

Juveniles found guilty of offences⁽¹⁾

TABLE 65

England and Wales

Number

Juveniles found guilty	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
All offences ⁽²⁾	78,188	90,560	99,559	107,000	120,198	120,947	128,394	119,998	121,528	118,622	114,111
Indictable offences	45,107	51,775	53,183	57,360	64,284	66,222	67,784	62,813	62,870	62,133	61,811
Larceny	27,993	31,497	31,265	33,261	37,340	38,220	37,429	36,044	36,555	35,129	35,111
Breaking and entering ...	12,043	14,284	15,363	16,779	18,944	19,592	21,992	18,898	18,725	19,811	19,111
Receiving	1,554	1,977	2,186	2,320	2,939	3,940	3,333	3,157	3,176	3,035	3,111
Sexual offences	1,185	1,118	1,267	1,217	1,180	1,166	1,022	894	901	889	911
Frauds, etc.	154	203	225	232	268	264	309	266	273	265	211
Violence against the person	760	1,032	1,231	1,583	1,717	1,787	1,896	1,978	2,004	1,793	1,811
Other offences	1,418	1,657	1,646	1,968	1,896	2,153	1,803	1,576	1,236	1,183	1,311
Non-indictable offences.....	33,081	38,785	46,376	49,640	55,914	54,725	60,610	57,185	58,658	56,519	52,311
Highway Acts:											
Total	14,568	17,033	22,727	25,223	30,140	29,352	35,333	35,002	36,901	37,205	34,011
Offences with pedal cycles	7,544	7,856	8,954	7,500	8,600	7,993	7,057	5,158	4,070	3,111	2,511
Other	7,024	9,177	13,773	17,723	21,540	21,359	28,276	29,844	32,831	34,094	31,411
Breach of local and other regulations:											
Total	1,670	2,114	2,238	2,493	2,771	2,852	2,974	2,728	2,224	1,815	1,711
Games in street	146	164	183	120	131	131	42	35	34	24	161
Other	1,524	1,950	2,055	2,373	2,640	2,721	2,932	2,693	2,190	1,791	1,611
Malicious damage	5,895	6,629	6,321	7,130	7,121	7,113	6,217	5,333	5,776	5,224	4,511
Railway offences	5,201	6,050	6,964	5,718	6,076	5,646	5,453	3,535	3,624	3,061	3,311
Stealing.....	982	1,078	1,054	902	745	914	768	415	334	288	211
Betting and gaming	172	195	272	181	180	160	80	75	53	54	81
Other offences	4,573	5,666	6,800	7,993	8,881	8,688	10,619	10,097	9,746	8,872	8,311
Disposal by Courts											
Magistrates' Courts:											
Total dealt with	77,416	89,430	98,372	105,754	118,691	119,672	127,664	119,210	120,698	117,786	113,311
Absolute discharge	6,683	6,966	6,599	5,727	5,423	5,184	4,593	3,132	3,132	2,579	2,511
Conditional discharge ...	16,130	18,485	19,234	20,131	21,830	22,440	23,162	19,533	18,312	16,727	18,411
Placed on probation	17,597	19,321	19,620	20,967	22,812	22,987	23,904	22,261	22,280	21,015	20,011
Fined	30,220	36,342	43,985	48,794	57,323	57,338	62,203	60,670	62,767	62,726	58,311
Committed to:											
Remand homes	546	661	650	711	626	654	616	514	463	426	211
Approved schools	2,988	3,613	3,583	4,192	4,501	4,671	5,083	4,749	4,709	4,967	4,511
Borstal institutions.....	3	1	4	6	3	3	5	13	6	5	511
Otherwise dealt with ⁽³⁾ ...	3,249	4,041	4,697	5,226	6,173	6,395	8,098	8,338	9,029	9,341	9,011
Assizes and Quarter Sessions:											
Total dealt with	772	1,130	1,187	1,246	1,507	1,275	730	788	830	866	811
Conditional discharge ...	33	96	99	78	105	62	45	42	37	43	311
Placed on probation	371	510	537	590	654	545	275	250	308	264	211
Committed to borstal institutions	118	193	158	171	248	228	164	172	151	163	111
Sentenced to imprisonment	8	14	29	27	27	14	12	3	—	2	211
Otherwise disposed of ...	242	317	364	380	473	426	234	321	334	394	311

⁽¹⁾ Persons under 17 years of age.

⁽²⁾ Including offences against Defence Regulations. From 1960, these are included in 'other offences', mostly non-indictable.

⁽³⁾ These figures include persons found guilty at Magistrates' Courts and committed to Quarter Sessions for sentence. The disposals of persons so committed are not shown in this table.

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Institutional correction

INTRODUCTION

IN THESE ARTICLES, Ian Taylor and I have looked at two of the types of questions that sociologists and others (like anarchists and socialists) who have a sceptical concern about society, might like to ask about our institutions which deal with juvenile offenders. The first question—one that can only be answered by personal experience and the sort of intensive observation he was able to employ—is dealt with by Ian in regard to Approved Schools: just what does it look like and how does it feel to the boys inside? No one really interested in the system can understand it without such a perspective. The second question—one that can be answered by very superficial methods such as reading documents—is one that I deal with in regard to Detention Centres: how do the spokesmen of the system explain it and justify themselves to us? I have done this rather selectively and this analysis would need to be supplemented by a more detailed account of the ideology—preferably in the words of those involved in the system.

There are obvious points at which these areas of interest overlap and we would have liked to spend much more time in looking at the correspondence, or lack of correspondence between the official statements of what is happening and the perception from the inside of what is happening.

The ANARCHY issue on Libertarian Criminology (No. 98) showed how difficult it is to define what would be a libertarian approach to crime and delinquency. Both of us to some extent identify with this vaguely specified approach and have tried (in my case more crudely and polemically) to indicate its relevance to these two institutions. Our friends who contributed to that issue of ANARCHY will excuse us for saying that they dealt with the more "glamorous" sides of the debate—for example, questions about political deviance. The day to day happenings in Approved Schools and Detention Centres are the bread and butter side and it's hard to say anything very exciting about them. We only hope that the response of our political comrades will not be like one eminent politico who after reading the issue on Libertarian Criminology asked one of the contributors why he wasted his time writing about criminals and delinquents, they should just be kindly dealt with by putting them somewhere out of the way.

STAN COHEN

Approved School: how does it feel?

IAN TAYLOR

AS THE LITERATURE OF APPLIED SOCIOLOGY EXPANDS, and young research workers move out into "original" fields in the search for theses, we can expect to hear much more about the situation of the institutionalised deviant. I am a little worried that we may hear little from the institutionalised deviant himself.

Currently, the concerns of "respectable" American sociologists with organisational theory and with the terminological manipulation of "function" and "system", as well as the development by not-so-respectable sociologists of the interactionist approach to deviance, have been displayed in a quite considerable literature. We can expect similar developments in this country, as the professionalisation of sociology and "the desire to be of use" proceed apace. But it may be salutary to remind ourselves now that it was left to the *Daily Mail* in 1967 to bring to the public eye the experienced realities of the boys in Court Lees Approved School.

A danger with social science—the science of human life and beings—is that it eliminates the human actor from the picture. Intent on according a "scientific" regularity (and implicitly a predictability) to human behaviour, the science may cease to be interested in, or even to allow meaning and autonomy to, the idiosyncratic behaviour of the actors under study. This danger may be particularly marked when the "scientist" is concerned with the disadvantaged and the inarticulate.

Howard Becker and the Becker "School" have been portraying the social world of the deviants in American society for some years. They have not stopped short of expressing a preference for that world over and above that of conventional society. Recently, indeed, Becker made an attempt to give methodological status to his sentimental predisposition for the Theory and Practice of Cool. In another issue

of this journal this attempt has received some attention.¹ Suffice it to say here that the temptation to give occupational and academic legitimacy to liberal inclinations can be dangerous in its consequences. Simply to represent the way in which the deviant sees the world (*because* he is a deviant) is not to state the truth about the world, and is not to help a social science to state the truth. That is another debate. But what concerns us here is the desire of liberal social scientists to give the impression that they are behaving in a strictly scientific manner by the language they use and the familiarity they demonstrate with models and mores. They do this because it is part of the game in the sociology industry. One of the rules of this particular game is that good sociology does not stop short at the reproduction of juicy interviews or stories. It is supposed to interpret the stories: to divide them up into "manifest" and "latent", "functional" and "dysfunctional", "innovative" and "ritualist". The result quite often is that we become more familiar with the categories than we do with the subjects. Only very rarely does the subject have his say. And he can never argue about his category.

Now, in the search for the disadvantaged and the inarticulate, the thesis-hunter will soon alight upon the institutionalised deviants of the British penal system. They fulfil most of the requirements. And the approved school boy is perhaps one of the likeliest candidates for sponsorship, since he suffers earlier and longer than most. In England and Wales, a boy can be sent to Approved School at the age of 10, and thus deprived at a psychologically-crucial time of the relationships he has constructed with family and peer group. The most common, and the most revealing, description by approved school boys of their situation is that they have been "sent away from home". The period of institutionalisation can vary (officially) from 9 months to 3 years, but in cases of recidivism and in cases where there is nowhere to return to, it is possible for a boy to remain in approved school until leaving senior school at the age of 18 or 19. He is, in other words, quite unambiguously disadvantaged compared to boys of his own age in the population at large, and, in terms most meaningful to him, cruelly disadvantaged compared to boys of his own age and acquaintance who may (in the arbitrary business that is the penal process) have escaped institutionalisation for all their undoubted delinquencies. The liberal sociologist will undoubtedly be sensitive to these unfortunate whims of Fate.

Moreover, the approved school boy does not have a voice. He is not organised to propagandise his point of view in any general sense, or to rectify grievances in any specific sense. He cries out for a Champion, giving articulation to the suffering he experiences but cannot express. The sociologist-Champion, given the immunity of science, may therefore ask to enter approved schools to assume his

chosen role. It will of course be understood that the permission to enter will be dependent on his undertaking to produce a value-free evaluation of the suffering experienced. Research of this sort is intended to give correctional ideology a sociological christening. Parenthetically, the approved school boy who gets to read the research report may wonder what happened in the translation.

Most of the pressures described (slightly sceptically) above are part of my personal experience. I am not claiming to have avoided the obvious consequences. However, I shall attempt to avoid any methodological or other prescriptions in what follows. I want to portray the world of the approved school boy through his own eyes (or rather, mouth), with a minimum of commentary, or, at least, with a minimum of extrapolation. The concern is to represent the world of the approved school boy, and to leave the reader to ponder on its relationship to the world in general, truth and the universe. Some explanatory remarks and connecting paragraphs will be necessary, but they are less trustworthy than the texts.²

Approved Schools in Britain

There are at present 123 approved schools in this country, roughly 8,000 boys in the 90 boys' schools and just over 1,000 girls in the remaining girls' schools. Some 32 of these schools are run by national charitable bodies, another 61 by self-perpetuating local committees of various descriptions and a further 30 by local authorities. Jonathan Steele has pointed out that:

"About half are deep in the countryside, and their isolation makes it harder to attract good staff, get regular visits from psychiatrists or Home Office inspectorates, or recruit professional people as managers. Instead, in most of them, the managers are local gentry, retired army officers, and people of sufficient means to have the time available. They decide a child's future, the date of release, the most suitable kind of after-care."³

There are some ambiguous proposals in the air for the reform of approved schools, and the creation of "youth training centres". But these proposals are in Government White Papers, and so we may be forgiven for not giving them any urgent discussion. At the moment, children can be sent to approved school for "being in need of care and protection", for "being beyond control" or for offences against the criminal law. Some 90-95% of boys in approved schools are offenders, whilst only about 30% of girls are in this category. The schools themselves, all of them theoretically emphasising a "social" as opposed to an "academic" education, are classified by age-range. Boys between 10 and 13 at the age of admission go to Junior Schools, those between 13 and 15 to Intermediate Schools and those between 15 and 17 to Senior Schools.

The approved school is not necessarily the first port of call for the delinquent boy being processed through the penal system. Depending on the temper and mood of the magistrate, a boy can as easily find himself sent to a Detention Centre for a period of 3 or 6 months in order to benefit from a "short, sharp shock". The approved school boys who have called in at these institutions on the way tend to be a little fitter than their colleagues, and to be slightly more perceptive about the nature of authority in the "correctional institution".

On the Way In

The intention here is to describe the range of roles that a boy can assume in an approved school, the range of "careers" that is available to him once he arrives in his "receiving" school. A few comments about the events that precede this arrival might be helpful to set the scene. We shall concentrate on the roles that boys talk about and find meaningful, in the same way as we might concentrate on the roles that obtain in the wider social structure. The school in question is an Intermediate School somewhere in England: the quotations are from taped conversations with boys.*

Before arrival at the "receiving" school, a boy is likely to have experienced at least two other institutions: the Remand Home and the Classifying School. He is likely to have been remanded to the home whilst a social work and/or probation report is prepared on him and his home background. The decision to send to approved school is made by magistrates on the basis of this report, and, presumably, on the basis of the offence itself. Theoretically, the "needs" of the young offender are to take precedence, but sentencing research has been unable to demonstrate any real move away from tariff-based sentencing by magistrates. A certain kind of offence "merits" institutionalisation; another does not.

The social work-probation reports have a traditional internal structure which reflects "individualist" or very crude "environmentalist" theories of crime. About a third of the document is taken up with descriptions of family and school background (this information is of course taken from the adults "concerned"); another third with personality tests and characteristics; and a final third with a brief offence history and recommendation to the court. The suspicion must be that when an over-worked social worker is involved in completing such a report, his main worry will be to fill out these traditional paragraphs and not to deviate from the recognised structure. To do otherwise would be to invite retribution from the bench. Everyone knows that social workers are "conning" magistrates most of the time, in order to prevent more stupidity than is necessary on their part, but there

*[held over a 2 month period]. All names are fictitious.

are limits to the extent a magistrate can be conned. In the final analysis, however, the social work report is more influential than anything else in deciding whether a boy should be sent to approved school. That is why approved school boys have usually been sent away "for their own good".

The above process can take some weeks. The exact period will be dependent on the seriousness of the offence (and whether it is to be tried in magistrates or assize courts), the amount of work each court is involved with, and the efficiency and caseload-sizes of local social workers. During this period, the boy will be in Remand Home, where he will be beginning to learn what institutions are about, to construct new peer groups, and to construct explanations of his predicament.

A common stereotype is that approved school boys (and borstal boys alike) are forever bragging about past criminal exploits and successes. In fact, it is very rare even to hear a boy mention his offences, although he will never tire of talking of his past. Most importantly, a great variety of explanations are offered as to why he was sent away, most of them accompanied by well-documented diatribes against the arbitrariness and insensitivity of magistrates.

"I'll tell you why I was sent away. I was sent away 'cos I was scruffy. And 'cos one of my parents had got cancer. I should have been sent home for that not sent away. To help out and that. So I absconded from the Remand Home three times and from the Classifying School twice. Makes you sick."

The role of other authority figures in school and on the street-corner is also a subject for frequent comment.

"I'm in here for fighting, not for being a master criminal or owt. How I got sent away is: see, one day I was at school and the Headmaster came up to us and he says 'Right, you've been swearing at workmen' and I says 'I haven't' and he says 'You have'. And there was this gorgeous young secretary in the office and I didn't want to be shown up, specially when I had me long hair. I turned round and he hit me on the arm with a cane and it went red. Well, I'm very nervous and I just turned and hit him. And when I hit him he didn't like it. And he said 'Oh, you get out of my school, you'. So I went. And the next thing I knew I was on probation."

The period in Remand Home is followed by a further spell in Classifying School, a much larger institution staffed with psychiatrists as well as by orthodox approved school staff. The length of time spent in Classifying School will again depend on the work-load of the responsible officials, as well as the availability of places in what are

thought to be appropriate receiving schools for individual "cases". Again, there is a period of considerable uncertainty and anxiety for the boy. Information about the various approved schools in the area circulates amongst the boys, and letters are received from boys already in them describing the masters and the general conditions. During this period of anxiety and exploration, many abscondings occur. One in five boys absconds some time during his sentence, and most head for home.

How It Is

In the early days at the receiving school, absconding is also very common. It is most common of all after the boy receives his first weekend leave. This will be the first occasion on which the boy has been able to return home since his original committal.

Prince: "When you at least get out on a weekend for a couple of days, you feel free, like you never did before. It's queer."

If boys do not brag about offences, abscondings certainly do become (for some) a matter of considerable pride. This is particularly true of the calculated absconding. Most abscondings are not of this variety, but are rather spontaneous expressions of despair. They tend to involve rather half-hearted attempts to "go home"—to deny the reality of having been sent away.

Timpson: "I nicked off 'cos I was being picked on. Knocking around with that Davis gets me into trouble. He picks on me and leaves me to get into the trouble. We was having this scrap and I got picked on by a master and I got sick. So I went."

In the case of the calculated absconding, the preparations are often quite prolonged and sometimes a decision is made "not to go".

Question: "Can you tell me the events last week that led up to your decision?"

Jones: "I think it was Tuesday and Jack said 'Do you fancy doing a bunk?' and I said 'Nah'. I said 'When are you going?'. He said 'After Mike gets reviewed' (i.e. for his release licence). So I said 'Alright'. I wanted to go before the review. I asked him to go earlier but he said 'Nah, it's not worth it'. I asked him about it a week earlier and he said 'Nah'."

Question: "Why was it not worth it?"

Jones: "He said he might be getting out soon and he'd start changing his mind."

Smith: "Might as well go to Borstal: you only do eight months there."

Jones: "You know how long you're doing there: you don't know how long you're doing here." Or detention even. (Some dissension.)

Question: "Alright, you said you were going to wait for Mike's review. He didn't get his licence. What happened next?"

Mike: "I says I'm going tonight and we planned it out. I woke Smithy up about 2 o'clock in the morning and he says 'I'm going'. I come down the stairs first and woke Jonesy. I says 'Are you going?' and he says 'If Smithy does'. I says 'He is going'. He says 'Alright'. So I went upstairs and told Smithy to get his clothes on. He says 'Wait half an hour'. I'd got my clothes on, ready, y'know. Got into bed. Half an hour later he says 'Nah, I'm not going. I'm too tired!'. Ha! I was calling him all the names under the sun."

Question: "Why did you have to wait for Smithy before you went?"

Mike: "He's a good mate of ours, 'sides, two's better than one."

Jones: "If I went with him, and I wanted a job, me and Smithy could get a job. But I don't think he could." (i.e. Mike.)

Smith: "'Cos he's only fifteen."

Jones: "'Course, he could do in his best clothes."

Question: "Where would you go?"

Jones: "I know this hut on the moors. When me and me mate nicked off before, we went there. I could go to our house and get me tent and jet-stove. And frig off."

Smith: "Plenty of lasses."

Question: "What's keeping you here, then?"

Mike: "It's too late, init? See, if we go in the middle of the night, there's this big chance of getting nabbed, in't there? If we go round about this time, there's not."

Jones: "We've really planned it this time. Tomorrow night when we go to the Youth Club."

Mike: "You've gotta plan it, 'cos someone keeps finding out and snitchin'. That's what makes me sick."

Question: "You're going to go tomorrow night straight from the Club?"

Jones: "Yeh, and we'll head straight for Melchester."

Smith: "Get lost, you can get the bus to Springley from there, can't you?"

Jones: "Yeh, but it's too risky to go to Springley."

Question: "Does it normally take you a long time to nick off?"

Jones: "Depend. You gotta plan sometimes."

Smith: "Tell you what. Go into the staff toilets now. You know the nightwatchman's book, have you seen it? Just look in there. It's got 'Smith and Jones left the school'—absconded from school. 'Bout fourteen days out. Me and him."

(Jones and Mike absconded some three days after this interview, though not from the Youth Club.)

Researchers have attempted to correlate abscondings with "personality types", period of sentence and time of the year (Christmas, etc). Most of the spontaneous abscondings do tend to be concentrated in the earliest part of sentence, but others are the result of more complex situations developing either in the school or in a boy's home background and outside peer group relationships. The spontaneous absconding drops off as the boy comes to find a place in what has been called the inmate social structure.

In the initial stages of commitment, the boy is assigned a place in the informal social structure by other boys according to various consensual criteria. Only later does the boy have the chance to achieve an alternative placing by his own efforts.

Question: "How do you decide on other lads?"

Thomas: "How they go on. You decide if they're a good kid."

Question: "How do you decide on that?"

Thomas: "Well, he might be a puff, or a cracker, or a good kid to follow."

Question: "What kind of kid is that?"

Thomas: "Well, he might fer instance have a reputation from before. He might have been a good kid at the Remand Home. Or might know some kids in Springley or Melchester or one of them places."

Once the assignation has taken place, the boy has a greater or lesser chance of being "taken under the wing" of more experienced boys. In this particular school, the boy is offered a place on a particular dinner-table by a "table-leader". To be offered a place by a high-status boy signifies acceptance by one of the influential groups in the social structure. Secondly, in this school, the boy can be offered a "sharer". The "sharer" relationship is a response to the scarcity of cigarettes, sweets and comics in the school. Although boys will bring back supplies of these valued items from leaves, these will very rarely last throughout the week, and there is no guarantee in any case that leave will be granted in any regular or predictable fashion. Often, then, boys can be reduced to their four-and-sixpence pocket money (much of which is taken up with other expenses in any case). Boys solve the scarcity problem by sharing with others. These sharing relationships normally involve two people, but they can take more complex forms. Most frequently, however, the relationship is between a younger and an older boy. The most obvious rationale for this arrangement is that the older boy can prevent the younger boy from having his supplies "nicked". Less obviously, but more important in terms of supplies, the younger boy is more likely to be granted leaves (in order to encourage him at the beginning of his sentence) than the older boy, and is therefore able to obtain the goods more frequently.

Question: "How did you first get to hear about sharing?"

Tomlinson: "Just after I came, Smithy came up to me and asked me. Told me how it worked."

Gibbons: "If one person doesn't go out (i.e. obtain a leave), the other can get the tabs and that."

Question: "Is Smithy one of your best friends then?"

Tomlinson: "Nah, not exactly, 'cos he's my sharer. It's different. He has me as sharer 'cos I can get the slies on (i.e. grease around the masters for a weekend leave). Like Briggsy and Wrighty are sharers. Wright's a cracker (i.e. "mad") and Briggsy knows that, but Wright gets out more than Briggsy 'cos Briggsy is near his licence."

This initial period in the school can be understood as an "inception period". It is comparable, but not entirely equivalent, to the processes of role-deprivation and mortification which Goffman describes as obtaining in adult "total institutions" (maximum-security prisons, mental hospitals and concentration camps).⁴ The "inception period" does involve the creation of new roles, but in approved school these roles are less strictly "institutional" but are assigned according to criteria which the boys find generally meaningful. What is observed by other boys is how the new boys "go on".

"Going on" in the inception period involves an adjustment to the fact of being sent away, and decisions about how to cope, how to "make out". This is really a decision about an institutional career: how to organise oneself and one's behaviour in order (ultimately) to obtain an early release and (immediately) to receive regular weekend leaves. Leaves are normally awarded as reward and privilege in return for "good progress" during the week. The crucial decision to be made, then, is to remain out of trouble, and this is a complex decision (since "trouble" is endemic in an authority situation). There are several obstacles in the way of a smooth, trouble-free performance of a chosen institutional career.

Firstly, the range of possible roles is extremely limited, since approved schools are not characterised by a particularly varied social structure anyway. The only formal status divisions are between houses (which tend in this school to be divided up roughly by size and age of boy) and between "class" and "trade" boys. The younger boys attend class until their fifteenth birthday, then moving on to the trade-shops, where they are taught (at least in theory) the elements of a particular trade. But these formal divisions are unimportant compared to informal assignations of status and role. Whilst the new boy is attempting to make his decisions about institutional career, he is being tested out by older boys to see if he can be useful in their careers. He will be tested out on the soccer field, scrapping in the houseroom, and, most subtly of all, in "snitching". He will be given some (usually false)

information—usually about a "bunk" (i.e. an absconding)—in order to test out whether he will pass on the information to staff. The results of these "tests" will then be compared with general stereotypes the boys hold dear (i.e. masculine as opposed to effeminate appearance; ability to "keep the cool" as against a tendency to anger or tears; ability to manipulate the school language and lore as against a clumsy imitation of the same). The role will be assigned on the basis of these decisions. In this school, the range of roles is also associated with ability demonstrated in the "sharer" relationship.

The second obstacle in the way of a smooth institutional career is the staff itself. Staff tend to be unpredictable, moody and demanding, exhibiting many of the characteristics of the institutionalised personality. From time to time, staff members will test out a boy themselves. They will do this to measure his "progress" and to look for a change in his "anti-social values". Sometimes, too, the Headmaster, particularly the Headmaster who periodically intervenes in a school's routine, may create problems for the institutional careers boys have mapped out for themselves. So, for example, after he had discovered a ring of tobacco-barons, the Headmaster of this school "clamped down" on the school as a whole, withdrawing privileges and leaves, and having the boys "scrubbing out" for a fortnight. This kind of intervention can threaten the relationships boys have created with staff and jeopardise their plans for early release. On the other hand, it may ease the progress of boys who find it difficult to operate a career in the unstructured approved school situation.

Question: "Anything special that makes you sick about the school normally?"

Arthur: "Yeh, it's soft."

Question: "You'd like it to be tougher?"

Arthur: "Yeh, it would be better the way we've had it all week, with this clampdown."

Despite all these obstacles, however, the decision a boy makes about institutional career does tend to guide a boy's behaviour. Since, as we said before, the available careers and roles are limited, the behaviour is easily recognisable and an argot is used to identify the various kinds of adaptation. The argot makes it quite clear that the relationship between these roles is a hierarchical one. A table-leader is quite unambiguous about the consequences of the seating-arrangement he enforces on his table:

Williams: "The people we put at the top will get their licence sooner than those we have put at the bottom. They're the greasers, the snips."

The "greaser" role involves the attempt, which is obvious to all, to "get in" with the staff. Staff and boys disparage this role. One of

the classroom teachers puts it this way:

"The point is that I am not one little bit chuffed by a kid who is forever saying 'Look what I have done' simply and solely because he thinks—as many of them do—that if he can get his hooks or claws into a member of staff, that member of staff will from then on say 'Oh yes, so-and-so washed my car, so-and-so chopped my sticks, so-and-so cleaned my shoes. . . .' More am I impressed with the kid quietly doing a job, not just standing there dumb-founded and saying 'Mr. White, there's no equipment, no dusters'."

Equally disparaged is the boy who attempts unsuccessfully to carry out the "greaser" role, and retreats to either of two other identifiable roles.

The first of these is the "snitcher" role, where the boy passes information to staff in a much less obvious and blatant fashion than does the greaser. By definition, this role is assigned by others (often by rumour) rather than purposively achieved—since no-one is every really certain who is doing the snitching. Snitching is one of the most despised activities in approved schools, akin as it is to the snitching that occurs in the peer group situation outside the schools (in the classroom of the secondary mod, in the local police station, etc.).

Snitching is very risky. If a snitcher is discovered, he will almost inevitably be "scrapped" by the bigger boys. It may take time to arrange a "rumble" of this kind, but the "punch-up in the bogs" is a common event in the everyday life of the approved school in general. The snitcher is also in danger of demotion on a dinner-table and loss of a sharer relationship. Demotion on the table means that the boy will probably receive smaller portions and be denied second helpings. As long as this can be shielded from presiding staff members, informal "dietary punishments" will be a common weapon in the hands of high-status boys in the school. Officially, of course, this kind of informal social control—wielded by the boys themselves—is frowned upon, but since the high-status boys are relied upon in other respects, there are recognised limits to staff intervention.

If the second sanction is applied—withdrawal of access to tabs and other valued items associated with the sharer relationship—the snitcher may be forced to assume the role of "pegger".

The pegger attempts to obtain his smokes from the barons by purchase, or, if unsuccessful (or broke), will be reduced to scouring the ash-trays and the rubbish-bins for dog-ends. This activity is, if anything, even more despised than snitching, since snitching at least bears some relationship to getting out, even if that end can be pursued more cleverly.

Reece: "It's getting worse in the school at the moment. That's why the boss has clamped down. All the peggers there are. Lots

more peggers in the school. Lots of tramps. Once one starts pegging, all the lot starts pegging."

Question: "Why is there all this pegging?"

Reece: "'Cos all these new boys come from trampy places like Melchester. Not exactly tramps. Not very well off, and when they come back from a weekend, they've got no tabs, and they have to peg. Get the dumps (dog-ends) and light 'em up in bits of paper and then they get nabbed. The person who nabs them goes and tells the boss. And the boss clamps down. 'Cos if there's a lot of pegging, it means there's a lot of scrapping and a lot of selling goin' on."

If a boy is able to avoid being assigned one of these low-status roles in his early days at the school, the way is left open for him to achieve high status in the social structure. Achievement of these roles would appear to be dependent on the efficient performance of sharer relationships, a co-operative endeavour on the dinner table, and an ability to "keep the cool" in one's relationships generally. The other stereotypes we mentioned before as being highly valued by working-class delinquent boys will also play their part. One of the central requirements is the ability to avoid being exploited, without resorting to snitching and without turning one's back on mates and sharers.

Question: "If you look at the sharers, one of them is a big lad and one of them's small. Why's that?"

Wilson: "'Cos they're taking the little kids for suckers."

Beattie: "Getting slied on them (i.e. 'taking them for a ride'). See, the big kids say 'Oh, I'll look after the tabs', 'cos the little kids get them nabbed off them. Someone kicks 'em in for 'em.'"

Wilson: "If it's baccy (i.e. loose tobacco for roll-ups) you cannot count it. If it's cigarettes you can tell whether they've taken any. But with baccy you cannot. See, they take you for mugs. But sometimes you're not the mug they think you are. . . . You've got to play wide on them sometimes. They'll take a sly tab, if you're not careful, and go sly on yer. Go wide on yer, crafty."

Beattie: "Normally what happens is that the small kid finds out he's being jipped and so he just tells the big kid 'I don't want to share with you anymore'. But if you're sly it doesn't get to this."

The boy who can keep the cool, who can keep sly, has several alternative roles available. Two considerations operate in the decision about these roles. The most important consideration in most boys' minds is to obtain an early release. This does involve getting on the right side of staff, and creating the impression of "making progress". Second to this, however, is the task of making life bearable during the period at the school. Several activities and consumables are available

to ease the progress through the school. The most elaborate situation that can be achieved will involve a regular supply of tabs and sweets throughout the week, a table-leadership (with the bonus of second-helpings) and a regular responsibility for leading boys out of school on visits to Youth Clubs, the cinema and the local baths. A boy can do all of this in one week and still finish the week with more money than most to his credit in the school bank. The two roles which connect with these considerations are those of "workieticket" and "baron" (sometimes called the "slyzie" in this school).

The workieticket role is a sophisticated version of snitching. It amounts to a willingness to co-operate with staff against individual boys and with high-status boys when they are charged with responsible tasks—without ever making it obvious that one is "slyzing" on others. Clearly this is a demanding role, and appears to be acted out mainly by more experienced boys, and particularly by boys with experience of other institutions. Boys in general have an ambivalent attitude towards "workietickets". If the staff, and particularly the Headmaster, are easing the life inside the school in some way (e.g. increasing privileges for the week) everybody becomes a workieticket—hoping to be amongst those chosen for privileges. The workieticket proper, however, has a range of strategies available for all circumstances, and usually manages to show himself exceptionable even in a general clamp-down or in any collective withdrawal of privileges. In these circumstances, he is generally disparaged by others—if only out of anger and despair. The ideology associated with "workieticketing" is clearly exemplified by one boy:

Harrison: "Course, the best way (i.e. to obtain an early release) is to be a real bastard for the first six months about, and then to get sly. Now and again, you can afford to make a mistake, or to get wrong (i.e. get into trouble). But mostly you keep sly and they say you're coming on (i.e. making progress). You just keep yourself to yourself."

"Baroning" is a much more risky option than "workieticketing". The baron can be responsible for bringing down the wrath of staff. If he is discovered in his activities, the baron can have his privileges withdrawn for some considerable period, and a general "clampdown" can occur in the school at large. Yet there is probably more baroning in approved schools than staff would realise, and certainly more than staff would admit to. Baroning is an inevitable response to conditions of scarcity, and a means (for some) of alleviating the pursuits of the early release.

Question: "When you go home on a weekend leave, how do you pay for it?"

Prince: "We pay for it. Some lads have postal orders sent in. But we pay for ours. Out of the bank money and our debts.

See, there's always a lot of racketing in the school. Fer instance, I had about ten tabs last week—on Friday night—I smoked three—and I had double my money practically. I gained five and a tanner . . . on seven tabs. Sell 'em around West (one of the houses). Can sell roll-ups an'all. For a bob. Just the same as a tab."

Question: "With those in debt to you, what do you do if they don't pay?"

Prince: "Threaten them. Kick them in the face or the money."

Bryan: "Are you serious?"

Prince: "Yeh, I've done Tom Briggsie. He owes me one and ninepence."

Phillips (Prince's sharer): "You can't sell a tab to someone you can't fight. Unless you can call on someone who can, scrap 'em. I mean you wouldn't sell one to Smithy, fer instance."

Question: "Why—because he's a big scrapper?"

Phillips: "He's not big . . . it's his mates behind him what's big. Jonesey would stick up for Smithy."

Although "baroning" is risky, it is seen as a necessary service which quite properly is carried out by the more experienced, high-status boys. Any guilt that might be associated with "baroning", and any worry about the repercussions that would follow discovery, is neutralized by the reference to staff rackets.

Question: "This is all going on behind the backs of the staff, is it? This collecting?"

Prince: "Nah, I think the boss knows. I think most of them (i.e. the staff) know."

Question: "Would they like to stop it?"

Prince: "Some of them would, but they got their own racketing. Rackets all o'er. Fer instance, there were some green slates waiting for the Boss's house, y'see. Mate of Mr. Johnstone (the Building Instructor) was making them. Used the lads and the waggon to transport it. But it would have been cheaper to use other stuff. Boss got wind of it, I think. Doesn't want slates any more. Uses mahogany."

Phillips: "Mr. Dennis, he's a good racket. Goes down the gardens Monday night. Takes cabbages, apples, owt he wants . . . sells stuff on the sly outside."

Prince: "They have small rackets going on between them as well, y'see. Say, like, Mr. Roe says 'I got some paint for a certain job'. Mr. Hallas'll say 'I need some bricks to build a small wall' or something like that. So they're alright, y'know. Or Mr. Roe with his building stuff'll say to Mr. Johnstone 'You do this for me, Jack: I'll see you alright'. All kinds of rackets like that going on at the school."

"Baroning" and "workieticketing" can of course overlap. Boys may be involved in both these roles simultaneously, or else at different times during their "career". But there is another role in this approved school, and in most, and this tends to be much more distinct and autonomous. The "scrapper" in the approved school (who may be called various things in different school argots) dominates his peer group by violence. Approved schools are not, however, totally dominated by the scrappers. Even in the senior schools, the size and vigour of individual boys is only one element in the social structure that boys construct and the life-projects they pursue. But the threat of violence is always present, even in schools where physical methods are little used by staff. The "punch-up in the bog", previously mentioned, is evidence of the continuing influence of the scrapper in the social structure, just as the "collecting" of debts on a weekend is evidence of the importance of the baron.

The precise relationship between the "scrappers", "barons" and "workietickets" in the higher reaches of the structure and the "snitchers", "greasers" and "peggers" in the lower reaches is not at all clear. It persists as an essentially hierarchical relationship, but the relative strengths of the groups pursuing the different careers within the hierarchy will vary according to particular situations in the life of the school, and important events in the lives of the boys in the school. The dominating influence in the inmate social structure will however—in most circumstances—rest between the "scrapper" and the "baron". The scrappers tend to be more visible.

Question: "Is being a big lad simply a matter of size, then?"

Smith: "Nah. Just like who you have had scraps with and that, and how you fight and that."

Question: "You think it's just fighting that's involved."

Smith: "Bound to be, in it. Come to think of it, the best scrapper leaves, the second best scrapper becomes best scrapper, and everyone goes one up. And keeps on going like that until the softest one becomes best."

But the "softer" boy does not have to scrap. He can choose to work his ticket, or he can baron his way through a career in the school. Doing this is less risky than scrapping and tends to have a greater pay-off. He is just as likely as the scrapper to be nominated for a table-leadership, for weekend leaves, and for formal positions of responsibility in the house and in the school at large.

How It Appears

We can say a few things about the world of the approved school boy, on the basis of these conversations. Hopefully, we cannot be accused of doing any violence to boys' views of that world in making these comments. Although this is clearly an anxious, uncertain,

periodically violent, and characteristically exploitative world, it is not a chaotic morass of inarticulate, suffering human beings. Far from being an amorphous and unstructured world dominated totally by authority and violence, it is a world of custom and of some regularity—and, most importantly, it is a construct of the boys themselves. This is not to say that the structure of this world is not constraining—any more than the structure of the street corner allows the achievement of freedom. But it may be that the structure does alleviate the more pressing constraints of being institutionalised.

I have not attempted here to deal with the "cause" of these structures, roles, careers (call them what you will). It may be that the thesis-hunter will assign them to "organisational structures", "institutional imperatives", "psychological adjustments" or even the accidents of human variety. I personally prefer to see them as products of human problem-solving, arrived at by people with memories and futures. The point for our purposes is that the "disadvantaged" and the "inarticulate" (sic) approved school boy has created a recognisable social structure—a well-defined set of values, expectations and folklore. The structure/culture which results may or may not have anything to do with "reform", "consciousness" or the Theory and Practice of Cool. But it does have an autonomy and meaning of its own, and the structure may pass unnoticed whilst the categories of sociological enterprise accumulate for accumulation's sake.

I have no intention of mistaking the appearance of this social world for its essence. What was said to me by approved school boys is no more and no less likely to represent the truth about that world than the remarks that were passed by staff. But it does represent a description of an autonomous structure and culture which is unlikely to be understood in applied sociology—except through the spectacles of the studious "research-practitioner", intent on evaluating the relevance of values for reform, and industrial work-performance.

Anarchists and socialists do not yet have a clear position on whether to reform or to organise the social deviants in the penal process. When we agree on this strategically, we may agree empirically on examining the structures and the roles the approved school boy has already created in action.

References

- ¹Jock Young "The zookeepers of deviancy" *ANARCHY* 98 (April 1969) pp. 101-8.
- ²The texts in this article are selections from tapes in the author's possession. These record conversations held with some 30-40 boys in a particular approved school in 1967. All names are fictitious, and the accuracy of their presentation is a matter of trust.
- ³Jonathan Steele in *The Guardian*, 9th February, 1967.
- ⁴Erving Goffman "On the Characteristics of Total Institutions" in *Asylums* (Penguin 1969).

Notes on Detention Centres

STAN COHEN

IT IS ABSURD—some might say—to expound at any length on the subject of detention centres. The libertarian anarchist's position should be quite clear: they are destructive of the human soul, they were conceived in the spirit of military discipline and they are run with the full weight of authoritarianism and repression: so tear them down and don't waste words. As one of Salinger's characters says of the Gettysburg address: Lincoln should just have stood in front of the crowd, shook his fist at them and walked away.

At times I am in sympathy with this way of approaching some of our institutions. But as a libertarian who is also in the unfortunate position of earning a living by being a sociologist who studies and teaches around the subjects of crime, delinquency and other forms of deviance, I am also conscious of having to fight this form of thinking. There is an anti-intellectualism rampant both among one's students (where it takes the form of demanding easy ways to answer exam questions) and, alas, among one's political comrades (where it takes the form of demanding easy slogans or programmes for action). Anarchists, whose intellectual roots go deeper back than any other group fighting the horrors of today's society should be the first to see that a committed and passionate position is not incompatible with an orderly argument. In conventional criminology of course—as the contributors to *ANARCHY* No. 98 made clear—we find under the facade of an orderly, "neutral" argument a whole range of assumptions which make it quite clear who is putting whom up against the wall. I don't want to set up any such facade of neutrality; my antagonism to detention centres is undisguised. But antagonism needs to be documented as much as acceptance.

How They Started: The Short, Sharp, Shock

Detention Centres were first formerly proposed in the Criminal Justice Act, 1948, their immediate inspiration being the military detention centres of the Second World War. The idea, in the words of the Home Secretary introducing the Bill, was to provide something for "... the young offender for whom a fine or probation order would be inadequate but who does not require the prolonged period of training which is given by an approved school or borstal institution". What better to fill

this gap than to give the offender "... a short but sharp reminder that he is getting into ways that will inevitably lead him into disaster"? There was very little questioning of this initial conception—it fitted in well with the times.

The first centre was set up four years later, in 1952, and others followed at fairly regular intervals, achieving high rankings on the sentencing chart for Teddy Boys, a fashion maintained more recently for the Mods and Rockers. By the end of 1966 there were four Junior (14-16) and 14 Senior (17-20) Centres for boys and one Centre for girls. The sentence is for a minimum period of three months and a maximum of six months. The move from short (three-six months) prison sentences for young offenders following the implementation in 1963 of certain sections in the Criminal Justice Act, 1961, resulted in large shifts from prison to Detention Centre. In 1955, 586 boys were sent to Detention Centres, in 1961 the number was 2,311 and in 1966, 7,154.

From the beginning it was made quite clear that the function of the Detention Centres was purely deterrent. The idea was to provide, in the oft-quoted phrase, a "short, sharp, shock". John Conrad, in what is for the most part an enlightened and sensitive analysis of penal policy and practise, blandly comments that to him, Detention Centres are "the most interesting innovation in the English correctional system". He sadly notes that the "short, sharp shock" phrase has haunted Detention Centre staffs (implying perhaps that the staff would prefer some other conception of their function) and goes on to quote an experienced Detention Centre Warden who says that the phrase "... disturbingly suggests that somewhere in a dim background there is carried on a system of semi-legalized physical torment. Nothing, it need scarcely be said, is further from the truth." No one, it need scarcely be added, can indict a system more thoroughly than its adherents.

But Conrad reminds us as well of the origins of the phrase:

*To set in solemn silence in a dull dark dock,
In a pestilential prison with a life long lock
Awaiting the sensation of a short sharp shock
From a chippy, chippy chopper on a big black block.*

In the seventeen years since which Detention Centres have been run something like 45,000 boys have been, to use the fashionable euphemism, "admitted" through their gates and awaited the sensations arranged for them by the dutiful staff. To these boys, the sensations have not been seen as particularly short—when you're 15 or 16, three or four months in such a place can seem a long time; nor particularly sharp—a phrase which implies a sudden chop rather than a series of dull thuds; nor much of a shock—for very few boys is this their first experience of the legal system: many have been through the courts and received probation, approved school and other forms of "treatment". One can understand why Neal Pharoah in one of the few articulate

such accounts which exists, described his experiences in a Detention Centre as a "Long, Blunt, Shock". Perhaps a "long, blunt, thud" would be more accurate. For many boys, some of whom have grown up in families and neighbourhoods where violence is frequent and all of whom have been subjected to the brutalities of our school system—the Detention Centre atmosphere is not altogether discontinued from previous experience.

In terms of the official conceptions of what the Detention Centres are all about, there has always been a remarkable consistency. One gets a feeling of timelessness reading through the original outlines in 1948, the Detention Centre Rules in 1952, the annual reports of the Prison Commissioners (later the Prison Department) since 1952, various Home Office circulars and other publications such as the *Justice of the Peace and Local Government Review*. In fact, as early as 1942, the well-known juvenile court magistrate John Watson justified the use of "punitive detention" for juvenile offenders in terms almost identical to those used in regard to Detention Centres nearly thirty years later:

... the provision meets the case where no long period of training is called for and all that is necessary is a short, sharp punishment to bring the offender to his senses and act as a deterrent. There is a very definite demand for some form of treatment of this kind which would be of short duration but thoroughly unpleasant and available as a penalty for minor offences, including minor breaches of probation. What is needed is a small local establishment in which the discipline is of the sternest, the food of the plainest, where everything is done "at the double" and where there is a maximum of hard work and the minimum of amusement; the kind of establishment a young offender would not want to visit twice and of which he would paint a vivid picture on his return home.

The least that can be said for these principles is that they were clear and unambiguous. There was also—in the official mind at least—a clear picture of the type of offenders for whom the regime was to be designed: those who had not yet developed an anti-social attitude (perhaps the Centres would give them the opportunity to do this?) and needed an early warning. The Detention Centres were to become the standard way of dealing with the young offender for whom, to quote the Home Office handbook *The Sentence of the Court* (1964):

"... a long period of residential training is not yet necessary or justified for their offence but who also cannot be taught respect for the law by such non-custodial measures as fines or probation."

The regime which derived from these principles was to be based on hard work, physical exercise and training, little recreation, para-military discipline and a lot of time marching around, lining up and changing clothes. These features were based on what is again a clear but on closer examination wholly unfounded set of justifications, derived from a combination of army, public school and Hitler Youth ideologies. At various times, the following elements were emphasized: rigid discipline

combined with wholesome influences; the inculcation of personal standards of cleanliness, obedience and good manners; the direction of energy into constructive sources; the long-term deterrent effect of unpleasant experiences; self-pride in physical powers; the beneficial effects of exercise for the mind and body; the sheer consumption of time in useless activity. These and similar elements of thinking have been accepted with little questioning, their relevance to the basic causes and outcomes of delinquency never demonstrated. The few attempts which have been made by the spokesmen of the system at any creative thought about these links have been too pathetic to quote at any length. According to an editorial in the *Justice of Peace* (1/4/61) for example, Detention Centres are successful "... in restoring some semblance of discipline and personal pride to the young men whose neglect of these qualities was frequently at the root of their delinquent behaviour". Such thinking defies comment.

It's All Like Butlins Now

Hasn't all of this changed? Aren't there now social workers in some Detention Centres and after-care arrangements? And don't the Home Office circulars talk about the introduction of more "positive" elements into the regime?

Detention Centre Wardens and other apologists for the system want things both ways. On the one hand they still propound the original philosophy and on the other, they claim that those who condemn the system for being harsh and unconstructive are wrong—things have changed, there is reform and positive training, the military aspects have been played down. Some outsiders, of course, are really worried by this latter rhetoric and think that the system has been watered down too far. A magistrate I interviewed two years ago told me that he didn't see much use in sending a boy to a Detention Centre any more, "it's all like Butlins now".

In practice, there has been very little change at all; this is not the way of such institutions. As Conrad says about the penal system as a whole: "Inertia, the law and the inherent bureaucratic resistance to change, preserve not only the physical structure but also the ideas, the organization and the expectations of the system". Certainly there have been some modifications to the original regime and one cannot deny that social workers have appeared on the staff of Detention Centres. There has also been some research. But the modifications have not involved any basic change in the conception of the Centres' purposes nor have they been due to any feedback from research about the effectiveness of the regime. The changes have been part of a general window dressing in which it is felt that one has to apologise for anything nasty and introduce, for the public's consumption, phrases such as "positive", "beneficial effect", "constructive", "for their own good" and even "rehabilitative".

The recent rather jaundiced looks at psychiatry by people such as Szasz, Laing and Cooper have warned us about the potential risks

of despotism appearing under such new disguises. Anarchists have quite rightly taken an interest in this argument (see ANARCHY 70 on *Libertarian Psychiatry*), although the anti-psychiatry line has been (characteristically) overstated in its recent adoption by the trendy New Left. From a somewhat different political position, C. S. Lewis's warning is the same:

Of all tyrannies, tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with approval of their conscience.

Of course we want neither robber barons nor omnipotent moral busybodies—at the moment we've got both. It is not just a question though of being sceptical about new methods of control which are exercised for their recipients "own good" but also of being careful of not exaggerating the amount of change which has taken place in institutions like Detention Centres. Even organizations such as the Quakers who have recently published criticisms of Detention Centres seem to have been taken in by the rhetoric of change. They quote official reports as early as 1956 and 1959 which mention modifications of the regime and a shift of emphasis from deterrence "to stimulation and towards a positive form of training". They mention that in 1963 Wardens agreed that activities such as shoulder-high arm-swinging and marching in Indian file were "unnecessary" and there were suggestions that boys should be given opportunities to discuss the reasons for their committal and the obligations they have to face on release. The Quaker report also mentions the effects of compulsory after care, introduced in 1964 and in 1965 an official report describes the use of discussion groups to help inmates become aware of their own problems. The Quaker study group finally quotes the report of a staff conference in 1966 to the effect that emphasis was now being placed "not only on proper discipline and fast tempo but also on the establishment of relationships between individual members of staff and boys".

Now what lies behind this rhetoric of change? We need not be driven to conspiracy theories about the Home Office and well meaning critics deliberately distorting the truth. We know from other areas of life that public statements are made about policies which are not really practised or which are only given lip service to. There has not really been a move away from a system based on deterrence and rigid discipline. The atmosphere in a Detention Centre is still para-military, there is still the 6.30 a.m. limbering up in the open-air, the compulsory P.T. periods, the parades and all the rest. What we have seen is the uneasy grafting onto the system of concepts which are alien to it and the appearance in official statements of a new apologetic tone: discipline is not enough, there must also be rehabilitation. The system is becoming

unsure of itself. Let me give some examples of this (and also of cases where the original principles are being unapologetically re-affirmed), again drawing upon official sources.

In 1959 there appeared in an important White Paper (*Penal Practise in a Changing Society*) not only the announcement that more Centres were to be built without any change but an attempt to retrospectively alter the original concept of the Centres: "In the first detention centre . . . emphasis was placed on the elements of hard work, brisk tempo and strict discipline. From the outset, however, it was understood that these stricter elements should be used as part of a constructive reformatory system in which the staff would make a real effort to find out what was wrong with a boy and put it right." Two years later in 1961, a change not at first sight very consistent with these sentiments was announced: a switch for senior Detention Centre staff from civilian clothing to uniform. (The Quaker report, to do it credit, also found this change "difficult to understand . . . at a time when more liberal ideas were being introduced into the regime".) In the same year a Centre was opened at New Hall and its function described in a journal for magistrates: "From the start the boy is taught that he must do as he is told and that he lives in a community where second best is not accepted." Two years later, a note attached to a Home Office circular (192/1963) for justices proclaimed the news that Detention Centres were ". . . intended to provide a sharp sanction by means of a short but strict lesson" (where have we heard those phrases before?). But there was an explanation and apology to come:

"The insistence that every boy should give of his best in all activities is the real element of shock. Throughout training a boy is strained to the limit of (though never beyond) his ability and this unflagging element is far more taxing and salutary than mere conformity with a rigid discipline."

Rather pathetically then, we are reassured that no boy is being strained beyond his ability and that no-one *really* believes in trying to change people by ensuring "mere" conformity: what nonsense in this enlightened age!

In 1964 the handbook *The Sentence of the Court* was published, reaffirming that the Detention Centres' regime was "brisk and firm", etc., that its intention was "primarily deterrent" but that "without reducing the emphasis on high standards of discipline and behaviour, much positive training can be given". A White Paper in 1965 stated that no change in the organization or methods of Detention Centres were proposed. In June 1967 a review of the system, however, was announced (partly prompted by publicity given to allegations of violent treatment of some inmates) and the report of the Home Office appointed Sub-Committee of the Advisory Council on the Penal System is expected shortly.

The Liberal Wolves

What I have been suggesting—perhaps a little unfairly and

unsympathetically—is that the spokesmen of the system have been caught in a dilemma imposed on them by the diffusion of the liberal rhetoric. They are trapped in the system, because they genuinely believe its basic assumptions but they are increasingly being called upon to justify the system in ways that erode some of these assumptions. The sophistry this dilemma calls for, results in making contradictory claims, or repeating old slogans but adding new words (such as “constructive”, “positive” or “beneficial”) which have the effect of annihilating the intention of the original message. Or else euphemisms are used: a recent Home Office Booklet describes the Detention Centre regime as “brisk and deterrent without being harsh or repressive . . . more stimulating than punitive”. This is surely nonsense: if the regime is meant to be punitive, why call it stimulating? The liberal reformers will all too happily join in this sort of game: Proposal 9 in the Howard League of Penal Reform’s memorandum of evidence to the Advisory Council is to change the name of the Detention Centres. They feel that the name has become allied in the public’s mind with the short sharp shock idea and it should be abandoned in favour of simply using the institution’s individual name.

An example of this sophistry can be seen in an article by *The Times* Home Correspondent a few months ago. He concedes that critics have a point in singling out the military features of the regime but then says “. . . this hardly establishes a charge that the Centres are pursuing discipline for its own sake”. The reason he gives for this is that the staff would deny such a charge; they take personal interest in the boys and are involved in training. But how can training be achieved in two-three months? But, ah huh, says Mr. Fowler, “the aim is not” (thank God, one might add) “to completely reshape the boy”. The aim is more modest and is summed up by a Warden, whom he quotes as follows:

What the lad wants to see most is that authority is strict; that it is fair; and that the people administering the authority are human.

This is a marvellous quote for anarchists to savour. The poor old Warden, driven into a corner by the wolves of liberalism and permissiveness, has to save himself by re-asserting a conception of authority which they all share. Why is he so touchy? Who says that authority is not strict, unfair and inhuman? (We might quarrel about the fairness of authority but we do not doubt that it is strict and human.) Many of the “changes” have been bones thrown to keep the wolves of liberalism at bay. The Centres have also been opened up and shown to people like magistrates and even (reluctantly) to researchers. The visitors haven’t always been impressed but at least they’ve been convinced that the barons are quite nice guys and after all, they really mean well.

Even the sternest critics of Detention Centres equivocate when it comes to taking up a position in regard to the basic nature and objectives of the system. In reply to a critical letter which made this point about the British Psychological Society’s memorandum to the Advisory

Council, Dr. Cockett, the convenor of the working party responsible for the memo writes:

Perhaps we may . . . add a more general comment, lest Dr. Norton retain the impression that we were attempting to defend or justify the existence of Detention Centres. Neither defence nor attack was, or could be, any part of our aim—which was to consider what we know and what we think professionally and to present it with a view to improvements and modifications where necessary. This appears to us (and, we imagine, to the British Psychological Society) to be a worthwhile aim which is not promoted by any kind of overstatement.

Now, in terms of my unease about anti-intellectualism, I would agree with Dr. Cockett’s defence of his working party’s aims. Clearly, overstatements are not enough. But there comes a point—and anyone who has read Paul Goodman cannot doubt this—where professional integrity demands much more than the presentation of knowledge.

Who Gets Sent

One of the most frequent reasons given for any failures in the Detention Centre system is that the wrong sort of offender is being given this sentence by the court; indeed *The Times* article quoted earlier implied that the only factor making Detention Centres less successful than they might be, was that the wrong sort of boy was being sent. In the memoranda to the Advisory Council from the Howard League, the British Psychological Society and other bodies, the question “for whom is the Detention Centre suitable?” is given much attention.

Originally, Detention Centres were designed to fill the gap between long term custodial measures and measures such as fines and probation. It was thought—and this conception still remains—that the highest success would be achieved “with offenders of little criminal sophistication and without previous experience of long periods in institutions (such as Approved Schools) . . . The regime is unsuitable to those who are seriously handicapped physically or mental” (*The Sentence of the Court*). Another Home Office circular elaborates on these criteria:

“It is not yet possible to define in precise terms on the basis of theory or experience, the type of boy who is likely to benefit by treatment at a Detention Centre but it is clear that careful selection is the key to success. Detention Centre treatment is generally found to be unsuitable for certain classes of boy, notably those who have already undergone long-term institutional training, have appeared many times in the courts, show symptoms of maladjustment or more serious mental disturbance, are dull and backward, or are physically unfit for strenuous exercise. The most hopeful category is perhaps that of the well-developed, undisciplined young offender, who has hitherto come off best in his conflicts with authority though without having developed a bent from crime and who requires to be taught, through the unpleasant experience

of enforced discipline in detention, that interference with other people and their property will be dealt with firmly and inescapably by society."

Are these official criteria met? As early as 1957 there was mention in official reports of an increase of boys "who were unable to receive the full benefit of their period of detention due to physical disabilities". In 1959 the unfortunate presence of boys with emotional disturbance was mentioned. The 1965 report was uneasy about the increased proportion of "the criminally sophisticated, the feckless, the inadequate and the emotionally disturbed". Research by Charlotte Banks showed that "unsuitable" boys were being sent, despite improved medical and psychological screening. Out of her sample of 302 boys, 78 (i.e. 26%) were "not suitable" for detention: these included 10 who were innocent of the offence for which they were convicted (one wonders what sentence *they* were "suitable" for), 11 for whom the sentence was too severe, 19 who were suffering from physical handicaps which would make the regime too tough for them and 38 who were judged to have "severe psychological handicaps". In case anyone should think that one is being too refined and soft-hearted about who is fit for the regime, an interesting case dating from August 1967 may be quoted. A boy was found guilty by the Gloucester City Magistrates and spent six weeks in a Detention Centre before his appeal was heard. The court was then told of the painful and difficult time the boy had in participating fully in the regime because of his club feet. The sentence was kindly replaced by a £30 fine.

What are the characteristics of the bulk of the boys sent? Elizabeth Field has recently summarized five studies of Detention Centres which go into this question. The first point is that the boys are by no means first offenders, who are being stopped short in the early days of the delinquent careers. In the five studies quoted by Field, the number of boys with *no* previous court appearance ranged from five to eighteen per cent.

In one sample of boys over 1965/66 the proportion with no previous convictions was six per cent, with one to two convictions, 37% and three or more convictions, 58%. Not only have most of those sent already had some experience of the legal system but a much larger proportion than was originally intended have been in one or other institution, such as a children's home or approved school. As early as 1957, 44 out of 498 boys released had previous approved school experience. Although there have been changes of fashion over the years in sentencing policies, the type of offence for which boys are sent to detention centres has remained fairly constant: about fifty per cent for offences against property, twenty per cent for taking and driving away and ten per cent for violence.

There is no doubt some truth in the belief that failures in the Detention Centres (as measured by re-convictions) are based to some

extent on mistakes in sentencing. For example, over eighty per cent of the 44 boys with previous institutional experience I quoted earlier, were re-convicted within a couple of years. The Detention Centre perhaps does succeed better with some boys than others (leaving aside the wholly barbarous way in which boys are exposed to a regime which even by the most superficial standards was not intended for them). But how do we know that the same boys for whom the Detention Centre "worked", would not have responded equally well to some other measure? And who precisely is this group for whom the Detention Centre is such a perfect answer? Clearly all those who defend the system as it is or else want to tinker with it, have some image of the ideal offender who is going to shoot up the success rates.

But looking at the Home Office document quoted earlier, it is not too clear just who this group is. And when bodies such as the Howard League and the British Psychological Society get round to defining who shouldn't be sent to Detention Centres, the list gets rather long. Here, for example, is the Howard League's list of "negative criteria":

1. The severely disturbed, including the grossly neurotic, those with major character abnormalities, sexual difficulties and the psychotic.
2. The educationally subnormal and very backward.
3. The brain-damaged, the epileptic.
4. The very passive and inadequate.
5. The grossly deprived.
6. Those with previous experience of institutions such as children's homes or approved schools.
7. The seriously drug dependent.

New "diagnostic centres" are being called for to assess these categories. They should have enough work on their hands. Perhaps we'll be seeing above the gates of Detention Centres, "There, But For The Grace Of A Highly Skilled Medico-Psychological Diagnostic Staff, Go I".

The Utilitarian Argument

Although it raises complex methodological and other issues which I don't have the space to go into, there is a superficially simple argument which claims that detention centres work. Their success is measured by the straightforward utilitarian criterion of non-conviction after a certain period of release. On the basis of this criterion for example, studies have shown that factors such as number of previous convictions, previous institutional treatment and certain psychological characteristics are associated with failure. What, though, is the overall success rate using the official criterion, which of course is not the only relevant one?

Elizabeth Field's summary of six research projects on this question,

carried out mainly over the last eight years, shows a fairly consistent picture. Re-conviction rates six months after release vary from 17%-20%, after a year they go up to 29%-48% and after two years from 36%-55%. The general picture is that on the average, more than half are re-convicted after two to three years. A few years ago, the Home Office calculated that for the under 17 group, the re-conviction rates after five years was 75% and for the over 17's group 79%.

The naïve outsider might be excused for not being particularly impressed by these figures. Yet the spokesmen for the system are always proudly pointing to its success rates and reminding you that they would be even better if those nasty "unsuitable" boys don't get sent. Even critics of the system concede that its success rates are impressive: the British Psychological Society's memo describes the 50% non re-conviction rate after two years as a "significant contribution".

Who is being conned? Until we are given a satisfactory definition of just what constitutes a "significant" or a "high" success rate, we cannot really be expected to be convinced by the utilitarian argument. The argument is sometimes refined by noting that the Detention Centre success rate is better than Borstal and much better than Prisons. But these differences obviously arise out of different types at the receiving end—boys in prison, for example, are more likely to have longer records and to have already been through Borstals and/or approved schools. Banks has shown that when a group of prisoners with three-four months sentences were matched with a group of detention centre boys in terms of previous convictions, age and type of offence, there was no significant statistical difference in the two groups' success rates.

Donald West's rather sad conclusion to his discussion on Detention Centres (in *The Young Offender*) is perhaps worth quoting:

Judged by the re-conviction rates of those passing through detention centres (more than a half re-convicted in the three years following release) the system is not particularly successful in deterring future criminality but then neither are the approved schools and borstals, which give more prominence to reform by education, social training and individual attention.

In the light of this sort of conclusion about the Detention Centre's success and the generally rather dismal picture that the statistics have shown for so long, what is really bizarre is to find people insisting that the system is still at a development stage and we have to give it time to show its worth. To quote from an editorial in the *Justice of Peace*, etc. (25th March, 1967): "Detention Centres are still an experimental form of custodial sentence. It is too early yet to say whether they have a permanent place in our penal system." This, after fifteen years—with thousands of boys passing through, substantial research which, to say the least, has not shown that the system is very successful and (if this is relevant) an annual average cost of nearly £900 per boy. Just imagine someone in industry or commerce keeping a system going for

seventeen years (as the Detention Centres have now run) and calling it "at the experimental stage".

From The Inside

No account of an institution can be complete without an account of what it looks like to those inside, in this case, both the boys and the staff. My only information on this derives from reading other people's research, descriptions by ex-Detention Centre boys like Neal Pharoah and discussions with a few other ex-inmates. This information must therefore be necessarily incomplete.

The only full study that exists on the attitudes of boys in Detention Centres is that by Anne Dunlop and Sarah McCabe. They interviewed a sample of 107 boys from two detention centres at the beginning and towards the end of their sentences. In terms of their background, the boys showed "a high degree of illegitimacy, of absence from the family home, of unsatisfactory family relationships, of poor educational attainment and of employment that was sporadic, aimless and sometimes dull". Their attitude at the beginning was subdued and apprehensive although some were resentful and aggrieved. They expressed dislike of specific deprivations such as early rising, physical hardship, no-smoking and other deprivations. They recalled with particular distaste their reception at the centre. Towards the end of the sentence, these deprivations and the various disciplinary measures, tended to be looked upon as minor irritants: the main burden of the sentence was the fact of detention itself and the loss of liberty. Any punitive and deterrent effect that the sentence might have, resides in the enforced deprivation of liberty itself and not in the elaborate regime devised for the boys. The staff tend to evaluate performance according to conformity to the regime, but as the Quaker report on Detention Centres says:

The statement "All Wardens comment on the excellence of the discipline" (Report of the Work of the Prison Department, 1965) may mean nothing more than "all boys have learnt that it pays to conform".

And the point is—as the Dunlop and McCabe follow-up study showed—that there is no evidence of any connection between what is seen as satisfactory behaviour inside the detention centres and the likelihood of further convictions after release. In the same way as conformity to enforced routine may have little relevance to the situation outside, it is unlikely that the so-called positive aspects of the regime, such as the work programme, is in any way related to the employment situation outside—particularly when work (such as scrubbing floors which are clean already) is used as a punishment. As Neal Pharoah rhetorically asks:

"Is it true to say that three months of blind obedience in digging holes, endless P.T. and continual unreasoning deprivation provides the emotive suggestion needed to serve as a deterrent when once

more the offender is returned to his environment?"

I have not paid any attention to the extent of violence and brutality against the boys. To do so might be to fall into the trap of attributing this behaviour to the idiosyncratic personalities of a few members of the staff, instead of directing attention to the intrinsic features of the system. Very few people who have any experience of Detention Centre life will deny that the occasional beating up and the more frequent kicking or knocking around occurs. It would be odd if we found otherwise.

There has been no really satisfactory account from the inside to base a full picture on. As a sociologist, one expresses the ritualistic hope that future researchers will provide such an account—although proposals I have seen for research on Detention Centres don't look very promising. They are still expressed in the depersonalized sociologese of "functions" or the reductionist psychologese of "personality traits". In another role, one might express the hope that no research will be necessary, because there will be nothing there to do research on.

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 Neal Pharoah: "The Long Blunt Shock", *New Society*, 26th September, 1963.
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LIBERTARIAN CRIMINOLOGY: AN OBSERVATION

AS ONE OF THE CONTRIBUTORS to the symposium published in *ANARCHY* 98 (*A Libertarian Criminology?*), I would like to express disagreement with Jock Young concerning an issue which he touched upon but did not elucidate. I must cite a whole paragraph in which he quotes from Robin Blackburn:

"*Affirmation of Objectivity.* The study of social phenomena, it is insisted, should be value free and should utilise objective concepts such as those used in the natural sciences. Thus Robin Blackburn describes this position as suggesting that: 'once theories are thoroughly cleansed of all value judgements it is believed that they will be governed by the wholesome discipline of objective facts. The predictable consequence of this attempted purge of values is to orient theory and research towards certain crude, over abstracted value notions masquerading as scientific concepts.' An 'ideology of objectivity' emerges but the moral yardstick of this objectivity is middle-class values. 'Psychopathy', 'Anomie', 'social disorganisation', 'under socialisation', 'maturity', 'weak superego', are all value-laden concepts despite the ongoing pretence of objectivity."

This is, in fact, an attack on the *nature* of science. It is pointed out that social science is being used in the interests of "middle-class values", and I agree that much social science is the tool of the Establishment. But if it is implied that science can *never* be freed from the service of some interested group, the usual argument (a Leninist one) is to go on to suggest that the ideology of "our mob" (the goodies) must replace the ideology of "their mob" (the baddies). When the new ideology holds sway, all science must be re-orientated to be ideologically correct. This Leninist outlook was in fact forced upon Russian scientists, not just in the social sciences, but in the natural sciences too, so that ignorant technicians like Lysenko rose to positions of power in the world of science because this "science" was correctly "Marxist". This position arises out of the attempted denial that there *can* be such a thing as objective truth. Every scientist who is worth his salt *qua* scientist, must kick like hell, and go on kicking, every time this piece of obscurantist casuistry is published.

Jock Young goes on to cite Ronald Laing—at least one side of Laing. Laing is not an "anti-psychiatrist" as he claims, but is very much a psychiatrist free-wheeling off Freud, whose weaknesses he magnifies into arrant dishonesty of argument. If he is an anti-anything, he is an anti-scientist. Young retails the libertarian side of Laing—but what about the other side of the coin? He retails the crude caricature of psychiatric practice in which Laing has inflated half-truths to the degree that an informed and realistic appraisal of the treatment of mental illness is seriously hampered.

The other side of Laing is sheer authoritarianism of the type preached by the mediaeval church. Without producing a shred of real evidence,

Laing seriously maintains that the major cause of insanity is the horrible treatment which has been meted out to the sufferers by those whom one would normally regard as their nearest and dearest—a comforting thought for the families of schizophrenics! When one tries to come down to brass tacks and find out from Laing and his associates what they propose to do about people suffering from mental illness, they take refuge in the woolly obscurities of existentialism. Mental illness (but like Christian scientists, we can deny that it is illness!) it seems, is the result of Sin—particularly the sins of those whom ordinary mortals would imagine to be affectionately concerned for the sufferer. And the cure? Only contact with the existential priesthood can accomplish that. But how do they set about it—what goes on? Aha, only if you subject yourself to existential psychoanalysis can you hope to understand.

For myself, if ever I become schizophrenic (as indeed any of us may) I hope that I am treated by scientists who will use drugs, electroshock or whatever methods seem most likely to overcome the derangement. I hope that I never fall into the hands of any priest-craft who will attempt to cure me by magic (or assure me that I am not really ill) and impute my condition to Sin.

Young's digression into psychiatric speculations does his case no good at all. He might as well drag in those monsters who render us unconscious and rip our bellies open when we can't struggle—when we suffer from appendicitis! In my own article I discussed in what sense doctors can be said to promote disease, and in the same sense psychiatrists can be said to promote mental illness. But I appear to differ from Young in some important aspects. I do not see anything new in the fact that "madmen question the sanity of psychiatrists, criminals the honesty of judges, perverts the sexuality of the decent. . . ." This has always been so. What appears to me comparatively new, and hopeful, is that humanity is progressing out of ignorance and stupidity and towards the dignity of controlling our own destiny. Natural science has produced a technology which in some senses is both degrading and suicidal, but the same *methods* of natural science can be applied to man himself. Undoubtedly such self-reflexive science is seized upon by capitalists, Marxists and other ideologues with the argument that there can be no objective fact—only facts seen through this or that pair of subjective goggles. It is against this, as I have said, that the scientist must kick—and I am kicking.

TONY GIBSON

Adolescents are notoriously slouchy and unco-ordinated in limb control but the round shoulders and earthbound gait of (approved school) boys is characteristic. They tend to walk with heads down and dragging feet, lacking purpose.

JOHN GITTINS, Headmaster of Aycliffe Classifying Approved School, in *Approved School Boys* (H.M.S.O. 1952) p. 2.

It is the job of the staffs of approved schools to give these youngsters, most of whom are inadequate in one way or another, a new set of values so that they can take their place again in the community and cope with the responsibilities and strains of society.

RUTH ADAM, *Careers in Approved Schools* (H.M.S.O. 1966) p.1.

Every effort shall be made to enforce discipline without resort to corporal punishment.

APPROVED SCHOOL RULES 1933: *Rule 34 (iv)*

I am not a sadist, but basically a kind man. If I have used excessive force in administering four canings, which, in all conscience, I still cannot believe I administered, I assure you that this was not done intentionally.

The most fantastic thing is that there has never been any complaint. If I had done this sort of thing, I would have reported myself to the chairman of the managers.

DENNIS HAYDON, ex-Headmaster of Court Lees Approved School, quoted in *The Guardian*, 9th August, 1967.

I have read with disgust the letter from "Approved School Teacher" on March 3rd. The person who can write this and hide behind a nom de plume is not the person we want in this service and his final paragraph indicates that he is only there to get cheap living accommodation.

(MISS) S. H. SUNNER, Headmistress, Springhead Park School, Rothwell, Nr. Leeds in letter to the *Daily Mail* 7th March, 1967, commenting on the allegations made (at that time anonymously) by Mr. Ivor Cook, a teacher at Court Lees. Mr. Cook's allegations were substantially confirmed later by government inquiry.