

12-1991

TIPS, Volume 11, No. 4, 1991

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Wolfensberger, Wolf P., "TIPS, Volume 11, No. 4, 1991" (1991). *Training Institute Publication Series (TIPS)*. 53.

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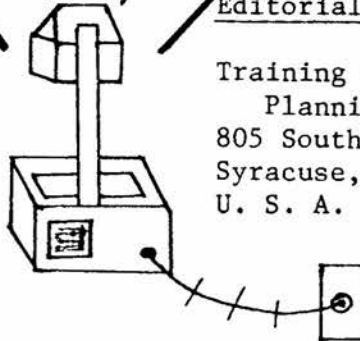
TIPS

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Vol. 11, No. 4
December 1991

TRAINING INSTITUTE
PUBLICATION SERIES

Syracuse, New York
13244-2280

Our December issues always focus on themes of poverty--mostly as it relates to oppression; the prison, crime and punishment scene; religion in society and its interface with human service; issues of war and peace; and seasonal news.

The Prison Scene

*The equivalent of concentration camps with high death rates still exist in many unrecognized forms around the world. An example are certain prisons in poorer countries, such as the Lurigancho Prison in Peru. It was built to hold 2,800 prisoners, but has about twice as many, though nobody knows just how many. Prisoners are simply pushed in through the gates and then turned loose, and hardly tended to afterwards, not even with food. Food that is sent in from the outside is commonly stolen by the guards. TB is rampant, and an average of two prisoners a day die from sickness or violence. Amazingly, 80% of the prison inmates have not even been convicted of a crime (AP in SHJ, 31/12/90).

*Not counting executions, Thailand has the highest death rate among its prisoners, with the federal prison system in Canada being a close second and Finland a distant third. South Africa, Australia and the US also have relatively high rates. One common factor seems to be the high proportion of native people and racial minority members who get imprisoned in most of these countries (source item from Mike Steer).

*A new federal maximum security prison is being built in Florence, Col., which may set the tone for prison things to come. It will be huge, without any windows whatsoever, is so designed that prisoners will never (or virtually never) leave their cells, and everything will be so remotely controlled that prisoners will virtually never see or talk to either guards or other prisoners. The prison is a manifesto of total technological and impersonal control, and a physical analogue to the kind of technological surveillance and other means of control that are becoming ever more prevalent in society generally around the world (CW, 8/91).

*There are prisons in New York State where rap "music" is piped in until 1 am, and played loudly for everyone, whether they like it or not (FR, 1/91). We can only marvel that there are not more prisoners begging for the death penalty instead.

*We have commented before on the new strategy first devised by the US federal government in the late 1970s, and then copied by state governments, of moving prisoners about from one prison to another, often thousands of miles away, and often in the middle of the night. This serves to harass prisoners, disorient them, and cut them off from their relationships and supports, including even their lawyers. We now have learned that prison systems have been doing this in total disregard of the astronomic costs of it, at the same time as they have complained of shortage of funds and therefore of prison space. In New York State alone, in a single year, close to 50,000 inmates were moved among 52 prison facilities, at a cost of \$8.5 million (AP in SHJ, 19/6/91).

By 1990, the US Federal Bureau of Prisons had acquired three 737 planes, specially adapted in order to move prisoners around the country (item supplied by Chuck Burkhouse).

*One peculiar practice of sexual harassment that appears to have become relatively common among prison forces is for masculinized female prison officers to practice sexual sadism on arrested females. For instance, female abortion protestors have been threatened by female police officers that they would be disrobed by them in front of male police officers if they did not cooperate. Female police officers also commonly do nothing to keep male police officers from observing female prisoners during strip searches, either in person or via TV monitors (CM, 25/7/91).

*In the US, when female prisoners who are pregnant are about to give birth, they may continue to be shackled even while being delivered, including in ways which are very unhealthy for the delivery process (SHJ, 9 Dec. 90).

*From 1973 on, the prison population in the US rose sharply, tripling by 1989. A study (Science, 29/3/91) found that the single biggest factor was that after someone was convicted of a crime, judges with considerable discretion at their disposal chose to impose prison sentences where previously they had not. Surprisingly, many other plausible factors were not shown to be significant, such as mandatory sentencing laws, longer prison sentences, later parole, police arrest rates, and even crime rates, though the latter might of course lie behind the behavior of judges.

*The US, rather than the Soviet Union or South Africa, imprisons the highest percentage of its population, namely 426 per 100,000 as of 1990 (Time, 14/1/91). At the current rate of imprisonment, half the US will be imprisoned by the year 2053, and the other half will be working for the prison system (USN&WR, 12/11/90).

*In the US, one out of four "black" men between ages 20-29 is either in prison, on parole or on probation (USN&WR, 22/7/91).

*The Australian state of Victoria is moving toward a "truth in sentencing" system which will, on the one hand, reduce the length of sentences for many crimes, particularly more serious ones, but on the other hand, abolish all sorts of premature releases. Considering that sentencing practices all over the world have always been tied heavily to availability of prison space, it remains to be seen what will come of this (source clipping from Michael Steer).

*A Boston Globe (12 Jan. 91) headline proclaimed, "Judge: RI prison crowding solved." Lets wait a year or two, and see!

*One thing that appears to have made modern imprisonment so utterly corrupt and hopeless is that it wedded old-fashioned imprisonment customs to modern bureaucratism that permitted no individualization or discretion. Thus, the harmless person who committed one minor offense ends up being treated (e.g., shackled) the same way as a hardened career offender.

*At least some prisons in New York State do not even have coin telephones, and the only way prisoners can call is by calling collect--if the other party will accept the call. Even local calls have to go collect (AP in SHJ, 3 Dec. 90).

*It is very revealing that when the State of New York ran short of money in 1991, one of the first cuts made by the state was to fire all 12 chaplains of its juvenile prisons, rather than firing all of its shrinks (AP in SHJ, 28/3/91). Two years earlier, the governor had tried to fire the chaplains for the adult prisons.

*Casting about for ways to save money, the very first suggestion that the chairman of the Pennsylvania senate appropriations committee for reducing the state budget crisis made in 1991 was to eliminate the 10 free postage stamps per month that inmates of the state prisons are allowed (information from Jonathan Beardsley III).

*In Spring 1991, the New York State Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled referred to the placement of retarded state prisoners with non-retarded state prisoners as "mainstreaming," and its chairman announced that for "most of these inmates, the Department of Correctional Services policy of 'mainstreaming' appears to be working reasonably well." Note also that we have always put imprisonment under "human management," not "services."

*Within 18 hours, there were two separate riots at a Los Angeles county jail, one caused by a racial conflict, and the other by a new no-smoking policy. A spokesperson for the sheriff's department said that it was "unusual" to have two riots in one day. Maybe soon, it will not be unusual to have three a day (SHJ, 2 Sept. 91).

*Prison guards in New York complain that whenever prisoners are shown a movie where a police officer gets killed, the inmates all give a standing ovation (AP in SHJ, 1 Dec. 89). Nice people they "usually" are not.

*The most frequently borrowed book from prison libraries in 1989 was a book on how to write love letters and love poems (USN&WR, 12/11/90).

*The small town (population 1800) of Horton, Kansas has raised money to build a prison for 1000 people, to be offered to other jurisdictions for rent so as to stimulate the local economy (USN&WR, 26/2/90).

*The current craze of privatizing prisons is now also taking hold in Australia where officials have concluded that the worst thing that could happen is that the jails will be no worse private than public--but at least cheaper (The Advertiser, 24/11/90; source item from Ross Wommersley).

*Starting before 1551, and late into the 19th century, the British marked government property with a broad arrow--and later marked the clothing and caps of convicts with arrows, as if the convicts were government property.

*Almost anybody who has not given up on prisons has pointed to Scandinavia, and particularly Sweden, as holding out some hope. However, a 1989 book, entitled Prisoners in Prison Societies, studied Swedish prisons, and seemed to dash one's last hopes.

*Oscar Wilde, the Irish poet (1854-1900), once poetized:

"The vilest deeds like poison weeds
Bloom well in prison-air:
It is only what is good in man
That wastes and withers there."

The Poor and Their Oppressors

*One political economist, Robert Reich, says that in effect, the wealthy people of the world are "seceding" from the poor.

*In early 1991, it was estimated that there were 272,000 homeless school age children alone in the US! (USN&WR, 4 March 91)

*A 1985 study in Ohio found that of 132 individuals discharged from a state mental institution, 36% had become homeless within 6 months and only 2 of the deinstitutionalized people had received any community mental health follow-up (Health Letter, 5/90).

*Between 1982-1989, the number of "soup kitchens" in New York City grew from 50 to 700. Some people would consider that good news (AW 13/1/90). An estimated 20 million people in the US availed themselves each week in 1991 of either soup kitchens or food banks (USN&WR, 22/4/91).

*In 30 major US cities, there was a 22% increase in demand for emergency food in just one year, from 1989-1990.

*There are multiple signs of economic stresses in the US. For instance, a record number of Americans, namely, 10% of the population, were on food stamps by fall '91, which was an increase of about 15% in a single year (AP in SHJ, 31/10/91). Also, it is reported that job loss (or fear thereof) has been bringing about a big increase in stress symptoms in large proportions of the population (APA Monitor, 11/91).

*With the steady increase in severe poverty and homelessness, and therefore also begging, there has been a whole new wave of laws and ordinances spreading across the US that outlaw begging, and thereby save citizens from having to face the systemic realities (source clipping from Karen Barker).

*A federal law mandated the transformation of thousands of federal surplus properties into shelters for the homeless, but of 9,200 potential shelters, only 32 were turned over to this purpose by late 1990. One reason was that local governments simply do not want shelters for the homeless to exist (USN&WR, 5 Nov 90).

*There is great irony in the fact that just as the homeless have been camping virtually in front of the White House in Washington for years, so did the homeless only a few yards away from the Kremlin. And just as in the US authorities periodically raze the makeshift shelters of the homeless in public places, so did Soviet police bulldoze away 60 truckloads of "homelessness" from the Kremlin neighborhood in late December 1990.

*The denial of all sorts of government benefits to homeless people because they have no address is not just a US phenomenon, but is encountered in countries around the world, including Canada and France.

*A group of volunteers in Houston cooked meals in their own homes for 600 people every Sunday, but the city officials issued a police citation to the volunteers because food outside the family had to be prepared in restaurants or churches, and served under sneeze guards (Oregonian, 6 Oct 91; source item from Paul DeParrie).

*Mother Teresa was going to convert two vacant Bronx tenement buildings into dwellings for the homeless when the city insisted that she could only do so if she installed an elevator. The city said that it might be alright in India to have derelict people carried to places of refuge, but "that's not acceptable here" (FI, 11/90). Thereupon, Mother Teresa decided not to take on the project.

*There are 12,000 homeless people in Atlanta where \$142 million was spent to construct a shopping and entertainment mall ("underground Atlanta"), accompanied by ceaseless efforts to make it a "vagrant-free zone" even though \$8 million of the above money was stolen federal money designated for housing and jobs for the poor (Hospitality, 6/90). Atlanta has been one of the more ruthless larger cities in the US in regard to its treatment of the very poor and homeless, as we have reported several times before. In 9/89, the city was designated as the host to the next Olympic games, and what this will mean is that housing will be built for thousands of athletes, even as more and more of the poor are pushed out of sight, and often over the edge of life itself. In fact, there is a very high likelihood that the Olympics will be directly responsible for even yet much more homelessness and many more deaths than in the past. This sort of thing seems to be happening more and more often, at least in the US, first highlighted by the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid which required that a big prison be built there to house people from far away, after first having been used as housing for athletes during the Winter games. What struck the TIPS editor even then was how many people, including those of intense religious faith, were utterly incapable of seeing the connections. In Atlanta, the connection should be even more obvious, but America's heart is turning colder and harder by the minute.

On the theory that if it provided public toilets, all the homeless of North America would come to Atlanta, the homeless in Atlanta have "no place to go." At the same time, Atlanta spends \$50,000 each year arresting and processing people for public urination (Hospitality, 11/91).

As one part of the herculean imperial efforts to get homeless people off the streets in Atlanta, it has been proposed to issue a "Ponce Pass" which would entitle a homeless person to walk down Ponce de Leon Avenue (Hospitality, 6/90).

In Atlanta, there also used to be a Jefferson Street Jail which is now the Jefferson Street Night Shelter--a very symbolic change.

*After businesspeople complained about homeless people making a mess when they looked for aluminum cans in the garbage, police in Dallas began to arrest homeless people for garbage scavenging. Interestingly, the penalty for such scavenging is a \$240 fine, but the people who do the scavenging have no money to pay any fines. Some of the scavengers complained that they would rather pick up cans and bottles than rob and steal (3/91 clipping from John Morris).

*In 7/90, San Francisco began to arrest homeless people for sleeping in public places. (Are they supposed to sleep in private ones?) An official said that this would "move these people....out of being homeless." A denizen of the streets seemed to be the only one with residual sanity; he said, "it ain't going to work" (AP, in SHJ, 5 July 90).

*It recently came to our attention that in the slums of Syracuse--as probably elsewhere--it is not uncommon for a poor family to move in the middle of the night. This apparently serves a multiplicity of purposes, such as that this may be the only time when everybody in the family can get together--and perhaps to escape attention from landlords or authorities.

*A Syracuse city official and university professor put on the ragged clothes of a homeless person and hung around a major indoor downtown shopping mall on a fact-finding mission, to see how street people got treated. One thing he learned is that many people who knew him well did not recognize him, in part because the moment their perception registered the impression "street person," they started looking away (SHJ, 4 Jan 88).

*The highest-paid employee in New York City government in 1990 was an emergency room physician who earned \$260,000.

*It is sadly amusing and ironic that one of the best things that ever happened to social scientists in the 1980s is homelessness, because few social problems have generated as much research among them, including of course graduate dissertations (Science, 23/3/90).

*A 6/91 ad in the New York Times offered for sale a "designer classic American hobo suit" for just \$2,500 (SHJ, 8 June 91).

*Walt, please come back! In 1990 the Walt Disney Co. put out a 5-inch plastic toy figure of "Steve the Tramp," a mean-looking scowling hobo with the lid of a beat-up garbage can in one hand. On his package, he was described as "dirty and scarred," ... "hardened and bitter after a life on the mean streets...a lout who would just as soon take your life as your wallet," and who "recruits runaway children into his army of little street thieves."

After an Episcopalian priest started an outcry about this, Disney agreed to stop selling the figure. If you have one, it is probably worth thousands now, or soon will be.

*It appears that hardly any of the parties that try to do anything for the homeless, be they governmental or private, seem to be able to do anything right. Also, when the privileged embark on "charity" events, they often do it in ways that reveal how little consciousness they have of the realities of oppression, or how much they really do devalue the people in whose oppression they play a major role. Below are three examples.

1. We consider it very problematic that so many fundraising events on behalf of the homeless or hungry consist of expensive and high-falutin' culinary feasts. In just one week in 4/91, there were such events in 75 US cities, involving the best chefs and restaurants. Just how inadequate good intentions can be in human services was underlined once again when a monastery in Connecticut cooked up a scheme to raise money for the homeless by making and selling gourmet dessert toppings--some of these even with liquor in them (AP in SHJ, 3 Dec. 90). We can envision a scheme something along the lines of "get drunk for alcoholic bums."

2. The School of Science student council at Purdue University in Indiana held a "drop your drawers for the homeless" event that appealed to people to donate new underwear (source item from Joe Osburn).

3. Some of the more service-resistant hard-core homeless of Toronto were interviewed as to what kind of living accommodations would bring them back indoors. Criteria often mentioned were a room of one's own, a window, a door that locked, and safety. Accordingly, a do-good group that sees itself as being of the "alternative" type got space in a former warehouse "in the industrial wasteland of Toronto near where the Don River ends toxically at Lake Ontario" (as it was described in unconscious irony), and redesigned a corridor to look like a "street" with tiny rooms strung along the corridor that had locks and "windows" that opened onto the "street" that was actually a corridor. The rooms were also elevated a step or so above the "street" to give the illusion of crossing a home-like threshold (clipping from David Wetherow).

*During the Industrial Revolution, one group of people in Germany who were grievously oppressed were the weavers. In 1844, they were heard to sing the following song:

You rascals all, you Satan's brood,
Whose hellish spite amazes,
You gobble up the poor man's food,
And curses take for praises.

You are the source of all that comes
As sorrow to the needy;
You snatch from them the very crumbs
With clutching hand and greedy.

Compassion you can't understand;
 As cannibals, you haven't tried;
 You want but one thing, all your band,
 To strip the poor of shirt and hide.

*Even though with independence in 1947, India officially abolished the caste system, caste prejudice and discrimination lingers on, especially against the "untouchables." Observers usually can tell which caste people belong to by their name, occupation, even the color of their skin (darker-skinned people are of the lower castes), as well as by their clothing. Because of the Hindu belief that one's present earthly existence is determined by the sinfulness or holiness of one's previous earthly lives, there is little sense of guilt by the oppressors (the lowest castes deserve their life for having been so bad in previous lives), and little sense of revolution or even of injustice by the oppressed (they believe that they must have been very bad people in earlier lives, and so deserve what they are now getting).

In November 1990, the Indian government proposed allocating a larger percentage of government jobs to the lower castes (they had already been allocated a certain percentage by law after independence). This set off protests and riots by the educated and privileged classes, with some youths of the upper castes even immolating themselves in protest--even though the proposed change in law would have made very little numerical difference because so few of the lower castes are literate, which is a requirement for filling any government job (from M. Steer & other sources).

A Hobo Song

We always try to find a "hobo song" or "hobo poem" for the December issue. We appeal to readers for help. The one below was told/sung to us by an Australian visitor, John W. H. Smith.

"I'm riding in a boxcar on the old Santa Fe
 On my way from Texas to Califor-ni-a.
 I figured it's the time to rest my weary bones
 So here I write the very last words of Hobo Johnny Jones.

'To my brother Sam in Alabam',
 I leave the memory of the ham
 We stole from Farmer Brown one day.
 I'm leaving you the dreams we had,
 Sorry mine turned out so bad.
 Farewell, Johnny's coming home.

'To my sister Kate in New Orleans,
 I leave the memory of the dreams.
 She fed me when I knocked upon her door.
 I'm leaving you that woodpile job,
 You can have my gold watch-fob.
 Farewell, Johnny's coming home.

'To my daddy in my old hometown
 (If my daddy's still around,
 And saved the fishing rod we made),
 Daddy, grab that fishing rod
 And ketch us both a mess of cod.
 Farewell, Johnny's coming home.

'To my mother up in heaven above,
 Waiting there for me with love,
 Tell her I nevermore will roam.
 Mother, Mother, wait for me.
 Open up the gates for me.
 Farewell, Johnny's coming home.'"

Crime & Punishment

*Here is a good example of information overload, selective reporting and interpretation, and crazification of the public. In 10/90, the Associated Press released news coverage on crime statistics. On 22/10/90, the Canadian Globe and Mail carried this under the headline, "Violent Crime Soars: 10% Rise recorded by FBI." On 29/10/90, the Syracuse Herald American interpreted the same story with the headline, "Survey: Crime Rate About the Same as '88." Buried under this heading, we learn that there had been a 20% increase in murders in the larger US cities, that rapes had increased 10%, and that 65-70% of people arrested in New York, Washington and Philadelphia tested positive for drugs.

*In the US, crime is so much out of control that there has been an explosion in private security forces, which as of 1990 actually outnumbered police officers by 100%, and may outnumber them by 300% by the year 2000. Unfortunately, many are trained for only six hours and get minimum wage, and half the states permit felons to be employed as security guards (USN&WR, 5 Nov 90).

*According to US News & World Report (1 April 91), police departments and their superiors practice hardly any internal discipline at all when it come to police abuse, despite the fact that police forces are notorious for attracting psychopathic and violent people.

*The good news is that there has been a steady decline in home burglaries in recent years, but the bad news is that this is the result of the increase in armed street robbery, because this produces instant cash, desperately needed by people addicted to drugs (USN&WR, 5 Nov. 90).

*Police hoodery. Before roughly the mid-1970s, one virtually never saw hooded police officers in western countries. Since then, the practice of police hooding up when they go into action has become ever more common, starting apparently with the so-called SWAT teams. We consider this a form of territion. From small beginnings, it has spread like wildfire across the globe.

*In 1966, only 42% of Americans favored capital punishment, but in recent years, support has risen to its highest point in at least 50 years, namely roughly 80%. Some observers believe that this is because people are losing faith in their political institutions, and killing is seen as a final solution for a serious offender where the public has perceived that the same offender will not be adequately or permanently removed from the public scene by the existing institutions that are supposed to deal with them.

*When capital punishment in the US switched over from the old executioner model to the medical model, it was widely feared that physicians, nurses, and other medical practitioners would become executioners. After some initial hemming and hawing, a number of professional organizations in these occupations opted out of the executioner role, but now we have learned that a number of physicians have, in fact, participated in such executions in recent years. Unfortunately, even the editor of Biblical Reflections on Modern Medicine (1/91), which is an evangelical periodical, concluded that physicians (not to mention Christians generally) may participate in capital punishment because they "are leaders and members of the community (state)," even though he did not advocate it. One small bit of good news is that the Illinois Medical Society has decided that none of its members may in any form whatsoever play any role in carrying out capital punishment, not even by pronouncing the victims dead (IAETF Update, 5 & 6/91).

*Britain used to be very hard on killers, having mandatory death sentences for murder. Yet since ca. 1980, a very clear pattern has emerged under which minor offenses can draw very severe sentences, while people who murder, slaughter and kill

in a variety of ways, pre-meditated and otherwise, get off free, or get token sentences (SpeakOut, 2/91).

*Considering that there is now overwhelming medical support for withholding nourishment and fluids from non-dying patients with the explicit purpose of causing their death, why would the medical profession not be logical and promote the idea that death sentences should be carried out by putting convicts under sedation and then starving and dehydrating them to death? After all, the profession has trumpeted how merciful this is for medical patients, so why would it not be at least as merciful as current executions, including the still rather gruesome executions by lethal injections?

*Murders are becoming so commonplace, and prisons so full, that murderers usually serve only relatively short prison terms if convicted. However, the police do not like it when the offender also tampers with physical evidence, which is what they called it when one man who had stabbed a woman he lived with also cut up her body with a circular saw (AP in SHJ, 7 Aug. 91). That called for real punishment!

*Good news strikes again! The US Census Bureau said that one of the groups of people it was most likely not to find during its census counting were people on probation or parole, and that it missed almost 750,000(!) of them during its 4/90 count (SHJ, 13/12/90). This is good news for all of us, in informing us that there are still possibilities for going underground in the US.

Religion & Society

*A 1990 report stated that Christianity is persecuted in 40 countries of the world, in some of these by various means of oppression, and in some of them all the way to a persecution of the blood.

*Throughout Biblical history, the prophets of Israel told people that if they fell away from God or sinned, disaster and defeat would befall them--and apparently, all such prophets were martyred. In 1990, an orthodox rabbi said that the Holocaust happened because Jews were falling away from Torah and God. But today, such a thing is no longer sayable, and the rabbi's pronouncement was met with world-wide outrage by other Jews. But the same rabbi also told the Jews that because the sins are continuing, yet another Holocaust may be close at hand. One thing people should take into account is that the rabbi is a wise old man of 97 years who has seen much whereof he speaks, but if he should prove to have been a true prophet, he will never be forgiven by many other Jews (AP in SHJ, 28/12/90).

*Not well covered in the US press is the fact that mystical seers are springing up all over the US, and have surprisingly little difficulty attracting large followings (FI, 6/90). Many of these visionaries start within the context of some more or less traditional religious body, and then become increasingly idiosyncratic, bizarre, and imperious. Their demands on their followers characteristically continue to escalate to the most outrageous things. Many end up claiming to be an exclusive representation on earth of the divine, or even to be divine themselves.

*The fourth-largest religious shrine in the world (after Kyoto, Mecca and the Vatican) is Disney World in Orlando, Florida (Time, 27/5/91).

*Adversity pushes or pulls some people to faith, as happened in Poland under Communism, where we can now expect a decline in religious faith. However, adversity can also alienate people from God and faith, as happened in East Germany where only 21% of people still believe in God, in contrast to 61% in West Germany (NCR, 13/1/91).

*Of course, affluence rarely brings anyone to faith. 93% of West Germans disagree with Christian teachings on euthanasia, and 72% opined that church teaching was alienated from "real life" (Amerika Woche, 20/10/90).

*While the Christian Bible is quite clear that only a small minority of people will be saved, only 4% of Americans believe that they will go to hell. Jesuit priest and theology professor at Fordham University, Avery Dulles, said, "it's quite possible no one will really go there" (USN&WR, 25/3/91). Well, where the hell will they go?

*A group of children were asked what various religious terms meant to them. One said that redemption was "getting things with green stamps." Conversion was "the point after touchdown." Lent was "the fuzzy stuff under your bed," and hymn was "the bottom of a lady's dress"--all in a peculiar way revealing the nature of modern religion (More News, 28/10/90).

*According to a 1988 Gallup survey, about 1/3 of teenagers who regularly attend Protestant or Catholic churches believe in reincarnation--which their own churches reject, but which is a common theme in new age and eastern religions (FI, 4/91).

*A classical example of religion having become theobabble is a new "Statement of Faith" of the Presbyterian Church USA which includes statements such as that the Holy Spirit "sets us free to accept ourselves." We suspect that wherever John Calvin is now, he is fuming.

*The use of the term "internship" for placing students for the ministry into quasi-pastoral roles in human services implies a capitulation of Christian ministry to the medical model.

*In Germany, there has long been a bizarre treaty between church and state under which the state taxes all people with a "church tax" who declare on their tax forms that they belong to a church, and the state then gives this money back to the churches in the form of salaries for (both Catholic and Protestant) ministers, and to keep up church buildings. One "joins" or "resigns" from a "church" by the way one fills out one's tax forms. In 1990, a Lutheran pastor baptized two cats (FI, 12/90). One question this raises (among several) is whether they will be counted among the number of church members, and what contribution they will make to meeting church expenses.

*Here is a good example of what can happen when a church is owned by the state. In Norway, there is an official establishment of the Lutheran Church, and Lutheran pastors are state employees. One of the Lutheran pastors engaged in speech and action opposing abortion, and for this had to stand trial under a law which requires civil servants to maintain the confidence and respect of other people (Advocate, 5/91).

*Amazingly, there is a new journal out entitled Church Law and Tax Report. Because contemporary churches--at least Christian ones--have essentially no faith in God and divine promises, one of their biggest fears is losing their tax-exempt status, which mostly would mean (a) that contributions to them would no longer be deductible from the taxes of the donors, and (b) that they might have to pay local real estate taxes and full postage on their mail. The new journal preys on this fear, and will therefore probably thrive.

*German beer names include Salvator, Delikator, Animator, Optimator, Maximator, and Triumphator. This is all a bit idolatrous, considering especially that Salvator is also a title of Christ, as encountered in the abbreviation IHS often used for Christ, where the letters stand for the Latin Iesus Hominum Salvator.

*There is now a National Chastity Association which is a non-religious group for unmarried people who want to reserve sexual relations for marriage. Many members are reacting to overwhelming peer pressure to have sex (NC Reg., 27/5/90).

*At one time, many people believed in metanoia; but it appears that today, meta-analysis may be replacing metanoia as a major religious construct.

The Interface of Religion & Human Service

*God as a spiritual screwdriver. In an age in which materialized technology is the analogue for much of everything else, including human service, we should not be surprised to encounter a book entitled Spiritual Technologies: A Users Manual. The utilitarianism of our age is also brought out by this being called a "users manual." In other words, one uses spirituality as one might any material object. This whole class of religious practice falls into what the TIPS editor calls theotechnology. There are thousands of Christian counsellors who practice theotechnology, and who essentially are using the same technological approach one finds in shrinkery generally with a few religious tricks thrown in.

*Someone is going to burn for this! A sign of our times is that many religious publishing houses have begun to grind out a large number of works of the type that we call theotechnology, theopsychobabble, or even pop theopsychobabble. The Spring 1991 catalogue of Abbey Press, a Catholic monastic publisher, was full of such works. Among them was a series of six books in the elf-help series, entitled Play Therapy, Be-Good-To Yourself Therapy, Prayer Therapy, One-Day-at-a-Time Therapy, and Be-Good-To-Your-Marriage Therapy, all illustrated with elf pictures, as if to trivialize the issues addressed. This trend certainly tells us where people look for "hope." The publishing house of the Jesuit University, Loyola, in Chicago put out a book (apparently 1990) entitled Self-Ministry through Self-Understanding. Along the same lines, it also had published a book on Bio-Spirituality, which was one of its bestsellers, and more along the same line. Just like we need Walt back, we also need Ignatius back.

*The shrink culture has also deeply invaded the Catholic practice of confession, now called the Rite of Reconciliation. Many priests have cast God into the role of the Father, and the sinner into that of a child arrested in a state of early rebellion against the father-figure, and such priests may virtually insist during a confession that the penitent must be mad at God, and may consider the reconciliation incomplete if the penitent does not own up to any such anger (e.g., CM, 7 Feb. 91).

*At Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Saint Louis, MO, two nuns are offering "massage therapy." Some people have suggested that the brains of some of the bishops need massaging, and others think that what the two nuns in turn need is a bit of flagellation (WDR, 2 Nov. 89).

*At the Hartgrave Hospital in Chicago, psychiatrists founded a Center for Treatment of Ritualistic Deviance, by which latter they mean satanism. We assume that the devil is greatly amused.

*A good example of how governmental positions are so commonly incompatible with the operation of government-funded services by religious groups occurred in Australia where the government decided that elderly people living in nursing homes should be permitted to have sex outside marriage, and religious orders running nursing homes have been warned that they would lose government funding if they did not make the necessary arrangements (source item from Joe Osburn).

*A physician at Johns Hopkins Hospital sampled 96 medical case records of patients who had orders not to be resuscitated, and found not one single instance where the patients' spiritual concerns had been addressed (Anthonian, apparently 1/91).

A secular ambulance agency in Syracuse was found in 1990 to have a service called "The Spirit Program," consisting of an annual subscription of \$59 that assures one of free emergency service (from that agency) above what one's insurance covers.

*A parish of Africans, living in minimal shacks (most of them without indoor plumbing) and having hardly any income, heard that there were homeless people in Hartford, Conn., and took up a straw hat collection for them. The (for them) kingly sum of \$35 was sent to a Hartford soup kitchen (Hartford Courant, 23/10/91; source item from Stan Kosloski).

*Catholics United for Spiritual Action (CUSA) is a group correspondence apostolate for the handicapped and chronically ill. Its main purpose is to help members "sanctify their sufferings by accepting them patiently and offering them to God in union with the sufferings of Christ for the welfare of others." For more info, contact Marie Sopko, CUSA, 176 W 8th St; Bayonne, NJ.

*Last flash. There has been an advanced news release from the Judgment Day, which we thought TIPS readers should be the first to know: On that day it will apparently go better with those who can then say things such as, "I sat in vigil at the bedside of a sick old woman," or "I bathed and shaved an old man who couldn't do these things for himself anymore," or "I gave alms to those who begged from me on the street, even though many drunk it away," than with those who say, "I organized and implemented a county-wide welfare program," or "I gave regularly to the United Way," or "I administered a state mental health agency." Let those who have ears to hear, hear!

News of the Season

*A new record was established in Syracuse when a few stores began to put up their Christmas decorations in the second week of October 1991. Also, already on December 1, the Public Broadcasting System television station in Syracuse carried "Christmas at the Boston Pops."

*For some bizarre reason, efforts were made in South Australia to have Santa Claus make his appearance during a parade in 11/90 in a three-meter-high wheelchair drawn by 10 handicapped people. A man was so outraged by that that he threatened to stand in front of the wheelchair and refuse to budge (source item from Ross Wommersley). In our opinion, an SRV contribution might have been made if the wheelchair had been drawn by 10 lords-a-leaping.

A Few Items on Social Role Valorization (SRV)

*We were astonished to read in an ARC Newsletter that the idea that people with previously negative valued differences should be accorded positive roles in society originated with the People First movement (GOARC GAZETTE, 9/91). A societal context in which this would happen was interpreted as a "post-normalization world." However, SRV was not mentioned at all.

*The vastly greater power of the Social Role Valorization construct over its normalization predecessor is brought out when we consider the fact that increasingly in our modern but decaying society, things that may very well be normative for people who are not in a devalued identity are nonetheless not at all contributive to positive roles and images for devalued people.

One of the most striking examples is the cumbersome and outright undignified way that even the most valued air travelers have to submit to security checks. Even the most valued members of society have to have their hand luggage x-rayed, have to empty out their pockets, and may have to be padded up and down the body either by hand-held electronic devices or by hand contact. None of these things enhances anyone's image--in fact, they are not even neutral, but degrading of everyone, even if one grants that they may be necessary.

Another example is found in school buildings for children that have been constructed after ca. 1980. Increasingly, these buildings have conveyed the message that the children are both animalistic and criminalistic. These facilities therefore degrade the social image of children, and often they actually even degrade their behavior, rather than enhance it. Now consider for a moment that many handicapped children who formerly would have been segregated are now either integrated in regular schools, or at least have their segregated classrooms in such generic schools. In such instances, the negative features which are aimed at children in general most certainly also impact negatively on children who are even more negatively imaged than ordinary children already are.

Thus, it is not good enough to "normalize" the life conditions of devalued people; one must strive to go one step further, and social role-valorize such persons. This is where the SRV theme of the conservatism corollary enters in as a powerful construct.

*The Community Living Board, which is a change agency body composed mostly of family members of handicapped persons, located in Saint John, New Brunswick, has for several years sponsored an annual high school essay competition around the theme of mental retardation, and awarded cash prizes of \$200-\$500 to the best essays. This has had an enormous impact, in that hundreds of students in the surrounding region have submitted essays, some of which have been remarkably good. What these high school students have learned in working on these essays is apt to bear fruit for a lifetime. The competition for 1992 was specifically framed around the theme, "Making it possible for persons who are labeled mentally retarded to have valued roles in contemporary society," consistent with an SRV conceptualization.

*We learned of a job coach in New Hampshire who was so impressed with SRV theory that he began to discuss social roles very systematically with his youthful clients. He would talk to them about what social roles were, how familiar they were with them, what kinds of roles they thought they were occupying, what kinds they would like to aspire to, and how he could help them to achieve their aspirations. In these respects, he appeared to be blending elements of Social Role Valorization with the social construct theory put together by George Kelly in the 1950s. The latter revolved more around individual roles as they might be crafted by a person in one-to-one psychotherapy, or as individuals might construct for themselves on their own, and outside the broader scope of SRV implications on the intermediate and highest societal levels.

*In our SRV teachings, we usually show some slides of a contrast between children wearing leg braces over their trousers, or under them where they are less conspicuous, and less apt to elicit negative stereotyping in viewers. The latter option we have interpreted as being more social role-valorizing. We now have run across a perverse parallel to this which shows how a measure, though social role-valorizing, can also be a perversion. There is a company in Madison, Wisc., with the name Humane Restraint Co. that puts out a whole catalog of restraining devices that are clearly intended for the police and prison world, and to some degree the mental health and nursing home world. One of them is a steel brace that runs from a person's ankle up to the hip, and has a hinge at the knee that can be locked in such a fashion that the person has to stand and walk upright, but cannot sit, run or kick, or it can be locked in such a fashion that the person can only sit down, but not get up or kick. This brace can be discreetly worn under the trousers by prisoners and/or presumably violent people when they are transported about (including in airplanes), so that members of the public would never suspect that the person was in restraints (source item from David Ferleger).

*As of 1990, India alone had 128 million people in its so-called "untouchable" caste (Time, 28/5/90).

*In case readers did not know it, Syracuse has been interpreted by some people (not by us) as being "the model community" in the US for the "integration of disabled people into regular life-styles at school, home and work" (Syracuse Herald-Journal, 18/2/88).

*Talk about model incoherency: overrun with homeless people, a public library in Tulsa started operating a day shelter, a shower, and free phone service (Time, 15/1/90).

*Flynn, R. J., LaPointe, N., Wolfensberger, W., & Thomas, S. (1991). Quality of institutional and community human service programs in Canada and the United States. Journal of Psychiatry & Neuroscience, 16(3), 146-153. This is a major new contribution to the statistical properties of PASSING, and its validity and reliability. The results were analyzed of 213 PASSING evaluations conducted in 1983-1988 in connection with introductory PASSING workshops in the US, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The programs served mainly mentally retarded persons (40%), subgroups of clients with "mixed" (different) impairments and conditions (38%), or mentally disordered ones (6%). Despite the fact that the evaluators were mostly novices, internal consistency and interrater reliability was found to be adequate. The average level of service quality on the total PASSING scale and its five subscales was only modest, however. Community group residences (n=77) were of significantly better quality than community vocational programs (n=56), and both were superior to institutional residences (n=20). Also, Canadian programs (n=76) were of significantly better quality than US programs (n=77). An outstanding vocational program that was not part of the study sample was used to illustrate concrete ways in which the quality of any human service program could be greatly improved, typically at little cost. Reprints of the article can be had from Dr. Robert Flynn, University of Ottawa, School of Psychology, 275 Nichols, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6N5.

Resources

We have come into possession of all remaining copies of the following text: Flynn, R., & Nitsch, K. (Eds.). 1980. Normalization, social integration, and community services. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press. Though some of the book content is outdated, it is still one of the few text-length books on normalization. Also, we consider two of the three chapters by Wolfensberger (namely, the ones entitled "The Definition of Normalization: Update, Problems, Disagreements, and Misunderstandings" and "Research, Empiricism, and the Principle of Normalization") not to have been replaced as yet in their relevance.

The recent retail price of the book from the distributor, Pro-Ed, was \$25 each. We will be selling it at \$20 plus our usual shipping charge, if applicable. However, we will allow an unusually large quantity discount price, 50 copies or more costing only \$12 each, and 15-49 copies costing \$15 each. Also, quantity purchasers will only pay straight shipping and insurance costs, and no further handling charges.

War, & Preparations for War & Its Human Sacrifices

Unfortunately, there is much war news. We once again remind readers of the intimate relationships and feedbacks among war, preparations for war, oppression, poverty, health and handicap.

*When we mention the number of lives lost in WW II, people are often incredulous. In WW I, a mere 10 million people lost their lives, but in WW II, over 55 million did. Surprisingly, those handicapped through war action in WW II were proportionately fewer than in WW I, namely 35 versus 21 million. Some people might take comfort from all these figures by contemplating how much these wars did to slow down overpopulation, and thus famine and misery. We should also consider how much fun so many people have from a war, while hardly any can be derived from crowding and starvation.

*In late 1915, during WW I, the following children's books were being published for the German Christmas market: Many Enemies, Much Honor; March, March, Hurra!; At the Enemy!; Under Hindenburg's Banners.

*In the last month of World War II, a German colonel established a fighter wing that specialized in recruiting teenagers to steer a fighter plane into allied bombers and thereby blow themselves and the bomber up. Some of them actually managed to survive a first ramming and managed to ram a second bomber. This was costly in terms of fighter planes, but cheap in terms of skilled pilots and ammunition. The colonel who had proposed this fighter unit refused to carry out any ram missions himself because he was needed as its leader. In 1991, still happily alive, he had the nerve to do a eulogy at the dedication of a memorial for the dead ram pilots (AW, 6 July 91).

*In 1990, the first monument in honor of military deserters--perhaps in the world--was dedicated in Germany. It honors the German deserters of 1939-45. Many German veteran survivors of the war were "up in arms" about this, but the dead ones were probably applauding.

*23% of Americans believe that the government should ban anti-war demonstrations (Casa Cry, 6/91).

*According to the US Veterans Administration, 15.2% of Vietnam veterans have "post-traumatic stress disorder" as of 1990. There is a good chance that many soldiers already went into the war or the army in a mentally debilitated state, but a lot of their later stress may not have been due to the combat itself, but the consequences of having committed atrocities and becoming dope-addicted.

*Zahn, F. (1984). Deserter from violence: Experiments with Gandhi's truth. New York: Philosophical Library. This is an autobiography of a 20th century US citizen who for much of his life has been an active practitioner of non-violence, particularly as it relates to war and to animal life. The book has its problems, but contains the following two documentary items of great importance. (a) The criteria used to intern Japanese people in the US (mostly in California) during World War II were more stringent than those used by the Nazis in Germany to determine Jewishness. If one of one's eight great-grandparents had been born in Japan, one could be interned, whereas in Germany, one of one's four grandparents had to be Jewish before one got persecuted. (b) One worker at a mental hospital in Connecticut during World War II called the facility a "production line for the morgue."

*Just how phony so much of the "seamless garment" rhetoric has been was dramatically underlined when in 2/91, during the Persian Gulf War, Cardinal Bernardin (who had coined the phrase "seamless garment" in relation to opposition to abortion and opposition to nuclear war) refused to condemn the Gulf War, but called it merely "unwise" (Catholic Messenger, 28/2/91).

*A 1990 book, entitled At the Heart of the Bomb: The Dangerous Allure of Weapons Work, said that the scientists involved in nuclear weapons development act as if their work was like any other, and show habitually "little capacity for moral insight and reflection." They let larger institutions define their work for them, and virtually never discuss the morality of their work with each other. When pressed for explanations, they give a variety of incoherent and low-level replies. We were struck by the many parallels of this among so many human service workers.

*In 1991, the retired French general deCastries died, who was the French commander in the battle for Dien Bien Phu which lost the Vietnamese war for France in 1954. We now have further insight into why the French lost. deCastries had commanded French colonial troops against Germany in 1945, and on several occasions permitted them to plunder conquered cities, and to rape at will. Thousands of German

females, from childhood to old age, were raped by his troops. He also permitted the destruction of cities that were no longer defended by German troops.

*Of the 100 largest Pentagon contractors, 25% have been found guilty of procurement fraud within the last seven years--some of them more than once. This involves some of the biggest and most prestigious US corporations (SHJ, 12 Nov 1990).

*A German editorial compared former President Reagan's autobiography with the published diary of Millie, the family dog of presidential family Bush, and came to the conclusion that Millie's book is better because (a) dogs have a better memory than humans, and (b) they do not censor their experiences. The editorial said that Millie remembered everything while poor Reagan may remember all about a ballgame on which he reported during the Depression, but has no recall at all on his administration's illegal arms shipments to the Middle East. The author suggested that one should get the Reagan's family dog to also write a book (Amerika Woche, 26/10/91).

*War begetteth poverty; poverty, peace.
Peace maketh riches flourish; wonders never cease.
Riches beget pride; pride is war's best ground.
War begetteth poverty; the world goeth round.
-English Round

Human Service News

*Our August/October '91 issue on crazeology has been quite a hit. A number of people expressed themselves profoundly grateful for some of the theoretical discussion, such as how the reliability of a construct constrains its validity. Some people could hardly quit reading the whole issue at once, and a few laughed themselves to death. One reader purchased 50 additional copies of the issue in order to distribute them to fellow members of his agency, and selected others. We would be glad to fill other such quantity orders.

*German immigrants in Chicago who have been around a long time have been lamenting the fact that the old German old age home used to have a much warmer physical and social atmosphere, and the residents used to be offered much more German culture and visits by German groups than they are now. An interesting observation was that anti-discrimination laws contributed to anybody being admissible, and in turn accounted for a great deal of the withdrawal of the German cultural organizations from the facility, since the residents increasingly would no longer be able to appreciate their performances or understand the German songs (AW, 21/9/91). This is a good example of a perhaps well-intentioned but inflexible legislative bureaucratism making for service quality decline.

*We deplore the modernistic aversion to old people, but we equally deplore the widespread profound resentment toward children by so many modernistic elderly people. In 1989, a federal law that prohibited most housing discrimination against families with children stirred up great anxiety in many retirement villages and similar settings, and has brought out some of the same kinds of attitudes that are often voiced by neighbors against group homes. What is so sad is that instead of outlawing children, housing developments for elderly people should outlaw bad behavior by children, and should have the privilege to kick out families who will not properly raise and control their children.

We also deplore the 1989 repeal of the US 1988 Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act. It would have been a boon particularly to the elderly at lower and middle income levels, but the affluent elderly who would have paid disproportionately toward the costs rebelled, and since they were the ones with more voice and influence, they prevailed, much to the bewilderment of the 1988 lawmakers who thought that they had done a good deed.

With so many elderly people displaying so much nastiness, it will be very difficult to maintain benefits for the elderly when their proportion increases

significantly, and the cost of their care falls increasingly on the younger population, as it all will very soon.

Extrapolating from current US demographic data, by 2030, every person on Social Security (SS) will be supported by less than 2 people still paying into the SS fund. On the one hand, as we have pointed out before, some people use this kind of trend to begin to wage war against elderly people, but on the other hand, wrenching social decisions would indeed be implied, such as profound competition between social expenditures and military ones.

*We recently learned that a man in his 50s who had worked for a manufacturing firm for over 20 years was laid off. The real reason for terminating him is that the firm was looking for ways to cut costs. But the stated reason was that he had recently been tested and found to "have" a "learning disability"--even though he had held down a manufacturing job there for a quarter of a century!

Another sad element of this story is that he called a local Citizen Advocacy office, looking for someone to help him. The office coordinator said that she had received several such calls from recently unemployed people, who had no idea where to turn for help, apparently saw the Citizen Advocacy office listing in the phone book, and thought it might be of some assistance to them.

*When a mentally retarded daughter, Anna, was born to one of Canada's most respected neurosurgeons, Harley Smyth, fellow physicians recommended that he institutionalize her at age three when she would become entitled to free care. The idea astonished Dr. Smyth and prompted him to ask: "In the elimination of the obvious heartache involved in the receiving of a mentally retarded child into the family of man, what else might we eliminate?" In due time, fate (or Providence) answered this question for Harley Smyth in a most dramatic and personal way, for the "something else" that might have been eliminated was his very own life. He was fond of taking Anna to an indoor pool for swimming lessons. One day at the pool, his now seven-year old daughter noticed a freckle on his back that looked different from the others. She noticed it again the next time they went swimming, and said, "Doctor fix it!" Smyth asked a plastic surgeon at the hospital to examine the curious spot. The "freckle" proved to be a malignant melanoma, an insidiously dangerous form of skin cancer, but caught by Anna at an early stage. The prognosis is good. (From DeMarco, 1998)

The Slaughter of the Innocent: The RU 486 Promotions & Deceptions

*In 9/89, Etienne-Emile Baulieu of France received one of the Lasker Awards, one of the most prestigious scientific awards, and perhaps the most prestigious one in the biomedical sciences beside the Nobel prize. What for? For developing the drug marketed as RU 486 that induces abortions early in pregnancy. The Lasker Award has often been the precursor to a Nobel prize.

Dr. Baulieu has said the pro-life people are not really pro-life (in most cases, he is right on that), but that it is doctors like him "who work in favor of treating patients and trying to help women who are in difficulty" who are (American Medical News, 20/10/89). (In this case, he is totally wrong, since he means doctors who are involved in abortions.) (Source item from Rod Brown)

*As of about 6/90, there were an estimated 800 clinics in France authorized to use RU 486. However, pregnant women were only accepted if they agreed to undergo a surgical abortion if the drug does not work (Parade, 22/7/90). Amazingly, some people are using the phrase "miscarriage" to refer to such an abortion.

*In an earlier TIPS issue, we mentioned that RU 486 was made by a subsidiary of Hoechst, which once was part of the super-corporation that made the gas used to kill first handicapped people in Nazi Germany, and later the people in the concentration camps. Once an alliance with death has been made, one commonly finds that death is enacted not just through one pathway, but through multiple ones. Thus, it is probably no coincidence that Hoechst is a major manufacturer of ozone-depleting

fluorocarbons--but has refused to reveal how much it makes (Greenpeace, 11&12/1989). And in that we seem to have confirmation of yet another ancient truism about violence which is that it always goes with deception.

*The cover story of Science (22/9/89), the most widely read scientific periodical in the world, was devoted to the drug RU 486. The drug's greatest effectiveness is in the first 9 weeks of gestation. Its developer, Baulieu, will not call it an abortifacient but a contragestive, derived from contra-gestation, just as contraception is derived from contra-conception. He is exceedingly proud of his work and promotes it with the argument that it "saves lives," and as Science put it, "it could save thousands of lives"--having stated only a few sentences earlier that 25,000 women in France used the drug in the previous 11 months to procure abortions. In efforts to promote the drug, spokespersons of the World Health Organization have said that 50% of maternal mortality in Third World countries is due to unsafe abortion, which is probably a fantastic exaggeration. The French health minister hailed the drug as a product of "medical progress." Already another similar drug is on the horizon, called ZK98734, made by Schering.

RU 486 has some worrisome "side effects" which are relatively manageable when the drug is used under close medical supervision. However, there are efforts underfoot to release the drug on a prescription basis, and it will then come into the hands of almost anyone who wants it, and will be used in a fashion which could be devastating to the health of the woman as well as of the baby.

Also, enthusiasts foresee the use of RU 486 as what they call a "birth control" drug, where women would take it on an ongoing basis similar to the way contraceptives are taken now, to either prevent ovulation or prevent implantation. If this should come to pass, we would have a drug that has an abortifacient effect as a backup to a contraceptive one, and women could take it and fool themselves into believing that they are contracepting rather than aborting.

Also, the drug is of course very likely to be called a contraceptive, as were drugs until now that also had an abortifacient "safety net" built into their action. Baulieu says that he wants to get rid of the word "abortion" because "it is almost as traumatic as the fact itself."

One of the favorite clichés of contemporary science is forcing morality to reconsider its previous tenets. Thus, Science stated that RU 486 "has forced participants in the debate over the moral issues of human reproduction to reconsider their points of view."

*How profoundly ideologized science is was underlined yet once again when two different institutes of the US National Academy of Sciences referred to the abortion pill RU 486 as a "contraceptive"--apparently all in order to make it easier for the US Food and Drug Administration to permit its marketing in the US (NRLN, 1 March 90).

*Some people have already begun to refer to RU 486 as a "magic bullet" (e.g., Sydney Morning Herald, 1 June 89), and one wonders whether our world of modernism will ever learn that there is no such thing as a drug that has no effects other than the desired ones. Even though Baulieu has publicly insisted that RU 486 is "safe," we should not be surprised if we learn eventually that it is a very dangerous drug not only for the unborn, but also for the mother. After all, this is how all these things have gone in the past: euphoric reports, with the eventual discovery of devastating realities (see our previous TIPS issue on crazes).

*After decades of glorifying abortion and telling everyone what relief and liberation it is from child-bearing, the pro-abortion forces are now rallying strongly to the promotion and utilization of the RU 486 abortion drug with the argument that it is a vast improvement over "abortions," which are now suddenly being interpreted in negative terms. The director for Population Sciences at the Rockefeller Foundation spoke about "demeaning abortions on the table," and US News & World Report (19/3/90) referred to old-fashioned abortions as "intrusive, distasteful" while using the terms "safe and effective" to refer to the abortion drug.

*The way scientists talk about RU 486 is absolutely astonishing. It is a classical example of the application of a pseudo-objectified scientified idiom being applied to a moral issue in such a fashion as to junk people's rational and moral reasoning. For instance, the medicine page of Time (6 Aug. 90) referred to the drug as "safe" and "efficient," and as a "major advancement." It cited US physicians as warning that if the drug is not made available officially in the US, a black market in it would develop. These, then, are the rationalistic arguments for importing and using a mass easy-killing abortion drug!

*US News & World Report (18/6/90) trumpeted that RU 486 had received a "clean bill of health" by medical researchers.

*Various medical and scientific organizations have called for the introduction and legalization of RU 486 in the US.

*At its national meeting, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) (probably the world's largest scientific organization) approved two resolutions. One called on the US government and pharmaceutical firms to make RU 486 available in the US because it "has many potential benefits for society." The other one was entitled "Population Growth," and called on the US government to provide (more) money for population control efforts, including "voluntary fertility control" and contraception. The two resolutions were printed side-by-side in the organization's weekly journal, Science (26/4/91).

The TIPS editor sent a letter to the president of AAAS and to the journal's editor, requesting that it be published. Despite repeated requests, this did not happen, although Science publishes several letters on various issues every week. Accordingly, the letter is reproduced below.

"May 29, 1991

Daniel E. Koshland, Jr., Editor
American Association for the Advancement of Science
1333 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Sir:

I have been a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science for a bit over 30 years, and a fellow for a major portion of this time.

I was shocked at the RU 486 resolution published in the 26 April 91 issue of Science (p. 587). I have always read Science regularly, but was not even aware that this resolution was in the making.

My objections to this resolution are that (a) it puts the AAAS officially behind a policy that I (and many other people as well) consider to be deathmaking, and hence deeply immoral, and (b) it does so hypocritically and deceptively.

Anyone who has had any background in the philosophy of science, and particularly epistemology, knows that science cannot be separated from ideologies and values. Thus, the issues here are not just scientific ones, as the resolution implies, and as well-meaning naive people, or less naive ill-intentioned ones, might claim. I also found it ironic that this resolution was immediately juxtaposed, side-by-side on the very same page, to a population growth resolution. The passage of the two resolutions together is not likely to be a coincidence; at the very least, it is deeply symbolic.

One of the deceptions at issue is that hardly any new drug turns out to be as safe and effective as it is at first interpreted to be. Indeed, new drugs commonly undergo profound reevaluations, and as the full truth gradually emerges, even those at first proclaimed as "miracle drugs" may not only get downgraded later, but even withdrawn. The resolution claims that RU 486 "has been used in France as a safe, effective method...", but that claim is already in question now, and who knows what else time will tell, especially given the fact that this drug has more ideology and

politics associated with it than most. Since everyone with even minor expertise with drugs knows about the history of the unreliability of the early promotion of drugs, we are obviously once again dealing with hypocrisy and deception. But then, those familiar with the dynamics of violence also know that violence is always attended by deception.

In service to the unmasking of hypocrisy, one should also ask on behalf of which other drug AAAS has ever passed a resolution calling for government approval, importation, lessened regulation, etc.

Another problem is that to endorse, at least in part, a drug that had been developed explicitly as an abortifacient because it might have other beneficial effects is a tainted decision at best, and with many people it is outright hypocritical because their real agenda is, in fact, the promotion of abortion.

Surely, the majority of the AAAS members know that many biomedical scientists in Nazi Germany used the opportunity of the Nazi killings to their research advantage. My extensive studies of this history have given me grave qualms even about accepting for myself a vaccination against Hepatitis B, because it was developed immorally in the US by deliberately infecting mentally retarded children with the disease, in order to use them as research subjects. That this position is not totally outlandish is underlined by the still ongoing debate whether medical research findings done on Nazi victims should be cited as valid, or used in any way even if they can be presumed to be valid.

It has been my personal moral policy to disassociate myself from any organization that makes explicit death alliances. This has already led to my withdrawing from several organizations. It never occurred to me that this would eventually have to include the AAAS. It is with the deepest regret that I will not be able to renew my membership when the time for renewal comes up, unless and until the RU 486 resolution is rescinded.

One sad thing that this episode helps reveal is that soon, those of us who try to be coherently opposed to all deathmaking, including abortion, will have to be outside almost all structures of society. In some cases, we are excluded against our will, and in others, we feel compelled by conscience not to be affiliated with structures that at least officially endorse some kind of deathmaking.

Wolf Wolfensberger
Professor"

*On 10 Jan. 90, the New York Times came out in an editorial supporting the use of RU 486 (Source item from Peter Millier).

*In 10/91, a wealthy California feminist activist, Peg Yorkin, announced that she had donated \$10 million to the Feminist Majority Foundation to be used entirely for making RU 486 available in the US. The woman had acquired most of her fortune in a divorce settlement from her husband who had been one of the producers of "All in the Family" and other TV blockbusters.

*Thirty people picketed the French embassy in Washington to protest the French government's promotion of the abortion drug RU 486, calling for a boycott of French wines, and pouring a dozen bottles of French wine on the ground. One of the people was arrested for--violating the open bottle law of the District of Columbia (WDR, 26/4/90).

*As was fully to be expected, and as we had predicted, the first reports are beginning to come in of damaging impact of RU 486 on the women who use it to induce abortions. An international commission of inquiry in France has already said that the "side effects" of the drug are so serious that it should be withdrawn from the market. The manufacturer responded by writing to all abortion centers that used the drug, telling them that such effects occur 9.5% of the time. The commission interpreted this as an insufficient response (RLR, 5/90).