairly well-defined commitment to the organisation and its campaign.

"Associate Membership of PROP will be given to any person who undertakes a yearly subscription of £2 (Two Pounds) being £1 (One Pound) in respect of his own Associate Membership and £1 (One Pound) in respect of the unpaid subscription of a Full Member. Associate Members must also undertake to establish and maintain contact with his or her Full Member associate and make reasonable efforts to assist in his or her rehabilitation."

Associates would be entitled to attend and speak at any local or general meeting of the organisation, and could have access to the accounts. They would not, however, be entitled to either stand for election to any committee, or to canvass or vote for any particular candidate at an election. Associates would be entitled to serve in an advisory capacity, without voting rights on any committee, but only at the specific invitation of a majority of that committee.

Copies of the Charter of Rights, the Statement of Intent, and the details of membership had been sent to the editors of every national newspaper, to the heads of television and radio news departments, and to the Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling. The letter to Maudling was brief, to the point – and unanswered:
"Dear Mr. Maudling,

I have been instructed by my Executive Committee to inform you of the formation of PROP as an organisation for prisoners and ex-prisoners and to request your co-operation in the effective implementations of the demands set out in the enclosed Prisoners' Charter of Rights.

I feel sure that your end objective is synonymous with ours, a significant reduction in the incidence of crime and an end to the suffering of victims and offenders. Perhaps you will even agree with us that it is difficult to say which class is in the end the greatest victim and who suffers the most.

I am instructed to advise you that members of my Executive Committee and myself are ready to enter into any discussions and negotiations with you to ensure the effective implementation of prisoners' rights and to request your response to our initiative at the earliest possible opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

R. P. Pooley."

The media welcomed the formation of a "prisoners' union" as a novelty. On the inside pages of the papers the following day news of PROP's formation was announced under headlines ranging from the Times "A PROP for Prisoners" to the Sun's "A Union for Old Lags". Similarly in a number of radio bulletins details of the organisation were divulged. Most of the stories paid more attention to the life of Dick Pooley than to the aims of the group, but in these first, heady days this was not seen as of any particular consequence. The media were not, however, sufficiently impressed with PROP to show up at the foundation meeting in Hull, the following night. There, about sixty people turned up to hear ex-prisoners discuss the need for an organisation to campaign for inmates' rights. Thomas Mathiesen came over from Scandinavia to offer the

1 'The Times', 12 May 1972.
support of the Scandinavian movement, and Jack Ashwell, local branch secretary of the TGWV spoke of the need to interest and involve the trade union movement in the struggle for penal change. Ros Kane of Radical Alternatives to Prisons discussed the problems and possibilities of that group's campaigns, particularly against the scheme to rebuild Holloway women's prison.

Attempts to publicise the organisation inside the prison were made through a number of channels. Most importantly, it was the national and local media who carried the message across the walls. Secondly, two days after the announcement of the group, weekend visitors to most of the major prisons in this country were handed leaflets explaining the aims of PROP and giving details of how the organisation might be contacted. Visitors were asked to take the papers into the prisons, or if this was disallowed (as was the case at most nicks), to pass on the news by word of mouth. A third channel was provided by sympathetic lawyers, probation and welfare officers, and other 'official' visitors who raised the question of a prisoners' union with the inmates. By the end of the first week, sufficient mail was coming out of all penal establishments to indicate that the initial 'awareness' campaign had been at least moderately successful.

But the main channel of contact between the inside and outside remained the media who increasingly reported PROP's claims to be in contact with the escalating prison demonstrations. One of PROP's first claims was to have been in touch with the leaders of the remand prisoners' protests. This claim was quickly substantiated by a letter written on a scrap of paper and smuggled out of Brixton. The author's name and prison number was on the top.
"Dear Mr. Pooley,

Sorry that this isn't nick paper. It's Saturday night and this note has to go tomorrow so I've got to make do with the back of a book.

Speaking for myself and my fellow inmates, we welcome and applaud the efforts you and those connected with your organisation are making on behalf of convicted prisoners everywhere. We here at Brixton will all be out again Wednesday evening, we know only too well that we got to keep the ball rolling, as unconvicted prisoners there's little can be done against us by the screws, so I think we here all agree that it's easier for us unconvicted to keep on coming out without fearing reprisals from the screws.

A lot of us here, have had a taste of brutality as convicted men, the result of trying to stand up for our own rights. I was in Wandsworth in 1970, 1971, spending a solid four months down chokey, on medicine, walking about like a zombie. All this has to stop. This is why we all here, and I think I speak for cons unconvicted and convicted, welcome and once again applaud what you're attempting to bring about.

I had no end of kickings at Wandsworth for trying to speak up for my rights. So did a lot of other men, but who could we appeal to? That kind of treatment is unnecessary and only makes men bitter and worse when eventually they're freed.

On Wednesday evening we're after an improvement in personal hygiene. Here on F-Wing there is 7 razors for 300 men. We're after association, better food etc. More has been accomplished here at Brixton in the last two weeks just by being allowed radios, but that is only really to pacify the men. There is lots more we want as convicted prisoners. We want the right to live like human beings and not be treated like scum as the ruling authority seem determined to brand us. Also we want the right to take educational courses in the nick. (In most nicks this is impossible.)

A lot of the chaps want to be in touch.

Sincerely,

..............."

What followed the arrival of this letter at PROP headquarters in Hull clearly illustrates the massive problems of communication with the inside that the emergent organisation faced. The letter arrived on Thursday, 18 May, and was read as indicating a sitdown in Brixton on 24 May. Plans were
initiated for a simultaneous protest outside the prison.
Groups such as Radical Alternatives to Prison were contacted, and asked to provide support. An announcement was made to the press about the intended protest, and indications were given that some two hundred demonstrators would turn out. In the event, the Home Office denied - for once quite accurately - that the inmates were sitting down in the exercise yard, the press and police turned out in force, to be met by the demonstration - of only four people, the National Executive of PROP. The demonstration was rapidly transferred into a delegation, with each of the executive claiming to represent fifty members. The next day, the press took the opportunity to undermine PROP's credibility. "Prison sit-down strike flops" reported the 'Sun', and the 'Daily Mail' spoke of the demonstration which "fizzled out". Nevertheless, prisoners and their protest were again widely discussed, and the PROP message was carried across the walls. The organisation had created enough of a stir for the 'Guardian' to run an editorial two days later which concluded that:

"Prisoners' grievances should not be repressed, but brought out into the open."  

It was the beginning of a summer in which PROP rarely allowed the subject of prison protest to disappear from the news, and more people became aware of the urgency of the explosive situation inside. In the first two weeks of PROP's existence, there had been a rapid escalation of inmate protests. On 13 May, three hundred and fifty men staged a sit-down at Wormwood Scrubs, and during the next six days, Brixton, Gartree, Wormwood Scrubs, and during the next six days, Brixton, Gartree,

Strangeways, and Gartree again all became involved. By the last week of May, over fifteen prisons had been affected by peaceful demonstrations involving over two and a half thousand men, protests for which PROP claimed at least partial responsibility. But the organisational problems were still manifest. At Armley jail in Leeds, the whole prison, without exception (996 men) had sat-down for twenty-four hours in protest against conditions. PROP arranged a demonstration in support outside the prison - but could only muster twenty seven people. It was a poor showing for an organisation which claimed some five hundred associate members. But again the event was widely covered in the media; and the image of PROP as a large organisation remained virtually unchallenged. The failure to attract outside support, however, was already proving one of PROP's most serious weaknesses, and the full effects of this disability were to be made clearly visible early in September.

At the same time, indications of the increasing inmate support for PROP were apparent in the mail arriving in Hull. At the beginning of June an article outlining the aims of PROP had been published in "Frontsheet", the paper of the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders/"NACRO/". NACRO is almost entirely financed by Home Office money, and its literature is officially accepted inside prisons. The article on PROP, therefore, reached a number of prisoners, including a man in Swansea, who wrote:

"I am writing in regards to the article which was published in the June edition of 'Frontsheet'. I am extremely interested in your organisation and would be very grateful if you were to send me the information as stated in the article."
As you may see by the above address, I am serving a prison sentence and only too well appreciate the things that you are trying to do for us.

Wishing you a happy outcome to your marvellous venture.

Yours sincerely .......

Although full details of the organisation and how to join were immediately sent, we do not know if they ever reached the man. There was never any further communication. We suspected, as was later to be confirmed, that PROP literature was totally banned inside prison, and the people to whom material was sent remained uninformed that their letter from PROP had been suppressed.

Towards the end of May, perhaps flushed by its early and undeniable success, PROP announced a further escalation of the prisoners' protests, to culminate in an all-out national gaol strike at some unspecified future date. This announcement was timed to coincide with the annual conference of the Prison Officers' Association in Cheltenham. The POA were upstaged, with the press headlining PROP's latest plans, and including POA comments only in the body of the text. Under a heading "Prison Officers' Conference", the Daily Telegraph, for example, proclaimed: "National Sit-Down Jail Strike threat for July". Every paper reported the accusation by the Chairman of the POA, Mr. Sydney Powell, that PROP was behind the recent strikes, and his statement that:

"the dividing line between passive demonstrations and a riot such as that at Parkhurst is very thin". It was to prove a veiled threat, which gave credibility to PROP, and enhanced the reputation and legitimacy of the organisation. 7

Meanwhile, the Home Office had accepted the validity of at least some of the Brixton prisoners' complaints, and offered some improvements which were immediately seen as palliatives. However, the fact that protesting prisoners had wrung concessions from the prison authorities was not lost upon the general prison populace. It enhanced the use of collectivised demonstrations as a tool to achieve change. PROP's demands for an escalation of the protest were thus fully met. Problems of communication with people inside remained, but at least the misunderstanding over the Brixton demonstration was ironed out. At the end of May, a "stiff" was dropped into the Hull office. It was an interesting comment on the determination of the men inside to continue and widen their struggle.

"Dear Mr. Pooley,

Yesterday as I came out of the exercise a young fella came to my friend asking for me, telling me he had a message for us all - that the press and all would be down for the planned demo. It was then I realised that you had received my last letter dated 14.5.72 too late as the sit-down was last Wednesday, 17th.

This guy had a visit today, and got his bird, who'd relayed the message on for me, to phone you immediately she left the nick to try and stop the press turning up. However, we heard that they all turned up, unfortunately. You must have misinterpreted by last letter, as I dated it the 14th and stressed that I had to get it away the next day being Monday, so as you would get it before Wednesday the 17th and so give you time to inform the necessary people. Naturally we are all a bit choked, but that's the way it goes. Somehow the letter got held up.

Now for the details of last Wednesday; we sat down at 3 o'clock, planning to go on till 10.30 p.m. No sooner had we sat down than the Governor turns up with this slob from the Home Office, a fella by the name of Sanderson. For myself, I'll be honest I can't speak, when I get fired up for a verbal blast I get overcome with tension and anxiety, a result of the drugs and the chokey which I have had. I guess it had some bad psychological effect on me. However, the chaps nominated to speak didn't get half out what they wanted to say. No sooner had the speakers risen than they were surrounded by chaps on bottles of milk charges who started asking silly things. At least these cranks had the nerve to sit down with us, not like some of the dead legs who hung their heads in shame and marched back to the cells. These are the spare pricks who are now enjoying the delights of their new found privileges.

However, since seeing this Sanderson, we now have our own razors, radios, longer exercises, plus a movie a week. So we can't complain. There's been more changes here in the last month than in the last 50 years.

What we want now is reforms for the convicted men. We want to stop these beatings that go on in places like Wandsworth, Parkhurst, etc. We want to change this bent system of the Visiting Committee. I don't think I've ever experienced anything so pseudo as the V.C. committee; the nearest I got to a 'not guilty' was a caution and that was only because they realised I couldn't get away from the block. We want you to press on.

We all read the Telegraph today and it's obvious that the screws are worried. They talk of 'character assassination'. They realise that if we get a Union, a life-line, then we can and will bring forth witnesses if any con is physically attacked. They realise, this small band of blue-coated Psychopaths, that they're going to have to be careful. One thing we want to stress is this, that none of us here see this Union as giving us the right to run around the nick assaulting screws, etc. To us this is a very serious thing and none of us wish to abuse it in any way.

But it seems to me that the Home Office are prepared to let the kickings go on, to reduce men to zombies, lining up for their three times daily dose of tranquilisers. Through the Union this can change. Once the men who are convicted get it into their heads that they have a life-line to the Outside World, then morale will brighten, men won't leave prison embittered and full of malice as they have been doing for the last countless generations, or for that matter since prisons were first invented. Obviously we know there has to be discipline, but the brutality can and has to stop. On the last part of my sentence last year at Blunderstone, I talked with a couple of guys who were in the riots at Parkhurst - Jesus, if ever a thing could have been avoided that could.
We read what Powell had to say in the Telegraph in regard that Prison Officers were open to physical attacks. How very true, but only from cons who've suffered at their hands.

As I said, Powell, is worried about this union because he knows that cons would come forward as witnesses to an acts of brutality once the life-line is established. Before, cons couldn't come forward as witnesses for fear of reprisals from the screws - and who could blame them. Then we hadn't a leg to stand on or anywhere or anyone to turn to. At the end of the paragraph it said 99 out of a 100 allegations investigated were found unjustified. Bloody obvious that is! That undermines and destroys Powells whole statement.

Well, Mr. Pooley, there's not a lot we can do from this end now. All of the demands here have been met, and we won't invent excuses for a sit-in. It seems like we'll have to wait and see how many of us are unfortunate to meet up in Wandsworth, and from there carry on the struggle for better conditions, etc.

We were glad to read that the cons had a sit-in at Strangeways and the Scrubs. First of all we thought their protests were a bit silly, but on reflection it seems that they were right and justified. Beginning with small items and gradually building up for the reform. At least they are convicted men whereas we are not, so they've got the bottle to go on.

I must close now and reassure you that the majority here are 100% with you, but our main concern lies with the convicted men. So if there's anything we can do to further the reform from this end, just send the message through the proper channels.

On behalf of everybody here .......

Any organisation, group, or individual seeking the support of prisoners must demonstrate its ideas through practical experience. Very early on in PROP's existence, such an opportunity was presented by the indifference and inefficiency of a prison welfare department. On the very first day of the distribution to visitors of leaflets proclaiming PROP, the organisation was called on to help four women and two children who found themselves stranded in Hull due to a train strike and the callous attitude of the authorities. Every prison is supposed
to have some sort of welfare office to deal with emergencies affecting a prisoner's family. In this case the prison authorities refused to help. The women contacted the probation service which was "unavailable". In desperation they turned to the police and explained their predicament. They were told to "hitch-hike" home. It was one of PROP's full members who found them huddled together on a deserted Paragon Station in Hull. He contacted PROP headquarters, who sent out cars to bring the families in. There was no room to put them up for the night, so an estate car was borrowed (from playwright Alan Plater) to take the party home to Halifax, Warrington, and Bradford. The PROP members involved finally arrived back in Hull at about five o'clock in the morning.

Two weeks later, a letter from the husband of one of the women arrived. It has been written on 16 May in Hull prison and taken fifteen days to reach the PROP office, having travelled via the Prison Department in London. It expressed thanks, and the offer of help.

"I am writing to you to say I'm very grateful to you for seeing that my wife got home safely on Saturday last during the rail dispute. I was quite taken aback yesterday when I received my wife's letter saying who had taken her home safely. You see, although I was given the message at 8 p.m. on Saturday evening that my wife was on her way home, I was not told who supplied this service. I was under the false impression that the police had laid the transport on. My wife tells me that the police told her to hitch hike the one hundred and twenty some miles home, and the prisons said they could not help either! And people wonder why we in here have no faith in the authorities.

Once more thank you very much for what you did, and if it is any consolation and reward to you, it is a great comfort to us in here to know that out there somewhere, there is at least one person who is genuinely willing to help.

If at any time I can be of assistance to you and your movement please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours Gratefully ..."
Once again, Dick Pooley wrote back, enclosing some of the literature including the recently produced magazine. The letter was returned, with an accompanying letter from the Governor, stating that under the prison regulations the prisoner could neither have the letter nor reply to it. The prisoner was apparently told that a letter had arrived for him but that he would not be allowed to read it.

The first fortnight in June witnessed another twenty sit-downs inside. Once again, the media gave wide and intensive coverage to these activities, and PROP was seen as responsible for the worsening relationships in penal institutions. Amongst the prison populace, PROP's legitimacy was growing. At one borsal in Lancashire, boys threatened to "get the union" onto masters who annoyed or provoked them. The Home Office, meanwhile, refused to publicly acknowledge the influence or even the existence of the prisoners' union.

Towards the end of the first week in June, however, it called together all prison governors to discuss the growing unrest and the increasingly articulate demands for immediate improvements in prison conditions. Although the meeting was secret, notifications of the decisions taken were passed out to PROP by a sympathetic governor. The most crucial was that the Prison Department agreed neither to interfere with, nor to punish prisoners taking part in peaceful protests. From PROP's vantage-point, the decision in part vindicated their decision to call for an escalation of the demonstrations. But for the POA, the decision was a massive disappointment, officers reacted with increasingly bitterness and anger which was to find its ultimate expression in the violence in Albany prison at the end of August.
The protests continued to spread. Between 11 and 13 of June there were five protests: two at Armley, two at Pentonville, and one at Albany. The demonstrations were entirely peaceful, and in each case involved almost all the prison population. The 'Times' acknowledged the non-violence of these protests, but also reported from Pakistan that:

"At least 58 prisoners were injured, about ten seriously, when the police opened fire to-day to quell a six-day protest at the central prison, in Peshawar, capital of the North-West Frontier province."

At the same time, the report on the Attica State Prison protest in which forty-three people had died was due for publication. As Powell of the POA had said, the dividing line between non-violent and violent protest is thin. It was events such as these which underlined the reality and tenseness of the situation. Violence is a part of the daily routine of prison. That it could erupt at any time could never be far from the thoughts of the PROP organisers. The prison officers, for their part, are trained to work in a situation in which violence is usually individualised. Together they can, and do, repress individual force by collective violence. But when that protest is peaceful and involves a majority of prisoners, they are powerless to intervene; they do not know how to react. If they pick out individuals they merely succeed in heightening the tension and escalating hostilities. The result is more intensive protests involving more prisoners. As the "troublemakers" or "leaders" are 'ghosted' to other prisons, so the protests spread. The screws eventually came up with only one answer: they provoked violence, called in the 'heavy mob' to repress the "riot", and then demanded the

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8 'The Times', 14 June 1972
the punishment of "those violent thugs". In June or early
July individual prisoners had been badly beaten up by an angry
and frustrated staff, as a reprisal against the inmates'
collective activity. What was to happen at Albany and Gartree
later in the year was a direct result of what was happening
during the mid-summer of 1972.

As demonstrations continued, and the Home Office refused
to even discuss PROP's demands, the threat of the National
Strike was voiced louder. At the beginning of July, Dick Pooley
demanded immediate recognition of PROP and of himself as its
National Organiser, and promised a "total shutdown in every one
of the one hundred and eleven penal establishments in this
country", if his voice was unheeded. It was a wildly
exaggerated claim, but against a background of escalating
demonstrations, and of increasing media interest, the statement
went unchallenged. On the 20 July, the following statement
was released to the press, and to the new Home Secretary,
Robert Carr:

"PROP, the prisoners' union, today announced that
there will be a national jail strike on 4 August.
The strike has been called because of the refusal
of the Home Office and Prison Department to negotiate
for the restoration of prisoners' human rights on the
basis of the Prisoners Charter which was issued by PROP
on 12 May this year. At that time PROP called for urgent
and serious consideration of their proposals. Numerous
letters concerning both specific and general complaints
about prison conditions have been sent to the Home
Secretary who has not had the courtesy to reply to
any of them.

Since the formation of PROP, two months ago,
there have been forty-five demonstrations, involving
over seven thousand prisoners in eighteen prisons in
support of the demands PROP is making on their behalf, and unofficial PROP committees have been elected in eight major prisons. In some instances, the demonstrations, which have been entirely peaceful have produced a violent backlash from prison staff. Complaints about staff brutality have been forwarded to the Home Office, but no official investigations have been undertaken. Solicitors instructed by PROP have been refused access to prisoners who were the victims of these attacks and witnesses have been kept in solitary confinement. The matter has now been taken up with the Law Society and with the M.P.'s in the areas affected.

The strike on 4 August will commence at 8 a.m. It will be entirely peaceful and will involve total non-cooperation with the prison authorities for a period of twenty-four hours. The specific proposals to which PROP demands that urgent consideration be given are as follows:

The right to membership of PROP and official recognition of PROP by the Home Office and Prison Department as the true representatives of all prisoners;

The setting up of PROP committees elected by prisoners in all penal establishments;

The right to parole, provided certain well-established and widely-known criteria are met;

An end to the 'Kangaroo Court' nature of internal disciplinary proceedings where prisoners are denied the right to legal representation and the effective right to call witnesses;

The right to Trade Union membership and to have pay and conditions determined by negotiation;

The right of all prisoners to withhold labour as a protest against unjust and inhuman conditions;
An end to disciplinary proceedings against prisoners who have participated in peaceful demonstrations and the restoration of all remission and privileges which have been forfeited by the participants in previous demonstrations on charges arising from them.

An early meeting between representatives of the Home Office and the National Executive Committee of PROP to discuss the restoration of prisoners' rights and the ways in which they might be enabled to meet their responsibilities to their families and to society;

PROP recognises the uneviable dilemma of the new Home Secretary, Mr. Robert Carr, and wishes to give him time to consider the proposals. That is why the announcement has been made two weeks in advance of the National Strike."

In fact, the announcement had been made so early because the organisers knew that two weeks of media coverage and speculation, and the usual moving around of prisoners, would ensure that news of the strike reached every prison in the country.

Despite the official censorship and restrictions on reporters' access to information, the history of PROP illustrates that the media can be a most potent weapon with which to attack and traverse the walls of a prison. PROP was also helped by 'screws' who tried to find out from the men if they were going to take part in the events of 4 August, and thereby inadvertently spread the work. The organisation claimed to be in daily contact with every major British prison. It was, but not through the "underground" links imagined. It simply used the media to transmit its messages — and the replies came out
"the backdoor", and "stiffs". It was simple; too simple for some of the press who seemed to want sensational stories of hurriedly-scrawled messages being passed backwards and forwards across the walls. Some reporters tried to pressure PROP organisers into giving information about PROP's reported secret communications with the inside. Nothing was divulged - there was nothing to divulge - but it all added to the mystery surrounding PROP's internal organisation. On the 21 July, every national daily, many local and evening papers and every news broadcast on television and radio carried the date of the first national prison strike in Britain. Two days later, a prisoner on home leave from Maidstone called Cambridge and said that he had been asked to ring by the PROP committee in the prison. He wanted to know what the events of 4 August would involve. A week later, information came through that the Home Office, suspecting his contact with us, had ghosted him to another gaol. A couple of official prison visitors rang to say that they had asked some prisoners whether they would join the demonstrations. The prisoners did not seem too sure of what the visitors had been talking about, so the officials had explained the proposed action! By the time the day arrived, prisoners at Durham had read, seen, and heard so much of the national strike that they thought it had had Home Office approval, and so the whole prison joined in the protest!

Whilst contact was being made so easily "inside", plans were drawn up to hold demonstrations outside every prison in the country. It was very quickly realised that PROP did not have the kind of support outside to recruit the necessary number of people.
The National Executive decided to hold one demonstration in the North and one in the South. After much debate, it was agreed that rather than risk two failures as witnessed at Brixton and Armley, it was better to pool all resources, and a maximum security prison in the Midlands was selected – Gartree. This establishment was a good choice because at that time, it had no wall but wire fencing around it. The prisoners would thus be able to see the demonstration outside. "Over five hundred people" was the official estimation of the forthcoming Gartree demonstration. Again this was widely reported and picked up by the prisoners.

But early on the morning of 4 August, it became clear that PROP's outside support was extremely limited. At 8.00 a.m. the press officer arrived at Gartree to be met by a barrage of press men, a posse of policemen, but no fellow demonstrators. The first national gaol strike in Britain had officially began. Only ten minutes later, the Assistant Governor stepped briefly from the prison gates to announce that there was no support for the strike-call in Gartree. As he spoke, a sheet was hung outside the windows of a cell block. It announced "Gartree, 24 hour strike is on". The embarrassed Assistant beat a hasty retreat, the authorities' credibility seriously damaged.

Throughout the morning, reports, mainly from the press, came into the Cambridge office, telling PROP which prisons were involved. Twenty-four hours before the strike, we had issued a list of twenty-eight prisons, nineteen allegedly with PROP committees, which we said would be involved in the strike. The press rang up continously, saying, for example:

"The Home Office have admitted that twelve prisons are involved so far. These are ... is that true?"
They then quoted the location of the prisons and the numbers of prisoners taking part and asked for verification. Gradually, a picture was built up of what was actually happening. By mid-afternoon, calls had been received from wives, relatives and friends who had visited a prisoner on that afternoon. They gave us a most accurate account of the numbers involved.

A 'Telegraph' reporter asked if Walton Gaol, Liverpool, was involved; we claimed it was, although the Home Office had apparently denied that the Merseyside prison was affected. The reporter told us that he had just left the prison where he had been visiting a contact, who told him of 300 demonstrators. At Durham, a photographer at the top of a high-rise block of flats, took a picture showing the men sitting-down in the exercise yard. Again, the Home Office denied this strike action, until informed of the photograph. This Home Office's lying was one of the most important features of the day's events. Journalists who had previously doubted PROP's claims, and accepted unthinkingly the official viewpoint, were now inclined to at least consider PROP's claims.

The late edition of the London "Evening Standard" carried a front-page banner headline about the "4,000 prisoners" involved in the strike. Every news bulletin carried stories of the strike, Douglas Curtis was interviewed on the main BBC news, and I did a "live" interview on ITN's "News at Ten". The next day, the front-page of the 'Sun' blazed "LOVE STRIKE HITS JAILS" and went on:

"The biggest ever protest hit Britain's jails yesterday as 5,000 prisoners went on strike for love."

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9 'The Sun', 5 August 1972
This was a reference to part of one of the provisions in PROP's Charter of Rights which reads:

"The Right to adequate and humane visiting facilities within all penal institutions, including the ability to exercise their conjugal rights."

That sort of sensationalism was to be expected. What was more surprising was the article which appeared in 'The Times' because it showed, perhaps unintentionally, the inconsistency, the deliberate inaccuracies, and the blatant lies of the Home Office who had attempted to play down the effect of the strikes as much as possible. 'The Times' reported the Home Office's statements that:

"just under four thousand prisoners in twenty-two establishments had made some sort of demonstration",

and that:

"among the twenty-four prisons affected during the day";

it went on to list thirty-three prisons.

Viscount Colville, Minister responsible for the conduct of the Prison Department, appeared on television and said that twenty-seven prisons had been affected, and under four thousand prisoners. Later in the month, Mr. Robert Carr, the Home Secretary, spoke of "the five and a half thousand prisoners" who had taken part in the National Gaol Strike.

The Home Office refused to meet PROP representatives to discuss general matters, but Viscount Colville said that he would meet any person or organisation on any specific issue. PROP promptly submitted numerous letters detailing cases of individuals who were the victims of staff brutality. Not one of the letters was even acknowledged, let alone answered. Viscount Colville's "offer" appeared disingenuous.

10 'The Times', 5 August 1972
Over the following weekend, PROP issued the following list of prisons which supported the strike action:


The total number of prisoners involved was estimated at over 10,000. Numerically, it had been one of the largest prison strikes in the world. But it was, or should have been, only the beginning. In Sweden, a wave of strikes was sparked off in the night of 4 August. (Despite PROP's claim, this was a coincidence.) What is crucial to note, though, is that the Swedish protests involved over sixty per cent of the prison population; PROP had had the support of less than twenty-five.

The day's events were still serious enough to make the 'Sunday Telegraph' question the security measures which allowed a group such as PROP to organise the strike. And the day of protest was to have a shattering effect on the National Prison Officers Association. The Prison Officers felt their position even more threatened by the activities of this organisation, which was undermining what they perceived as traditional standards of law and order in the prisons. Their fears were justified when Douglas Curtis told reporters that PROP's next plan was to organise a walk-out from "open" prisons. "I re-iterated the threat on ITN." It was this proclamation which was to have such important consequences. In the present, it allowed sections of the press to label PROP as an irresponsible, anarchic organisation, and served to distract attention away from the causes of the protests and the Charter of Rights. In the long-term it prepared the ground for a concerted, violent counter-attack by the prison officers.
In the meantime, letters smuggled out of prisons which had taken part in the strike, began to reach PROP headquarters. A "stiff" from Gartree ran:

"We had a great demonstration with a great deal of good-natured support. Over 200 men went out and camped out until 11.15 a.m. on Saturday. We went out after lunch 1.05 p.m. on Friday. This way everyone could get out if they wanted with a lunch inside them. We made bivouacs and tents from blankets (passed through the windows) and all had a marvellous night.

The figure of 200 is misleading. There was immense support as well inside. Everybody inside, except a handful, "sat-in" on the wings watching TV until midnight and many slept downstairs throughout the night. Many passed food and hot water through the windows to sustain those of us outside.

If you ignore those on rule 43 (14), in hospital (8), Block (8), sick, confined to their cells (about 10), and Friday visits, the figures are very impressive. The total prison role is about three hundred and seventy at the moment.

One man here is interested in helping by doing some sketches, which are of very high quality, and suitable for reproduction. They are of the sit-out, showing tents, etc., exactly as they were. He would also be prepared to do some good oil paintings, as would another man, which he will send you free, for sale for PROP. funds. It is also possible that someone may want to donate a few soft toys or match-stick models for sale - are they of any use?

By the way, the man doing the sketches waved a towel through the window and got a great response from Doug Curtis. It gave a great deal of encouragement to many inside. I hope this incident was encouraging to Doug as well ..."
regular contact with this man who was identified as one of 
the "leaders" of the Armley demonstrations in previous months. 
He told Dick that:

"I've got a new name for you to write to me under. 
The name is R... You can either be an uncle on
my mother's side, or a cousin on my father's side."

To write to a prisoner one must ask the permission of the 
Governor. The prison rules state that the Secretary of State 
can impose restrictions upon communication between a prisoner 
and other people, with a view to securing discipline and good 
order, or to prevent crime, or in the interests of any persons. 
Any Governor may stop any letter on the grounds that its 
contents are objectionable. By writing as an uncle, Dick Pooley 
would have been able to by-pass these restrictions. If he 
wanted to communicate a date for a particular demonstration, 
he could merely write reminding the prisoner not to forget his 
mother's birthday on that particular day. 

The inmate spoke of the strike:

"By the way, did you know that all the lads in 
Leeds, who took part in the strike on Friday last, 
all got one-fifth of their pay taken off? It was 
worth it, 'cause we all had a good laugh in the 
tailor's shop. But I don't think they should have 
taken any pay off us. But what could we have done, 
apart from another strike, and there wasn't many 
who would have done it. I don't think everybody 
got money taken off them; I think that what they 
done was take if off them who they thought were 
the ringleaders.

Well Dick, I think that's about it for now, as 
I will have to get this letter to my mate to pass 
out of his visit."

Another prisoner, who had been in Armley, but transferred 
to Lancaster for 4 August, sent out an account showing the 
sort of lies which the Home Office told to cover up the truth 
throughout the summer.
"I was transferred from Armley to this prison (Lancaster). I would like to say now that most of the reports in the papers, about the strikes and sit-downs at Armley Prison were wrong. One report that I read myself stated that we were all given our normal exercise, even though we were confined to our cells, on the Governor's orders. This in itself is untrue as I was left locked up for two days without exercise. Also, I spent twelve months at Armley, and not once did I see any facilities for visitors and children, even though, according to the 'Yorkshire Post' a spokesman at the Home Office said there were.

I also know that some men lost up to 90 days remission for taking part in the strikes and sit-downs. As you know, one man had his arm broken by the screws, and another prisoner was beaten up by the screws, for going to the aid of his mate. But as you also know, these things get hushed up. And apart from that, what's a prisoner's word against a screws?

This as you may guess is a stiff which will be smuggled out of here and posted to you for me. So if you want to keep in touch with me or send someone to visit me, the best thing to do is to get someone to write to me as if they know me well, and after a few weeks arrangements can be made for someone to come and see me. This prison, as you know, is made of mainly 'stars' (first-timers). I, however, have done a few prison sentences and I am now twenty-six years old.

Anyway Dick, on Friday, 4 August, me and my mates who all work in the number one tailor's shop, went to the shop on Friday morning - there was twenty-seven of us. But we all refused to work and just sat-down all over the shop. (NOT ONE MACHINE WAS SWITCHED ON.) We also refused to have our dinner, or leave the shop at dinner-time. I myself was hoping to stay in the shop all night. However, at five o'clock that evening, after the Vicar had been in and told the lads that all the prison was locked up, and that if we didn't leave the shop, the other lads would lose their association. This of course, was the sort of excuse the lads who didn't want to spend all night in the shop wanted. So twenty-two decided to leave the shop. This left five of us still in the shop. However, after being asked to leave again, we decided it would be best, otherwise we would have been giving the screws what they wanted - a chance to nick us, and lose us ninety days remission, as troublemakers. This we weren't prepared to do for the other prisoners here who didn't take part in the strike. However, all in all, we managed to bring the prison to a full stop for the day, which was the main thing. So you can rely on us in the future, to strike when you want us to,
However, the complaints I have got against this prison in addition to the ones you already know about are:

1. We only get a half-hour's exercise in the fresh air every day, yet in other prisons and according to the rule book, we are entitled to an hour's exercise. WHY?

2. **THE FOOD IS PIG SWILL.**

3. We can't get a special letter to write to our MP, etc., unless we pay for them ourselves. Yet in other prisons a S/L is free.

4. Most men are three to a cell, which was only built and is only fit to house one man.

5. Also a lot of men who are entitled to their home leave aren't getting it. I myself don't get released till 1974, but already I have been told I won't get Parole, home leave or even the chance of going on the Hostel in this place. I asked permission to write to you from Armley, but was refused.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours ...

For the past month, the demonstrations had been increasing rapidly, as prisoners exercised uncritically and in an inflationary way their newly-found source of strength. An organisation outside the prison walls had not only shown, but also made the prison authorities admit publicly and repeatedly, that prisons can run only with the cooperation and goodwill of the prisoners. The prison grapevine had hummed with details of the privileges won in Brixton by withdrawing that goodwill, and prisoners all over the country were now beginning to mobilise. PROP, in its role of publicist of these events, had done its job well.

At the same time, however, the growing confidence of the prisoners was matched by the increasing fear, anger, and frustration of the prison officers. With their hands tied by the non-interventionist, non-punitive directives of the Prison Department, the POA voiced ever-more alarmist demands
for retaliation. The Home Office's attempts to cover-up, and deny protests were being undermined by the regular flow of information into PROP's offices. For example, the Prison Department would not admit to any protest in Lancaster prison between the fifth and the thirty-first of August. But a letter from a man imprisoned there provided a different picture:

"Dear Dick,

I have some news for you. First of all I would like you to know that ten of us, me included, went on hunger strike on Monday, 21 August in protest about the state of the food, etc. in this prison, Lancaster. Again on Friday 25th August, after some men staged a sit-down in the exercise yard, nine men were placed on report, and each lost nine days remission. This, of course, has all been hushed-up. However, we would like you to know what's happening in this place. Furthermore there is a rumour going round that about ten of us are due to be 'shang-hied' from here to Durham, Manchester or Liverpool, in an effort to put a stop to the strikes and sit-downs that have been taking place here.

I'll close now Dick, and get this ready for my visit later today ..."

Somewhat predictably, the established penal reform organisations rallied round the Home Office. In the "Justice of the Peace" (19 August 1972) Hugh Klare of the Howard League launched a virulent attack on the prisoners' union, asking "It is PROP, But Is It Proper?". He argued that:

"the precious essence of democracy, its most profound distillation, is consent based on reasoning, discussion, and compromise."

The article concluded:

"The reformer's task within a democracy is one of public opinion and persuasion. It is a task in which those with experience of imprisonment have an important role to play."

By not accepting the traditional rules of the game, PROP was being undemocratic. Klare did, however, make an important

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Hugh Klare, "It's PROP, But Is It Proper?" in "Justice of the Peace", 19 August 1972 p.536-7
contribution to the discussion of PROP's campaign up to this point. He referred to the national strike, which he admitted was, surprisingly, peaceful (given his belief that prisons contain more than their fair share of "violent, unstable, and impulsive men"), and then to the threatened walk-out from open prisons:

"If their call were to be answered, the effect would be that open institutions would effectively cease to exist. All prisoners would then be kept in closed institutions." 12

There would indeed be no alternative but for the Home Office to squash these men into closed prisons, and thus raise to an even-more alarming level the degree of overcrowding. Such action would almost certainly lead to a heightening of the protest. This was precisely PROP's intention. During the demonstrations at Brixton, prisoners had effectively taken over and controlled the prison. If inmates in penal institutions all over the country were to follow suit, the pressure on the authorities would have been overwhelming, and, it was believed, many of PROP's demands, including the right to unionize, would have had to be met.

It did not work out like that for the initiative which the prisoners and PROP had seized was wrested unceremoniously from their grasp by the increasingly militant prison officers. No longer were the prisoners to call the tune and lead the dance. On the contrary, they were to be on the receiving end of the full-scale, bitter and personalised recrimination of the POA.

During the week beginning 21 August, the POA began a "GET TOUGH" campaign. Leaders of the 15,000 strong association

12 Hugh Klare (1972) op. cit. p537
issued the following six-point policy statement:

1. Prison rules and regulations are to be properly applied and all indiscipline reported.

2. No prison officer association members are to prepare, cook, or serve meals outside normal mealtimes, when inmates are demonstrating.

3. Members of the association are not to work overtime for extra activities - like prisoners' watching television outside normal time.

4. Where prisoner demonstrations make extra demands on staff, other activities - like prison visits and classes, are to be cut.

5. If, in complying with these activities, any member should find himself in difficulties under the provisions of the code of discipline for prison officers, he will receive the full support of the executive.

6. These policies result from an emergency situation, and the Prison Officers Association looks forward to an eventual return to normality. 13

This policy document was released shortly after prison officers on the Isle of Wight had "revealed" details of a Mafia-type organisation run by long-term prisoners. (The film, "The Godfather", was at the height of its success at this time.)

The London Evening News of 23 August proclaimed in a massive banner-headline on the front page:

"MAFIA IN PRISON: THE INSIDE STORY".

The article underneath quoted a prison officer as saying:

"It is dynamite in there. Any small fuse could blow the whole prison open".

The same officer spoke of the "good old days" when:

13 'The Daily Express', 24 August 1974
"prisoners respected you. Orders were carried out without question, and the inmates knew that if they 'tried it on', punishment was 'swift, certain and tough.'" 14

He then provided a list of notorious prisoners in Albany, including, Charles Kray, brother of twins Reggie and Ronald Kray, who were in the "next door" at Parkhurst; great train robber, Robert Welch, police murderer John Duddy, moors murderer Ian Brady, and Cannock Chase murderer Ray Morris. It was clearly implied that these men were the Mafia "Mob" who had taken over the prison. The next day, columns were devoted to details of the workings of this organisation, in every national newspaper. More importantly, the later editions carried the "sensational" news that officers at Albany had rejected the POA's six point policy document, and were demanding stricter punishments for EVERY infringement of the regulations. To achieve this, they were preparing to work-to-rule and ban overtime if their demands were not met by 13 September. They claimed to have the support of colleagues from at least fifty jails.

At the same time, a deputation of POA officials and Albany officers arranged to meet the Governor. A matter of hours after their meeting, the Governor said he had had a tip that a mass escape attempt was being hatched. Immediately, according to the Press, the prisoners were locked-up, and searched. The media reported that a number of grappling hooks, chisels and ropes were found in certain cells.

According to official sources, as the search progressed, the prisoners became increasingly non-cooperative, and created an uproar by banging on the walls, and shouting. Soon there was

14 'London Evening News', 23 August 1972
mass chaos. A riot had broken out. Bedding was flung from windows and massive fires started. Police and extra officers had to be rushed to the prison by hovercraft from the mainland. The fire brigade was out in force, and took two hours to fight the blaze. By Monday, "the place was in one hell of a mess".

This was the story which greeted late-risers on August Bank Holiday Monday morning. But the Home Office had not been available for such detailed comment over the weekend. The Governor had not spoken to any journalist. No prisoners had left the jail. All visiting had been cancelled. Every detail reported by the media of the events at Albany over that weekend was given by prison officers - the same prison officers who had threatened, only twenty-four hours before the riot began, industrial action to have their demands met. What a terrifying coincidence! Or was it?

Immediate reaction amongst the PROP organisers was one of profound disbelief. I had taken over as press officer during the press officer's absence. I received a call from a woman who said that her friend was due out of Albany on Tuesday for four days home-leave prior to his release. The story he was to tell confirmed any remaining doubts that what had happened at Albany was the direct result of the actions of prison officers. "The Times" newspaper, and ITN "News at Ten" programme, were contacted, and sufficiently incredulous of the coincidence of events at Albany to listen to this PROP member. Having heard his story, ITN gave him a full opportunity to tell his story on "News At Ten", and "The Times" printed what really happened in a full column on the front-page of their next edition. The upheavals and occasional violence of the following
ten days, met a direct response by the imprisoned population to the details of the Albany and other officers' activities, as they were detailed on the prison grapevine.

This is what really happened. A couple of hours before the Prison Officers' deputation had met the governor, two men were found trying to escape. One was on top of the inner wire, the other at the bottom, holding a broken rope-ladder. Even if the man on top of the wire had jumped down, he would not have been able to breach the second, higher wire fence. Realising their failure they threw themselves at the inner fence, to set off the alarms, and were led to the punishment block by screws and dogs. One was a 'A' Category prisoner, but not one of the notorious inmates already listed. As is customary after an escape attempt, a "random search" of cells was instigated. In practice, the cells of the escapees' associates are searched. In one cell, two grappling hooks and a short length of rope were found. All the 'A' men were isolated electronically from the rest of the prison on Thursday night, as a security precaution.

Shortly after this, officers went to meet the Governor. The Governor agreed to a thorough search of the prison. This was to be carried out on the Friday. That morning, before breakfast, as men emptied their slops in the recess, they were shown a notice signed by the Governor advising them of the search, and asking for their cooperation. The relationship between Governor and prisoners at Albany was exceptionally good, and based on mutual respect. The source of all the mounting tension in that prison was the prison officers, who resented the good working relationship between Governor and governed. The notice in the recess advised the men that, as the search
was the decision of the Governor, he would not deduct wages for that day. Thus, on Friday, 25 August, the prisoners at Albany were given a day off work with pay. Hardly cause for a riot.

It should be noticed that the only newspaper carrying any story specifically about Albany on Friday was the 'Sun', which had spoken to two prisoners who warned of "a big riot if something is not sorted out soon". There was no mention of any escape attempt. Inside, prisoners were more relaxed than they had been for some time, looking forward to the extended holiday.

On Saturday morning, they were unlocked about three-quarters of an hour late. As they line-up to slop out the full "piss-pots", their attention was drawn to another notice from the Governor, regretting that he had been too optimistic in hoping to get the whole prison searched in a day, and that the search would have to continue. He said that the annual sports, which were to be held on that Saturday afternoon would be held on Monday instead, and he would give the inmates Tuesday off work with pay. He added that then he hoped the search would be completed by Saturday noon, but that it would definitely be over by 5 p.m. Again, the prisoners were not unduly worried, and went quietly back to their cells.

Breakfast was almost non-existent that morning, and dinner and tea were over an hour late, very cold, and unusually tasteless. A screw poked his head into the cell of a lifer and snarled:

"You bastards are going to suffer. We are going to drag this out as long as possible, and get our own back."
As the day wore on, it became increasingly obvious that for some reason, the search was not going on schedule. At five o'clock there was no sign of the men being unlocked. There was no explanation. "The whole prison seemed to sense that they were being fucked around. Men began to shout for the screws to explain what was happening". No reply. And then about seven thirty that evening, a man shouted:

"The bastards have ripped the Board off the wall, two photos are missing, and the one of my wife is torn up."

He then picked up his chair, smashed his window, and threw everything he could lay his hands on out of the window. He hurled a lighted towel outside, trying to start a fire in the yard below.

That was the beginning. Within minutes, the sound of crashing chairs, and smashing glass echoed round the prison. Six more men had followed suit, and a man who had been inside about four days set fire to his mattress and hurled it out of the window. Men started shouting, and banging on the cell walls. It was soon clear that at eight o'clock on Saturday evening, the search, which the Governor thought would have been completed in one day, then by noon, or definitely by teatime on Saturday, was not even half-finished. The screws were getting their own back for the eight massive, passive protests, which had paralysed Albany between 1 April and 22 August 1972. There had been no violence to person or property. Relations with the Governor had rarely been better. It was only when the staff took it into their own hands to decide what law and order was, and how to enforce it, that there was trouble.
What had led one man to smash up his cell and begin the "riot"? When his turn came for his cell search, he had taken his blankets out into the landing with him. Two screws, a discipline officer and a works officer, went into his cell and shut the door behind them. At Albany, being a new prison, all the furniture is fitted onto the wall, this includes the bed, a table-top a small cupboard and a picture-board. Most men hang pictures of family, relatives and 'friends' on this board, and, since the pictures are the only private possession a man has, they are prized above all else. Only those snapshots out of everything in the cell belongs to the inmates. Nothing, not even the razor and soap he shaves with, the clothes he wears, the shoes he walks in are his. To lose one's pictures is literally to lose all that one has. The two officers doing the cell search did not unscrew the fittings. Rather, they shoved a wedge behind them and pulled them off the wall (in case anything was being hidden behind them). The table was overturned, the chamber pot kicked over (in case anything had been concealed inside) and the contents, stale urine and excretia, spilt all over the floor. The mattress was thrown on top of it all. the bed dragged from its mountings. The picture board was prised off - and the pictures pulled down. Some were torn (in case, they were impregnated with drugs). That was how the screws left the cell. For one man, seeing the torn picture of his wife lying in a pool of shit, and the smashed cell it was too much. Cracking the window he threw it all out and tried to start a fire in the yard below.

In practice, there was little chance of the fires ever starting. As soon as the first man threw a flaming towel, the fire-brigade was called out. The whole area underneath every
window of every cell in every block was flooded to prevent fires starting at any time. That was all over in less than thirty minutes. The brigade stood by for the next two hours.

On Sunday morning, the 'Sunday Express' headlined the "riot". The 'Express' has shown itself to be most sympathetic towards the demands of the more militant prison officers at Albany. It was then that the "mass escape plot" was hatched - over forty-eight hours since the two men had been found on the wire. On Monday, every national newspaper carried the story:

"JAIL TENSION BOILS OVER"
screamed the 'Daily Mail'.

"160 IN JAIL BLAZE RIOT"
sang the 'Sun', in an article which ran:

"A massive riot raged in Britain's 'problem' jail at the weekend. Some of the toughest prisoners in Britain took part ... Tension in the jail - where officers have complained about a Mafia-type takeover by rough criminals - rose to a new pitch on Saturday. Following a tip that a mass breakout was planned, a full-scale search was made." 16

In fact, that search was still going on, and it did not finish until nine o'clock on Monday evening, having taken over three days longer than the Governor expected. In fact, all A-men ("toughest prisoners") had been isolated from the rest of the prison on Thursday evening, and could have played no part in the "riot". One officer was widely reported as saying:

"In the present mood of unrest, we dare not let the prisoners out" -

Hardly surprising in the light of what was really happening.


16 'The Sun', 28 August 1972.
On Tuesday, the media reported that trouble had spread to neighbouring Parkhurst, where twenty-two men had climbed up scaffolding, and onto the roof. A letter was read out over the phone to me warning that "someone could get killed" at Wandsworth prison, London, if the gross inhumanity and brutality of certain screws was not stopped.

Viscount Colville meanwhile said on BBC radio that he did not think there was a connection between the prison officers' demands for tighter jail discipline, and the Albany jail disturbances.

"Certainly there was something wrong at Albany, but one incident - albeit nasty - did not mean they had lost control completely".

On Tuesday, the protests spread rapidly. At Gartree, over three hundred men sat-down and refused to work. Gartree had been described only a week previously as being more like a holiday camp by one prison officer. On Tuesday 29 August, it had become "one hell of a place to work in". The prison officers it seemed, did not want the prisoners' voice to be heard, even if this might de-escalate the situation, and restore the "holiday" atmosphere. When the deputy governor met a prisoner's committee that evening, a spokesman for the prison officers commented:

"It is not the wish of the staff that such a meeting should be taking place. We do not agree with the governor and his deputy sitting round a table with the inmates".

At the same time a prison officer on the Isle of Wight announced that unless negotiations with the Home Office for tougher discipline were successful,

"we shall go ahead with the withdrawal of overtime".
The action of the officers seemed designed to increase the bitterness and tension. At Camp Hill, ninety-five men went up on the roof. There was unrest at all the islands' prisons, and a prison officer had threatened more. At Chelmsford, seventy men perched on the roof under a huge PROP banner. The 373 men at Albany remained locked up.

On Wednesday, the protests spread as the first disciplinary measures were handed out at Albany. Altogether, there were 433 alleged offences committed by 158 prisoners. At the proceedings of course not one of the accused was allowed any legal advice or representation, no one was allowed to call witnesses, or cross-examine the prosecution; and no one was allowed to appeal against the punishments which ranged from a caution to loss up to fourteen days remission. Other men, who were charged with graver offences, were sent before the Visiting Committee.

On the mainland, the protests spread to Haverigg, where 165 men sat-down. In Aberdeen, 170 men hoisted a PROP banner high above the roof of the Peterhead prison. PROP officials were constantly being interviewed about the situation. The response was consistent, and more than a little unrealistic, "All protests will stop immediately, if the Home Office agrees to negotiate".

Dick Pooley appeared on television warning and threatening to escalate the unrest. I was on Irish radio, expounding the aims of the organisation, and warning that action would soon spread across the Irish Sea. The next day, there was a massive, peaceful demonstration in Long Kesh interment camp, and a PROP banner was waved over the demonstrators.
At Hull, 55 men began a sit-down, 73 sat-down in Dartmoor, five prisoners climbed on the roof of Stafford; inmates at both Cardiff and Oxford hauled a PROP sheet onto the roof. At Walton jail Liverpool, over fifty prisoners sat down in the exercise yard, whilst above them two prisoners sat on the roof, hurling slates at firemen who tried to pull them down, shouting:

"We're for PROP and PROP'S for us!!"

Pressure was mounting on all sides, and an MP called for the immediate return of Mr. Carr, the Home Secretary, from his holiday in Corfu. International attention grew, and the 'Washington Post' published all PROP's aims, as well as the details of the campaign. On the continent, PROP was in touch with different organisations who were publicising the demonstrations in their own country. A PROP official who was in Amsterdam, broadcast to the Dutch people. The programme was recorded and sent to a radio station in San Francisco. As the protests escalated, the validity of earlier claims about the "Mass Escape Plot" was seriously questioned, and the question of the possible responsibility of the screws for the latest uprisings was raised. On 1 September, the 'Daily Mirror' reported:

"WARDERS MUTINY AT A TOP JAIL

Dartmoor prison officers stopped work yesterday as prisoners there joined the wave of demonstrators, now sweeping British jails. The stoppage at Dartmoor lasted for nearly an hour after the lunch break. The staff only went back to work when the Governor promised that the demonstrators would be punished". 17

It seemed that, despite the Prison Departments claims, the prison protests were, linked, after all, to the prison officers' "get tough" demands. The deputy governor at Dartmoor

17 'The Daily Mirror', 1 September 1972.
apparently told a delegation of screws that the Home Office policy was not to punish peaceful protesters. The staff then said that they would not return to work until they were told something was to be done. In the meantime, 250 men had staged a sit-down in the exercise yard, and demonstrations at Hull, Oxford, Parkhurst, Stafford, Haverigg, Risley, Remand Centre in Lancashire, Cardiff, Durham and Liverpool continued. The unrest flared right through the weekend, and Mr. Carr was flown home to have urgent discussions with the prison department.

Predictably Carr arranged an immediate meeting with the POA, and refused to have any sort of communication with PROP. The prisoners' union struggled to maintain a coherent line of argument. Enormous pressure was being exerted on the organisation whose structure and membership was very weak and unstable. But even when PROP was being labelled as extremist, it still had the last say. A letter had arrived early one morning at the Hull office saying that the demonstration inside the local prison would end at nine o'clock that evening. On the same day, therefore, one week after the first apparent escalation of the Albany situation, PROP publicly called a halt to the demonstrations. It announced that the sit-in at Hull would end that evening at exactly nine o'clock. On BBC News, this announcement was repeated; a telephone rang, and the newscaster acknowledged that the strike had indeed ended, as the prisoners' union predicted. It was one of the few successes that PROP was to have that week.

As the protests ended one by one, PROP was plunged into its most serious internal crisis. Within forty-eight hours of his return from holiday, Curtis, who for reasons known only
to himself, had decided not to return home during the most important week in PROP's existence, resigned from the movement in a blaze of carefully concocted, and very damaging (from the organisation's point of view) publicity, alleging gross irresponsibility on the part of Dick Pooley. He proceeded to take out bankruptcy proceedings against PROP.

During the next two weeks PROP members struggled to keep the organisation together as Curtis deliberately set out to destroy the union he had played a large part in creating. No voice could be raised in protest against the savage sentences being meted out at the disciplinary proceedings. In all, over 1,700 men were disciplined; some lost over two years remission. At Camp Hill, for example, fifty prisoners were dealt with by the Board of Visitors and lost between twenty-one and forty-four days remission. Some of the toughest punishments were at Liverpool, where five men lost between fifty-six and one hundred and eighty days, and one lost three hundred and sixty days — two consecutive periods of one hundred and eighty days for attempted assault on a prison officer (throwing a slate) and for destruction of prison property (tearing slates off the roof).

A letter smuggled out of Peterhead in Aberdeen, revealed the savagery of the reaction there:

"If things don't take a turn for the better, there will be a blood-bath here shortly. After the recent PEACEFUL demonstration in support of your movement, Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners, the screws here battered the shit out of a load of guys. Two men lost one year's remission each.

Another lost nine months, and two more six months. All got twenty-eight all round. The guys who were sentenced to the greatest loss of remission have all had to have hospital treatment due to the savage beatings made on them by the screws. A guy
is still in hospital. During all of this, I have been in solitary confinement awaiting trial, but have been instrumental in the demo. I told all these guys to get it in writing about the beatings, as its some solid ammunition for you. Of course, we tried the official channels. 'No grounds for complaint' - the usual answer. How the hell do these bastards get away with it? We badly need contact with you.

I'm doing life with a few sentences on top for fighting with Governors and screws. Their latest carry-on is a classic. I've been set up by the Scottish Home Office, the Governors and screws here. I'm telling you, they've left themselves wide open. I'm done for attempted murder on a con (lifer), who has been bullying and raping young guys, and terrorising cons in general. I've never fought with a con in my life, I don't believe in it. Recently things reached a serious state with the administrators here and me, so to take the spotlight off them for a while, they set me up with this guy who was bullying. As a result, I am in this position. Fortunately, all the cons and others are coming to court to expose them, and you won't believe how much they've left themselves open. I'm sure you could use this to show the public the strokes this mob pull. Believe me, Dick, this bunch of cons up here are solid and with your PROP the whole way. I hope that at all costs you'll establish contact with us for its badly needed. At the moment, its total harrassment by the screws for the last demonstration, but we don't mind, we must overcome! Don't let the establishment wear you down. Just bear in mind, that what these people do to us behind these walls. RIGHT ON!

From all the guys . . .

Up at their North London Headquarters the national Prison Officers' Association was most pleased with the results of its "get tough" campaign. The POA was confident that the right treatment had been used to smash the prisoners' movement.

"It is quite clear that the firm action ordered by the Home Secretary has had the desired effect" remarked Mr. Fred Castell, the POA's general secretary.

The stiff punishments were one result of the POA's activities. Its members had begun a strict interpretation of prison regulations. The smallest breach of discipline or good order was reported to the governor, who then had to punish.
The POA seemed either unaware, or more likely undeterred that their actions could only lead to a heightening of tension in the prisons. They understood that the protests had arisen from dissatisfaction with conditions inside prisons and with the running of the penal system and they were determined to harness the prisoners' actions for their own ends: particularly to their own struggle to run the prisons in practice, if not in theory. To strictly interpret the rules must necessarily generate further conflict between the staff and the imprisoned, but from their vantage point such conflict would produce more security, more control, more repression, and this is where their interests lie.

Over one month after the "mass escape plot" at Albany, some sixty men were still being held under Rule 43, which officially means no association with other prisoners. In practice, the men were kept in bare cells throughout the day. All furniture had been removed, there were no personal possessions allowed, although at night, the men were given a mattress to sleep on. They were allowed a twenty-minute exercise period, on their own, every day, and, if lucky, were allowed a bath once a week. Meals were given to them on the floor of the cells, and when the screws finally decided to pass the meals to the men, the food was invariably cold.

Several hundred prisoners were being held under Rule 43 in other prisons, at the beginning of October. Two hundred men were still awaiting to be dealt with by Visiting magistrates. They were held under similar conditions but under Rule 48, which concerns disciplinary charges rather than "removal from Association". (Rule 43).
At these inquiries, in theory the men charged are allowed a full opportunity of hearing what is alleged against them, and of presenting their own case. A man at Albany received three hundred days on top of his sentence because he fought and injured three prison officers who attempted to take him to the segregation cells. Other prisoners wanted to give evidence on his behalf, claiming that he was provoked into violence. There is absolutely NO provision under the prison rules for them to do so. One man wrote to PROP asking: "What sort of justice is that? It is the justice of a prosecution and judge frightened to hear the defence and to conduct a fair trial".

News reached PROP organisers of the "toughtening-up" inside the prisons. The screws had become obsessed with every detail. They demanded to be called "Sir" apparently believing that the more often they were addressed as "Sir", the more respect they were commanding. The major rule being enforced inside concerned visiting. Visitors, following the rooftop protests, were restricted to exactly twenty minutes, irrespective of the distance they had travelled. As Albany prison is on the Isle of Wight, it had been customary practice to allow prisoners sessions with their families lasting up to one and a half hours. The prison officer on duty would stay very much in the background. After the "riot" two prison officers stood at the shoulders of the inmate being visited. Visits were timed with painstaking accuracy, and a woman who had travelled from Glasgow to see her husband, met him for not one minute longer than the stipulated visit.

Rules about magazines and newspapers were being rigorously applied and no excess was allowed. Books to help study, or to
further special interests were being stopped by the officers. A talented, self-taught artist in one gaol was not allowed to receive a well-known book about the French Impressionists on the grounds that some of the pictures were "obscene". Television sessions were drastically curtailed, and in many institutions, such as Risley Remand Centre, the weekly film-show was stopped.

In Wakefield Prison, a young "lifer" studying for a degree course at the Open University complained that "study is becoming impossible". He had gained three 'A'-levels from his cell, with a distinction in his first year degree exams. A couple of screws had decided to censor his essays, and stop books they did not think he should have. As the man was taking social sciences, a subject prison libraries have few books on, his task was impossible. Many other prisoners on educational courses by correspondence were only allowed one letter a week. This meant choosing between writing to their families or continuing with their studies.

The prison grapevine hummed with details of the aftermath of the protests. As prisoners were ghosted around the country, news of conditions and staff brutality circulated rapidly. In Dartmoor, screws made men run a gauntlet of officers armed with riot sticks. Over a dozen needed hospital treatment. At Durham, the "leaders" of the protests were repeatedly subjected to the sadistic brutality of the screws. Dogs had been used to clear the protesters from the exercise yard. More than one man had been badly bitten. Dogs were now escorting men round the prison. The "leaders" were put in straitjackets, and given injections to keep them quiet. One man was unable to sit-up properly and speak with his girlfriend at an interview a week later. Straitjackets were also used at Walton Jail in Liverpool.
The screws were applying their "get tough" campaign with vigour and relish. Tension in prisons mounted throughout October. Sporadic sit-downs, for example at Hull, were hushed-up, by the Home Office. The media seemed reluctant to write anything about these continuing protests.

It was becoming more and more inevitable that this situation dictated by the prison officers would produce more open conflict. Allegations of staff brutality were voiced by the media, and increasing numbers of official prison visitors and probation officers became convinced that the methods adopted by the POA during the summer were a certain recipe for violent reactions from the prisoners.

Rumblings were heard from Gartree at the end of October. Prisoners had already threatened to burn the place to the ground if their allegations against the staff were not properly investigated. Following the three-day sit-in, the whole prison refused to go to work. Work began again on 7 September, but only, as one prisoner wrote: "because of threats, cajolings, beatings and lockings up by the authorities".

Physical violence on the part of the Gartree prison officers increased as they tried to crack down on every infringement. It became clear that their actions could only lead to open hostility. Particular, "notorious" prisoners were chosen to take the brunt of the prison officers sadistic reactions. One was Frederick Sewell, gaoled for murdering a policeman. Hobbies were drastically restricted. Only basket-weaving was taught, despite the other facilities which the modern Gartree has to offer. Visits were restricted. No extra letters were allowed. Were these the Governor's orders? Apparently not; the prison officers had taken the laws into their own hands.
As one man said,

"They run everything by the rule-book, it gives them a chance to beat men into cabbages and that's what they want".

One November evening, Gartree erupted. An eye-witness account of what happened was published in 'Inside Story' (Number 8):

"Some 14 prisoners, in possession of a key to a gate leading to the outside prison yard, made their way - in the full glare of floodlights and closed circuit TV cameras, warders and guard dogs, to the perimeter fence and began cutting a hole in it. Now it only takes the most cursory knowledge of a maximum security prison to see the inevitability of failure, the tragedy and the courage inherent in their action.

While this was going on all the rest of the prison population were in the dining-halls at the evening meal: every prisoner was watching the whole episode from the dining-hall windows, which look directly out to the wide expanse of yard and field and onto the perimeter fence - this at five in the evening, the floodlights even brighter than those at a football match.

We could see - as if upon a stage - the 14 men grouped against the fence, some of them working with the wirecutters, and the small army of warders, some with guard dogs, grouped in a wide semi-circle around them. As we watched more and more warders joined the semi-circle until it was a mass of uniforms, riot sticks and snarling, yelping guard dogs, all of them moving in on the small group of prisoners up against the fence.

During this very short time - some three minutes - all the prisoners at the dining-hall were shouting at the warders: 'Get back! Get back! Leave them!'. It was obvious that the 14 prisoners had had it: the escape had failed. The prison was surrounded by the top-level police force patrol always on alert at the prison. And there were so many warders you couldn't count them. Also the prison lies in open, rather desolate countryside: getting through the two fences was not the biggest obstacle in the attempt.

Still the warders suddenly rushed the group and began clubbing them to the ground, the dogs yelping and leaping on the prisoners. It was then - at that time and no other - that the prison erupted: the whole place was completely wrecked within a few minutes. The warders beat the prisoners savagely. I saw, as did everyone, one prisoner being held down between two warders while another beat the prisoner over the head
with a claw-hammer: he had run into the engineers' stores on the way round when the alarm was sounded, as did many of the warders, their riot-sticks not being felt to be sufficient 'defence' against unarmed prisoners.

I saw two prisoners lying, apparently unconscious, on the ground near the fence still being beaten by warders: the two prisoners were to lie there for three hours after this — in November. We saw them from the windows after we had barricaded ourselves in C Wing: we couldn't do anything.

That is what happened. The immediate reasons for the riot are clear, I think: anger, frustration, helplessness, having to witness the most vicious and totally unnecessary violent assaults on fellow prisoners".

In the very same edition of the papers which reported the trouble at Gartree, a Law Lord suggested that Judges could help to push prison reforms by refusing to send people to prison until conditions improved. Lord Kilbrandon, Lord of Appeal, Chairman of the Commission on the Constitution, and former chairman of the Scottish Law Commission, said that the purpose of sending a man to prison was to deprive him of his liberty, and "not to subject him to appalling conditions". He continued:

"Judges might say that we are authorised by law to impose the deprivation of liberty, but we are not authorised by law to impose mental, physical and moral deprivation. Unless you can supply us with places where we can send people to prison without moral, mental and physical deprivation we shall not imprison them". 18

At the same time, a new Human Rights Commission proposed a Prisoners' Charter of Rights. Lawyers, under the chairmanship of Lord Gardiner, who was Lord Chancellor in the last Labour Government, demanded immediate and radical reform of prisons, including abolition of the censorship of letters and the right of prisoners to have access to the prison rules. Other proposals

were that prisoners should be allowed to buy or order any publication available to the public; there should be more prison visits in the first month of sentence, and the right to parole at times of domestic crisis; an extended welfare service with the use of auxiliary help from voluntary organisations; a merger of the prison health service and the national health service; and a recognition that a reduction in the length of sentences would help to relieve overcrowding in prisons. The conference was attended by judges, lawyers, magistrates, and every branch of the penal system.

The conference called on the Home Secretary to set up an official inquiry into the system of the Board of Prison Visitors which deals both with complaints from the prisoners against the staff, and with disciplinary charges against prisoners. Following the activities of these Boards after the rooftop demonstrations, it was recognised that the two functions should be separated. It also recommended that prisoners should be allowed the right to legal representation at internal disciplinary proceedings, and the right to appeal against the sentence. It also suggested that the press be admitted to these courts.

Over the same weekend, Miss Shirley Williams, then the Shadow Home Secretary, told a NACRO conference that prisoners should be paid full union rates for any work they did.

As the trouble at Gartree died down, and the story of the "mass escape plot" was quietly dismissed by the Home Office, one is forced to question again the POA's belief that their "get tough" campaign was conducive to the maintenance of laws and order in British prisons. The implications of Castell's
remark that "it is quite clear that the firm action ordered by the Home Secretary had had the desired effect", had been made explicit at Gartree.

But what is perhaps most significant about the Gartree "riot" from the viewpoint of the emerging prisoners' union was that when a direct telephone link with the outside was secured by the prisoners they made no attempt to contact Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners. Rather, the inmates in B-wing who had taken over the welfare office eventually contacted the "Guardian". Yet on 29 September, Dick Pooley had told 'Peace News',

"In Gartree, for example, we have one hundred per cent support, and when we call for a sit-down they do it. But there are people in there who'd burn the place down. Luckily, in Gartree, there are responsible blokes fully behind us who will not let the violent element get out of hand".

This inconsistancy reveals much about that had been happening within PROP. Problems which had existed from the very beginning remained unresolved, others only surfaced under the intense pressure of 'Albany week', and still more difficulties were at that stage unrecognised. By the time the last of the demonstrators had been taken back to the cells, Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners was deeply involved in internal crises which revolved not only around the leadership question, but also about the development of a coherent strategy focussing on specific issues.

The leadership crisis was the most public, not only because sections of the media were extremely anxious to undermine the emerging union, but also because a member of the National Executive tried to gain as much self-publicity as possible.
The question of the leadership of the organisation seemed the all-consuming issue at the time (at least to those of us involved at close quarters), but from a long-term perspective was of lesser consequence than the issues it tended to obscure. The often bitter personal feuding between Pooley and Curtis was merely a reflection of more profound structural problems.

Perhaps the most obvious was the whole question of support for the organisation both inside and outside the prisons. As we have already seen, PROP laid claim to a kind of support it never had. Only three days after PROP's official formation, the press officer told the 'Sunday Telegraph' that he was "one of the fifty people actively preparing a leaflet and news sheet at the headquarters in Victoria Avenue, Hull". Behind the National Organiser, he added there were two hundred and fifty young academics, sociologists, solicitors and probation officers. By the end of June, PROP claimed to have over five hundred members, and nine local groups in London, Cambridge, Nottingham, Leicester, Leeds, Bristol, Liverpool, Sheffield and Hull. In fact, PROP never had this type of support.

There were undoubtedly hundreds of people in general sympathy with the aims and strategies of the group, but few actually made any sort of positive commitment to the movement. As we have seen, when it tried to raise support for demonstrations outside particular prisons, PROP never managed to find more than twenty-five or thirty people. At Brixton in May, only the four members of the National Executive with ten banners turned out; in July at Armley less than twenty-five; and at Gartree, on the day of the first-ever national gaol strike in this country, less than two dozen demonstrators turned up.
If attracting outside help was difficult, then trying to concretize inside support was even more hazardous. Unlike the USA, there has been little or no politicisation of British prisoners. Although members of groups such as the Angry Brigade have had an undoubted influence inside, we should be careful of over-exaggerating it. In Britain, the whole issue of possible politicisation has hardly been discussed. It is crucial to recognise, therefore, that almost all the prisoners involved in the demonstrations of the summer of 1972 were motivated by the conditions in which they were forced to exist, rather than because of some wider understanding of the importance of imprisonment in an advanced, capitalist society. In other words, the solidarity which was undoubtedly forged during the protests, and particularly in the face of savage repression, was not a consequence of years of politicisation activity by established left-wing groups (as it might arguably be claimed in the USA and elsewhere), but rather appears to have arisen out of the prison situation itself. In the aftermath of the demonstrations, with the massive reprisals taken out by the prison officers and authorities and the essential powerlessness of the union to intervene very much in mind, it is too easy to be pessimistic about the summer's developments. The fact remains that the prisoners took part in disciplined, collective, mass protests, and that they articulated their demands in increasingly wider terms. (Questions were eventually raised for example about the nature and purpose of imprisonment.) However, many prisoners still demanded some sort of immediate gratification of their demands, and were bitterly disappointed when PROP failed to win it, as the Brixton prisoners were seen
to have done. But the problems of inmate support ran even
deeper. Although PROP had claimed the mass support of prisoners
from its inception, there was no way of 'proving' or validating
this claim. To have been able to provide some evidence to
support their assertions would have dramatically increased the
legitimacy of PROP's claim to be the British prisoners' voice.
As it was, there was never any system of 'authorization' as
has been developed by the San Francisco Prisoners Union.
Prisoners were never asked to 'sign-up' for the union; their
support for a demonstration in a particular prison at a
particular time was taken to be indicative of their more general
support for PROP. We have already seen how the huge problems
of communication between inside and outside remained largely
unresolved. Those prisoners who did manage to contact PROP
directly were often unanswered because of the censorship
practices of the prison staff. Censorship has always been
a massive source of anger, frustration, and despair for the
imprisoned; in PROP's case it was to prove decisive. A letter
smuggled out from Gartree following the demonstrations at the
end of August, typified the mood amongst the prisoners, stemming
from PROP's apparent lack of response to the inmates' efforts:

"... Quite a bit has happened here in these past
two months. Except for your appearance on the
appointed strike (4 August) PROP has been
singularly absent from the frequent demonstrations
here. This is, I presume, put down to lack of
contact. Considering that Gartree is one of your
strongest supporters, I would have thought a
solitary banner during the last demonstration
would have alone worked wonders for the majority.

As it is, Dick, quite a few are disillusioned
by your seeming lack of response. At each demo,
PROP has been advertised, and it is only by my
propaganda (lies) that your purpose has remained
a focal point for the demonstrations."
At present, after the three days sit-out, the whole prison has refused work. Tomorrow, work commences - but only because of threats, cajoling, beatings and locking-up by the authorities, and because now, at this moment, there is no motivation to remain away from work. I am not too sure whether a point of no return has been reached. I am no alarmist; Dick, but I am a bit concerned about PROP's future as a determining force in Gartree. I was hoping, when I first came here, that plenty of contacts would be made through me. Many people were greatly interested and put their names down as prospective members of PROP and had the list posted to PROP's branch in London. No acknowledgements of any kind were made. I promised them PROP was the answer to all their institutional ills; that I'd have representatives from PROP to see them. Result? I've been let down in expectations, Dick, and worse still, because I like to keep my work when sincerely given, they have been let down too.

On the whole, as you have probably gathered, it's been a pretty dismal outlook. Inspiration will have to be forthcoming pretty quickly to most men in here now..."

Again, PROP never managed to even partially overcome the problems of regularized access to the prisons because, although it claimed a large number of sympathisers amongst people working in various capacities inside (probation officers, teachers, official prison visitors), such people never made a more positive commitment to the organisation, and so could not be called upon in a time of need. Communication between the prisoners and the outside office always remained, therefore, inconsistent, and, most importantly, unreliable.

Few prisoners approached the union on their release. Those who did drifted away very quickly. A small nucleus did form in Hull for a period, but was never substantially involved in the running of what was ostensibly their organisation. The general pattern of events seemed to be evolving too quickly to assimilate these ex-cons into the day-to-day running of the group. At the height of the prisoners' union campaign, despite rigid demarcation between full and associate membership, the
middle-class, non-prisoner members were intimately involved in this prisoners' organisation. It was a middle-class lecturer who provided the office accommodation in Hull; a university lecturer who effectively built and ran PROP's affairs in Sheffield, the only local group to get off the ground; and I, a student at Cambridge University, was press officer during the most critical week of the organisation's short life. Ultimately, the lack of positive commitment to PROP on the part of the mass of the prison population meant that the National Executive remained self-appointed, and that Dick Pooley continued as the self-styled National Organiser of the union. Just as there had been no formal elections to any position, so there were no mechanisms by which the leader could be called into line. At a very heated meeting in York, to discuss the summers' campaign in general, and the resignation of Douglas Curtis in particular, it became clear that Dick Pooley was not prepared to relinquish his position at the head of the organisation. The group had never made that important transition from a leadership based upon charisma to one based on some sort of democracy, and so the challenges to Pooley's leadership were totally ineffective. The immediate consequence was that he remained self-proclaimed leader of the prisoners' union, but in the long-run, the differences between the groups in Hull and London became most critical, hardened by the personal and ideological class between Pooley and Ted Ward.

The inside disillusionment with PROP was deepened with the 'collapse' of the organisation's welfare services, and involvement in humanitarian work. Apart from one or two early efforts, the welfare side of the union remained almost totally underdeveloped. The main problems were lack of both finance,
and personnel to carry out the work. Although the 'Statement of Intent' had proclaimed that the prisoners' union would provide a variety of services free to its full members, these services never really existed. Although limited advice was offered (particularly legal) PROP never had the resources or the facilities to develop in this direction. Increasing numbers of inmates did contact PROP with very specific requests for help, and were frustrated by the failure of the organisation to reply (due to censorship) or by its obvious inability to put into practice its stated policies of help for full members. Again, it is important to recognise that any services which had been financially possible, would have been seriously hampered by the lack of personnel to generate them. As we have seen, few people anywhere made a firm commitment to the organisation. Many people were in general sympathy with the vociferous demands for profound penal change, but were either unable or not prepared to make the type of stand demanded by associate membership. A third category of membership, affiliate, was then introduced, to allow such people to join the organisation. If the associate membership scheme had been made fully operative, then at least some of the problems of communication might have been overcome. Visiting particular people inside was one of the most satisfactory arrangements for the passing of information, for not only could it be fairly reliable and consistent, but it was also a visible sign to the imprisoned of outside support.

A related problem was the lack of substantive backing from academics and others involved in the penal system. Although PROP had originally announced its intentions to the National
Deviancy Conference (NDC) in York some weeks before it was publicly identified, there was only a limited positive response to its calls for help. The NDC is an organisation for radical criminologists and others, presenting an alternative voice to that of the Home Office and its satellites (particularly in Cambridge). The group has tried to forge a link between theory and praxis, and to this end has provided a forum plus financial support for many groups including representatives of the gay, women's, mental patients, and prisoners' movements. However, the success of the NDC in linking theory and practice is extremely limited. In the case of the prisoners' union, perhaps most of the conference delegates supported the organisation and the ideas it embodies, but only a handful were later to be personally involved. These few provided platforms from which the PROP organisers tried to rally the support of the student body, as well as solid personal support not only when things were going well, but also when PROP was on the verge of collapse. For the past three years, they have continued to contribute help and advice. For the large majority of NDC members, however, this involvement with PROP has to be seen as part of their more generalised romantic flirtation with the counter-culture of the 1960's and its off-shoots in the early 1970's.

We have suggested that at no time did Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners have an overall strategy, designed to highlight specific issues within the more general list of demands. PROP never mounted campaigns on behalf of particular sections of its Charter of Rights. There was, then, a lack of clarity not only about which tactics were to be adopted, but also about which issues were to be raised. It is against this
background that PROP's continual demands for recognition by, and negotiations with the Prison Department must be viewed. Any campaign seeking negotiations with officialdom and conducted so openly and vigorously is fraught with dangers. Experience in America and Scandinavia shows how even if both sides have a reasonable bargaining position, negotiations ultimately serve to reinforce rather than undermine the prevailing system and its authorities. The penal authorities have shown themselves particularly adept at re-interpreting the basis, content, and outcome of such negotiations, to enhance their own position, and seriously weaken that of the opposition. PROP (by its uncritical demands for recognition) had revealed that it was apparently unaware of these issues. One is almost tempted to conclude that if the prison authorities had agreed to meet PROP representatives for "talks" (as opposed to "negotiations") then the prisoners' union with its limited resources, might have been castrated and coopted very quickly and easily. As it was, the refusal of the Home Office to meet PROP leaders merely added fuel to the already burning discontent of the imprisoned, confirming their belief that traditional channels of protest were either closed or ineffectual.

The most crucial outcome of this lack of overall policy and strategy was the leadership's continuing support for the escalating prison protest. From its very inception, PROP sought to raise the protest activity inside prison. The national strike is the most obvious example of the resolve. But experience in the USA, Scandinavia and elsewhere shows conclusively that such escalation plays directly into the hands of the authorities. The inflationary use of the strike weapon militates against the
prisoners' movement. PROP's efforts to simply increase prison protest, without attempting to resolve any of the problems it produced, were misguided, and ultimately extremely harmful to the organisation. As we have seen, it enabled the prison officers to counteract the prisoners' efforts, by taking the initiative away from the inmates, and proceeding to embark upon a path of vicious repression and punishment. At no time was PROP able to effectively help any of the men and women inside who suffered as a direct consequence of PROP's acceptance of inflationary protests. Thus, PROP succeeded in merely transforming the prisoners' disillusionment into bitterness against the organisation. By the end of September 1972, 'PROP' was not merely a dirty word amongst the prison staff; it had become one also amongst the prisoners.19

PROP - post 1972

The immediate outcome of the survey of PROP's position at the end of the summer 1972 was the separation of the Hull and London groups. Dick Pooley still regarded himself as the National Organiser, and demanded the subordination of Ted Ward and the London group. Communications between the two had never been particularly good - they were conducted through me during Albany week, for example - and it quickly became apparent that the groups would achieve relative autonomy.

Dick Pooley has continued to present himself as the National Organiser of Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners, and has spent considerable time giving talks and lectures to students and other groups. The main thrust of his energies have been

19 TAYLOR, LAURIE, "PRISON SPLASH", in 'NEW SOCIETY', vol.21 No.521 (28 September 1972). Provides an interesting and accurate account of the initial "splash" created by PROP arguing that "their greatest initial achievement has been to transform the terms in which a social problem is discussed".
devoted to the hostel he founded for prisoners coming out of Hull prison. "Gooday House" has provided a home - temporary at least - for a large number of ex-cons, for whom Dick Pooley has also tried to find work. The house seems to have taken on the more traditional role of a post-release hostel, though avoiding some of the worst features of such semi-institutional life. The hostel is, I have been given to understand, the recipient of a substantial Home Office grant; it has not proved possible to run it as a self-supporting venture.

It is in London then that the prisoners' union has developed and flourished. Despite the enormous difficulties he has encountered, Ted Ward continues to work full-time for the organisation, living at subsistence level. After many months of frustration, premises were finally found, courtesy of Camden Council, on Finchley Road. It is from here that London PROP has sustained its "awareness campaign". Realising some of the massive problems which had originally confronted PROP, and the burdening legacy of the summer of 1972, Ted Ward has conducted an essentially low-key operation aiming at building up credibility and support at a grass-roots level amongst trade unions, trades councils, colleges, and, most importantly, amongst the imprisoned population. It has been a particularly slow and onerous task which has only really begun to bear fruits in the middle of 1975.

The general aim of the London group has been to create "a general awareness and change of attitudes in regard to society, crime and punishment". PROP has regularly produced pamphlets and leaflets outlining specific cases to illustrate most general points. In each instance, an attempt has been made to secure as wide and as public a discussion of the issues raised. The editors of the national and local media, local councillors,
Members of Parliament have all been continuously lobbied. In terms of coverage alone, London's PROP efforts have been quite remarkable. To take but one example. The group published a full report "to the people of Islington" of conditions inside the prisons in their borough. It sought to create an awareness of the reality of imprisonment in general, but to emphasise that,

"Whilst deploring the inhumanity to prisoners in Manchester, Durham, the Isle of Wight, etc., it seemed that we are especially responsible for what occurs in the prisons on our doorstep. The Home Office may take official responsibility, but it is an indictment on us, the people of Islington, if what is described in this report is allowed to happen in our Borough". 20

Copies of the report were sent to the three Members of Parliament for the area; the members for Islington of the Greater London Council; the principal officers of the council departments, sixty borough councillors and ten aldermen; the Secretary of the Magistrates' Association; the Secretary of the London Federation of Trades Councils; the local Probation Service; the National Union of Students; and to the General President of the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades. The Governors of Pentonville and Holloway prisons, and the Minister responsible for the Prison Department were also sent copies. The local press and media were contacted, and considerable local publicity was generated. A second report was then compiled, and similarly distributed, which sought to illustrate "through press cuttings that public interest is being aroused and that the cases contained in the first report are by no means isolated". The second report attempted to outline the full extent of the local council's involvement in the prison system.

"Council is responsible for supporting prisoners' families, single housing, after-care, and all the problems of the ex-prisoner. It is also responsible for the prisoner while he is still in prison. Fire regulations, working conditions and health all concern the Council throughout the Borough - they must, therefore, concern the Council within the prisons. The Council must combine all its responsibilities under a prison sub-committee so that a framework can be established to make sure that all such responsibilities are fully met.

Councillors must no longer think of prisons as somebody else's problem; the problems are not being solved, and it is the Council which must confront problems within its Borough.

If councillors are answerable to each resident within their Borough - enfranchised or not - then they must protect everybody regardless." 21

The report concluded with a number of recommendations, including that just as councillors should have the right of access to prisons within their Borough, so prisoners should have similar rights of access to councillors. A sub-committee of the local Council should be set up with special responsibility for prisons, and all council inspectors should be responsible for the maintenance of health, fire, and factory regulations within the area's penal institutions.

London PROP has made intensive efforts to contact and secure the interest of the trade union movement in the prisoners' movement. Unlike the earlier efforts (which culminated in a meeting with Vic Feather, then General Secretary of the TUC), Ted Ward has again concentrated upon building support at the grass roots level. Jack Ashwell, Hull branch Secretary of the TGWU, had spoken at the inaugural PROP meeting of the lack of interest about prisons amongst trades unionists. He argued,

"... taking the trade union movement as a whole, if there is any policy within the TUC on prisons, it is not published. So one can assume that the TUC

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has never applied its mind to the problem which exists. Whether it has been shoved under the mat, nobody can safely state, but I think it is very important that the trades union movement is made aware of this particular problem. In the past, quite possibly, people like myself have been approached, and have maybe attempted to do something as on a local basis; but it hasn't got off the ground. To my recollection, in over 15, 16, 18 years, never once at the TUC Conference has this particular problem been mooted. I think it is time people in the union movement were made aware of it." 22

Not only in the trades unions, but also at the trades councils, London PROP have tirelessly argued for greater involvement in the prison system. The employment of prisoners on work for which they are paid well-below union rates has been widely illustrated, as has the use of prisoners as strike-breakers, discussed in an earlier section. The outcome of these efforts has been the passing of numerous resolutions at various union branch and trades council meetings. Ted Ward has been invited to address unionists either on the shop floor or at the local meeting. In every case, workers have shown considerable interest and concern for the plight of the imprisoned.

London PROP have been equally concerned to secure the involvement of the student movement. Ted Ward has spoken and debated at innumerable meetings organised on college campuses all over the country. A number of students have, at various times during the past three years, helped to produce reports on specific issues. Linda Anderson, for example, a student at Keele University, had undertaken a six-week fieldwork placement at HMP Stafford. She wrote, in the Introduction to her report, (published by PROP) on the prison,

22 "PROP" (official magazine) number 2 (undated) p.5
"Before I started the placement I was advised by my tutors to be discreet about what I saw and not to stir things up too much. Ostensibly this was to prevent me jeopardising the chances of other students getting the opportunity to work there. After six weeks there I decided that this reason was an insufficient justification for keeping quiet.

I was so appalled by the way a prison really works it seemed on reflection a very small loss to face any personal consequences that might result from writing this report compared to the service I would be doing the blokes inside by voicing their grievances and by casting some light on what happens behind prison gates."

Other students had played an invaluable role in various fund-raising events to provide the necessary finance to run the office and publish the reports. A small number of students have been sent on placements from local colleges and given much assistance to Ted Ward. Towards the end of 1974, a group at Brunel University joined with a number of people interested and involved in the struggle for penal change, to produce a lengthy motion to the NUS Annual Conference. A series of critical observations preceded the three main demands, which included the adoption of PROP's Charter of Rights, the "eventual abolition of the prison system", and in the interim, the payment of union rates for work done by prisoners. A number of detailed instructions on action to secure the implementation of these demands concluded the motion. Unfortunately, for PROP and the proposers of the motion, it was never debated at the conference due to lack of time - and interest.

PROP has also given its wholehearted support to the setting up and development of other groups involved in the penal arena. One of the most important was the Prisoners' Wives Union, set up in the summer of 1973 by Maggie Tuttle, whose husband is serving eighteen years. Originally, Mrs. Tuttle had contacted
PROP for help and advice. She wanted a second child and, since conjugal visits are not permitted, she was petitioning the Prison Department for permission to have her husband's child by artificial insemination. Her request was repeatedly rejected, but formed the spearhead of a campaign which focussed on the question of conjugal visits, and, more generally, the treatment of the prisoner's family. With messages of support coming in from numerous prisoners' wives, Mrs. Tuttle decided to launch a union for the family and relatives of the imprisoned. The influence and support of PROP was clearly visible in the establishment of this group, particularly in the list of demands, and statement of intent. To a lesser extent, PROP was involved in the setting up of the first-ever Mental Patents Union in this country. Similarly, in its "awareness" campaign, PROP has supported a series of diverse groups, including the National Federation of Old Age Pensioners, emphasising the economic, social, and psychological prisons in which so many people are forced to exist in this society.

London PROP has attempted to overcome the problems inherent in any sort of welfare work, which were raised earlier. It has not had the resources or the manpower to provide for people, but Ted Ward in particular, because of his involvement with the Claimants Union, is able to advise people who approach him of their rights, and where to claim certain benefits. The emphasis has switched then away from trying to provide all services for prisoners and their dependents (a role which was always unrealistic), to advising people of the agencies and organisations which exist to help out in particular situations. A group of PROP members, led by the ex-prisoner Geoff Sugden,
have recently moved away from the political campaigning of the organisation, and undertaken welfare and humanitarian work for ex-prisoners. They started the "Hargrave House Project", a community-based, self-help scheme for ex-prisoners. The house had been made available by the Student Community Housing group, and this project aims to,

"provide men and women released from prison with first-stage rehabililitative, accommodation and employment, in an environment which enables them to have as much responsibility for their own life-style as possible".

The house is to serve Pentonville and Holloway prisons, and eventually, it is intended to set up a business, "to be run on a non-profit-making basis, allowing only for union rates of pay, and providing the local neighbourhood with reasonably priced general household services, such as painting and decorating, etc.". Ultimately, the project leaders hope that through such work, the residents will become self-supporting, as well as being closely involved in the local community. Soon after its foundation, Home Office money was made available to and accepted by the group.

Two problems have continued to hamper PROP's work: finance and personnel. As we have already seen, the prisoners' union was formed on, and continues to run on a tight, shoe-string budget. It has refused to take any money which is provided by the Home Office (the only exception was a small grant from NACRO which is massively funded by the Prison Department). London PROP continues to rely on membership subscriptions, donations, and sales of publications. It has recently received a small quarterly grant of £100 from the London Boroughs Association. Financial considerations are extremely pressing,
and the inflationary spiral of postal, telephone and printing costs has disrupted the work of the union even more. Although Camden council provided the office accommodation rent-free in the initial stages, the Council not only refused to provide any direct financial assistance, but insisted that PROP paid the full rates on the property, and have even taken the organisation to court to secure payment. The situation is presently desperate, although the union has been helped by the Burnbake Trust which has taken over part of the premises to exhibit prisoners' art work.

'PROP has also failed to build up an active outside membership, to support the various campaigns it has launched. Numerous people have at different times come and offered support and practical help, but have not stayed around long enough to build a solid base to the organisation. Relations with other groups active in the area of penal change have also been very strained. This is due in part to the character of Ted Ward, who is perhaps too anxious that people coming to help should have the same total commitment to the idea of a prisoners' movement that he has shown during the past three years. The prisoners' union on the outside remains, therefore, organisationally and financially weak and insecure.

On the inside, PROP has had to try to re-establish legitimacy and respectability in the eyes of the prisoners. Immense damage had been done by the masquerading of members of the Executive in September 1972, whilst hundreds of those imprisoned were being punished for supporting the organisation. It will take a long time for PROP to re-establish the confidence, trust and loyalty of the prison fraternity. By conducting a
deliberately low-key operation, and by making the organisation available to people inside, Ted Ward has begun this long and slow process. Very recently, his efforts have begun to pay dividends, mainly because of his unflagging support for the Warrington-Madgin release group, and for Gus Thatcher. London PROP first published the "Justice?" report on the Warrington and Madgin case early in 1975. The organisation has subsequently been involved in a massive publicity campaign aimed at proving the innocence of the two men. The willingness of PROP to undertake such a task has been one of the most important factors in its improved relationship with the people inside. Gradually, but increasingly, prisoners are again contacting PROP in London for advice and support. This time, however, the prisoners' union does not respond with empty promises; rather, it is careful to offer nothing that it cannot actually provide. As contact with the prisoner has begun to be re-established, so the organisation has embarked upon its most important work.

It has begun to produce a regular magazine, "Prisoners' Voice", which provides a public forum for the imprisoned. Experience in America, Scandinavia, France, and in this country, the prison authorities have an almost total monopoly on information relating to prison events. Access to the prisons is denied to all but a few; the prisoners are hidden away behind high walls, reinforced by carefully maintained mechanisms for censorship and the suppression of information from the imprisoned. Prisoners are generally unable to openly criticize the institutions, and every conceivable step is taken to ensure that any communication which might exist is regulated. As Mathiesen has shown contact between the inside and outside is bitterly opposed, not simply because it distorts some of the
important aspects of imprisonment, but because, ultimately, it disturbs some of the main features of the social system itself. The purpose of the "prisoners' voice" on the outside, then, is to act as a mouthpiece for the imprisoned. This is the task which Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners performed so well during the summer of '72 before it was distracted into illusory and self-destructive claims of initiating prison protests. It is to this task that PROP based in London has finally returned.
CHAPTER 6

The Origin and Development of Prisoners' Unions in the USA.
SECTION 1:
"FIRST CAME PRISONS: THEN CAME PRISON RIOTS."

Vernon Fox, in one of the few historical studies of prison disturbances, has identified more than two hundred prison riots and disturbances between 1850 and 1956. He has concluded that there will never be a complete and exhaustive study of prison riots because "prison riots are hard to find." Because most prisons in the United States of America are so closely associated with politics, and a riot is likely to have political repercussions, Fox argues that prison administrators have consistently tried to withhold or minimise details of any disturbance. He suggests that whether a riot is or is not reported therefore depends upon a number of related factors including: firstly, the size of the groups participating in the riot; secondly, the intensity of the participation; thirdly, the proximity of prisons to metropolitan centres where large newspapers are looking for news, and from where 'big-name criminals' are received: fourthly, the activity of news-reporters; fifthly, the solidarity or factionalism of the political situation within the prison, and finally, the policies of the administration with regard to reporting to the public.²

The apparent frequency of riots in the first half of this century, as compared with less than three dozen recorded riots between 1850 and 1906, is attributed by Fox to "better news-reporting and media of communication" which assures that fewer disturbances escape public notice.

Thus, although prison protest is virtually as old as the penal institution itself (the first recorded riot was in Connecticut in 1774),

² Vernon Fox, (1956) op.cit. p.3
it has been argued that the content, direction, and organisation of
that protest has seen a dramatic shift in recent years. In the
Introduction to their Reader entitled "Prisons, Protest, and Politics",
Atkins and Glick have pointed out that although it would not be an
exaggeration to say that historically within the United States prison
riots are commonplace, "since at least seventy-five separate prison
disturbances have occurred in the decade from 1960 to 1970, there is
evidence to suggest that the frequency, if not the intensity, of
prison unrest is increasing." 3.

What such writers conclude is that, whilst the methods of protest
used by inmates today can be seen in the earliest riots, there have
been changes in the characteristics of the prisoners' demands. Such
changes, it will be argued, represent a move from perceiving a situation
of the ABUSE of power to one which questions the NATURE of that power.

Like the prisons themselves, the earliest riots were small. The
Report of the Agent of the Prison Association of New York (October 1852),
for instance, gave the population of Brooklyn Prison, New York as seventy-
eight, including twenty men, thirteen women, thirty-six boys and nine
girls. Typical of the earliest disturbances was the incident at Auburn
which was reported after it "came to the attention" of the newspapers
through a person who was at Auburn. On 17 January 1857, Mr. Curtis,
the contractor in the machine shop, ordered an inmate to perform a task;
the inmate refused and was placed in solitary confinement. The following
working day, sixty inmates walked into the shop, picked up hammers and
demanded the immediate release of the inmate. Their demand met, the
inmates went back to work. As the prisons grew bigger, so the riots
developed in size. One of the earliest large-scale riots was at Sing-Sing
in 1913 and involved some 1,500 inmates. In 1915, some three hundred

prisoners at the Kansas State Penitentiary took part in the first recorded collective protest which included the taking of hostages and negotiations with an independent, outside body (in this case a university professor!). Two years later, the National Guardsmen fixed bayonets and quelled disturbances at Joilet, Illinois. In 1927, again at the Kansas State Penitentiary, inmates insisted, for the first time, that their demands be published in the local newspapers. In the same year, at Folsom Prison, some two thousand inmates fought National Guardsmen. Seven hostages were held; four hundred Guardsmen surrounded the building which the prisoners defended; tanks were brought in; airplanes flew over the scene; one-pound artillery was brought in; and floodlights were trained on the building. In the ensuing struggle, twelve inmates and three guards were killed, and hundreds injured. One aged officer also died - from over-excitement. The greatest loss of life occurred in 1930 at the Ohio Penitentiary when three hundred and seventeen people were reported to have died.

Over fifty major riots occurred in American prisons between 1950 and 1953; characterized as the worst period ever for prison administrators until the disturbances of the late 1960's and early 1970's. Like those described by Fox, these collective disturbances were largely spontaneous uprisings against intolerable living conditions. The largest of the upheavals was at Jackson State Prison in Michigan, in April 1952. For five days, hostages were held until inmate demands had been officially heard, and published in the local newspaper. The uprising ended when officials published the demands, allowed an outside party to inspect the prison, and agreed not to take punitive action against the participants. But, eventually those identified as 'the leaders' were indicted for conspiracy, and few of the demands agreed upon were actually met. Things continued at Jackson very much as before - a
familiar pattern in the aftermath of prisoners' protest.

Pallas and Barber, amongst others, have argued that both the tenor of the demands and the thrusts of the riots in the 1950's were consistent with that of the general forms of challenge to American society which occurred at that time. Few political groups of any significance actually disputed the legitimacy of the social order. Rather, these groups, who had not yet been included in the American Dream were demanding to be accommodated. The accompanying political style was 'pluralism', with various interest groups trying to bring pressure on the relevant authorities to fulfil their obligations, as defined by the prevailing system. In this generalised sense, the prisoners' protests and that of the Civil Rights Movement, for example, were expressions of the same impulse. They were aimed at eliminating explicit practices and customs which were seen as antithetical to the philosophy of American democracy. That is, they challenged the ABUSE of power rather than the NATURE of that power. The goal of the Civil Rights Movement was the integration of black people into the mainstream of American life. Within the penal setting, the ideology of "rehabilitation" and "treatment" was gaining widespread acceptability. Instead of being considered "bad", prisoners were seen to be "sick" and in need of "treatment" to help them to "adjust properly" to the existing society. This period witnessed a massive upsurge in welfare and treatment personnel in prisons, the introduction of indeterminate sentencing, enabling penal authorities to hold an inmate until they decided he was "ready for freedom", and the advent of a new terminology which was eventually to facilitate the immediate abolition of prisons in New York State, and their replacement by "Correctional Facilities". The trust which prisoners indulging in collectivised protest placed in the treatment personnel during the riots in the 1950's was indicative of the

hope they had in rehabilitation, and the correction of the more flagrant "abuses" of power. 'Rehabilitation' and the notion of 'integration', which was the ideal of the Civil Rights Movement, were in some sense identical. They both posited the adaptation of individuals to the social structure which opens up to receive them. But both campaigns met with a similar response - violence, used to break up Civil Rights campaigns and prison protest. Although some limited progress was made through judicial channels, the Courts never had the power, nor possibly the inclination, to enforce their decisions. In the short-run, the movements were either crushed or co-opted. In the long-term, the violent and excessive responses of the state evoked disenchantment with the accepted channels of protest, and disillusionment with the American Dream itself. As Stokely Carmichael pointed out most black people had long accepted the Puritan work ethic - without reaping any of the rewards which accrued to the whites. As the Civil Rights campaigns faded black Americans were left still waiting for their "forty acres and a mule" promised on emancipation. In the prisons, the groundwork was laid for more radical challenges to the society's penal institutions. The importance of the increase in intensity of prison riots during the 1950's lies in the fact that they presaged the period of organised 'political' rebellion of the 1970's, for the inability of the system to respond positively to their demands for improved living conditions created the situation in which more radical ideas could influence the prisoners.

This development has been reflected less in the methods of protest and more in the types of demands made and the style of their articulation by the inmates. These changes can clearly be seen by
contrasting the demands of the prisoners at Jackson State Prison, Michigan in 1952 with those made by the Folsom Prisoners in 1970, which have come to be regarded as one of the most crucial landmarks in the American prison struggle. The demands at Jackson State Prison were quickly formulated, sometime after the riot had begun, and included:

1. **15-block (the maximum security wing) be remodelled to provide for adequate lighting and treatment facilities**.

2. **Counsellors have free access to the disciplinary cells in the 15-block.**

3. **Segregation (solitary confinement) policies be revised, and number of the individual treatment staff be given a position on the segregation board.**

4. **Only guards who would not be inhumane in their treatment be picked for duty in the 12-block (reserved for epilectic, semi-mentally disturbed, blind, handicapped, and senile cases).**

5. **The carrying of dangerous hand weapons and inhumane restraintment equipment by guards to be prohibited.**

6. **Adequate and competent personnel for handling mental cases, and more adequate screening of such cases.**

7. **A letter on prison stationery to be sent to the parole board asking for a revision of procedures to give equal treatment to all parolees.**

8. **Post-operative care be given under the direction of the medical director (instead of by prisoner technicians).**

9. **Equal opportunities for dental care for all prisoners, with special regard to the elimination of special buying preferences.**

10. **Creation of a permanent council elected by prisoners, to confer periodically with prison officials.**

11. **No reprisals against any leader or participant in the revolt.**

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5. Pallas & Barber (1972) op. cit. p. 3 - 4.
A number of generalisations may be made about these demands and the revolt. It was unplanned and unco-ordinated, and the programme put forward reflected the day-to-day needs of prisoners. It dealt with internal conditions and problems of institutional survival, and, if accomplished, would have materially improved the prisoners' lives. According to Pallas and Barber, the pattern of leadership at Jackson is "indicative of the level of organization in this type of riot."

A white prisoner, Earl Ward, imposed his leadership upon the group when it became clear that internal fighting and disorganization needed to be controlled. He personally prevented prisoners from harming the hostages, and supervised the formulation of the demands. And, although a significant number of inmates disagreed, he decided when the group should surrender. In general, leadership was white, although Blacks, Puerto Ricans and Chicanos participated. Leaders, such as Ward, were generally feared or respected for their toughness; power accrued to them by default. Much of the leaders' energies were spent controlling intense personal and racial animosities, and only the unity of the movement prevented the revolt from disintegrating. As already indicated during the course of the riot, prisoners usually were willing to negotiate with, and even surrender to, certain members of the prison staff whom they regarded as sympathetic to their cause. Those numbers were 'treatment' personnel, in whom the inmates put great faith. At Jackson, for example, the prison psychiatrist, Vernon Fox, convinced the prisoners to modify some of their demands, and that the prison administration was sincere in its initial acceptance of their grievances. After the riot was over, Fox wrote an article in 'Colliers' entitled, "How I Crushed the Prison Riot". 6

The strike at Folsom Prison in November 1970 was the longest and best supported strike in Californian prison history. Nearly all 2,400

6. Pallas & Barber (1972) op. cit p.4 - 5.
prisoners held out in their own cells for nineteen days in the face of constant hunger, discomfort, and continued psychological and physical intimidation. At the very beginning, they issued a thirty-one point "Manifesto of Demands and Anti-Oppression Platform", labelling prisons as the "Fascist Concentration Camps of Modern America" and calling for an "end to the injustice suffered by all prisoners, regardless of race, creed or color". The demands focused on the denial of political and legal rights to prisoners and the exploitation involved in the work programmes within the prison. They included a demand for the right to form prisoners' unions inside the penal institution. 7.

THE FOLSOM PRISONERS MANIFESTO OF DEMANDS AND ANTI-OPPRESSION PLATFORM

WE THE IMPRISONED MEN OF FOLSOM PRISON SEEK AN END TO THE INJUSTICE SUFFERED BY ALL PRISONERS, REGARDLESS OF RACE, CREED, OR COLOR.

The preparation and content of this document has been constructed under the unified efforts of all races and social segments of this prison. We the inmates of Folsom Prison totally and unlimitedly support the California state wide prison strike on November 3rd 1970, under the united effort for designated change in administrative prison practice and legislative policy.

It is a matter of documented record and human recognition that the administrators of the California prison system have restructured the institutions which were designed to socially correct men into THE FACIST CONCENTRATION CAMPS OF MODERN AMERICA.

DUE TO THE CONDITIONAL FACT THAT FOLSOM PRISON IS ONE OF THE MOST CLASSIC INSTITUTIONS OF AUTHORITATIVE INHUMANITY UPON MEN, THE FOLLOWING MANIFESTO OF DEMANDS ARE BEING SUBMITTED:

NOVEMBER 3, 1970

"MAN'S RIGHT TO KNOWLEDGE AND THE FREE USE THEREOF"

We the inmates of Folsom Prison have grown to recognize beyond the shadow of a doubt that because of our posture as prisoners and branded characters as alleged criminals, the administrators and prison employees no longer consider or respect us as human beings, but rather as domesticated animals selected to do their bidding in slave labor and furnished as personal whipping dog for their sadistic, psychopathic hate.

We the inmates of Folsom Prison, say to you, the sincere people of society, the prison system of which your courts have rendered unto, is without question the authoritative fangs of a coward in power.

Respectfully submitted to the people as a protest to the vile and vicious slavemasters:

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
THE CALIFORNIA ADULT AUTHORITY
THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE
THE CALIFORNIA STATE COURTS
THE UNITED STATES COURTS
AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT THIS SYSTEM OF INJUSTICE

CALIFORNIA PRISONERS UNION

We the men of Folsom Prison have been committed to the State Correctional authorities by the people of society for the purpose of correcting what has been deemed as social errors in behavior. Errors which have classified us as socially unacceptable until reprogrammed with new values and more thorough understanding as to our roles and responsibilities as members of the outside community. The Folsom Prison program in its structure and conditions have been engraved on the pages of this Manifesto of Demands with the blood, sweat, and tears of the Inmates of this prison.
The programs which we are submitted to under the façade of rehabilitation, is relative to the ancient stupidity of pouring water on a drowning man, inasmuch as we are treated for our hostilities by our program administrators with their hostility as a medication.

In our efforts to comprehend on a feeling level an existence contrary to violence, we are confronted by our captors with violence. In our efforts to comprehend society's code of ethics as to what is fair and just, we are victimized by exploitation and the denial of the celebrated due process of law.

In our peaceful efforts to assemble in dissent as provided under this Nation's United States Constitution, we are in turn murdered, brutalized and framed on various criminal charges because we seek the rights and privileges of ALL AMERICAN PEOPLE.

In our efforts to intellectually expand in keeping with the outside world, through all categories of News Media, we are systematically restricted and punitively offended to isolation status when we insist on our human rights to the wisdom of awareness.

We the inmates of this prison have vested the power of negotiation regarding settlement of the stipulated demands within the judgement and control of these four men of the outside world society:

SAL CANDELARIA, (BROWN BERETS).
HUEY P. NEWTON, (BLACK PANTHER PARTY)
CHARLES GARRY, (3rd WORLD LEGAL DEFENSE COUNSEL)
REPRESENTATIVE (FOR THE CALIFORNIA PRISONERS UNION TO BE DESIGNATED)

All and any negotiation will be conducted by Prison and State Authorities with these four men.

There shall be no convict committees.
AT 8.30 a.m. NOVEMBER 3rd, 1970, ALL CONVICT LABOR AND ASSIGNED ACTIVITY SHALL CEASE TO FUNCTION, WITH THE STIPULATED EXCEPTIONS OF:

(1) HOSPITAL WORKERS
(2) CULINARY WORKERS

ACTIVITY SHALL NOT RESUME UNTIL THE PRISON INMATE POPULATION HAVE RECEIVED DIRECTION FROM THE STIPULATED FOUR PERSON PANEL AS ABOVE MENTIONED, EITHER THROUGH RADIO, NEWS MEDIA, OR PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

MANIFESTO OF DEMANDS 11/3/70

1. We demand the constitutional rights of legal representation at the time of all Adult Authority hearings, and the protection from the procedures of the Adult Authority whereby they permit no procedural safeguards such as an attorney for cross examination of witnesses, witnesses on behalf of the parolee, at parole revocation hearings.

2. We demand a change in medical staff and medical policy and procedure. The Folsom Prison Hospital is totally inadequate, understaffed, prejudicial in the treatment of inmates. There are numerous "mistakes" made many times, improper and erroneous medication is given by untrained personnel. The emergency procedures for serious injury are totally absent in that they have no emergency room whatsoever; no recovery room following surgery which is performed by practitioners rather than board member surgeons. They are assisted by inmate help neither qualified, licensed, nor certified to function in operating rooms. Several instances have occurred where multiple injuries have happened to a number of inmates at the same time. A random decision made by the M.D. in charge as to which patient was the most serious and needed the one surgical room available. Results were fatal to one of the men waiting to be operated upon. This is virtually a death sentence to such a man who might have lived otherwise.
3. We demand adequate visiting conditions and facilities for the inmates and families of Folsom prisoners. The visiting facilities at this prison are such as to preclude adequate visiting for the inmates and their families. As a result the inmates are permitted two hours, two times per month to visit with family and friends, which of course has to be divided between these people. We ask for additional officers to man the visiting room five days per week, so that everyone may have at least four hours visiting per month. The administration has refused to provide or consider this request in prior appeals using the grounds of denial that they cannot afford the cost of the extra officers needed for such change. However, they have been able to provide twelve new correctional officers to walk the gun rails of this prison armed with rifles and shotguns during the daytime hours when most of the prison population is at work or attending other assignments. This is a waste of the taxpayers money, and a totally unnecessary security precaution.

4. We demand that each man presently held in the Adjustment Center be given a written notice with the Warden of Custody signature on it explaining the exact reasons for his placement in the severely restrictive confines of the Adjustment Center.

5. We demand an immediate end to indeterminate adjustment center terms to be replaced by fixed terms with the length of time served being terminated by good conduct and according to the nature of the charges, for which men are presently being warehoused indefinitely without explanation.

6. We demand an end to the segregation of prisoners from the mainline population because of their political beliefs. Some of the men in the Adjustment Center are confined there solely for political reasons and their segregation from other inmates is indefinite.
7. **We demand** an end to political persecution, racial persecution, and the denial of prisoners to subscribe to political papers, books or any other educational and current media chronicals that are forwarded through the United States Mail.

8. **We demand** an end to the persecution and punishment of prisoners who practice the constitutional right of peaceful dissent. Prisoners at Folsom and San Quentin Prisons according to the California State Penal Code cannot be compelled to work as these two prisons were built for the purpose of housing prisoners and there is no mention as to the prisoners being required to work on prison jobs in order to remain on the Mainline and/or be considered for release. Many prisoners believe their labor power is being exploited in order for the State to increase its economic power and continue to expand its correctional industries which are million dollar complexes, yet do not develop working skills acceptable for employment in the outside society, and which do not pay the prisoner more than the maximum sixteen cents per hour wage. Most prisoners never make more than six or eight cents per hour. Prisoners who refuse to work for the two to sixteen cent pay rate, or who strike, are punished and segregated without the access to the privileges shared by those who work; this is class legislation, class division, and creates class hostilities within the prison.

9. **We demand** an end to the tear-gassing of prisoners who are locked in their cells. Such action led to the death of Willie Powell in Soledad Prison, in 1968 and of Fred Billinslea, on February 25th 1970 at San Quentin Prison. It is cruel and unnecessary.

10. **We demand** the passing of a minimum and maximum term bill which calls for an end to indeterminate sentences where by a man can be warehoused indefinitely rehabilitated or not. That all prisoners have the right to be paroled after
serving their minimum term instead of the cruel and unusual punishment of being confined beyond his minimum eligibility for parole, and never knowing the reason for the extension of time, nor when his time is completed. The maximum term bill eliminates indefinite life time imprisonment where it is unnecessary and cruel. Life sentences should not confine a man for longer than ten years, as seven years is the statute for a considered lifetime out of circulation and if a man cannot be rehabilitated after a maximum of ten years of constructive programs, etc., then he belongs in a mental hygiene center, not a prison. Rescind Adult Authority Resolution 171, arbitrary fixing of prison terms.

11. We demand that industries be allowed to enter the Institutions and employ inmates to work eight hours a day and fit into the category of workers for scale wages. The working conditions in prisons do not develop working incentives parallel to the money jobs in the outside society, and a paroled prisoner faces many contradictions on the job that adds to his difficulty to adjust. Those industries outside who desire to enter prisons should be allowed to enter for the purpose of employment placement.

12. We demand that inmates be allowed to form or join Labor Unions.

13. We demand that inmates be granted the right to support their own families; at present thousands of welfare recipients have to divide their checks to support their imprisoned relatives who without the outside support could not even buy toilet articles or food. Men working on scale wages could support themselves and families while in prison.

14. We demand that correctional officers be prosecuted as a matter of law for shooting inmates, around inmates, or any act of cruel and unusual punishment where it is not a matter of life or death.
15. *We demand* that all institutions who use inmate labor be made to conform with the state and federal minimum wage laws.

16. *We demand* that all condemned prisoners, avowed revolutionaries and prisoners of war be granted political asylum in the countries under the Free World Revolutionary Solidarity Pact, such as Algeria, Russia, Cuba, Latin America, North Korea, North Vietnam, etc., and that prisoners confined for political reasons in this country, until they can be exchanged for prisoners of war held by America, be treated in accord with the 1954 Geneva Convention; that they, their personal property be respected, and allowed in their possession, and that they not be manacled.

17. *We demand* an end to trials being held on the premises of San Quentin Prison, or any other prison without the jury as stated in the U.S. Constitution as being picked from the country of the trial proceedings and of the peers of the accused; that being in this case, other prisoners as the selected jurors.

18. *We demand* an end to the escalating practice of physical brutality being perpetrated upon the inmates of California State Prisons at San Quentin, Folsom, and Soledad Prison in particular.

19. *We demand* that such celebrated and prominent political prisoners as Reis Tijerina, Ahmad Evens, Bobby Seale, Chip Fitzgerald, Los Siete, David Harris, and the Soledad Brothers, be given political asylum outside this country as the outrageous slandering of the mass media has made it impossible either for a fair trial or for a safe term to be served in case of conviction as the forces of reactions and repressions will be forever submitting them to threats of cruel and unusual punishment and death wherever they are confined and throughout the length of their confinement.
20. We demand appointment of three lawyers from the California Bar Association for full-time positions to provide legal assistance for inmates seeking post-conviction relief, and to act as liaison between the Administration and inmates for bringing inmate complaints to the attention of the Administration.

21. We demand update of industry working conditions to standards as provided for under California law.

22. We demand establishment of inmate workers insurance plan to provide compensation for work related accidents.

23. We demand establishment of unionized vocational training program comparable to that of the Federal Prison System which provides for union instructors, union pay scale, and union membership upon completion of the vocational training course.

24. We demand annual accounting of Inmate Welfare Fund and formulation of inmate committee to give inmates a voice as to how such funds are used.

25. We demand that the Adult AUTHORITY Board appointed by the Governor be eradicated and replaced by a parole board elected by popular vote of the people. In a world where many crimes are punished by indeterminate sentences; where authority acts within secrecy and within vast discretion and gives heavy weight to accusations by prison employees against inmates, inmates feel trapped unless they are willing to abandon their desire to be independent men.

26. We strongly demand that the State and Prison Authorities conform to recommendation No.1 of the "Soledad Caucus Report", to wit, "That the State Legislature create a fulltime salaried board of overseers for the State Prisons. The board would be responsible
for evaluating allegations made by inmates, their families, friends, and lawyers against employees charged with acting inhumanely, illegally or unreasonably. The board should include people nominated by a psychological or psychiatric association, by the State Bar Association or by the Public Defenders Association, and by groups of concerned, involving laymen."

27. We demand that prison authorities conform to the conditional requirements and needs as described in the recent released Manifesto from the Folsom Adjustment Center.

28. We demand an immediate end to the agitation of race relations by the prison administrations of this state.

29. We demand that the California Prison System furnish Folsom Prison with the services of Ethnic Counselors for the needed special services of Brown and Black population of this prison.

30. We demand an end to the discrimination in the judgement and quota of parole for Black and Brown People.

31. We demand that all prisoners be present at the time that their cells and property are being searched by the correctional officers of state prisons.

The Folsom demands were later the core demands of the prisoners at Attica State Correctional Facility. The "Attica Liberation Front" had been formed in May 1971 around twenty-nine demands focusing on prisoners' rights to organise politically and economically, as well as on living and working conditions. Also included was the specific demand that the warden be fired. During the following months, a negotiating committee of inmates met with officials several times, but the officials did nothing about the prisoners grievances. On September 9, several hundred prisoners captured the prison yard and seized numerous guards as hostages. Numbers swelled to some 1,500 and two demands were added to the original manifesto:

transport to a non-imperialist country for those who wanted it (a demand which was quickly dropped), and total amnesty for participants in the action. Discipline and an operating support system were organised in the yard, and leadership was a collective chosen from groups including the Black Panthers, Black Muslims, Young Lords, radical whites. Negotiations were held with officials of the administration, who conceded all but two: those of amnesty and the resignation of the warden. It is those demands which exemplify the "politicisation" of groups leading the protests in the early 1970's. The demand for amnesty was not new; what was different was the awareness of the inmates that if these demands were granted, they would have established the precedents that prisoners have a right to participation (if not control) in the process of choosing who rules them, and that they have the right to rebel without fear of punishment. This increased political awareness is further indicated in the choice of the word "amnesty", rather than the prior demand of protection from "reprisals". Pallas and Butler have argued that the former denotes a relationship between political actors, whilst the latter implies a power relationship independent of specific political conditions. It is not simply that prisoners want personal protection as in the 1950's, for example; they are seeking the legitimization of a political weapon.

A second important difference is that the prison revolts of the 1970's overcame the mistrust and hatred between black and white prisoners, not as in the past because of the personal power of one white leader, but because of the recognition of the common struggle and enemy. At Attica, the slogan was "The Solution is Unity", and all reports indicated complete racial harmony and absence of tension in the yard. Tom Wicker, a member of the Observers Committee, noted:
"The racial harmony that prevailed among the prisoners - it was absolutely astonishing.... That prison yard was the first place I have ever seen where there was no racism." 9.

The shift in focus of anger from inmate against inmate to inmates against guards has seriously undermined a crucial tool of prison management; administrators have long used and positively encouraged racial antagonism to "divide and rule". Solidarity of the prisoners against the prison authorities is one of the most important consequences of the prison protest during the last few years. As one ex-convict has said,

"Now there is an entirely new concept in prisons: where they have identified the enemy as the guards, the prison itself."

A black prisoner in Folsom wrote about unity:

"It is precarious approaching white groups, but as I said, WE are willing, if for no other reason than to free our forces from a senseless struggle against those who are not our true foe." 10.

This unity is further revealed in the changed leadership of the riots. No longer based on personal strength or ability to inspire fear, leadership is a collective, based on mutual consent and on apportioning of responsibilities among various racial and political groups, as an indication not only of the strategy of unity, but also as a concrete manifestation of its practicality.

As already noted, an important characteristic of prison revolts prior to the 1970's was the focus of prisoners demands on grievances within the prison system. Demands such as those at Folsom still include 'traditional' demands for medical, recreational and educational improvement, but also transcend them to question the legitimacy of inmates' incarceration, and the functions of prison within present-day American society. Imprisonment is viewed as 'political repression' rather than punishment for crime. As George Jackson wrote in his 'Prison Letters':

9. For a more detailed account of the Attica rebellion by Tom Whicker, see: Whicker "A Time To Die" (U.S.A. Quadrangle, 1975)
10. Quoted in Eve Pell (1972) op.cit. p.198 - 205.
"There are still some blacks here who consider themselves criminals - but not many... Believe me, my friend, study and think, you will find no class or category more aware, more embittered, desperate or dedicated to the ultimate remedy - revolution. The most dedicated, the best of our kind - you'll find in the Folsoms, San Quentins, and Soledads." 11.

Wendell Wade, an organiser in the Black Panther Party, has provided a vivid illustration of this new orientation:

"The prisons are now filling with political prisoners, those brothers who were active in opposing the occupation of the black community by the fascist police force, and its domination by the exploitative businessman and tyrannical politicians. The acts of these brothers are also acts of survival, for by organising against the forces of reaction and engaging in acts of self-defense or preventative self-defense they ensure that the next generation of black people will not have to be as preoccupied with mere survival, or at least will have the correct tools to deal with insuring their survival. It is not surprising that many of these brothers are charged with the ubiquitous "assault on a police officer"! It is the lumpenproletarians, the children of the field slave (either directly or indirectly who are in the vanguard of this war...." 12.

In a similar vein, Bettina Aptheker has argued that "the point is to attack the whole foundation - all the assumptions - involved in maintaining a rehabilitative prison system which must assume the moral and mental defectiveness of its victims, in the middle of a morally bankrupt, racist, defective, and generally deteriorating social order."

To take the illustration of the Civil Rights Movement again, the significance of social discrimination in the South was vigorously debated in the early days of the movement. Was Mississippi an "aberration" of the American system, as the liberals contended, or was it, as the radicals argued, simply America writ large? The same question was asked of the prison system. Are the horror stories acted out in so many prisons (e.g. Cummins, Arkansas) mere "exceptions" to a usually benign 'correctional' system, or do they, on the contrary, reflect something essential to the entire prison system, if not to American society as a whole? Is Attica, for example, an anomaly or is it at the crux of the entire system, reaching out to those on parole, and beyond them to all in the ghetto, the Gario, or the Slum, whose

physical location is far from the penitentiary? The answers to these questions are most clearly visible in the Manifestoes of protesting prisoners, no longer concerned with mere 'abuses' of power, but fundamentally concerned with the 'nature' of that power.

As well as changes in the demands, and in the organisation of collective protest, the late 1960's and 1970's witnessed important differences in the articulation of manifestoes, and the size of the audience. Prisoners were no longer content to have their demands paraphrased in the local paper. At Attica, for example, prisoners demanded the continued presence of newsmen of their own choice throughout the negotiations between inmates and officials, in the hope of generating support in the outside community. News coverage was responsible for sparking off "sympathy protests" in other jails and penitentiaries. Similarly, the actual Manifesto was directed not to the prison administrators but to "the oppressed peoples of the world", or to the "sincere people in our society". Prisoners showed themselves aware of the similarities between their and other peoples struggles, reflected in their analysis of prison not only as an "institution for class control in the United States, but also as part of the global system of class control called imperialism". 

Related to this widening of their constituency is the attempt by inmates to establish contact with 'outside' groups. One of the most serious obstacles facing the "political" protest was the essential invisibility of inmates. The presence of newsmen at the Attica negotiations was a clear attempt to mobilize widespread community support for the prisoners' struggle. This awareness of the need to organise on the 'outside' as well as 'inside' has reflected the increasing concern with the "nature" of power. No longer are prisons studied in isolation;
but rather as "appendages of the state apparatus employed to maintain exploitative and oppressive social conditions." Attempts to concretise such links have led to efforts to organise both the prisoners and ex-convicts into 'unions'. This desire for community-based support is perhaps one of the crucial measurements of the level of political articulation represented by prison protest in the 1970's, because it indicates its level of political articulation. As already suggested, the rioters of the 1950's and earlier were not conscious of the similarities between their protest and the level of protest in the larger society.

Today's protesting prisoners have shown themselves not merely aware of the links but anxious to make them more complete. Prisoners' demands in the 1970's, in stark contrast to those of the 1950's, are both aimed at, and informed by, inter-racial and even international solidarity.

It is changes such as these which have led many commentators to speak of the "revolutionary movement" within prisons, and to view the prisoners' struggle as being in the "forefront of the revolutionary movement in America." Wendall Wade has written:

"The prisons hold a wealth of resources for the struggle to liberate our communities; it is the training ground for the lumpenproletarians. With aid from the community, the whole prison experience can be transformed into an asset to the community; a reservoir of black workers, organisers, and warriors. Our black army is in the prisons of North America." (13)

Badillo and Haynes have argued that "Prisons for a long time simply "universities of crime" have now become centers for political education." (14)

In an article entitled "Prisons Feed a Mouth of Protest", Steven Roberts has concluded that a "movement paralleling those that have arisen in recent years among blacks, students and women has now begun to emerge in the nation's prisons." (15)

Again, Min Yee has written that:

"The waves of prison strikes and outbreaks of violence which are now periodically washing over various institutions are seen by

(13) Wendall Wade (1971) op. cit. p.18
(15) Steven Roberts, "Prisons Feed a Mouth of Protest" in 'New York Times' 19th September, 1971
many as a new 'revolutionary movement' of 'political prisoners' in the nation's prisons. Californian prison authorities have remarked that they are receiving a 'more violent breed of inmate', inmates from the streets smouldering with revolutionary rhetoric." (16)

And Frank Browning has drawn out the comparison with the 1950's when,

".... prison reform really meant simply adding a new kind of guard to the shot-gun brandishing bulls who already walked the rails. The newcomers were psychologists and social workers, people whose educated benevolence was supposed to hasten the way to rehabilitation for the unfortunates inside the joint. Nothing much was done to change the pattern of life for prisoners, and the reformers were simply added to the payroll. With the legacy of the '50's fresh in their minds, today's prison organisers don't speak the same language as prison reformists. The reason is simple. The reformers went to graduate school, and make a living at reform. The organisers went to prison and learned to build strikes." (17)

This section has tried to look at the evidence offered to support the "politicisation" thesis, and then at how this politicisation has been interpreted by prison commentators. The next section will attempt to explain why and to what extent such "politicisation" has occurred.


SECTION 2:

"The foregoing analysis leads to several conclusions. First, the prison system is indeed no aberration, but rather a central element to American society. It has been shaped, and in turn reinforces and supports the population of a status quo characterised by racism, inequity and exploitation. The lawlessness of that system was not an accidental by-product or an oversight, but actually crucial to the social functions the prison has performed. It is clear that a return to rule by law, rather than rule by men, or lawlessness, would represent a significant victory for those who are now most seriously victimised. It would seriously handicap those now in control of the prisons by limiting their ability to take reprisals against those engaged in political activity within the prisons, and in so doing it would create space for those activities."

[Stender and Greenberg: Prison As A Lawless Agency].

"You sit on your cold, steel, mattressless bunk and watch a cockroach crawl out from under the filthy commode and you don't kill it. You envy the roach as you watch it crawl out under the cell door."

[Johnny Cash "Folsom Prison Blues].

Prison conditions have not been dramatically improved during the past century; on the contrary, it has been argued that they have deteriorated. It was on this situation that forces and influences from outside the prison were to have such an impact and promote the 'politicisation' of the prisoners' struggle discussed in Section 1. In seeking to locate explanations for this increased 'politicisation' this section will look most closely at the Black Power Movement which had many direct links with penal institutions, and at the introduction on a large-scale of the 'treatment' ideology and its consequences for the prison staff and inmates. This section will also be concerned with specific 'moments' in the wider historical period in which the prisoners' movement emerged. The section will begin by illustrating the change from concerns about 'abuses' of power to concern about the 'nature' of that power by reference to the growth of the anti-war movement, and its importance for the prisoners' struggle will be made explicit.
1. **THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT**:

We have already noted that the present prison protests are different from those of the 1950's in that the former were concerned with the legitimacy of power rather than its mis-use. This progression was a characteristic feature of "left" politics during the previous twenty years and is clearly visible in the development of the anti-war movement. Anti-war organisation is an amorphous phenomenon, but insofar as any clear pattern of its growth exists, Horowitz has discerned three particular stages. Firstly, during the period covering (roughly) 1952-1956, there was an apparent ideological "thawing-out" of the communist-oriented left. "Out of the ashes of the McCarthy assault on the feeble American communist organisation, and out of a corresponding period of 'thaw' in the Soviet Union and its loosening effects upon communists everywhere, there emerged left-wing efforts at ideological independence and more democratic organizational procedures." The second period Horowitz locates was between 1957 and 1965 and involved the rebirth of issue-oriented leftism. In this period, new radical groups emerged primarily involved in the struggle for civil rights for blacks, not only on a legal level but also on educational, economic and political levels. As Lynd notes, this stage was characterised by a faith in the rationality of all men, and was typified by individualised, dramaturgical acts: for example, individuals sailed into the Pacific Ocean atom bomb test areas (sponsored by the Committee of Non-violent Action (CNVA), founded in 1957). The third period (1967 onwards) was dominated by two main events: the 'nationalization' of black radical organisations, taking on separatist overtones, and seeking exclusively black leadership; and the increasing involvement of the United States in S.E. Asia. The war in Vietnam provided a ready-made ideological issue, around which blacks, whites,

(18) I. L. Horowitz, "The Struggle is the Message: The Organisation and Ideology of the American Anti-War Movement" (California: Glendesary Press, 1970)
students all rallied. The period also witnessed massive campus upheavals which moved from an initial stance of university reforms to demands for social change on a broad scale.

For Horowitz, this timetable represents a movement away from 'representational' to 'confrontational' politics. Bruce L.R. Smith tried to capture the spirit of the anti-war movement when he noted that "a different mood seems to be creeping into our politics";

"We see a greater tendency to work outside of rather than through established channels, more demonstrations and fewer quiet remonstrances behind the scenes, a weakening of the traditional political parties as vehicles for managing conflict, direct action exalted and closed politics distrusted, a push for wider participation along with a vague feeling that government officials are aloof and no longer representative. The process is fed in some difficult-to-specify but important fashion by the electronic age-media".

The anti-war movement saw the development of "participatory democracy" as an organizational method, deriving from the mystique of "mass consensus" provided by unity against the Vietnam involvement. Groups and organizations were small, and manageable, with co-ordinating committees (SNCC), local organizations built on an 'ad hoc' basis to meet local issues (WAGE), or chapters of national organizations (CORE). Built around the twin-issue of civil rights and peace in Vietnam, the war-movement was issue-orientated rather than doctrine-dominated. It was less a common ideology and more a common enemy (the Vietnam War and the U.S. Government which perpetrated it) which forged the movement.

The importance of the anti-war movement in general, and the student militancy in particular, for the prisoners' struggle can be divided into its effects on "tactics" and on "demands". As already noted, the tactics of the prisoners' struggle have altered little. Perhaps the only significant change has been the emphasis on "symbolism". The anti-war movement developed numerous symbolic attacks on the government policy including a frontal assault on traditional American actions of patriotism through

(19) Quoted in Horowitz, (1970) op. cit.
the burning of the American flag, or the raising of the NLF flag, and the
destruction of draft cards. Similarly, prisoners in the early 1970's
increasingly made these sort of gestures to draw attention to a specific
issue. Of greater consequence, however, was the influence the war protest
exerted on the prisoners' demands and the 'preamble' in which they were
couched. A small but influential group of war protesters viewed the war
as an imperialist venture, and the responses of the state to the demonstrations
were seen as part of the repressive nature of the American political system.
Thus, the role of the police and National Guard was portrayed as an extension
of that of the military in foreign affairs. As the tactics of direct action
escalated the confrontation, violence became the anticipated 'normal' response
of the state authorities to ostensibly peaceful protest. Events such as
those in Chicago in 1968 at the Democratic Convention and the subsequent
"Conspiracy Trial" (documented by Tom Hayden) were used to expose the 'real'
nature of power and the interests its wielding protected and served. Thus,
increasingly, prisoners looked upon the penal system less as an atomised
unit and more as an integral part of the whole coercive mechanism of social
control, and demands, such as those at Folsom, were prefaced by specific
references to the "anti-imperialist struggle", and called for the unity of
the Third World (including the American blacks) against its U.S. oppressors.

This link between the imperialist struggle in South Asia and the
repressive activities of the domestic social control agents was strengthened
by the arrest and subsequent imprisonment of thousands of draft-resisters
and demonstrators. As well as the more general effect this had of re-
defining the prisoners demands, these imprisonments also had an important
influence upon the organization of prison protest. As we shall analyse
in more detail later, the war resisters brought with them into the prisons
radical and revolutionary ideologies, and certain organisational skills
and techniques. One of the most important consequences already emphasised
was the links forged between prisoners previously divided along racial bias. War resisters and demonstrators were constantly outspoken about prison life and thereby helped to publicise the conditions inside. They provided direct contact with outside radical organisations and secured their involvement in the prisoners' struggle. Taken together, these have had the cumulative result of emphasising the political nature of the penal system, its inmates and of the struggle for prison reforms.

2. THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT:

The most decisive influence on the increased politicisation of prisoners, however, has been the Black Power Movement, beginning with the Black Muslims in the 1950's and early 1960's and reaching a peak with the formation and subsequent destruction of the Black Panther Party. This major influence has mirrored the colossal change in the proportion of black/white prisoners over the last twenty-five years. In California, for instance, in 1944, white inmates totalled 68 per cent of the state's prison population. Seventeen per cent were black. By 1969, fifty-four per cent were white and twenty-eight per cent were black. During the same period, the black population comprised less than six per cent of the state's general populace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>California Population</th>
<th>% of Blacks in California</th>
<th>State Prison Population</th>
<th>% of Blacks in Californian Prisons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>9,000,000</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5,711</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>19,800,000</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>28,795</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the large state and federal prisons, the position is even more remarkable. In New York, 70 per cent of the inmate population is black. In the autumn of 1971, New York City's 13,735 inmates were 70 per cent black, 20 per cent Puerto Rican and 10 per cent white. In Michigan the prison population at the end of 1966 was 2,976, with whites outnumbering blacks, 1,667
to 1,309. At the end of 1970 the prison population had increased from 3,000 to 4,501, a 50 per cent increase in four years, and now blacks outnumber whites 2,408 to 2,093. In Virginia, in 1965, the population was 4,690 with non-whites accounting for 2,631 of the inmates. By 1970, although the number of inmates remained stable, black prisoners outnumbered whites 2,729 to 1,839. Similarly Wisconsin, and all other states for which statistics are available, show a disproportionate number of black prisoners to white.

It should be no surprise, therefore, that the level of militant black rhetoric in prisons during the past twenty five years has increased dramatically.

THE BLACK MUSLIMS:

Paralleling the reformist politics of the Civil Rights Movement was the development of the Black Nation of Islam, with a philosophy which stood in sharp contrast to that of the Civil Rights campaign. The latter was essentially geared to integrating middle class and professional blacks into the existing racist structure, and to bringing minimal political participation of rural southern blacks in the political system. Little or no attention was paid to the urban North, which was generally assumed to be less overtly racist than the South.

The Black Muslims, in direct opposition, concentrated their recruitment campaigning on the cities, particularly the ghettos (and the prisons as an extension of them). Instead of seeking integration or assimilation, the Black Muslims attempted to raise social consciousness, and to make blacks aware of their particular common identity and struggle. Their philosophy was separatist, demanding the creation of an independent black nation. They were from the same areas of society as the increasing black prison population; many, including the leader, Elijah Muhammad, had served time.

(20) Badillo and Haynes (1972) op. cit. p.9
They campaigned within the penal institutions both by personal contact and by letter. Every prisoner who approached Elijah Muhammad received a personal reply and Muslim literature. In 1958, more than four hundred black prisoners were thus 'converted' to Islam. When a prisoner was discharged, he was "not wanted by the Christian churches who teach love and forgiveness", but a ready-made fellowship awaited him at the Muslim temple. The newly released brother was welcomed and immediately made to feel a part of the local congregation. A job was found for him, usually in one of the religion's enterprises, and in a short time he was virtually indistinguishable from the rest of the group. At times of special need, he had his religious brothers to help him out.

The attraction of the Islam philosophy was its comprehensive critique of which American society. The catechism of Elijah Muhammad taught that all whites are "beasts" that had been raised by Moses "on their hind legs" and led from the caves. Most significantly, this notion allowed the black man a dignity, pride, and identity denied in existing white society. As Leonard has noted, "the ultimate appeal of the Movement, therefore, is the chance to become identified with a power strong enough to overcome the domination of the white man - and perhaps even to subordinate him in time..."

To be identified with a Movement that grandly rejects the fundamental values of the powerful majority is to increase vastly one's self-esteem and one's stature with one's peers. Central to the Black Muslim philosophy is the idea that blacks as a group are VICTIMS of white society; their miseries are not the consequence of personal deficiencies. The black prisoner who contacts the Nation of Islam is constantly reminded that he is in an institution administered by whites, guarded by whites, built by whites. Even the chaplains are white, "to continue to force upon you the poisonous doctrine that you are blessed by being persecuted". The judge who tried him, the jury who heard his case, the officers who arrested him - all were white. Elijah Muhammad then went on to question the legitimacy of the black man's imprisonment.

(22) Lincoln (1973) op. cit. p.27
"If, in fact, you DID steal, from whom did you steal? Only the white man has anything, and if you stole from him, you got but a fraction of what he owes you. Did you kill? If you killed a white man, they murder us at will. They decorate their trees with the bodies of our people. Or they kill us by 'law', but they cannot enforce the same 'law' to protect us or let us vote."

If prisoners have committed crimes against other black men they are told they committed these "unnatural acts" out of frustration and the inability to "see who the real devil is": "you may have killed your black brother with your hand, but in your heart you have tried to kill your true tormentor". This specific idea was then made a more general proposition about the political relationship between black and white, as for example, Elijah Muhammad wrote in one of his first letters to Malcolm X:

"The black prisoner, he said, symbolized white society's crime of keeping black men oppressed and deprived and ignorant and unable to get decent jobs, turning them into criminals". (24)

For Malcolm X and thousands of other black prisoners, the words 'The white man is the devil' was the "perfect echo" of that of their lifelong experience:

"You let this caged-up black man start thinking, the same way I did when I first heard Elijah Muhammad's teachings: let him start thinking how, with better breaks when he was young and ambitious he might have been a lawyer, a doctor, a scientist, anything. You let this caged-up black man start realizing as I did, how from the first landing of the first slave ship, the millions of black men in America have been like sheep in a den of wolves. That's why black prisoners become Muslims so fast when Elijah Muhammad's teachings filter into their cages by way of other Muslim convicts." (25)

Thus, the importance of the Muslim proselytizing was its 'redefinition' of the black prisoner as VICTIM. So that rather than owing and paying a debt to society, black prisoners began to see themselves as being abused, that their imprisonment was simply another form of oppression which they have known all their lives. As Cleaver noted,

(23) Lincoln (1973) op. cit. p. 114
(25) Malcolm X (1968) op. cit. p. 279
"Negro inmates feel that they are being robbed, that it is 'society' that owes them, that should be paying them a debt."

Developing this line of attack, Eldridge Cleaver, himself a former Muslim convict leader, has argued,

It is only a matter of time until the question of the prisoner's debt to society versus society's debt to the prisoner is injected forcefully into the national and state politics, into the civil and human rights struggle, and into the consciousness of the body politic. It is an explosive issue which goes to the very root of America's system of justice, the structure of the criminal law, the prevailing beliefs and attitudes towards the convicted felon. While it is easier to make out a case for black convicts, the same principle applies to white and Mexican-American convicts as well. They too are victimised, albeit a little more subtly by 'society'. When black convicts start demanding a new dispensation and definition of justice, naturally the white and Mexican-American convicts will demand equality of treatment.\(^{(26)}\)

Although throughout the early 1950's, the Muslims were an "underground" organisation in the prison they gradually became more open in their activities, and as their intensive recruiting paid handsome dividends, directly challenged the prison administrators. Demands were few: the right to hold religious meetings, the right to purchase the Koran, the right to build a mosque, and the right to receive visits from Muslims outside. The organisation, discipline and unity which backed these demands posed a fundamental threat to the 'isolationist' and 'individualised' methods of the prison, and the ensuing repression, "ghosting" of known leaders, and brutality used in breaking up meetings served to reinforce Elijah Muhammad's teachings of the bestiality of the white man.\(^{(27)}\)

At the same time, the persecution of the Nation of Islam on the outside and its being cast as the "most serious threat to the society as a whole" forged the link between the inmates and the outside organisation. This link was strengthened by two important tactics used by the organisation in its struggle: lawsuits and strikes. The strike weapon was used in response to particular incidents of brutality or oppression; for example, after the killing of a Muslim by a San Quentin guard in 1967, to demand the prosecution of the guard. Lawsuits were used to force the prison

\(^{(27)}\) Paullas and Barber (1971) op. cit. p.7-9
administration to concede to their demands for freedom of worship.
Suits were invariably lost, but the publicity gained enabled the Muslims
to illustrate the biased nature of the court system.

But during the 1960's the Black Muslim organisation inside the prison
went into decline; "the light that once shone so brightly has dimmed, if
not gone completely". Cleaver has advanced three major reasons for this:
firstly, Allah has failed to come. "In order to prod the reluctant
potential convicts into a speedy decision on whether or not to join; the
Muslims used to spread the word that Allah would destroy North America
'next year' and only those blacks, who were already members of the Nation
of Islam would be saved". Secondly, the split between Elijah Muhammad
and Malcolm X, the "universal hero of black prisoners" and the latter's
murder. Malcolm X had a special meaning for black convicts. "A former
prisoner himself he had risen from the lowest depths to great heights.
For this reason he was a symbol of hope, a model for thousands of black
convicts who had found themselves trapped in the vicious PPP cycle:
prison-parole-prison. Thirdly, the "inexplicable failure" of the Nation
of Islam "to offer any legal assistance to Muslims behind the walls".
Muslims inside, who wanted to take the California Department of Corrections
into court to win their constitutional rights were forced into the
humiliating position of having to seek support from "white devil" organisations
such as the American Civil Liberties Union.

"What black inmates now look to with rising hopes is the cry for Black
Power and an elaboration of its details in the Name of Malcolm X. In
this connection, the most popular books being read by black inmates in
prisons today, Black Muslims and just plain old fed-up Negroes are
The Keeper"; "The Wretched of the Earth"; "Negroes with Guns"; and
Che Guevara on Guerilla Warfare - none of which looks to Mecca." (28)

Whilst accepting the decline of the Muslims within prisons (which
matched the Nation of Islam's decline on the outside) their positive
contribution to the increasing politicisation and organisation of black

(28) Eldridge Cleaver, "Post—Prison Writings and Speeches"
(London: Johnathan Cape, 1969) p.13-17
inmates should not be overlooked. From the point of view of the emerging prisoners' movement, the Black Muslims were crucial in several ways to the raising of the level of black consciousness:

(a) Their philosophy helped to destroy some of the barriers to political consciousness which had previously divided inmates;

(b) Muslims introduced disciplined organisation and unity amongst prisoners in the face of severe repression, and it kindled the idea that specific groups should engage in collective action to achieve their stated aims.

(c) By emphasising the common situation of black inmates and espousing collective action, the Black Muslims systematically counteracted the "treatment ideology" and notions of individual pathology which were coming to have such a remarkable hold on prison policy.

(d) The Black Muslims introduced the importance of outside support for the movement inside, and by their lawsuits in particular located the areas in which outside aid was crucial.

(e) Outside support illustrated the "common" identity of the black struggle. Direct links were made with the "Third World", and the successful anti-colonial movements of the early 1960's. The Nation of Islam, in exhorting the Black American to fight, pointed to the newly independent African states as examples of self-determination for black people in their struggle against white oppression.

This view of the prisoners' struggle as part of a world-wide movement was the extreme counteract to the notion of the 'individual failing' of the black inmate. It also, most importantly, redefined the role of the black prisoner as "victim". (This was emphasised, as we shall see later, by the legal battles which were undertaken).

THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT:

The gradual political sophistication of Black prisoners, and their perception of their struggle as part of an international movement, led to their questioning the Muslim philosophy of nationalism, and its religious
emphasis was increasingly deemed either inappropriate or reactionary to the prisoners' fight. The Muslim preoccupation with separation and innate racial superiority was the perfect correlate for a prison administration which sought to control inmates by placing black against white. (The well-tried colonial idea of 'divide-and-rule'). Following his trip to Mecca in 1965 and his split with the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X wrote of his changed perception:

"The white man is not INHERENTLY evil, but America's racist structure influences him to act evilly. The society has produced and nourishes a psychology which brings out the lowest, most base part of human beings". (29)

Malcolm X's special appeal to black prisoners gave his change of mind an important impact, and forced many prisoners to re-examine their attitude towards the need for black/white unity in opposition to the penal administration. Cleaver later wrote,

"Many of us were shocked and outraged by these words from Malcolm X, who had been a major influence upon us all and the main factor in many of our conversions to the Black Muslims, but there were those of us who were glad to be liberated from a doctrine of hate and racial supremacy. The onus of teaching racial supremacy and hate, which is the white man's burden, is pretty hard to bear". (30)

One of the reasons for the ascendancy of the Black Panther Party was its recognition of the common struggle of the white and black prisoners, (that it isn't the white convicts 'per se' who oppress them), and of the class nature of their fight. It is important to chart the rise of the Panthers against a changing international situation, in which overt repression was rapidly becoming the "official" response to dissent. The war in Vietnam in particular served to reveal the imperialist roots of American foreign policy, as well as its racism. During the Sixties there was a massive increase in challenge and retrenchment which was not restricted to the United States. The violence of the ghetto riots, and the emergence of a militant black power grouping, the anti-imperialist movement amongst students and intellectuals which manifested itself in

(29) Malcolm X (1968) op. cit. p.454-456, for a fuller account of his 'conversion'.
(30) Eldridge Cleaver (1969) p. 16
world-wide campus revolt; the growth of liberation groups within local communities; and the revolutionary movements in S.E. Asia, Latin America and Africa all helped to promote an understanding and articulation of the inter-relationships between foreign and domestic affairs, and of the role of racism as an ideology to divide people of different races in the interest of economic exploitation. Such analyses, and the continuing debate about revolutionary theory and praxis, provided a setting against which the politics of confrontation were brought to the fore. We have already noted how the Black Muslims linked the prisoners struggles with those of the emerging black African states; this link was made even more explicit by the writings of Black Panthers:

"Black People cannot continue to view the prisons and the prisoners in the same manner as the administration of these concentration camps and the power structure views them. Whether a blackman is located in an isolated prison camp in California or a tenement in Harlem, whether he be in Addis Ababa or the jungles of Mozambique, his enemy is this monster of capitalist production and distribution". (31)

To legitimate their claim that their struggle is that of the whole Third World, the Black Panthers have refined the theory that Black Americans are a colonised people, and that the ghetto society in which they exist is a colonised society of the larger white American society. The basic premise of this argument is that the ghetto institutions are not owned and dominated by local people. The people who teach in the schools, fight the fires, run the social work agencies, own the stores are not ghetto people; the organisations that employ them are not run by ghetto people, and the policies they follow are not set by ghetto people. Whether one thinks of these people as helpers or exploiters, they represent the functionaries in a process over which ghetto people have little control and with which they feel little sense of identification. In this sense, according to the Panthers, ghetto institutions are similar to those of an occupying power. Conditions in

(31) Wendell Wade (1971) op. cit. p.17
the ghetto are seen as the result of a systematic policy, both conscious and sub-conscious, of subjugation of black people by white people. Accordingly, the Panther Party argued that the massive exodus of white people from the inner city areas, engendered not only by life-styles, but by racial fears, was accelerated by riots and violent crime in the streets. This situation was portrayed as not dissimilar to that of the colonial transition.

The strength of the Black Panthers within the prisons derives in part from its leadership, from its programme, and its tactics. The Panther Party leaders had all, or were serving long periods inside. Huey Newton and Bobby Seale were also "on trial", and used their courtroom appearances as a platform for vigorous speeches revealing the "true" nature of the American judicial system. They provided the rallying point for mass movements in their defense—movements which developed organisationally on both sides of the prison walls. The writings of leaders such as Newton, Seale, Cleaver and George Jackson became cornerstones of the prisoners struggle.

The Ten-Point Programme of the Party included two specific points relating to the prison situation. They were carefully worded to emphasise and expose specific aggressive structures of the penal system in their relation to the larger oppression of the social system. Point 8 reads:

"We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prison and jails".

According to Bobby Seale, all black people should be released from prison because they have not received a fair trial. This relates to Point 9:

"We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer groups or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States". (32)

The Panthers believe that the courts should follow the Constitution to ensure that black people receive fair trials. The Fourteenth Amendment gives a man the right to be tried by his peer group and a peer is a person from a similar economic, religious, geographical, environmental, historical and

racial background. To do this, the Party argued, the court will be forced to select a jury from the black community from which the black defendant comes; white juries have no understanding of the "average reasoning man of the black community".

The Panthers emphasised the role of the Black as victim, originally put forward by the Muslims. Eldridge Cleaver, for example, defined rape as an "insurrectionary act" - and the rape of a white woman was "revenge over the way white men have used black women." Thus, crime was explicitly viewed as a political act, and all prisoners became "political" prisoners of one type or another. Bettina Aptheker has identified five categories of political prisoner:

1. Those who had become effective political leaders in their communities, and therefore victims of politically-motivated police frame-ups, for example, Angela Davis.

2. Those who have committed various acts of civil disobedience, or refused to be inducted into the Armed Forces, e.g. the Berrigan brothers and thousands of draft resisters.

3. Many in liberation movements who engage in specific acts of resistance or armed self-defense (within and outside prisons); i.e. acts which are politically conceived; e.g. Sam Melville.

4. Many thousands of originally non-political people, victims of class, racial and national oppression. "Arrested for an assortment of alleged crimes and lacking adequate legal or political redress, they are imprisoned for long years in violation of fundamental civil and human rights".

5. There are many who in the course of their imprisonment begin to develop a political consciousness; e.g. George Jackson. Such people, the Panthers argued, are victims of politically-inspired actions against them by the prison administration" and parole boards.

The Black Panthers, therefore, fused together many of the disparate elements which have led to the "politicisation" of prisoners, outlined in Section 1.

(33) Eldridge Cleaver (1969) op. cit. p.203
(34) Bettina Aptheker, "Social Functions of the Prisons in the USA", in Angela Davis, "If They Come In The Morning" (London: Orbach and Chambers, 1971) p.50-51
Of particular consequence have been their efforts to unite all prisoners on class rather than racial lines: a success to be seen on Unity Day in 1968 at San Quentin. But not only did they identify the repressive nature of the American political system as a whole, locating the prison as but one mechanism of formal control, the Panthers attempted to challenge that structure directly. Their image was one of aggression. Unlike the Muslims who urged some co-operation with the penal authorities, the Panthers openly defied the visible agencies of repression by their uniform and the carrying of guns. Like the Muslims they redefined black as "beautiful", giving a new dignity to the Black American. Their overt hostility to the police was greatly admired and they used it to illustrate the coercive nature of the capitalist system. They argued that when Blacks have armed in self-defense, the government distorts and twists the reality to render it synonymous with criminal aggression. But when policemen are clearly indulging in acts of criminal aggression, officially they are merely defending themselves through "justifiable assault" or "justifiable homicide". The brutality of the police and National Guard in response to their activities merely validated the essential 'truth' of their philosophy. The close contact which so many Panthers had with penal institutions meant that, for the first time, radical activity was seen to be emerging from the prisons; prisoners were viewed as being in the "vanguard" of the wider struggles.

From the viewpoint of the prisoners' "politicalisation", therefore, the Black Panther Party was crucial. It not only continued the positive contribution of the Muslims outlined above, but it provided a host of black leaders, who took on a significance which transcended the prison walls. The Panthers provided a strong mass movement on the outside for the struggle inside, and gave a new identity and dignity to the black convict. Not only was he re-defined as victim; but the inmate found himself in the (illusory) position of "aggressor", able to strike out
against his oppressors. In their speeches and writings, the Party leaders forged strong connections between the situation of the imprisoned and that of the Third World nations. But, most important of all, developing beyond the Nation of Islam, the Panthers emphasised the CLASS basis of imprisonment in an attempt to unite all prisoners, regardless of colour, into a newly "politicalised" prisoners movement.

3. THE LEGAL STRUGGLE

Prisoners never have been without any legal rights. Aside from any constitutional or statutory requirements, the courts have held that prison authorities have an obligation to ensure that all prisoners are kept free from harm, as well as to provide the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, clothing, and medical care. Thus, the authorities have a duty to maintain the minimal conditions necessary to sustain life and health. However, the important word to note is "minimal". For example, in 1963, an inmate at Utah State Prison complained about the quality and quantity of food provided in the prison's maximum security wing. He received two small meals a day; the service was unsanitary and the food cold. More importantly, the prisoner argued that he always felt hunger pangs. The court relied on the testimony of the prison doctor who pointed out that there had been no reported cases of malnutrition at the prison in over five years, and that hunger pangs were necessarily "subjective".\(^{35}\) The case was accordingly dismissed. This is a clear illustration of how minimal a prisoners' rights are. On top of this, one should also recall the protracted period invariably required in the first place to accept the mere existence of a right, then to give it substance and scope and finally to implement it. However, as Fred Cohen has pointed out, "an educational process has occurred. When the opinions written in some of the more recent cases are compared with opinions

\(^{35}\) Fred Cohen, "The Discovery of Prison Reform" in 'Buffalo Law Review, vol. 21, no. 3 (Spring 1972), p. 860-1
written only a few years ago, the difference in technique, content and principle is startling." (36)

Until recently, the courts have traditionally supported the correctional administrators' claims to autonomy by adopting a policy of judicial abstention, known as the "hands-off doctrine". This reluctance to interfere in internal prison affairs appears to be based on three distinct rationales: the theory of the separation of powers; the lack of judicial expertise in penology; and the fear that intervention by the courts will subvert prison discipline. Increasingly, these arguments have been undermined. For example, the courts have never permitted the separation-of-powers doctrine to preclude judicial review of legislatively delegated authority. Under pressure from "exposés" of prison conditions and prisoners' protests, and of decisions taken in the fields of public welfare, mental health, student rights, and juvenile justice, the courts have begun to scrutinize the standards and procedures used by penal administrators. Similarly, some judges have acknowledged that the need for discipline may provide a too-ready excuse for denying prisoners' rights.

According to one observer, recent prison litigation has encompassed three main areas:

1. Access to the courts, including communication with legal counsel and access to legal materials;
2. Religious freedom; and
3. the proscription of cruel and unusual punishments. (37)

That these are the three main areas of the more successful actions in the courts is testimony to the alteration of the prisoners' status. Prior to the late 1950's, it can be justifiably argued that the legal status of the prisoner was scarcely recognizable as the equivalent of human status. Whilst avoiding any excessive claims for the recent activity, the enlargement of prisoner status is not insignificant. (36) Fred Cohen (1972) op. cit. p.861
(37) Fred Cohen (1972) op. cit. p.860-5
example, now have the right of access to courts and thus a jural identity. The most important development of the past twenty years activity in the legal battle for prison reform has been the increased receptivity of the courts to prisoners' pleas. At its extreme, this receptivity has led to a whole state prison system being declared unconstitutional. \(\text{Holt vs. Sarver:} \) "Conditions in Arkansas were so debased that the federal district judge found that a sentence of imprisonment amounted to banishment from civilized society to a world where human life and the most elemental of human decencies ceased to exist."\(^{[38]}\) However, one must not exaggerate these developments: to accord the prisoner the absolute right to freedom of religious belief is as pious a proposition as the solemn statement that we all have this freedom. But what matters is the way in which those beliefs may be exercised, particularly if they deviate from the conventional, as the long legal struggle of the Black Muslims, already noticed, testified.

It has been claimed that a new era of prisoners' rights litigation has emerged during the past four years. As one observer has put it:

"The issues are changing, although they are logically connected to the claims of the prior eras, and the clients are changing - they are scarcely recognizable."\(^{[39]}\)

Many writers have remarked on the dramatic changes in the self-image of prisoners. Where in the '50's and '60's legal counsel were questioned almost solely about defects in the conviction, and prison conditions, now the discussion has shifted to a focus on RIGHTS - the right to a fair parole hearing; the right to gain access to information about the prisons; the right to privacy; the right to political organization; the right to be free of physical brutality as well as from psychic terror; the right to procedural fairness; the right to "read anything I please" and "to be free of The Man." The prisoner has realized that the two most important sources of relief are primarily prisoners' revolt and then successful litigation.

\(^{[38]}\) Fred Cohen (1972) op. cit. p.863

\(^{[39]}\) Fred Cohen (1972) op. cit. p.864
From the point of view of the prisoners struggle, the courts have revealed themselves as the only faintly responsive organ of government, and have inevitably become the target for massive activity on the part of prisoners and their lawyers. Lawyers, in particular, originally argued that individual relief and changes in the system on the basis of rights would somehow dent the total control exercised by prison officials. There have been a number of advances, particularly in the raising of the level of consciousness amongst the inmate population explicitly, in the development of jailhouse lawyers and the re-definition of the 'criminal' as victim. Moe Commancho, President of the California Correctional Officers' Association, argued in testimony before a Congressional Subcommittee that prison violence is an outgrowth of revolutionary recruitment and agitation most commonly occurring through inmate contact with lawyers.

Whilst one may have doubts about the validity of this viewpoint, the legal struggle has promoted much publicity about the penal process. Professor Fry, considering the part to be played by litigation in prison reform, recently wrote:

"Certainly the well wrought opinions of thoughtful judges in some recent prisoners' rights cases have through media dissemination heightened the public concern over prison conditions. Just as civil rights litigation served in the early sixties to dramatize and personalize discrimination (litigation, by focusing on a single plaintiff's plight, can be more stunning than any impersonal, composite analysis), prison cases may have this value even when the direct reforms achieved by a plaintiff's verdict is negligible."(40)

One has only to look at the publicity surrounding the revelations about the Arkansas prison system in Holt vs. Sarver to validate this viewpoint.

There have been important gains through the legal battles fought. We have already noted the changed status of the prisoner, and his image of being victimised. One of the most crucial "victories" has concerned the first amendment right to freedom of speech, which, though previously submerged in dealing with access to the courts, has come to have a new role.

Judicial disapproval of censorship of mail (the first amendment encompasses

the right of the prisoner to communicate with the outside world, and the right of those on the outside to communicate with those on the inside) has reached the point, where one court held that outgoing mail to legal and public officials cannot be opened or delayed whilst incoming mail from the same people can only be checked for contraband in the presence of an inmate. (One should note how prison authorities have either ignored or got round this ruling). Similar decisions and the publicity surrounding them have succeeded in piercing the isolated world of the prison and its captives. As Fred Cohen has suggested:

"The litigation efforts to date deserve credit for forming a small opening in a system sorely in need of ventilation. The needling and nagging of prisoners' rights lawyers has provided inmates with an arsenal of verbal symbols that may well make it easier for a man to do time" (41)

However, the objectives of prisoners' rights litigation largely remain unrealized, and the struggle is continuing. The prison community has rightly been viewed as a lawless enterprise "lacking in substantive and procedural safeguards". What lawyers are able to do is still very much a function of what the courts are willing to do and to allow the lawyers to do. One needs to remind oneself constantly when discussing the "legal" point of the prisoners' struggle of the inherent limitations on the judiciary's willingness and ability to control practices at the operational level. As Greenberg and Stender have pointed out, the lack of substantive change following decisions won in favour of prisoners was due to many interrelated factors including the ability of prison administrators to engage, at public expense, in dilatory appeals to avoid instituting court-ordered changes; the reluctance of the courts to enforce detailed orders or to look into the same practice under a different label, for example punitive or disciplinary segregation now called "administrative segregation"; and the massive potential for arbitrariness inherent in the penal system which permits officials to

(41) Fred Cohen (1972) op. cit. p.886
simply overlook or ignore court orders. Thus, to quote but one example from many, the judicial victory in 'Jordan vs. Fitzharris' (a decision about solitary confinement) the authorities in California found a way around the ruling. Similarly, the treatment of the Black Muslims is another example of prison intransigence in the face of court orders. Although the religious rights of the Muslims were upheld in several courts, pork continued to be served frequently to them inside and may were segregated or denied parole in reprisal for their religious affiliation and activities. It is no accident that the most crucial question raised by lawyers at a 1971 Prisoners' Rights Conference "How does one get a court decision implemented?" remained unanswered.

The system's inflexibility in the face of efforts to generate change by "working within the system" has led to new techniques of protest being used in the prisons, imported from 'outside' organisations and movements. Such new methods derive from a deep and empirically well-founded belief that the old ones have had only very limited utility. Samuel Jordan has taken the question beyond reform through litigation and raised the issue of "reform" itself. He has pointed out that the goal of the reformers, whatever their motivation, is to make prisons work. The positive results of the courts activity has been to create the possibility and appearance of rights rather than actual rights. Decisions, in all aspects of what has been called the "Due Process Revolution" of the Warren Court, turn out to be flabby conceptually and imperfect operationally. Thus, the complexities and safeguards of search and seizure law are "ameliorated" by finding apartment doors open and contraband in plain view, etc. On another level, these attacks on the police and agencies of social control have ironically resulted in a massive increase in political and economic support for them.

Whilst not wishing to totally undermine the important steps made in the legal struggle, its limitations are painfully obvious: thousands of writs later, prisons are still effectively screened from public visibility.

and accountability, and the predictable abuses continue to take place. Newer, more radical, more organised, political actions against the coercive system have emerged, to which the legal battle is largely subordinated.
4. THE TREATMENT IDEOLOGY:

We have already pointed out that it is only because of existing prison conditions that the 'outside' radical influences discussed above have had such an impact inside American penal institutions. Whilst it is indeed questionable how many dedicated revolutionaries there are inside United States prisons, there can be no doubt that many thousands of "a-political" and highly reactionary inmates have supported the militant politicized struggle of the past six years. When discussing the radicalizing influences of the Black Panther Party, for instance, we noted how the Panthers increased political understanding by formulating descriptions of black/white relations, past and present, and policies for altering these relationships that the Black lower-class found meaningful. It is important to recognize that so many black prisoners were receptive to the Panthers' philosophy because of the brutalizing conditions in which they were forced to exist inside. Such conditions, have not substantially improved during the past century, but they have been altered significantly, primarily as a consequence of the increasing hold which the ideology of 'treatment' has come to have in the penal setting. This section will begin by discussing the definitional components of 'treatment' and its practical implementation at Soledad Prison in California, and move on to look at particular aspects of the ideology and their relationship to prison conditions. To facilitate an understanding of the importance of the 'treatment model', we should note at the outset that the primary aim of the San Francisco Prisoners' Union is the abolition of indeterminate sentences - one of the most pernicious consequences of the treatment ideology.

Whilst acknowledging the importance of treatment, we should avoid trying to present "treatment" and "punishment" (the "traditional" purpose of imprisonment) as necessarily incompatible aims. One of the most publicized maxims of the penal reformist lobby of recent years has been that you can't treat a person and train him for freedom in a spirit of
captivity. However, this view of treatment and punishment as not only conceptually distinct, but also incompatible is false and grossly misleading. Rather "treatment" and "punishment" are very much on the same continuum of social control. Historically, both developed from the same epistemological (if not logical) sources – for example both are to be found in utilitarian philosophies. Thus, one could argue that aversion therapy, for example, is perhaps the 'perfect' punishment according to Benthamite criteria:

(a) it is certain; (b) it is proximate; (c) it is analogous to the offence; and (d) it anticipates illegal acts by introducing aversive stimuli in the 'initial stages' of the prohibited behaviour, thereby functioning as a preventive (deterrent) agent.

The increasing importance of the treatment ideology has witnessed the return to "personal defects" explanations of deviant activity. There has been a significant rise in the attempts to show the genetic basis of personality, schizophrenia, 'delinquency-proneness' and so on during the past twenty-five years. What is new, however, is that, unlike in Lambroso's heyday, there are numerous sophisticated technological developments in biochemical, genetic, and neurological analysis which lend a distinct precision and authority to such theories. What this return to pathological explanations of deviancy and influence of the treatment ideology implies becomes immediately apparent:

(a) Attributions of deviant behaviour to some personal "defect" which can be psychological, neurological or biological;

(b) increasing need to formulated individualised "remedies" or "cures" on the basis of some sort of medical diagnosis, as the most powerful mode of controlling deviant behaviour;

(c) an increasing emphasis upon prevention measures which ANTICIPATE rather than REACT to overt deviant acts (and the acts are subsequently viewed as merely symptomatic of some underlying disease);
(d) the further legitimation of the claims of those 'treating' that their work is "in the individual's best interests".

The consequences of these changes can be clearly seen in the penal institutions throughout the country, but particularly at California Model Prison, Soledad, the showpiece of liberal reformists in the 1940's but which was prominent in the political struggles of the prisoners' movement of the late-1960's and early 1970's. The Soledad Brothers, for instance, provided a major catalyst for the organising of support both within and outside prisons.

"In the center of the Salinas valley, just south of John Steinbeck's birthplace, unobtrusive among the leafy alfalfa and stalks of California corn, squats Soledad Prison, three stories of drab, beige brick and mortar, whose innermost walls - the maximum security Adjustment Center - are cut off from the farmlands outside by a series of nine lock-and-key, electronically-controlled doors and gates." (43)

Carefully conceived, meticulously planned, and precisely organised the prison was built in the late 1940's and early 1950's by a state appropriation of ten and a half million dollars. It was the showpiece of the liberal Earl Warren, who prior to his appointment as Governor had been a crusading district attorney and state attorney general. In 1942, on election, he ordered a thorough but secret investigation of California's prisons, and was shocked, by the detailed accounts of depravity, sadism and squalor, into attempting a complete reorganisation of the states' penal system. Richard McGee, who had won liberal and press acclaim for his organisation of Riker's Island penitentiary in New York City, was named as director of the California Department of Correction and head of the parole board. He undertook to combat what he simplistically termed the "twin evils" of imprisonment: idleness and overcrowding. To combat the former at Folsom, for example, McGee established educational programmes, opened vocational training shops, and launched some very basic programmes in "counselling and psychiatric rehabilitation". 'Rehabilitation' became the watchword, and was used to justify the introduction of the indeterminate sentence, under which a prisoner could be held indefinitely.

(43) Min S. Yee (1973) op. cit. p.1
until he proved that he had "rehabilitated" himself. With the new emphasis, came the terminology and 'screws' became "correctional officers". Overcrowding proved only marginally more problematic to McGee. When he came to office there were 5,711 'inmates'; shortly after he left, there were 28,795 people behind bars and California had one of the largest prison populations in the world. Soledad was built to facilitate this achievement by housing 1,500 prisoners.

The CDC planners were at pains to outline their penal philosophy at the opening of the new prison in 1951:

"The policy of the California State Board of Prison Directors is based upon the concept that there can be no regeneration except in freedom. Rehabilitation, therefore, must come from within the individual, and not through coercion. With this principle in mind, the rehabilitation program of the State Board of Prison Directors contemplates not only important educational and vocational factors, but also, by and through classification and segregation, a gradual release from custodial restraint, and corresponding increase in personal responsibility and freedom of choice". (44)

The Soledad experience, they declared, will be a "community-living approach", whereby, "inmates and staff work together and discuss problems and responsibilities at regular meetings." Prisoners were to be housed in private cells; games would be available, a radio system with ear-phone plug-in units in each cell was installed; a gymnasium with plenty of sports equipment for use during the day, would be used for first-run movies at night. Surrounded by flower-beds and meandering paths, visitors were impressed with Soledad's cleanliness, its lawns, the landscape of alfalfa, corn and mountains. As the Spanish name affirmed it was a place of solitude. When the visitors left, prisoners went to work producing institutional clothing, seeding new field crops, slaughtering pigs and selling surplus milk and dairy products to a nearby mental institution, the Agnew State Hospital.

Not a lot has changed in Soledad's operation. The hog ranch furnishes the prison about six tons of pork a month; sixteen tons of alfalfa and corn are produced annually; drab grey and beige desks are shipped to the state

(44) Min S. Yee (1973) op. cit. p.7
capital at Sacramento, where they are used by government offices; twelve million vehicles bear twenty four million license plates and renewal stickers produced at Soledad; and hundreds of rolls of toilet paper are pulled from paper convertors every hour.

But in other ways, Soledad has changed dramatically. The community-style of life envisaged never materialised. Rather than turning out "good and honest citizens" ready to take-up their rightful place in society, Soledad produced "Souls on Ice" and George Jackson. Despite the Montgomery bus crusade, the Mississippi civil rights murders, the black ghetto riots of Watts, Harlem, San Francisco and Oakland, the liberals continued to believe 'colour' was unimportant and merely swore further allegiance to the rehabilitative machinery of the reformist dream. But with first the civil rights movement then the militant Black Power groups clamouring at the walls, reaction from outside became increasingly more vociferous and organised.

In their "Report on Crime and Punishment in America" ("Struggle for Justice") the working group appointed by the American Friends Services Committee have accurately pinpointed the essential dilemma of the liberals:

"We submit that the basic evils of imprisonment are that it denies autonomy, degrades dignity, impairs or destroys self-reliance, inculcates authoritarian values, minimises the likelihood of beneficial interaction with one's peers, fractures family ties, destroys the family's economic stability, and prejudices the prisoners' future prospects for any improvement in his economic and social status. It does all of these things, WHETHER or NOT the buildings are antiseptic or dirty, the aroma that of fresh bread or stale urine, the sleeping accommodation a plank or inner-sprung mattresses, or the interaction of the inmates takes place in cells and corridors ('idleness') or in the structural setting of a particular time and place ('group therapy'"

The advent of the treatment techniques within specific social control contexts has led to the increasing authority of technocratic decisions about the management of deviant behaviour, and a corresponding increase in the remoteness of such decisions from both public and legal investigation and control. Such increased legitimacy is, however, founded upon a 'circular' argument: behaviour is noted and ruled unacceptable; this is

then viewed as symptomatic of underlying disease (this assumes illness); the symptoms are then 'treated'; the symptoms disappear, thus proving the original illness thesis. What is more, in a different but related context, the discovery and development of tranquillizers, for example, has not signified an understanding of personal anxiety and aggression any more than the application of C.S. gas signifies an understanding of mass protest. It should be stressed that the "operational effectiveness" of the 'treatment' ideology is in no way an indication of its scientific rigour.

It is vital to recognise, therefore, that although the policy of confining people in order to treat them has yet to prove itself, it has nonetheless come to have an extraordinary hold on penal policy despite this patently obvious and gross practical failure. We have already noted that 'punishment' and 'treatment', far from being incompatible, are on the same continuum of social control. The hold that treatment has come to have may then be attributed to the covert functions that the treatment ideology serves. It also enables the liberals to relieve their guilt feelings about punishing people. It has facilitated the development of a massive array of welfare bureaucracies and people both inside and outside the penal institutions, enabling these prison employees to feel that they are doing something useful by "helping" their clients. Furthermore, the treatment ideology serves to discredit prisoners by attempting to convince them and the rest of the community that people are incarcerated because of some personal ailment or defect rather than to fulfill a structural need. As we saw at Soledad, this ideology has brought about a whole new terminology which helps to disguise some of the more excessive and less palatable functions of our prison system.

Three trends are significant when surveying the impact of "treatment". First, the length of sentences has increased steadily; from 1959 to 1969 the median time served rose from twenty-four to thirty-six months in California. Secondly, the number of people incarcerated per 100,000 has continued to
rise. In California, for example, it has risen from 65 in 1944 to 145 in 1965. As the American Friends Services Committee observed:

"During a period when the treatment ideal was maximised, when vocational training programs, group and individual therapy programs, milieu therapy, and many other rehabilitative experiments were introduced, more than twice as many persons served twice as much time." (46)

Thirdly, as already suggested there is no evidence to show that persons staying longer in these programmes in a rehabilitation-oriented institution are helped any more than the person serving a shorter time in a punitively-oriented prison. One indicator of this is the consistency of recidivist rates, which, in California, reveal that over 40 per cent of parolees return to prison within two to three years of release.

One of the most important consequences of the treatment model has been the increased use of the indeterminate sentence, whereby the legislation sets a minimum and maximum term for each offence within a broad category (e.g. in California, burglary, second degree, carries a sentence of one to fifteen years; rape, one to fifty; robbery, five years to life; sale of cannabis, five years to life). The judge, instead of sentencing the defendant to a specific number of years, simply recommends him to the prison "for the term prescribed by the law". Thereafter, the prisoner is under the complete jurisdiction of the parole board which will consider his case, fix an individualised term for him based on his prison record, and set a date for his release on parole. The idea is to remove the sentencing power from a possibly prejudiced and vindictive trial judge and place it in the hands of skilled experts in human behaviour. Prisoners make an annual appearance before the Adult Authority (parole board) who read a man's record - including not only details of his criminal record and his future plans, but also the results of tests, psychiatric and psychological evaluations, work and disciplinary reports, and probation and arresting officer reports. Hearings last an

(46) American Friends Service Committee (1971) op. cit. p.91
average of fourteen minutes, and the prisoners' date of release is either fixed or denied. (47)

There are several important points to notice. First, extraordinary power is lodged in the Adult Authority. Not only has it the final determination of sentence, it can rescind this determination, return to prison, and again refix the inmate's sentence. None of these powers and none of the procedures involved can be checked by judicial review. Secondly, the idea of the indeterminate sentence is based on the belief that the date of release should be fixed by "experts" in the behavioural sciences. We have already cast doubts as to whether this knowledge actually exists, but what is also interesting is that few board members have any such background at all. In 1970, six of the nine members of the Adult Authority in California had police work backgrounds.

There is considerable evidence (mainly in the form of testimony from prisoners and ex-prisoners) that indefinite sentences are "one of the most painful aspects of prison life. The American Friends Services Committee cite the following opinion of a woman incarcerated at Frontera, California:

"The total waste of time spent while here and the constant mental torture of never really knowing how long you'll be here. The indeterminate sentence structure gives you no peace of mind and absolutely nothing to work for.

The total futility of this time is the most maddening thing to bear. You realize nothing but frustration from the beginning to the end of your confinement. The situation is compounded by the "never-knowing" system of the indeterminate sentencing law". (48)

There is ample evidence that indeterminacy has escalated the prisoners' sense of injustice, and many have reacted strongly in support of the prisoners' movement demands. As legal expertise amongst them has grown there has been a tendency to view the treatment procedures based on rehabilitation as a covert way of stripping them of constitutional rights. As the prison protests of the past few years indicate this sense of injustice is contagious and pervasive, and its effects profound.

(48) American Friends Service Committee (1971) op. cit. p.94
SECTION 3: DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICA'S PRISONERS' UNIONS

In the last section we examined a number of the forces which have differentially influenced the politicisation of the prison populace and the growth of a prisoners' movement. One crucial dimension of this influence was the inmate's changing view of his position from offender to offended and victim. This 'reversal' of roles has been further emphasised by two related developments: firstly, the emergence of criminological theory which argued that deviance is not a quality inherent in any behaviour or person but rests on society's reaction to certain types of rule-breaking; thus, the same action is not defined in the same way by all societies; and secondly, the increasing acknowledgement that not all persons breaking the rules are officially defined and classified as deviants; the belief that "everyone is a criminal" is widely held amongst prisoners, and, in the sense of the 'criminal' as law-breaker, has been authenticated by research in that field. Statistical support for this premise can be found for instance in the President's Commission report, "The Challenge of Crime In A Free Society": "One Commission survey of 10,000 households indicates 91 percent of all Americans have violated laws that could have subjected them to a term of imprisonment at one time in their lives."

This section will move on to discuss the emergence of prisoners' "unions" as a manifestation of the trend towards "politicisation". We shall note that such attempts to organise have taken two distinct forms. Those which attempt to unite inmates within a particular institution; with little or no outside contact; and those which have attempted to unite prisoners' across institutions, and across the walls, i.e. with strong, cohesive and active help and co-operation. As an example of the first, we shall look at Green Haven Prison in New York State, noting that the union's demands and activities are oriented solely towards improving conditions within that place. As an example of the second, we shall trace the emergence of a prisoners' union in California, and its subsequent split into two distinct groups, the United Prisoners' Union and the San
It should be emphasised at the outset that these represent only a small part of the many efforts to organise prisoners and ex-prisoners which have developed in the past decade or so. Such groups as the "Fortune Society" in New York, for example, represent a different type of organisation. The purposes of the Fortune Society include:

- to create a greater public awareness of the prison system in America today,
- to help the public understand the problems and complexities confronting inmates during their incarceration and when they return to society,
- to work with released prisoners on a one-to-one basis, helping them in their adjustment to society,
- to develop community involvement with crime-prevention programs by creating alternatives for the released convict. This includes vocational, educational and social opportunities." (50)

The Fortune Society attempts to reach the public by sending teams of speakers (ex-convicts) to talk to school groups, church and civic organisations and by providing witnesses and testimony before city, state, and federal legislators. In addition, representatives are frequently heard on the media, and the group publishes a regular newsletter.

The possibility for inmate organisation within the walls, arises in part from the inevitability of some 'bargaining' between those charged with enforcing institutional regulations and those who are supposed to be regulated, for the simple reason that, as of yet, administrators rarely have sufficient resources to gain complete conformity to all the rules.

As Reich has argued,

"Taken together the scarcity of enforcement resources and the pressure of confinement result in the necessary toleration by correctional administrators and officers of constant violation of institutional rules, even if they are confined to a level considered by administrators to be neither very visible nor very serious. The manner in which the tolerance is allocated among inmates depends fundamentally upon what may be termed "bargains", often tacit and implicit, in which enforcers attempt to gain maximum conformity given their limited resources and institutional rules.... within the day to day bargaining process often the only goal sought to be achieved by the institution is short-term surface order - the semblance that everything is running smoothly with no official (or public) cause for alarm." (50)
The introduction of "rehabilitative" and educational programmes has dramatically increased the capacity of the correctional officer to make a range of decisions directly affecting the inmate's life, other than brute force. The Californian correctional administrator, for example, now has an impressive array of weapons to gain conformity by threat, either implicit or explicit: he can offer schooling, jobs, training courses; he can grant furloughs, work release, school release, weekend release; he has power over assignments and transfers; most importantly he can revoke "good time" and has command over the indeterminate sentence.

As we have already noted, recent years have seen a growing consciousness amongst prisoners of the disparity between such arrangements by "bargaining" and "fair treatment". We have seen that the courts have slowly emerged from behind the "hands off" doctrine, and established some "basic rights" for prisoners. The court campaigns and assertion of rights has in part, led to demands for the "formalisation" of the bargaining process between the institution and the inmates. Attempts have been made within certain penal institutions to legitimise the collective organisation of inmates and the collection of inmate representatives. As already seen, the concept of inmate self-government is not new. During the early years of the Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia, beginning around 1793, prisoners established most rules for the internal organization of the prison. Punishment for rule violations was "exclusion from the society of fellow prisoners" which was found to be "sufficient" to maintain order. By 1888, the Michigan Penitentiary had pioneered a "Mutual Aid League" in which inmates drew up the constitution, had regular meetings and decided upon some prison rules. But it was not until 1927, with the inauguration of the "Norfolk Plan" at the Norfolk (Massachusetts) Prison that the principle of genuine collaboration or joint responsibility for prison management between prisoners and staff first found full expression.
The recognition of basic rights and the bargaining potential together with the recent prison protests have led to demands to allow inmates to form and participate in labour unions for the purpose of bargaining with prison administrators on work-related issues. Such demands are further evidence of the increased sophistication of the prisoners' protests. A "union" has been legally defined as follows:

"In a broad sense, it symbolizes an organisation composed of a body of persons united in the pursuit of a common cause and enterprise. Generally a labor union is a combination of wage earners organized for their mutual betterment, protection, and advancement."

American courts have already indicated that prisoners may have a constitutionally protected right to participate in some form of labour organization, and if the right can be exercised "to a limited extent without creating serious threats to the security or the order of the institution an absolute ban on such limited exercise may amount to unconstitutional deprivation." (51)

Does the prisoner have the right to unionize? In theory, "a prisoner retains all the rights of an ordinary citizen except those expressly or by necessary implication, taken from him by law". Comeau has consequently argued that the presence or absence of the 'right' to unionize turns on both the possession of this right by the ordinary citizen and the constitutional, statutory and practical considerations which might specifically or by necessary implication withdraw this right from the inmate. (And the right of the citizen to form and participate in unions is well established). But it is far from clear whether the inmate has "lost" this right. Although New York law, for example, does not specifically withdraw the unionization right from inmates, the Department of Correctional Services has revealed itself unfavourable to inmate unions.

According to a spokesman:

(51) Paul Comeau, "Labour Unions for Inmates: An Analysis of a Recent Proposal for the Organisation of Inmate Labour", in 'Buffalo Law Review' vol.21 no.3 (Spring 1972) p.965
"The relationship of the inmates to the Department of Correctional Services is not that of an employer-employee.... The Department of Correctional Services will not permit nor recognise any inmate labor organization within the Department. Such labor organization is contrary to the best interests of the Department and the general welfare of the inmate population." (52)

In one of the few surveys conducted of state corrections departments, to determine their attitudes to inmate unionization and other forms of bargaining, Comeau found an unwillingness to accept unions at the present time, in all states. (52) Paul Comeau (1972) op. cit. p.966-7

The importance of the "right" to unionize cannot be over-estimated, since it is a composite of the more fundamental freedoms of speech, press, peacable assembly, and petition for the redress of grievance. As we have already seen, the courts have shown themselves unwilling to endorse positively these rights for the prisoner, arguing that such rights are not absolute but subject to restriction, for example, "if a compelling state interest centering about prison security, or a clear and present danger of breach of prison disciplines, or the threat of some substantial interference with orderly institutional administration "exists". (52)

1. THE UNION AT GREEN HAVEN

Thus, although it is clear that inmates do not have an administratively, legislatively or judicially recognized right to unionize, prisoners have begun to, nonetheless, organise themselves, in a more eclectic form than along the traditional informal racial or political lines. During the summer of 1971, the first prisoners labour union in the United States was found at Green Haven Correctional Facility, fifty miles from New York City. From the outset, the leadership of this incipient union sought legal assistance from the Prisoners' Rights Project of the Legal Aid Society. After much research and discussion, the prisoners were advised to seek recognition as a 'public employee's union' under New York's "Taylor's Law" (53) see Mark Dowie, "Unionising Prison Labour", in 'Social Policy', July/August 1973 p.57-60

(52) Paul Comeau (1972) op. cit. p.966-7
(53) see Mark Dowie, "Unionising Prison Labour", in 'Social Policy', July/August 1973 p.57-60
since the prisoners worked for and were paid by the State, and the Department of Correctional Services sold the product of these labours to other public institutions for a profit. An important court decision was won when Judith Tenney held that the prisoners shall be allowed to communicate with the Prisoners' Rights Project as a collective and not merely on an individual basis. With the assistance of the lawyers, a union constitution was drafted, the P.R.P. was formally retained as counsel, and authorization cards began circulating among the prisoners at Green Haven.

It is important to note that all recruitment was carried on exclusively by the prisoners. After simply ignoring the union (presumably in the hope that it would disappear), the prison administration began to harass the organizational efforts, although following the Attica rebellion of September 1971, the more overt forms of harassment noticeably declined. By the following February, over one thousand inmates out of a population of eighteen hundred, had signed authorization cards for union membership. In their struggle for recognition as a "public employees union", the emerging group, through their counsel, sought the support of an outside union. After much negotiation, the executive committee of District 65, Distributive Workers of America, approved in principle affiliation with the Prisoners' Labour Union - if the prisoners desired it. By so doing, the union has committed itself to assisting the prisoners with the organization and management of their union. For their part, the prisoners union chose to wait before affiliating until District 65 has demonstrated "a sincere desire to work with and support their efforts," for example, by actively assisting prisoners on release with job finding and skill training. At the same time, community support for the prisoners union is evidenced by the formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee under the auspices of the Urban Coalition in New York.

At the beginning of February 1972, a press conference was held by members of the Advisory Committee to announce publicly the formation of the
Prisoners' Labour Union at Green Haven. On the same day, the Union itself demanded recognition by the Department of Correctional services as exclusive bargaining agent for all prisoners at Green Haven: this demand was immediately declined. The union have thus filed a petition for certification before the New York State Public Employment Relations Board. (54)

Despite harassment and long delays awaiting legal discussions, the Union movement spread to at least two other penal institutions in New York State, Wallkill Prison and Bedford Hills (Women's) Correctional Facility. The publicly stated objectives of the union at Wallkill are:

I. To improve the conditions of union members;

II. To equalize to the fullest extent possible the rights, privileges and protections of prison labor with those of free labor everywhere;

III. To advance the economic, political, social, and cultural interests of the prisoners at Wallkill;

IV. To aid in the adoption of laws and secure compliance with existing laws - local, national and international - for the economic, political and social welfare of all prisoners."

The importance of these unions as an example of collective organisation amongst prisoners is that they provide a possible model and strategy for the establishment of inmate unions throughout the country (and, possibly in the U.K.). The pattern of future struggle might therefore be as follows:

I. Prisoners will organise a union in the conventional trade union fashion: i.e. with signed authorisation cards;

II. The cards will then be placed in the hands of the union's counsel on the outside who will work to legitimise the union's efforts to negotiate with the prison authorities (their employers);

III. The employers will resist such efforts, calling the union "unrepresentative", "illegal", "subversive of good order", etc. and harass individuals involved on the inside by segregation, transfer and even physical violence;

IV. Attempts will be made to secure the affiliation of the major union to support the prisoners both in their collective struggle for recognition, and individually on release;

V. Court rulings or future legislation will be vigorously campaigned for, enjoining the employer to negotiate.

(54) see C. Ronald Huff, "Unionisation Behind Walls", in 'Criminology', vol.12, no.2 (August 1974), which refers to Greenhaven, but is specifically about the Ohio Prisons Union, and has been written up as a PhD thesis (1974)
2. THE UNION AT MONROE PRISON:

The Washington State Prisoners Labor Union has emerged from the inmate councils permitted by the "liberal" penal administration, as a direct consequence of prisoners' recognising the limitations of such councils, seeking new strategies and developing an "outside" "contact" organisation. During Washington States' recent prison reform move, "Resident Governing Councils" were established at each penal institution. Originally, they were viewed by the prisoners and the administration as a progressive programme of "self-government". However, it quickly became apparent that the R.G.C.'s power derived from the prison administration and lacked roots in any kind of organized prison population. To indicate their understanding of their basic powerlessness, the prisoners changed the name of the R.G.C.'s to "Prisoners' Reform Council", thereby eliminating the misleading implication of self-government. It became obvious that a change in name in no way altered the substance of the councils. About a year before the R.G.C.'s were established, a "union" had been started at Monroe by a small group of prisoners who were primarily engaged in legal and administrative work on the foundation of a union. The R.G.C. members, on recognition of their lack of power, issued a press statement recognising the Washington State Prisoners' Union as the sole bargaining agent of the prisoners. The union quickly came to have the support of the majority of prisoners because it holds a broader vision of prisoners' power than the R.G.C.'s. The union represents a direct manifestation of the principle that collective organisation must be based deep within an organized prison body, and not within the prison administration. By the end of 1972, the union had authorisation cards from 85 per cent of the Monroe prison population. Within a few months of its inception, a group of community volunteers, working inside the prison, formed an organising committee outside the walls. The outside group broke itself down into four working committees - legal, industrial relations, medical and correspondence. A CoOordinating Committee of one member from each group was formed, and this
the outside support and meets weekly with its prisoner counterpart inside the prison. The union at Monroe provides an important illustration of the concept of a "prisoners voice" outside, whose aim is to establish dialogue on both sides of the prison walls. On the inside, the union exhibits an organizational structure as free as possible from the divisiveness of racism and personality cliques. The union is moving towards a more collectivised form of leadership, an executive council. Shop stewards have been elected from some of the prison's work crews. The union publishes its own paper, "GETTIN' DOWN" within the institution. Articles in the paper have provided clear insight into the political thinking behind the union:

"As prisoners we're fucked over. We all know this. We're exploited and frustrated because we've lost the power to control our own lives.

In many ways our position is similar to that of labor back at the turn of the century. The isolated working man had no rights - if he wanted to live and to feed his family, he had to take whatever the law dished out. But working people didn't stay divided for long. They united and fought for their rights. The created organisations - unions that forced the bosses to sit down across a table from them and grant their demands.

The time has come for prisoners to stand together, united and powerful, and demand our rights. The prison administrators of today are the management bosses of yesterday. As long as we're divided, race against race, clique against clique, they'd walk all over us. Its time to stop all that tired con shit, look around, and see that there's only one way to win - and that's together."

The prisoners' union at Monroe contrasts with that of Green Haven, and more closely resembles the California Prisoners' Union by being overtly political in the style and content of its demands and strategies. It seeks to take "control of our lives by organising control over the programmes and institutions that make our lives what they are." In an article aimed at the prison population, the organisers listed the type of activities that are "100 per cent stupid and absolutely bound to lose", including "burning this joint to the ground" /It's as certain as day follows night that they'll build a worse one in its place/; attacking the guards /The pig is not

(55) "Gettin' Down." The Newsletter of the Washington Prisons' Labour Union" (Undated)
the enemy.... Fucking with him is strictly low level and really dumb", dividing along racial lines "Honky, nigger, greaser, gook, Indian motherfucker... this bullshit is just too lame... Racism is the oldest routine the Man's got going for him. Time and time again he'll use it to keep us at each other's throats while he sits back without a care in the world." The organers ask, therefore, that if negotiations with the Authorities are refused or fouled up, "Don't smash it, don't burn it, don't shank it, but slow it up." The Monroe Prisoners Union leaders argued that such a 'slowdown' is flexible, "it can become less a or more intense as the situation demands,"or turn, if the prisoners find it necessary, into a total work stoppage.

The reactions of the authorities are carefully listed - isolation, transfer of identified leaders, attempts to infiltrate and subvert the organised unity by use of "grasses"; attempts to agitate and produce violence, or eventually, they will resort to locking everyone up. It is interesting to see that the inmate union leaders place greatest emphasis on 'communication' "with one another inside the joint, and with the outside world." Channels of communication through shop stewards were established and maintained.

Having thus attempted to "educate" the prison population to the forthcoming struggle, the union organisers drew up the long letter to the Prison Warden, demanding negotiations. This letter was circulated throughout the prison, and comments on it were incorporated in the final draft. This was published in a special issue of the newspaper, which detailed the ensuing campaign. The paper began by reiterating the basis on which the union had been established:

1. "That prisoners have an absolute right to a fair wage, to adequate medical treatment, to safe living and working conditions, and to decent food and housing;

2. That prisoners have an absolute right to participate fully in the planning and administration of all rehabilitation programs;

3. That prisons couldn't exist without prison labor;
4. That prisoners have the right to peacefully organise themselves into unions or any other organisation that would benefit them;

5. That prisoners have the right to bargain collectively with their captors in fair, open negotiations."

Having thus established its 'legitimacy', the Union laid out the letter to the Warden, and the types of demands to be negotiated. This document provides a clear insight into the "political" nature of the union and its organisers. It is important, as Mathiesen has shown when discussing the Scandinavian prison movement, because it details the terms of negotiation; it does not make an open-ended offer of "talks" which might easily be abused.

(56) See Appendix, A.
3. THE CALIFORNIAN PRISONERS MOVEMENT:

In the opening section, we looked at the Folsom Prisoners' Manifesto as an expression of the politicisation of prison protest. The Folsom strike was also crucial in providing the impetus for the development of an 'outside' prisoners' union. The strike activity at the institution had resulted in prison industries being shut down, and the men being locked in their cells. As the strike continued, prisoners wrote of its progress, detailing the reaction of prison officials, the morale of the prisoners, and the efforts made by prison administrators to end it. These "memoirs" have been recorded in Eve Pell (ed.) "Maximum Security". The strike was the largest and best supported strike in Californian penal history with the men holding out for three weeks. The strike was of great moment for the prisoners' struggle in three specific ways:

firstly, it was the first mass non-violent, non-rulebreaking event;
secondly, the demands, as already noted, displayed a new political sophistication, relating prison issues to the wider struggle for social change. Concomitant with this was the essential unity - particularly racial - of the strike action. As one prisoner wrote, "The strike was broken NOT because the prisoners had become disenchanted. The Collective Spirit and optimism were too real to make me believe that prisoners went to work as a result of disillusionment;"
thirdly, the strike was supported by simultaneous demonstrations OUTSIDE the prison walls, and there were several demands within the Manifesto relating to prison labour issues and calling for the right to prisoners to form labour unions.

Shortly after the strike had ended, pressure on both sides of the walls had grown strong enough for a handful of people (mostly ex-prisoners) to call a working session in January 1971 to form a prisoners' union. Over a hundred people from the Bay Area attended this meeting, at which a prisoners'
union was formed, temporary directors elected, and an initial constitution adopted. On June 11 and 12, the Californian Prisoners' Union (C.P.U.) held its first constitutional convention. The constitution was modified and a permanent board of directors elected; nine of the ten were ex-convicts. The two most critical decisions of this convention were firstly, to adopt a decision-making structure which ensured that the union be controlled by ex-prisoners, and, secondly, to acknowledge that the primary aim of the C.P.U. was to sustain itself as an OUTSIDE organisation to foster prisoners organisations inside, which would negotiate rights for all prisoners. (57)

The C.P.U. immediately published its own paper "The Anvil", "Serving the Convicted Class", and the namesake of an illicit "mimeograph" which had circulated widely inside Folsom. The second issue contained a full page editorial urging "We must unionize!" The article illustrates the heavy and intense political orientation of the C.P.U.: "In the widening class struggle in Amerika we prisoners are the lowest of the low". It continued,

"We are still being crippled in the prison sweatshops for mere pennies, we are still being psychologically tortured by the nebulous but spirit crushing reality of the indeterminate sentence law, we are still political pawns in the game of power, profit and political debts incurred by the governor and the director of corrections.... We are still struggling alone, one at a time against the concerted oppression of capitalism's department of corruption with its 12 beastile prisons, 26 slave labor camps, 7,000 bureaucrats, and 130 million dollar budget... the system, through the deprivation/ gratification game has evolved a snitch system that places men's lives in physical jeopardy over the whim and caprice of a rat! And in spite of all this, we remain unorganized and ineffective to deal with our common oppression". (58)

Short shrift was made of the "writ writers... who think the answer lies with the courts, but the courts have damned us all our lives. In fact, the courts have conspired with the millionaires and the police in seeing to it that every time we lose in the legal area... Writs is only one level of the struggle. Because, even if the courts upheld our position, who is going to enforce the law at the custody level in prison?"

In outlining arguments in support of organising, the Anvil editorial points out that "Behind this dream of a union is the twisted and broken

(57) Largely based upon Irwin and Holder, "History of the prisoners' union", in "The Outlaw" Journal of the Prisoners' Union," vol. 2 no.1 (January/February 1973) p. 1-3
(58) "The Anvil", no. 2 (undated)
bodies of literally thousands of our brothers and sisters who have been killed trying to deal with the system. "As long as we do not unionize, we can expect the same madness day after day...." But the C.P.U. are committed to "life and death in Union among the poorest, most oppressed minority, most vilified, most ripped off people on the planet! That's us. Let us cease this shucking and jiving and get down the road of revolution! Let us come gloriously together after 300 years of system induced manipulation/of sticking each other! Let us all join - you and you and you and him and me and her and you, the Californian Prisoners Union! Prisoners Unite, for what have you to lose but your chains!!! Slaves of the state, Rise up!"

The article closed:

"ALL POWER TO THE CONVICTED CLASS!!! ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!!!"

Within the first few months of its inception, the C.P.U. filed papers with the state and drew up a set of major objectives for changing the conditions of prisoners. These 3 demands, the "Bill of Rights of the Convicted Class" fell into three main categories: those concerned with

1. the abolition of the indeterminate sentence system, and all its ramifications;
2. the establishment of the workers' rights for prisoners, including the right to collectively organise and bargain; and,
3. the restoration of civil and human rights for prisoners." (59)

It was not long before a major split occurred within the Union, led by members of the San Francisco office, Willie Holder and John Irwin. Holder and Irwin, whilst recognising "the considerable progress made," highlighted many serious weaknesses within the C.P.U. There was no source of funds. The initial structure was small, and consequently spread out thinly over the entire state, with the ten members of the Board of Directors originating from many parts of the country. Meetings were hard to arrange,

(59)"The Anvil", no.2 op. cit.
...and communication difficult. There was no stable office, to serve as both a focus for, and initiator of activities required to develop and maintain the organisation.

As we shall see, Holder and Irwin criticisms were not, however, restricted to the C.P.U.'s organisation and procedures. Of perhaps greater consequence, though rarely openly discussed, were their different formulations of the desired goals and the strategies to be adopted to attain them. In the immediate future, however, they broke away from the C.P.U., announced the formation of the San Francisco Prisoners' Union, and set about rectifying the organisational weaknesses they had perceived in C.P.U. Deciding that the original organisation was "too heavy, too thinly spaced, and lacking in a solid foundation", the S.F.P.U. concentrated on creating a 'stable locale' with a set of ongoing activities related to prisoner issues which it could undertake and sustain given its limited resources. It instituted its own paper "The Outlaw", and began a transportation service for ex-convicts released from San Quentin. It spoke on prison issues to college and civic groups, to church gatherings and the media. It established and maintained an office and residence for six full-time workers, supplying their room and board, and, from time-to-time, a small personal allowance. All this was done on small donations from members and supporters in the immediate community, and from a small grant from the D.J.B. foundation. By the middle of 1974, the S.F.P.U. claimed a circulation of 22,000 for each issue of "The Outlaw" $\sqrt{8,000}$ to convicts, $4,000$ to others; an incoming mail of over one thousand letters, some one hundred referrals for cons and ex-cons, and at least a dozen speaking engagements each month. The Union was engaged in litigation on "the Adjustment Centers; 1st Amendment Rights, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Assembly, etc; Discriminatory job practices aimed at ex-convicts; and Inmate Welfare Fund". The San Francisco office had seven full-time officers, and some twenty volunteers working part-time. The Union
claimed a 'national' membership of 18,000 out of a total inmate population of 254,000, including some 3,000 members in California out of a total prison population of 22,000.

The San Francisco Prisoners' Union has drawn up a revised list of goals which differs markedly in both style and content from that of the original C.P.U. (which Holder and Irwin played an important part in formulating):

"PRISONERS' UNION GOALS:

We demand a termination of:

1. ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION
2. THE INDETERMINATE SENTENCE
3. DENIAL OF CIVIC AND HUMAN RIGHTS:
   (1) Employment without a reasonable wage;
   (2) Employment without workers' compensation or benefits;
   (3) Refixing of sentences;
   (4) Delay in sentencing;
   (5) Sentencing with irrelevant, scientifically invalid, unjust, arbitrary, or whimsical guidelines;
   (6) Revocation of parole without due process;
   (7) Brutal treatment on the part of guards and prison staff;
   (8) Racism;
   (9) Denial of basic civil rights;
   (10) Inferior, incompetent, and insufficient medical treatment;
   (11) Arbitrary, indefinite punitive segregation;
   (12) Inadequate educational and vocational programs;
   (13) Forced participation in inhumane and ineffective "treatment" programs;
   (14) Restrictions on prisoners' efforts to litigate;
   (15) Denial of full civil rights upon release."

Gone is the preamble of the C.P.U's "Bill of Rights of the Convicted Class".

(60) "The Outlaw" vol. 2, no. 2 (May/June 1973)
"We the people of the convicted class, locked in a cycle of poverty, failure, discrimination and servitude; do hereby declare, before the world, our situation to be unjust and inhuman. Basic human rights are systematically withheld from our class. We have been historically stereotyped as less than human, while in reality, we possess the same needs, ambitions and dignity indigenous to all humans. Our class has been unconstitutionally denied equal treatment under the law. We are the first to be accused and the last to be recognized." (61)

The C.P.U's Bill is set out as a series of 'Articles', each stating a 'right' and making a specific attack on the penal administration and its ideology. The S.F.P.U. represents a much broader, more generalised approach which catalogues defects in the present system. This typifies the thrust of the union's efforts aimed at making the existing system more humane, and more workable. To this end, the S.F.P.U. concentrates on prison work as a central issue about which to organise, and on presenting a "Non-Political Overt Posture":

"Again, in our experience, the overt manifestation of "radical" political leaning or the haggling over ideological differences has done as much harm to the prisoner organizing movement as any other factor. There are many very concrete changes which practically every prisoner and ex-prisoner desires and we intend to focus on these and work to create effective organisations without being bogged down in political rhetoric or political differences."

Holder and Irwin have thus been concerned to remove the prisoners' struggle from what they conceive to be the "so-called radical chic", and place it in the context of the local community's struggles. They have adopted a policy of "creating awareness" of the prison situation, and great emphasis is placed on media work and public speaking. In its early days, the S.F.P.U. helped to organise prisoners' strike action against "slave wages"; in 1974, it spoke of "acknowledging" such action and of "supporting" it, but the question of initiation from the outside was carefully avoided. The "non-violent picket-line" around the Department of Motor Vehicles in San Francisco provides a useful illustration of the S.F.P.U's "awareness" campaign.

In the summer of 1972, the Union organised a picket of the San Francisco Department of Motor Vehicles, and leafleted people who came to renew their

(61) "The Anvil", no.2 op. cit.
car registration. The 'Information sheet' handed out sought to draw public attention to the state's use of prison labour:

"If you own a car this year you will pay between $12 and $149 (depending on the model) for the licence plate or sticker to register your car.

The tag or sticker was purchased by the Department of Motor Vehicles in San Francisco from California Correctional Industries for a maximum of 21 cents.

The tag or sticker was manufactured by convicts in the state penitentiary who were paid between 2 and 16 cents per hour. [That's right, CENTS PER HOUR/]

1. *The office of Auditor General in 1968 estimated that based on sales a man who works in miscellaneous manufacturing for Correctional Industries is worth $6,102.00 per year to the department. It costs the department $3,902.00 to keep him in prison. The difference is $2,200.00 yet on the average (8 cents per hour) he is only going to earn $186.40 per year.

2. These figures based on 1968 information have changed only in an increase in price to car owners. Now there is a lot of talk about politicians and bureaucrats getting fat on convict labor. The Prisoners' Union knows that isn't true since we know that goods sold from one state agency to another is just a matter of cash flow within the state budget.

We also know that you the consumers are not being robbed as the money you spend for your tags pays for highways and highway signs. What we want to point out to you is that within the $12 to $149 you are spending for your registration there is enough to pay the labor that manufactured your plates a decent wage.

Understand that we are not asking for a handout for we are willing to pay room and board in prison. More important, we are anxious to get our families off welfare. We want to be able to send them some money every month, but after toothpaste and other necessities there isn't much left of $12.80 monthly average.

We ask that Governor Reagan not balance the state budget at the expense of the taxpayer."

It is important to note that this picket was NOT paralleled by any sort of prisoners' demonstration on the inside, although it could be argued that a work stoppage, for example, on that day, would have drawn much greater attention to the issue at stake. We can clearly see from the Scandinavian experience that such 'joint' action is far more impressive than either those on the inside, or those on the outside, "going it alone".

The S.F.P.U. has, therefore, tried to 'depoliticize' the prisoners struggle, bringing it back into the politics of representation rather than

* "Report to the Ways and Means Subcommittee, Dec.10, 1968, p.4".
confrontation. It has consistently sought recognition by the state penal authorities, even though this has seriously hampered its activities, and weakened its resolve. Most recently, it has tried to strengthen itself financially by applying for government and industrial grants. Such grant applications read like an apology for the prisoners' struggle, and seem to suggest that the organisation will harness and thus regulate such activity, thereby institutionalizing it. The S.F.P.U. has undertaken a programme of expansion, sending representatives on a tour of the U.S.A., locating and offering help to emerging prisoners organisations. This tour was seen to have three primary functions.

Firstly, the Prisoners' Union wanted to gain a "national perspective" on the activities of other groups to facilitate more intelligent future planning and co-operation. Despite its original intention to organise on and around the local community, the S.F.P.U. leaders clearly have aspirations to the eventual affiliation of unions throughout the country. To achieve this, it is necessary to have more information about the structure and context of the different emerging prisoners' organisations.

Secondly, the S.F.P.U. wanted to 'guide' emerging groups, by offering practical help and support, for example in the establishment of an "outside" office, which is regarded as essential "if only because, without one, the prison administration can suppress any inside organisation." The S.F.P.U. have tried to show how the outside office can be used as a focal point to generate resources, community support, and to facilitate communication with those inside.

The third function was to encourage uniformity of structure and purpose amongst the numerous emergent groups. Whilst accepting the need for individual responses to the specific context in which they emerged, the S.F.P.U. tried to encourage adoption of certain basic, generalised features of structure and goals.

These attempts by the S.F.P.U. to formalize, institutionalize and...

(62) "The Outlaw" vol.2 no.2 (May/June 1973) "Nationwide Unions Coming Together" p.1-3
depoliticize the prisoners' movement sharply contrast with the work of the United Prisoners' Union which largely took over the structure and role of the original C.P.U. The U.P.U. leader is "Popeye" Jackson, a black ex-prisoner whose ideology, manner, and tactics contrast with those of the increasingly subdued, white organisers of the S.F.P.U.

The U.P.U. adopted, in a slightly modified version, the Constitution of the C.P.U., announcing itself as a,

"multi-racial, non-profit mass organisation, open to all of us of the Convicted Class,.... made up of convicts locked down in maximum security inside the concentration camps under the guise of the Department of Corrections, and people on the outside who are in minimum security convicted to the system of racism, fascism, capitalism and imperialism, who dare to struggle for constructive change."

The organization proclaims a nine-article Bill of Rights, similar in style and content to that of the C.P.U. It relates the prisoners' struggle not only to other community struggles, but to the "worldwide" system of imperialism; Article ix /Section 17 proclaims:

"The Convicted Class demands an end to the draft and the involuntary servitude which it requires and the immediate termination of the War in S.E. Asia as a subtle and discriminatory form of capital punishment. It further insists upon the convening of an international tribunal to adjudicate the guilt of those who continue to perpetrate war crimes."

The U.P.U. provides a more radical critique of the penal system and its relationship to industrial capitalist society than the S.F.P.U., and its activities are more readily described as "militant". It is interesting to compare their attitudes to the Sambonese Liberation Army S.L.A. in the summer of 1974. The U.P.U. gave its wholehearted support to an organisation seen as "extremist" and "terrorist", whilst the S.F.P.U. called a press conference to formally announce its opposition to the organisation and its methods; each time reference was made to the "prisoners' union" which supported the S.L.A., the S.F.P.U. publicly disassociated itself from any such connection.

The U.P.U. is smaller and more of a "one-man band" than an organised
union, but nevertheless has refused to sacrifice its radical attack on the penal system in return for financial support to build up a stronger bureaucracy. Much of the support for the U.P.U. derives from the charisma of its main organiser, who has so far been unable to translate such 'personal' support into more substantial commitment to the goals of the union. It is difficult to ascertain with any accuracy the degree of support for the U.P.U. on the inside, but the U.P.U. regularly supports the struggle on the inside, appearing less concerned with obtaining an aura of respectability than the S.F.P.U. In sharp contrast to the S.F.P.U. the U.P.U.

has tended to engage in an "awareness" campaign designed to unmask the repressive nature of state authority. It is not concerned to provide the Department of Corrections with new, improved management tools, nor, therefore, with re-legitimating the existing system. As such, although it appears less attractive in terms of "immediate gratification" of some of the prisoners' demands it has remained true to its original methods and aims. Unlike the S.F.P.U., the U.P.U. has been concerned to link the prisoners' struggle with those of their oppressed groups, and thus to continue the radicalisation and politicisation discussed earlier. As in Britain, prison systems in America has spawned the embryonic prisoners' movements, which although still in its infancy has many lessons for the struggle in this country. Perhaps the most fundamental is that prisoners are increasingly coming to see with George Jackson that:

"The ultimate expression of law is not order - its prison. There are hundreds upon hundreds of prisons, and thousands upon thousands of laws, yet there is no social order, no social peace." (63)

(63) George Jackson, "Blood In MY Eye" (London: Johnathan Cape, 1972) p.119
Chapter 7

Conclusion
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In this discussion of the emergence of prisoners' unions, we have looked at the different types of organisations which have emerged as positive, visible manifestations of the prisoners' struggle. In concluding, we shall examine the various types of "unionization" which may provide models for future activity in the U.S.A. and in this country. Particularly in the U.S.A. we have divided these responses into three types: those which are based on the inside; those which are based on the inside, but which seek also to establish themselves on the outside; and those which are based on the outside, but seek collectivized inside support and co-operation. We have already seen that such developments have been vigorously opposed by the penal authorities, who, whilst prepared to tolerate 'inmate councils' are not prepared to countenance any organisation which threatens their total monopoly of effective power. Associate Warden Park of San Quentin testified in the House subcommittee hearings that the struggles for a prisoners' union were "mischevious nonsense". We have pointed to the crucial differences between the prisoners' unions and the officially approved inmate councils, in which the prison administrators, prison officers and inmates meet to discuss questions of "mutual interest". These councils are not given any decision-making power, and the likelihood of co-optation of the prisoners is correspondingly very high. It is in opposition to such bodies that the struggle for prisoners' unions has been directed. We have shown that particularly in the U.S.A. prisoners are increasingly aware of the political nature of their struggle, and that the
central issue at stake is POWER. The inmate councils of the 1950's and early 1960's may have been presented as a more humane approach to the 'problem' of corrections, but the focus of power rested firmly with the prison authorities, and so long as prisoners continue to lack the solidarity and autonomy of their own organisation then their 'freedoms' may easily be withdrawn by the same authorities who granted them. One of the most important lessons of the prisoners' struggle has been that prisoners must fight for RIGHTS as opposed to the prevailing system of PRIVILEGES which can be withdrawn and used as a controlling device.

It has been argued that "bargaining" between prisoners and staff is inevitable in a situation in which the officers lack the ability to exert total control over those imprisoned. Under such "informal" bargaining, a significant degree of official tolerance is given to certain prisoners who in turn promise control over certain parts of the inmate society. Such a system makes for hierarchical divisions among the prisoners, and fosters exploitation and brutality by the physically strong over the weak. Informal bargaining procedures are arbitrary and provide certain favoured prisoners with special privileges. Experience at Green Haven suggests that where such bargaining is formalised, made explicit and legitimated, those objectionable consequences of the informal system would be lessened, if not ended completely. One of the greatest obstacles to moving from informal to formal bargaining is the fear of administrators that prisoners organized collectively pose a far greater threat to institutional order and security. However, such a fear is
not necessarily well-grounded. We have seen how inmate councils have been periodically used to maintain the smooth running of the institutions, and unions in the outside labour force have experienced a marked decline in militancy and a concurrent increase in discipline and "businesslike" conduct as employer acceptance of, and co-operation with labour unions became more widespread. It does not necessarily follow that by allowing inmates to unionize one is seriously undermining the very fabric of the prison system. Recent developments in the U.S.A. indicate that collective bargaining between inmates and administrators can be an extremely effective method of correcting institutional problems and averting disorders. The Center for Correctional Justice, in the District of Columbia, for example, has been involving prisoners in the settlement of disputes and grievance. It should be stressed that the strategy of the Center is to "gradually increase the privileges granted to the prisoners as they show an increasing willingness to accept greater responsibility. Thus, as the threat to security or order is reduced, the rights of the inmates are broadened". An agreement reached concerning the placement and use of vending machines is an excellent example of the way the procedure operates. Subject to preliminary conditions, inmates and administrators agreed that:

For an initial sixty (60) day trial period to begin when the machines arrive at the Youth Center, one additional officer will be required to be stationed within the visiting hall. If the additional officer is not available on a particular visitation day, the vending machines will not be made available that day.

If, after the first thirty (30) days of the trial period, the machines were not made available in

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1 The Center for Correctional Justice is a private, non-profit, District of Columbia corporation, authorized by the District of Columbia Department of Corrections to sponsor a unique and comprehensive legal services programme in the area's penal institutions. See "Center for Correctional Justice", Second Quarterly Report 5 (1971).
the visiting hall for at least one-half (\(\frac{1}{2}\)) of the scheduled visiting periods due to the unavailability of an additional officer, the machines will be placed with the visiting hall every visiting day, whether or not an additional officer is available.

If after the 60-day trial period no serious problems arise with respect to inmates taking anything bought from the machines out of the visiting hall or the security of the machines, the installation of the machines will be considered permanent and no extra officers will be required in the visiting hall.

......

Should the presence of the machines create security or staffing problems at the institution, the vending machines may be removed.

The Superintendent will consult the I.A.C. and C.L.P. before making any decision which will require the removal of the machines."

A related argument is that not only would inside communication facilitate easier control of a penal institution, it would also play a significant role in achieving "rehabilitative" goals of the prison system. Reich, for example, has argued that,

"if by 'rehabilitation' we mean providing skills which enable an inmate in some measure to satisfy his wants with a minimum of violence, then formal bargaining may be an important rehabilitative device ..." "

He goes on to suggest a number of reasons why this might be so. Firstly, "in contrast to private bargaining, where inmates learn that bullying and brute force pay off, formal bargaining rewards negotiation and compromise. Through formal bargaining, inmates may learn how to solve problems, maximise gains, articulate goals, develop alternative strategies and deal with opponents without resorting to force or violence - techniques and skills directly applicable to lawfully


satisfying their wants outside prison walls”.

Secondly, Reich argues that unlike informal bargaining which reinforces the inmates' deviant self-image, formal bargaining would afford him some dignity and self-respect by legitimising many of his goals and the means to achieve them.

Thirdly, "formal bargaining may encourage a sense of responsibility and participation". Unionisation would encourage prisoners to discuss and amend the institutional goals and rules, enabling them to develop that all-important "Self-confidence and skills of critical judgement" which Reich knows they will need on the outside.

We have seen how 'rehabilitation' has been used to introduce a whole new series of control apparatuses within the penal setting; Reich's and other's concept of unionisation, as suggested by the above is but another example. Such organisations are conceived with an implicit assumption of helping the institution to run more smoothly; unions are viewed as yet another management tool. This is not to suggest that inmates could not derive more positive benefits from such a conception; unionisation of the type envisaged by Reich would at least protect the inmates to a greater extent from the petty-minded and personal discretion of the correctional officer. It would provide the union leaders, at least, with the self-respect earned by proving incorrect those prison administrators who have argued that "prisoners are too immature" to take part in bargaining and other union activities. Or, as another warden wrote,

"When a prisoner is adjusted enough to advise how to run the prison, he doesn't belong here. He should be released."
Evidence already is to hand, for example at Attica, that even under the most intense pressure, prisoners are competent to negotiate as well as formulate proposals for change. Rahaway State Prison in New Jersey is just an example of an institution where "negotiation" has settled a dispute peacefully.

What is important, however, is that in such efforts at unionisation based on the inside, with no outside basis, the ultimate and largest share of power rests firmly with the prison authorities. Reich even bases his whole thesis on the assumption that "formalised" bargaining will merely collectivise the power which the prisoners have already (and use, indiscriminately in informal bargaining): it will not provide them with any increase in 'real power'. From the point of view of the British movement, the American experience of prisoners' unions based solely on the inside indicates quite clearly that such organisations are positively geared towards maintaining the existing arrangements within the institution: their function albeit disguised is to enable the management to run the institution more smoothly. Reforms which are initiated are also of a "positive" nature: that is, they ultimately relegate the existing order of things, and the union is placed in the untenable position of upholding and defending that order. As well as strengthening the prevailing institutional aims and methods, such positive reforms appear to create even more obstacles for the prisoners' organisation. The decisive conclusion to guide future development is that even where inmates enter into official negotiations at which actual decisions are made, the prisoners' position will be extremely weak.
We have seen how the S.F.P.U. emphasized the need for an "outside" office, to act as a focus for generating activity and co-ordinating strategies, information and resources of the emergent prisoners' organisations. We have also seen how the prisoners at Washington sought outside help to consolidate their position as an inside prisoners' union. This basic need for an outside organisation is a direct consequence of the essential invisibility of prisoners, which again derives in part from their lack of power. The converse of this problem - amply illustrated in the American prisoners' struggle - is that the authorities have a monopoly on information relating to prison events. Access to prisons is denied to all but a few, and the chosen ones are invariably given a carefully constructed tableaux of events. Prisoners, themselves, (even more so in this country than in the U.S.A.) are generally unable to openly criticise the institutions, and every conceivable step is taken to ensure that communications with the outside is censored and regulated. One of the primary tasks of the emerging "outside" prisoners' organisations - drawn from the American and British experience - must be the forging of a "prisoners' voice", dedicated to publicising the reality of imprisonment, and to providing an alternative source of information to the authorities. The prisoners' struggle illustrates clearly that such contact between inside and outside is bitterly opposed not simply because it disturbs some of the important aspects of the social functions of imprisonment, but also because it disturbs some of the main features of the social system itself. The purpose of the "prisoners' voice" on the outside, therefore, is to act as a
mouthpiece for the imprisoned. The politicisation of prisoners as reflected, for example, in their demands, has indicated that prisoners are quite capable of articulating and understanding their own situation. It doesn't necessarily follow that because they are largely hidden behind bars prisoners are ignorant of where their best interests lie. One of the basic tasks of the "prisoners' voice" would be to enable the prisoners to publicly speak for themselves.

By acknowledging the need for a "prisoners' voice", the study of the development of both PROP and the CPU and its off-spring has illustrated how vital it is to involve prisoners and ex-prisoners at all levels in the organisation. Using non-prisoners' specialisms (e.g. legal) the prisoners' unions have proved to be most persuasive - rather than insisting on an "ex-cons only" membership. What is crucial, however, is that the final decisions taken are approved by the ex-prisoners, and are not voted in by non-prisoner members.

In our discussion of the struggle in California and in this country, the need for close liaison between inside and outside groups become increasingly clear. Wherever possible, the outside organisation should seem to co-ordinate its activities with those of the inside, to gain maximum possible effect. During the picket of the San Francisco Motor License Department by the SFPU, no such parallel activity was being carried out on the inside - and the media were able to present the protesters as a group of "liberal do-gooders" who obviously didn't have inmate support for their protest. As Mathiesen has argued of the Scandinavian struggle, in the field of penal policy you have so few cards to play, that you have to play them for maximum effect.
A further lesson to be drawn from this study of prisoners' struggles is that it is not enough for the "outside" groups to merely publicize information received from the inside. Rather, the material should be contextualised to unmask the wider policy implications of the penal system. The very efforts of the authorities to stop such communication will themselves help to reveal the essentially coercive and repressive nature of the penal system.

Perhaps the most important lesson in strategy from our discussions is that whilst prisons do run on the co-operation of the prisoners, such co-operation should not be taken to denote some sort of prisoners' power to challenge that of the authorities. Even where prisoners resort to mass collective action, including the taking of hostages (as at Attica), the focus of power - physical and otherwise - rests completely on the side of the State. In this light, it can be seen that many of the strike actions of the inmates were essentially counter-productive. We have drawn parallels between workers and prisoners' unions and it is important to understand a crucial distinction between their "strike-weapons". Unlike workers on the outside, prisoners do not provide a service on which their rulers ultimately depend for continued existence, and which inmates can threaten to withdraw. As a direct consequence of these two related points, the history of prisoners' movements have provided - and continue to provide - examples of how vulnerable the prisoners are to official reprisals. Although an outside union can raise the issues in the media, it can offer no personal protection from the authorities' backlash - whether it be isolation, transfers, disciplinary courts or beatings. As the more recent 1970's
suggest, particularly in this country, too many such failures and morale is lowered; support for the union and its goals dwindles, perhaps never to return again. As Mathiesen has shown in his study of the Scandinavian movement, the strike weapons should therefore be used with extreme caution: strikes should be brief rather than protracted (as at the original Folsom strike); should be signals to the outside world, indicating grievances to particular political bodies and the media through the outside organisation, rather than as a method to wear down the authorities, because the consequence was Attica; should aim to awaken outside interest rather than try to force negotiations and the inherent dangers to the prisoners which we have discussed; should focus on specific issues rather than on more general goals, to enable the outside organisation to immediately and publicly identify the grievance and demands; finally, they should be used sparingly rather than in an inflationary way, as in Britain in 1972, not only to keep the public interest alive, but also to provide the greatest possible protection for its members.

We have seen how, in recent years, there have been increasing attacks on penal institutions, not only from within the walls, but from the outside. Prisons have been portrayed as the "universities of crime" by former President Nixon, and we are constantly reminded that the prisons in this country are rapidly reaching "crisis point". Everybody, it would appear, is concerned that prisons do not work, and the search for alternatives has rarely been more vigorous. Dennie Briggs, for example, in his "In Place of Prisons" published this summer, launches a typically scathing attack on prisons in general, and on juvenile institutions in particular:
"If over fifty per cent of the planes sold by aircraft factory X were to crash within two years of delivery, factory X would have to change the model drastically or else go out of business. Planes falling from the sky are both unpopular and frightening. So are people who commit criminal acts. Yet more than half the men and women who are imprisoned for eighteen months or more in the UK, for example, commit another crime and are back inside within two years. For young people, it can be as high as eighty per cent." 4

In the first chapter, we saw how most of such criticism is concerned to emphasise that prison has failed in some way. It was suggested, however, that the usefulness of such criticisms is very limited; what is most urgently needed is research directed towards an analysis of to whom, and in what ways prisons are useful. Such research would necessarily involve a political commitment, in keeping with the slowly increasing recognition that the struggle for penal change is an ideological one, inherently linked to wider social movements.

One of the dangers which was revealed implicitly in our analysis of the emerging prisoners' unions was that undue emphasis on prisoners as the "convicted class" must be avoided. Whilst recognising the particular situation of the imprisoned, we should be concerned to relate that position to that of people on the outside. To acknowledge that prisoners must have full control over their organisations is not to deny the strong links between theirs and other people's struggles against exploitation and oppression. It was suggested that this might be partially guarded against by placing particular emphasis on prison as one of the most visible symbols of the all-embracing hegemony established by the ruling class in a capitalist society. Such State power can be and is used to oppress us all.

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4 DENNIE BRIGGS "IN PLACE OF PRISON" / LONDON. TEMPLE SMITH/ NEW SOCIETY 1975 p.9
Given the present pessimism about the efficiency of penal institutions amongst many circles, it is not surprising that the search for alternatives has reached a new intensity. If we were to believe the reports of the Prison Department, quite radical steps are being taken in the reorganization of existing facilities and the development of new ones. It should be remembered, however, that this is very difficult to accept, beyond the level of rhetoric. Present juvenile policy, for example, is apparently designed to keep children out of penal institutions, and yet ever-increasing numbers of young people are being committed to detention centres, borstals, and prisons. (In 1973 about four thousand children aged between fourteen and sixteen, alone, were placed in custody.)

This apparent paradox largely stems from the fact that the Prison Department, for a variety of reasons suggested in the first chapter, is looking for alternative (preferably cheaper) ways of arriving at the same conclusion. Any officially inspired reorganization which is taking place has to do with a change of means rather than a change of ends. The alternatives being sought have to be seen to satisfy the existing stated objectives of imprisonment. This has enormous implications for the emerging prisoners' unions. As Mathiesen showed in Scandinavia, suggestions which do not arrive at the same goal are rejected outright by the prison authorities as being "unrealistic" and not viable. Richard Korn has described the situation accurately:

"Like the ancient kingdom of China, which has always absolved its conquerors, corrections has always neutralised the individual efforts of those seeking to change it. The thought stimulates sober reflection about the doctrine of gradualism. The force required to move a
massive rock from a roadway cannot be divided. Each of ten thousand men singly pitting his strength against it day after day will not be able to move it. The huge inertia of the obstacle which might yield to the concentrated strength of ten will abort the isolated strengths of ten thousand. The roadblock will remain, to be pointed out by succeeding generations of the defeated, as a monument to the futility of human effort." 5

The predominant concern has been to funnel limited reform into the present institutional arrangements. Schemes are added as appendages to a system which remains essentially unaltered, but, importantly, relegitimated. Particularly in this country, such piecemeal efforts have been largely directed towards undoing some of the massive damage caused by incarceration. Schemes are generally poorly funded, and low key. The majority of research carried out in this country is focussed on what has been and is being done, and is subordinated to the management imperatives of the Prison Department. Such research poses little threat to the present system; on the contrary, it is frequently designed and manipulated to endorse it. Even, as in Massachusetts, with the recognition that no amount of reform could make the existing system work, the closing down of correctional institutions has not provided a genuine alternative. Rather, it has succeeded only in replacing one set of institutions with another set of institutional and quasi-institutional arrangements, which are not only further removed from effective public control and scrutiny but are premised upon existing theories of criminality and deviance.6 In our discussion of treatment, it was argued that there was evidence to suggest that prisons had benefited from being viewed as 'sick' rather than 'bad'. Indeed, as chapter two indicated, the increasing warehousing of prisoners


and use of indeterminate sentences suggest that offenders are actually worse off. Many of the alternatives currently being developed provide for massive escalation of the opportunity for administrative arbitrariness, expediency, and non-disclosure of information. More generally, these schemes are to be deplored because they are based upon, and in turn reinforce assumptions about criminality which are unfounded. As Goldenberg has argued, in the context of Massachusetts, the 'alternatives' approach is predicted upon a view of the delinquent act as a

"particular and idiosyncratic response (variously labelled as 'pathological', 'anti-social', 'maladjustive', etc.) by the adolescent to the universal needs and problems that characterize the traditional and conflict-ridden period of time between late childhood and early adulthood". 7

Given such a perspective, the fundamental objectives of the new clinical approach in Massachusetts are the same as those of the traditional punitive system. Both direct their efforts towards containing the young (through various mechanisms) in the belief that such control and limitation will provide ample opportunity to remedy the previously unsuccessful or incomplete socialisation of the young. Neither approach questions the social order, but rather accepts and legitimates it. There is never any doubt in the mind of the administrators that given relative autonomy and time they will be able to return the young offender to the society as a good and useful member. Implicit again is the assumption that it is the individual who must adapt to the perceived social order; such capitulation to the world is seen as "maturing" and "growing up".

The earlier critique of the treatment ideology revealed how the personnel involved traditionally take the attitude that

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7 quoted in MIKE FITZGERALD (1975) op.cit. p129
they know what is best for the individual, that such a programme or decision is "in the individual's best interests". Their reports contain innumerable references to a person's lack of 'vocational skills', to his 'educational deficiencies', 'bad attitudes', etc. But, as Ian Taylor has pointed out, such practices are not restricted to the prisons:

"The growth of social work, in particular, and the associated 'academic discipline' of social administrations, was no arbitrary result of student demand (an unexpected increase in the number of students with altruistic impulses); all Western governments in the fifties and sixties foresaw the need to extend substantially an occupation that could patrol and pacify the boundaries of social conflict, defusing public issues into private ('casework') problems." 8

The American Friends Services Committee have documented the practical outcome of the treatment approach:

"During a period when the treatment ideal was maximised, when vocational programs, milieu therapy, and many other rehabilitative experiments were introduced, more than twice as many persons served twice as much time." 9

Not surprisingly, there is little or no evidence to suggest that people staying longer in re-habilitation-oriented programmes are helped any more than those serving a shorter time in a punishment-oriented institution.

The implications of what is happening in Massachusetts and elsewhere can be generalised as indications of the future directions of juvenile correctional policy in particular. Firstly, treatment facilities will be rapidly expanded, partially at the expense of the traditional, punitively-oriented institutions. Secondly, the resulting plans and programmes will be "clinically" based; i.e. they will deal with "clients"

9 AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE", "STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE" _NEW YORK. HILL AND WANG, 1971_7. p.91
whose problems are almost exclusively located inside their own heads or behaviour. Thirdly, as already suggested, the new treatment and helping settings and their emphasis on "community-based" rehabilitation will provide a suitable backdrop for the introduction of new techniques of behaviour modification and control. Fourthly, the new treatment techniques and programmes will provide the "experts" with even more screening from public visibility and effective accountability to anybody other than themselves. Whilst projects may utilize "non-professional" lay volunteers, the emphasis will be very much on the "clinically appropriate" values of objectivity, dispassionate involvement and so on. There is no evidence to suggest, therefore, that the use of volunteers will provide an alternative to therapeutic values and behaviour.

Finally, whilst the new programmes will be firmly based in and aimed at the community, we should recognise that they will be identifying with the existing control agencies _the schools, police, courts and so on_, rather than with the aspirations of the local community. In other words, they will seek inclusion in a social network, composed of institutions whose very existence and practices have contributed massively to the problems that presently exist in this society.

From the point of view of the prisoners' union, therefore, the issue of alternatives raises fundamental questions about the aims of the organization. We saw how the San Francisco Prisoners' Union was being drawn further and further from its professed aims and methods by its constant attempts to gain the authorities' acceptance and blessing. The SFPU provides a clear illustration of how an organization which insists on
seeking official recognition and sanction risks integration into the very system it is trying to change. By consistently emphasising honesty towards, and co-operation with the penal authorities, the San Francisco group has found itself increasingly drawn into debates whose terms it cannot control or even influence. It has developed preoccupations with the need to find viable alternatives to the present system - but viable that is from the Californian Department of Correction's viewpoint. Any new SFPU proposals have to be seen, and are thus increasingly being tailored to meet, the existing stated objectives.

In sharp contrast, the United Prisoners Union has remained loyal to its manifesto - although, in the short term, it has thus appeared less 'successful' than the SFPU. To enable a prisoners' union to remain true to its objectives - particularly if it is committed to the ultimate abolition of imprisonment - one of the most pressing theoretical needs is for the development of a radical theory of crime and punishment which recognises that both the making and breaking of rules are processes which are "fully social in nature", and conditioned by the "facts of material reality". Moving away from individualistic theories, the search for social explanations has emphasised the urgent need for a political economy of crime. The processes involved in crime creation must be viewed as "bound up in the final analysis with the material basis of contemporary capitalism and its structures of law". 10

We have been concerned to show that crime is not the property of any one particular group or class in the capitalist societies. The rich and the poor, rulers and ruled all engage in criminal activities on a regular basis. It is crucial to

recognise however, that it is in the enforcement of the law that the lower classes are subjected to the ruling class control of the law enforcement system. As Chambliss has argued:

"many acts committed by lower classes and which it is in the interests of the ruling class to control (e.g. crimes of violence, bribery of public officials, and crimes of personal choice, such as drug use, alcoholism, driving while intoxicated, homosexuality, etc.) are just as likely - or at least very likely - to be as widespread among the upper classes as the lower classes. Thus it is crucial that the ruling class be able to control the discretion of the law enforcement agencies in ways that provide them with immunity." 11

A Marxist theory of crime must also account for laws reflecting conflict within the ruling class. Chambliss, therefore, has argued that "laws restricting the formation of trusts, misrepresentation in advertising, the necessity for obtaining licences to engage in business practices, are all laws which seem to reduce competition among the ruling classes and to concentrate capital in a few hands". Control of the law-enforcement agencies undermines the effectiveness of the universality of laws, and seems to protect the powerful from the more unpalatable consequences of their law-breaking.

Fundamentally, this study of the intensification and changing nature of prisoners' protest, has revealed that liberty is not simply a matter of ensuring certain 'civil liberties'. It is not enough to argue for limited institutional reform, or for improvements in the existing control system which will bring "equality" before the laws for everybody. We must not only be continual critics of the established order of its injustices and inequalities, we must...

also seek to locate and explain their origin, and then act to translate theory into practice. It is only by uniting theory with praxis that the radical position will become more acceptable. As David Harvey has pointed out, "a revolutionary theory ... will gain acceptance only if the nature of social relationships embodied in the theory are actualized in the real world". 12

One of the most crucial lessons to be derived from this comparative analysis of prison movements is that we must acknowledge that the struggle for penal change is an ideological and political one. The existing system of imprisonment performs certain functions for the ruling class and it is in terms of these objectives that the 'success' of the prison must be gauged. The analysis of the present trends of imprisonment in this country and in the USA emphasise that we must support the prisoners' struggle not only for their sakes, but for ours too. For the prison indeed oppresses not just those who are locked behind its bars; increasingly it reaches out to ensnare everyone of us.

APPENDIX AND BIBLIOGRAPHY
APPENDIX I

OPEN LETTER FROM MONROE:
Roger Maxwell, Superintendent
Washington State Reformatory,
P.O. Box 777,
Monroe, Washington 98272

Superintendent Maxwell:

As you know, the Washington State Prisoners' Labor Union has been active in Monroe for more than six months now. To date, more than four hundred and thirty Monroe prisoners are signed members of the Union.

We have used this six months to build and strengthen the Union and to develop a coherent picture of the problems at Monroe from the perspective of the prisoners. We have held meetings at least weekly with various prisoners who are active in the Union inside, and we've conducted two general surveys of the entire prisoner population. Also, we've done extensive outside research into the organization, staff, budget and operation of the Monroe State Reformatory.

What we've found comes as no surprise. In spite of its liberalized policies, Monroe is as much a failure as any other prison in this country. The Vocational Training programs train no-one, and the Education programs do not educate. Although prisoner labor keeps the prison running, prisoner wages range from nothing in such essential jobs as the kitchen and laundry, to a maximum of twenty-five cents an hour in Industries, where thousands of dollars in monthly profits is produced for the State of Washington. Working conditions in the prison would not be tolerated anywhere but in a prison. Medical care is a joke; one part-time doctor is expected to fill the needs of more than six hundred and fifty prisoners.

The RGC was intended to provide prisoner input into the operation of the prison. In spite of the commitment and hard work of the RGC Representatives, it has failed to do this and has become little more than a buffer zone between the prisoners and the administration. We believe the reason for this is obvious. The RGC is not self-government; it has no real power, it can only advise the administration and then rely,
as always, on their good will for needed changes.

The following Proposals represent what the Union believes to be the minimum changes that must be made at Monroe immediately. The Proposals are divided into two general sections. Section One proposes a general restructuring of the administration of Monroe in a way that would put some real power into the hands of the prisoners. It is the intention of the Union to transfer control of all non-custody functions, conditions of prisoners, to the hands of the prisoners themselves. We believe that this is the only way to make these programs responsive to the needs of the prisoners. Also, only in this way can prisoners learn to protect themselves from the destructive effects of imprisonment and to escape the cycle to crime and prison. The Proposals in Section one would be a start toward that goal.

Section Two concerns the clearest and most blatant problems at Monroe at this time. Section Two consists of suggested changes in the following specific areas: Health and Safety, re-release Programs, Education, Counseling, Food, Access to the Press, Prisoner Publications, and Union Representation.

You should understand that the Proposals themselves are not demands. Our only demand is that you begin fair and honest negotiations with the Union under conditions set forth near the end of this letter.

SECTION ONE

1. Operations Committee

We propose that a prisoner-staff-community Operations Committee be established that would assume responsibility for all non-custody operations in the prison. The committee would be composed of three staff members, three prisoners and one person from the outside community acceptable to both staff and prisoners. The organization and operation of the Committee should include the following general principles:

A. The Committee would have full authority and responsibility for all non-custody operations at Monroe.
B. The prisoners on the Committee should be chosen in some fully
democratic manner that insures their accountability to the
prisoner population and provides for real minority participation,

C. Decisions should require a majority vote of the entire Committee.

D. The prisoner members of the Committee should have unrestricted
communication with the prisoner population and with the outside
press.

E. The Committee should be free to form sub-committees with the
responsibility to investigate, develop plans and report to the
full committee. Sub-Committees' should be formed immediately
for the following areas:

1. High School and College Programs
2. Vocational Training
3. Private Industry
4. Prisoner Wages

The Proposals in Section One have purposely been kept as general as
possible. These ideas represent a truly radical departure from the way
in which prisons have always been operated, and will take time and
determination on the part of both prisoners and staff to develop into
a workable plan.

SECTION TWO

I. Health and Safety

A. Routine physical examinations should be given to all prisoners by
a doctor at intervals of not more than one year.

B. The hospital staff should include at least one full-time doctor.

C. An ambulance should be available at the prison on a twenty-four
hour basis with a trained crew and the capability to transport
any prisoner or staff member to a regular outside hospital within
thirty minutes of an emergency.

D. An adequate staff of prisoner medical technidans should be
trained and qualified by a course equal to that for a licensed
practical nurse in the State of Washington. These prisoners would
be responsible for the initial evaluation and routing of all routine prisoner medical complaints. Their primary task would be to serve the interest of their patients, and would act as the prisoners' advocate in the hospital. They should be selected for training, supervised, and fired if necessary by the Operations Committee.

E. A committee should be formed including two members chosen by the prisoners, two members from the hospital staff and one outside doctor acceptable to both. The purpose of this committee would be to conduct a thorough investigation of the hospital at Monroe and to make whatever changes necessary to deliver effective medical treatment to the prisoners.

F. A Union Safety Committee should be formed, modeled after similar committees in outside unions. Members should come from each of the work areas and should be trained in first aid procedures. One of the functions of the committee would be to provide an ongoing program of health and safety education for the prisoners.

G. Adequate first aid kits should be made available in all living and working quarters.

H. Routine dental examinations should be given to all prisoners by a dentist at regular intervals of not more than one year.

II. Pre-Release Program

The WSPLU should be given the necessary authority and access to the prisoner population to develop an adequate pre-release and vocational rehabilitation program to be operated by ex-prisoners.

III. Education

A local community college, such as Edmonds, should be permitted to develop and operate a comprehensive High School and College program at Monroe. Funding should be provided by the State of Washington. Supervision would be the responsibility of the Operations Committee.
IV. Counseling

The prison should maintain a large enough staff of qualified counselors so that no one counselor has a case load of more than fifty prisoners. Counselors should have at least a degree in social work and be hired without discrimination because of sex. There should be a sufficient number of minority counselors to reflect the proportion of minority prisoners in the population. The Operations Committee would be responsible for screening qualified applicants and for the supervision of the counseling staff.

V. Food

At least two prisoners should be trained to share responsibility with the nutritionist for the planning and preparation of all food. Selection and supervision would be the responsibility of the Operations Committee.

VI. Access to the Press

Any representative of the outside press should be permitted to enter the prison and interview any consenting prisoners. They should be required to give no more than twenty-four hours notice, and should be allowed free access to all areas of the prison. Also, the press should routinely be allowed at all general population meetings without giving prior notice.

VII. Prisoner Publications

The prisoners should be allowed a free, uncensored newspaper with the cost to be borne by the institution.

VIII. Union Representation

Prisoners, no less than any other American workers, have the right to be represented by a strong, democratic labor union. The National Labor Relations Board should be permitted to conduct a secret election within Monroe on the issue of union representation.

A copy of this letter has been distributed to all prisoners at Monroe and is fully supported by the vast majority of them. Therefore, we insist that you immediately set a date to begin negotiations with the Union.
Negotiating Team. In order to insure that the talks are open and fair to all concerned, we also insist that they be conducted under the following conditions:

1. The Union Negotiating Team will be composed of three prisoners inside Monroe and three outside members of the Union.
2. One representative from the RGC, from each of the ethnic groups, and from the staff Union must be permitted to attend all negotiating sessions as observers only.
3. The Union must be permitted free written communication with the prisoner population during the course of the negotiations.
4. The entire Union Negotiating Team, including alternates, must be allowed to meet privately for at least one hour prior to each session. Another one hour private meeting, to include the observers, must be allowed after each session.
5. The Union must be allowed to make a tape recording of all sessions.
6. Prior to the conclusion of negotiations, the Union must be permitted to call a general population meeting to be attended by the entire negotiating team, at least ten outside guests and the press. The purpose of this meeting will be to get prisoner approval for any settlement.
7. No reprisals of any kind are to be taken against any prisoner for his efforts in the Union.

These Proposals are not intended as an ultimate solution to the complex problems, but they can be a beginning. The Proposals are firmly based on the principle that prisoners should fully participate in the decisions that affect their lives. We believe this principle to be fundamental to any real solutions.

We urge you to carefully consider the ideas presented here.

Representatives from the Union will be at your office at 9.00 a.m. on Friday, October 19th to talk to you about opening negotiations. A press conference is planned for noon of that day to announce the results of that meeting.

Sincerely,

For the Washington State Prisoners' Labor Union

cc.
Governor Dan Evans
Robert Tropp, Director, DSHS
National Labor Relations Board
Donald Horowitz
Washington State Labor Council
APPENDIX II

Chemical Agents and Related Equipment For Correctional Institutions

Prepared by

Eugene S. Jones
Sales Representative
George F. Cake Corporation

March 27, 1970

Introduction

Correctional administrators have placed increasing importance on the use of chemical agents and related equipment to subdue violent individuals and to retain or regain control of groups of rebellious inmates with minimal use of physical force. For this reason, the committee on riots and disturbances invited the major distributors to collaborate in the preparation of this chapter; however, only one distributor responded to the invitation. The committee has included this material because of its relevance to riots and disturbances in correctional institutions, not as an endorsement of any manufacturer or distributor.

California, and perhaps several other states, have recently enacted legislation which requires that criminal justice personnel successfully complete a standardized training program before they can use gas or other chemicals in the performance of their duties. Whether or not such legislation exists, correctional administrators should ensure that all of their security personnel receive appropriate training before they are permitted to use chemical agents.

The reader is cautioned that this chapter will require periodic updating because of the constant refinements and new developments in chemical agents and related equipment.

More information on this subject can be obtained from:

International Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc.
Professional Standards Division
1319 Eighteenth Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

1 In "Riots and Disturbances in Correction Institutions," In American Correctional Association, "Causes, preventive measures and methods of controlling riots and disturbances in correctional institutions" (Washington, D.C. 1970)
Chemical Agents and Related Equipment for Correctional Institutions

In the past few years there have been several new developments in chemical agents for controlling riots and civil disturbances. Correctional institutions, when faced with riots, have, however, somewhat different problems; for example, many of their disturbances take place indoors. With this in mind, it is felt that a brief description of the various types of chemical agents and equipment would be of assistance to the correctional officer in determining what should be used.

A few pointers should be kept in mind when using any chemical agent:

1. Chemical agents are solid particles and depend on agents to carry them and nearly always have to follow the air currents. For this reason it is of utmost importance that the direction of the wind or draft in a large building or open room be noted at the time a chemical is used.

2. All chemical agents are capable, in small, confined areas without proper ventilation, of reducing the oxygen content of the room below 16 percent which could be fatal.

3. First aid should be made available for all subjects who are strongly contaminated with chemicals.

4. All chemical agents will contaminate an area to a certain extent, and the correctional officer using these chemicals should have an understanding of what each chemical will do.

5. The chemical or device used would determine the necessity of evacuating the building or room prior to and after its use.

6. C.N. (tear smoke), the standard tear gas in use for many years, will not affect all individuals in the same way; and there are a few people it does not affect at all.

At the present time there are two main chemical agents used for all riots and civil disturbances. They are described as follows:

1. CHLORACETOPHENE [Tear Smoke or Tear Gas] C.N. (Red)

   This is a chemical agent that attacks the tear ducts in eyes and causes tears to flow. There is a temporary feeling of blindness and a stinging sensation on the face and on all moist areas of the body where a person might be perspiring. The respiratory passages of the nose and throat are affected, and difficulty in breathing is encountered. An ordinary individual can only take a small amount of this and finds it uncomfortable to remain in it for more than a few minutes. There are some people who, due to certain illnesses, are not affected by this chemical agent.

2. ORTHOCHLOROBENZALMONTONITRILE
   [Irritant Smoke] C.S. (Blue)

   This is classified as an irritant agent and lachrymator. It affects the respiratory system of the body and produces almost instantaneous effects. There is difficulty in breathing, copious tearing and a burning sensation on the face and other parts of the body. An individual will start to cough. There is a tightening, crushing and burning feeling in the chest which causes panic. There will be a noticeable sinus and nasal drip, and in high concentrations it can cause nausea. Subjects find it intolerable and under most circumstances will not go in for a second exposure. It should not be used indoors where a person cannot leave the contaminated area. There must be some avenue of escape for individuals subjected to C.S. chemical agents.

   The following are brief descriptions of the various types of C.N. and C.S. grenades:

   1. PYROTECHNIC OR BURNING TYPES

      The standard size burning-type grenade made by most companies in the United States will burn for approximately 30 to 45 seconds and sometimes longer. They are capable of putting out a tremendous volume of chemical smoke, and they are primarily designed for outdoor use. In small, confined areas it can be dangerous if too much is used. The grenades do present a hazard; they can be picked up and thrown back by anybody who has a pair of gloves or any hand protection available, e.g., a folded handkerchief. They are fused to begin burning approximately two seconds after they have been thrown. They can be launched around 100 yards from launchers designed for gas guns and shotguns. The following are the three most popular burning-type grenades in the standard size:

      1. Lake Erie Continuous Discharge Grenade
      2. Federal Spedheat Grenade
      3. Penguin CN/Smoke Grenade

   II. EXPULSION OR INSTANTANEOUS DISCHARGE GRENADES

      This type of grenade is designed to be used when an immediate discharge of chemical agents is needed in a certain area. Most of the standard size grenades have about a two-second delay fuse. The entire content of the grenade is dispersed immediately. Some grenades are loaded for CN or CS smoke and others, a very fine micro-pulverized powder of CN or CS. It is very difficult for a person to pick up an instantaneous or blast-type grenade and throw it back before the agent contents have been dispersed.

      There are several things to consider when using grenades loaded with CN or CS powder or dust. If the grenade goes off on the ground much of the chemical agent is left there and does not become airborne. There is a tremendous decontamination problem with finely
powdered chemicals. Although some manufacturers claim that this type of grenade has the largest volume of chemicals as an agent, they cover a smaller area than the burning-type se containers.

The following are a few of the standard size instantaneous type grenades:

1. Lake Erie Model 34 Instantaneous Discharge Grenade
2. A. A. I. Multipurpose Grenade
3. Federal Blast Dispersion
4. Federal Disintegrating
5. Penguin Baseball Grenade

III. "THE FEDERAL STRIKE" MODEL G-2

This is a new grenade on the market marketed by Federal Sign & Signal Corp. and their distributors. This grenade is made of rubber and is about the size of a baseball. It is a burning-type grenade and discharges its entire chemical agent (CS) in approximately 10 seconds. The fuse delay time is about two seconds. The grenade is made of soft rubber so there is no fragmentation. It puts out a tremendous amount of CS smoke — so thick that it is very difficult to throw back while in operation. It will move on smooth surfaces, and it is a cool burning-type grenade. The chemical agent (CS) smoke is about ten to twenty times the volume of conventional type baseball grenades and others using powdered CN or CS.

IV. MULTIPLE-LOADING GRENADES. THERE ARE TWO MODELS AVAILABLE, THE LAKE ERIE JUMPER REPEATER (CN OR CS) AND FEDERAL TRIPLE CHASER GRENADES (CN OR CS).

These two grenades are unique inasmuch as they move around after the initial discharge. The Lake Erie Jumper Repeater will move from three to fifteen feet depending on the surface. It discharges all of its contents in three bursts, one second apart, covering a large area; and since it jumps or moves it makes it nearly impossible to pick up and throw back. It is an expulsion or instantaneous type grenade.

The Federal Triple Chaser separates into three burning-type grenades after the initial discharge. Some of the sections will travel forty yards depending on the surface. It is a burning-type grenade and does present fire hazard. Each section burns for about 25 seconds, and it is possible to pick them up and throw them back with gloves or some protection for the hand.

V. POCKET SIZE GRENADES (CN OR CS)

There are three continuous burning-type grenades loaded with the CN and CS chemical agent smoke.

A. The Mighty Midget Grenade made by Lake Erie Chemical Company. This grenade has the manual type percussion fuse. There is no bouchon lever. It can be launched from a 38 Sp. revolver launcher 100 yards and from a 12 gauge shotgun launcher about 140 yards. It is a continuous type burning grenade and burns for about 20 seconds.

B. The Federal Pocket Grenade made by Federal Laboratories has the conventional type bouchon lever. It is not recommended for launching from either a revolver or shotgun launcher. The agent emission time is about 20 seconds.

C. The Brunswick Skitter Grenade made by Brunswick Corp. has the conventional type bouchon lever. The agent emission time is about 15 seconds. It is not recommended for revolver or shotgun launchers.

Although these are small grenades, they put out, in comparison to their size, a large volume of chemical agent smoke. Like other burning grenades they can be picked up and thrown back with hand protection and can start fires.

VI. CHEMICAL WAND

Developed in England and distributed by Lake Erie Chemical Co., this is an excellent product for training purposes. It burns for about five minutes, putting out a steady stream of CS smoke. It is very effective for covering large areas where the officer can walk around with it in his hand. It does not put out a heavy concentration, and there is no long-lasting residue which might cause contamination problems. It is very good for handling sit-ins and similar situations.

VII. GAS GUNS

Lake Erie Tru-Flite and Federal Gas Gun are 37mm or 1½". Note: These guns now will fire shells or projectiles made by either company.

VIII. PROJECTILES AND SHELLS

These fall into three categories:

1. Short-range blast shells
2. Medium-range
3. Barricade projectiles

The type needed would depend upon how close an officer could safely approach the area where the chemicals are to be used.

IX. GRENADE LAUNCHERS

A. 12 gauge shotgun type — Lake Erie Chemical Co. and Federal Laboratories both make grenade launchers for the 12 gauge riot shotgun. They will launch burning type grenades about 115 yards.

Caution: The launching shells and grenades are not interchangeable for the launchers. You must use Lake Erie launching shells and grenades in the Lake Erie launcher; the same procedure holds for Federal products.

B. Revolver Launcher 38 Special — Manufactured by Lake Erie Chemical Co., it will fit almost any Colt or S & W service revolver. It uses a special blank shell and will launch the Lake Erie Mighty Midget grenade about 110 yards.

C. Grenade Launcher 12 gauge — For the Midget
grenade by Lake Erie Chemical Co. will launch the Mighty Midget grenade about 140 yards.

X. LARGE-VOLUME CHEMICAL AGENT DISPERSERS

There are several types of generators on the market for dispersion of chemical smokes or fogs. The most popular is the Pepper Fog Generator manufactured by General Ordnance Equipment Co. This generator runs on regular gasoline and is capable of putting out about 100,000 cubic feet of CS chemical smoke in 25 seconds. It is very portable, and the complete unit loaded weighs only 27 pounds. It has been successfully used out of automobiles and helicopters. It is not necessary to turn off the engine to refill the irritant tanks. The chemical smoke (CS) output is seven gallons per hour and equal to about 300 burning-type grenades. The formulation tank holds one gallon and will last from 10 to 20 minutes depending on how dense the variable fog control is set on the machine.

Tests have revealed that there is very little decontamination. When used indoors at one correctional institution on two separate buildings, no trace of contamination was found after one hour.

XI. AEROSOL DISPENSERS

There numerous devices on the market at the present time. A recent survey by the I. A. C. P. shows that the Chemical Mace™ manufactured by General Ordnance Equipment Corporation is the most popular in law enforcement.

There are three models of the Chemical Mace™ which would be of interest and use for correctional institutions:

1. MK IV Chemical Mace™
   a. Carried usually in a holster on the belt.
   b. Effective range, 15 ft. with approximately 70 half-second bursts.

2. MK V Chemical Mace™
   a. Carried in holster on belt and has a trigger, sight, and pushbutton safety.
   b. Effective range, 20 ft. and about 70 half-second bursts.
   c. Cartridges are replaceable with scale to tell how much formulation is left in each unit.

3. MK IX Chemical Mace™
   a. This is a larger unit designed for use against groups of people.
   b. Effective range, about 25 ft. and about 50 half-second bursts.

The above units have been used on individuals in cells, with no effect on inmates in cells on either side.

XII. GAS MASKS

It is essential that gas masks be available when any chemical agents are used. These masks should be checked and tested at least twice a year, and stored in a cool dry area.

Modern canisters will last indefinitely if proper care is exercised. Some surplus military masks will not filter CS smoke, and these should not be used.

If helmets are worn with face shields, be sure the gas mask will fit under the helmet and shield; some will not.
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Recent years have witnessed an upsurge in prisoners' protest. In contrast to earlier times, such militancy has increasingly been channelled into collectivised and controlled strikes and demonstrations. There has been an accompanying change in both the content and style of presentation of inmates' demands, reflected in the explicitly political rhetoric of their 'manifestoes'.

This dissertation is concerned with one feature of this 'new' militancy - prisoners' attempts to organise themselves to protest not only about the material conditions, but also about the fact of their incarceration. It looks in particular, at the emergence of Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners (PROP), the British prisoners' union founded in May 1972. A comparative analysis with the movement in the USA is undertaken, and the whole thesis is informed by the work of Thomas Mathiesen, and the Scandinavian experiences.

The first chapter presents a brief history of imprisonment to raise the question of why people are imprisoned. This leads into a discussion of more recent developments and possible future trends of British penal policy. Chapter Three outlines prison conditions, which, it is argued, provided much of the impetus for the emergence of PROP.

Chapter Four provides a brief historical sketch of British
prisoners protest. The section on PROP is largely
documentary, and is based upon my own direct involvement
in the movement as a founder member, and press officer
of the union. The sixth chapter highlights some of
the issues raised by PROP, by using comparative material
from the USA. The concluding chapter seeks to draw out
the main obstacles confronting an emergent prisoners'
organisation and places it firmly in the political sphere.