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Jailhouse News & Blues

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Ever since the birth of the modern prison, about 200 years ago, there have been controversies about what percentage of the prison population was retarded. One source of ambiguity had always been how mental retardation was to be defined, but there has always been agreement that on the average, the prison population was less intelligent than the general public. At this time, it is estimated that about 40% of the US prison population has an IQ below 55, and 10% has an IQ below 70.

Probably more than anything, this tells us the following: people who are not too smart are disproportionately apt to be found in prison; such people are the ones that are much more apt to commit stupid crimes and then to get caught; and such people are also the ones that are not likely to find clever lawyers to defend them in a committed fashion.

*In a biography (Screw, by T. Ryan, 1962) a former guard at Bridgewater State Hospital (actually the section for the criminally insane of the Massachusetts Correctional Institution featured in 1967 in the film Titicut Follies) described incredible abuses committed by the personnel against the residents, including getting residents to fight each other for the amusement of the guards, inciting a handicapped man to gouge his own eyes out, and assault upon residents so that guards could claim having been attacked, putting in for injury, and getting weeks of paid injury leave.

*In 1978, there were efforts in the US Senate to pass a so-called 'Therapeutic Communities Act' which would have mandated the introduction of behavior modification programs into all federal prisons, which might leave one with the impression that someone being put into the time-out room (formerly called the dungeon) is being given the benefit of a therapeutic community.

*The Watertown Correctional Facility in New York State, a medium-security facility, formerly a US Air Force radar installation, housed a typical average of 230 prisoners during 1963, many of whom were sent there from as far away as New York City, roughly 350 miles away. One would certainly think that the state of New York would be capable of establishing a medium-security facility somewhere closer to the major population centers where people commit their crimes, and where they could be imprisoned close to their social support networks.

*Alone is in the far north of New York State, almost at the Canadian border. In response to political pressures, the state decided to put a 700-place prison there. Said the town supervisor, 'This is good news,' and the mayor, 'I'm very pleased,' and the town supervisor, 'We are delighted,' all because this means a $14 million annual payroll. However, as is customary in New York State prisons, the prisoners commonly are sent to prisons far from home, which is known to dramatically increase the recidivism rate.

*There are some mighty big prisons in the world. The principal jail of New York City is on Rikers Island in the East River, and had 7700 inmates as of late 1964.

*We have reported repeatedly on suicide in prison, and how common it is particularly for adolescents and young adults who often have been imprisoned for the first time and for minor crimes. About 40% of these suicides take place within the first two weeks of incarceration. About 90% of prison rapes of men by other men are believed to go unreported because the victims really have no recourse.

*People in prisons have very little income. In a Georgia prison, one prisoner recently worked from 3:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. and received an average of 2¢ an hour pay. If a prisoner does not receive money from the family, there may not be enough for snacks and small necessities for which even SSI has allowed at least $55 a month to handicapped people. Thus, one of the few ways a prisoner can
earn money is by selling blood. Even for this, they may only get $7.75 per pint—3—and so some prisoners do it almost weekly. There is something very abhorrent about this entire practice, and the fact that prisoners are a group highly at risk of catching AIDS could turn out to be a very unfortunate blessing—if there is such a thing—in that it may curtail the practice. This blood, at least in Georgia, is not even used in local hospitals to save lives, but is sold at a profit overseas for the production of chemicals (Hospitality, 4/93, source item provided by Doug Louncey).

*A court in California found that Folsom and San Quentin prisons were as loud as a freight train thundering 100 feet away, yet the personnel would not permit prisoners to wear earplugs. This almost guarantees that a lot of people either lose some of their hearing or go crazy. The judge ruled that earplugs must be permitted (Institutions, etc., 12/94).

*Apparently, one favorite way in which prison personnel torture prisoners in the US is to spray mace into their eyes even when they are totally passive.

*It appears that the British prison system has learned something from the American, in that it has begun to also shift prisoners among its prisons. Sometimes, a family will travel from Ireland on a long and expensive trip to England to visit their imprisoned family member, only to find out that their relative has been moved to another part of the country without them having been notified.

*The official publication of the American Correctional Association, Corrections Today, contains hardly anything on corrections at all. Instead both its content and its extensive advertisements have to do mostly with imprisonment and security.

*According to a Massachusetts firm, it is almost ready to market computerized robot prison sentries that would roam prisons, particularly at night, and substitute for human prison guards. The robots can be armed with tear gas and "tasers," which is a kind of electrically charged harpoon, and theoretically also with guns. The robots would be 44 inches tall, weigh 35 lbs, and move on wheels. They have the capacity to differentiate humans from animals and can speak in a fashion (UPI, 10/15, source item from Joe Osburn).

*In ever more frantic efforts to stay in control of the prison situation, the empire has now introduced "tear-away" clothing for prisoners.

*Among the entrepreneurs who smelled the potential profit in private prisons are the Wall Street brokerage firm F. P. Butten, and respectable old-timers such as RCA. One private prison firm has the detoxifying and unrevealing name, Behavioral Systems Southwest.

*Good news. Sweden is experimenting with a prison system in which inmates live at a country estate without being locked up, work at a job on the grounds, and get paid a wage of almost $1600 a month. However, out of this money they have to pay room, board and other expenses, and are given help with budgeting. Thereby, they are learning how to use money realistically and productively. The program is said to have reduced recidivism, and it may be expanded nationwide. (Source item supplied by Doug Louncey)

*Somewhere in the US, there is a state prison which received authorization to construct a large swimming pool in the corner of its exercise yard. Knowing that if the public learned about the pool's existence, they would be attacked for "coddling criminals," authorities carefully buried the completed pool under a layer of earth, to be dug up whenever the climate of public opinion becomes more favorable.
*An inmate in the Santa Clara county jail in California who had been serving time for stealing video games somehow gained access to the jail's computer and changed his release date. The discrepancy was accidentally discovered, whereupon officials had to review the records of about 1200 other inmates to see if their release dates had also been changed.

*As we emphasize over and over, never fight perversions with perversions. In Laporte, IN, a prisoner fell 2 floors from a jail window while trying to escape, and he sued successfully that the Sheriff's Department had to pay $42,000 in medical bills for his injuries.

*It has been very difficult to determine whether there are any prisons within a 10 mile radius of an operating US nuclear reactor. The only major one identified by an anti-nuclear journal is Pennsylvania's State Correctional Institute at Graterford, which is close to the Limerick nuclear power plant of Philadelphia Electric. It holds 2500 prisoners in overcrowded cages. The prisoners hired a lawyer in order to determine what plans there were to evacuate them in case of a nuclear emergency at the power plant. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board was very uncooperative in sharing whatever evacuation plans there were. Bit by bit, the lawyer had to pry the plan out of them. One element of the plan is that guards on duty would each call 10 off-duty guards to come to the prison to help move the prisoners. However, some guards have privately told the inmates that in the event of a nuclear accident, they would flee the prison and let the prisoners fend for themselves. To this, the superintendent of the prison commented in typical imperial style: "I have no indication that any staff is going to do anything other than what they are directed to do." The evacuation plan also relies on public transportation vehicles and drivers who have never had anything to do with the prisoners (Cohen-Joppa & Cohen-Joppa, 1985, source item from Ann O'Connor).

Criminal Justice Tales

*There is remarkably little relationship between the prison sentence one receives for a crime and the time one actually spends in prison. Rapists receive a median sentence of 10 years, but on the average serve only 36 months. People under life sentence spend on the average less than 7 years in prison, and almost a quarter served less than 3 years. Over half the people sentenced for manslaughter serve less than 2.3 years (UPI, in SLJ, 8/7/85).

*According to a Knight-Ridder news service article (6/6/85), illegal aliens in the US are almost treated as badly by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service as some imprisoned people are in totalitarian countries. For instance, they are sometimes imprisoned weeks at a time without ever getting outdoors, there may be nothing for them to do for months, medical attention is minimal, families are commonly separated, people are often rapidly shifted between prisons without anyone being informed, they are often coerced into signing papers, and may be confined to isolation for various reasons. Authorities say that there is no reason to expect any change in the foreseeable future.

*Lieutenant Calley had been sentenced to life imprisonment for his part in the My Lai massacre. However, he was released after only three years of house arrest and 4½ months in a military prison.

*After almost a century of 'reforms,' a child in the juvenile justice system is now vastly more likely to be imprisoned before than after trial. In fact, on any given day, about 13,000 juveniles are in some form of detention in the US, but at least 2/3 of these are awaiting trial. The vast majority of those who are tried are dismissed or put on probation, and very few are sentenced to jail. These practices have been challenged in the Supreme Court but have been upheld (Newsweek,
Other authorities claim that as many as 500,000 youths are spending at least some time in adult jails every year, where many are sexually abused, tortured, and even murdered. For instance, in Boise, ID, a 17-year old boy was jailed in 1982 for owing $73 in traffic tickets, and his cell mates tortured him to death. These things contribute to the high suicide rate of youths in prison. Some lawyers estimate that in California alone, 100,000 youngsters are held in adult jails each year, nearly all charged with minor offenses, and very few of them ever being jailed after court proceedings. Another insanity is that children who commit trivial offenses may be held together with those who are extremely hardened and have committed a string of gruesome crimes. Further, juvenile detention facilities are sometimes much harsher than adult ones.

*In Syracuse, a 22-year old man was up in court for drunken driving. While the case was pending, another man assaulted him with a knife and rendered him paraplegic. He thereupon got himself an automobile that he was able to drive, but at age 25, he killed a 23-year old young mother by drunkenly plowing across a downtown sidewalk. People felt so sorry for him that a plea bargain was arranged whereby he pleaded guilty in exchange for a guaranteed sentence of probation.

This vignette underlines that people who become adventitiously handicapped generally retain their earlier personality and problems. Becoming handicapped does not necessarily cure a person of anything, or make them noble or better, though it does do all of these things for some people. The above is further underlined by the case a few years back of a man in a wheelchair who was caught after he had cold-bloodedly gunned down another man. It turns out that the killer had been a mob operative before he was paralyzed, and had simply continued to be what he had been before.

*Your money or your rights! The man who assassinated the mayor of San Francisco in 1978 got out of prison in 1984. The reason he got out so soon is because his lawyer persuaded the jury that his mental capacity was diminished because he had been eating too many sweets. After his release, he could have been sued for having violated the mayor's rights.

*Good news. A phenomenal event is a complaint from 800 West German judges and prosecutors submitted to the US district court judge who sentenced four people to prison for 8 to 18 years for chipping at a concrete Minuteman missile silo with a jackhammer. The West German jurists said that the sentence was unjust, even cruel, and more like retaliation. For a similar offense in West Germany, offenders were commended by the court for the integrity of their conscience and given a fine. German judges feel guilty about their complicity 40 and 50 years ago with the Nazis, and are saying that US judges are now being accomplices to nuclear crimes (NCR, 10/5/85). Interestingly, the West German Supreme Court has upheld that "the claim of a democratic state to punish a person for violation of the law has to recede in cases where punishment would crush the conscience and personality of the defendant.'

Judicial Murder

*In October 1985, the state of Indiana executed a prisoner convicted of murder. They applied 2300 volts for 10 seconds, then 500 volts for 20 seconds, but had to reapply voltage three more times to terminate the prisoner's vital functions, with the execution taking a total of 17 minutes. Smoke came from the man's head and the chamber was filled with the smell of burning flesh. Unfortunately, almost everybody involved concluded that lethal injections were the answer. By 10/85, 15 states permitted or required such injections. (Source item from Joe Osburn.)
In November 1984, the Secretary of the Division of Prisons of the North Carolina Department of Corrections sent a letter to the employees of the department congratulating them on the "professional conduct you demonstrated in carrying out responsibilities associated with the executions our department was required by law to perform this year." It noted that these executions were handled in "an efficient and dignified...and excellent manner." 'Never has a devotion to team work been more evident and the results of that team work more rewarding...there were no mistakes, no errors in judgment.' The writer was described as 'a very caring human being and a very sensitive person' who did not himself attend any of the executions (NCR, 8/2/85). By "no mistakes, no errors," we assume he meant that no one survived an execution.

*One possibility ahead is that executions may be contracted out among states. For instance, one possibility being considered if the federal government should get back into the capital punishment business, is to contract executions out to states such as FL which is currently holding the record for executions in recent years (Institutions, Etc., 8/85).

The Antics of Police States & Police Forces

*The US Commerce Department has a specific rule (Section 5999B of the Commodity Control List) that authorizes the unlicensed export of "specially designed implements of torture" to a list of nations friendly to the US. The implements include things such as thumbscrews and cattle prods, described by a government official as "just routine items for the police." (Newsweek, 12/11/84)

*During the October 1985 urban riots in Britain, there was some discussion as to why the police were not using water cannons. It turned out that these can be quite lethal, and before they could be used on people they would have to be tested on animals—but in Britain, that's a no-no. Thus, ironically, humans are, at least for the time being, being spared because the tests might do harm to animals.

*Unfortunately, Britain unveiled a "normalisation" plan for Northern Ireland which included the use of plastic bullets, which have already killed 17 children. As one of our British friends put it: "This alone is one good reason to shift from normalisation to Social Role Valorisation."

*Oddly enough, there are such things as private police training corporations. Such organizations are hired by many police departments to train their officers. The biggest of these firms is the American Security Council which has privately compiled files on 7 million US "dissidents." Because these files are in a private domain, they are not accessible under right-to-information legislation. At least one such organization has recently begun teaching that sanctuary and anti-nuclear groups are potentially terrorist. That would certainly include the TIPS editor and many of his friends. One element of this calumnious campaign has been to interpret such groups as "Communist fronts" (Sojourners, 7/85). Can increased violence by police against peaceful peace groups be far behind?

*TIPS has commented before on the fact that police forces tend to attract recruits that have psychopathic and/or sadistic tendencies. Peace demonstrators find this out all the time. At the recent women's demonstration at the Seneca Army depot in NY, a woman demonstrator refused to move, and when police laid hands on her she went limp, which is a common non-violent tactic. In order to punish her, the police broke her little finger. Jerry Berrigan, one of the Berrigan brothers who are committed to non-violence, demonstrated at an Air Force base where the Air Force demonstrated cruise missiles to the public on Hiroshima Day (8/6/83). They handcuffed his feet, and hands to his back, and then threw him face
down on the concrete floor. This is a very common tactic, and is both terrifying and very likely to do injury to one's face, if not worse, because one cannot buffer oneself with one's hands. Obviously, the tactic is well understood by police forces because it is so widely used as a method of punishing people whom they do not like.

The public affairs director for the Seneca Army Depot in NY commented as follows about the women demonstrators: "I know it is a sensitive issue, but they have their lives and they can do with them what they want to." This certainly sounds like a terrible thing to say when one is talking about 450 highly trained soldiers confronting about 2500 people, most of them women, and most of them peaceful.

*A 29-year old man who had only one foot and walked with a crutch created a disturbance in a restaurant. When police arrived, he hit one officer in the head with his crutch and then determinedly advanced on a second officer who, instead of simply retreating before the one-footed man, responded by shooting the assailant in the head, perhaps seeing this as an act of mercy as compared to shooting him in the other leg (SHJ, 22/5/84). Admittedly, one-legged men can be mighty dangerous—even if they are 88-years old, as revealed in Nashville, TN. A young man backing his car out of the garage did not see that there was a wheelchair going by with a man in it, so he bumped it and spilled the man. When he saw what he had done, the driver was mortified, got out of his car to apologize—and promptly was shot in the chest by the old man who had a pistol concealed in his wheelchair.

*Slavery

*There are many forms of indirect slavery, and these will probably never have an end. However, the north African country of Mauritania appears to be the last country that still has old-fashioned slavery even though its end has been declared there at least 3 times in the 20th century. The slave system was introduced there about 1000 years ago by the Arabs, with the slaves being mostly Negroes. There are now an estimated 100,000 full-time and 300,000 part-time or former slaves in Mauritania, with a typical price for a male being about $200 and a female around $4000.

*While the abuses of child labor once so gruesome and common in our society have been abolished some time ago, they still prevail in many Third World countries. For instance, in Columbia, children as young as seven may be sent to work underground in the mines in very low galleries where their backs are permanently damaged, they get dusty lungs, and usually die early. In Thailand, children may be forced to work 15 hours a day polishing gems in order to obtain the most elementary form of subsistence. In India, 9-year old children may be put to work weaving rugs in a monotonous fashion year after year, until they are intellectually stunted, lose much of their vision and get emphysema from the wool dust.

*Miscellaneous

*A truly amazing bit of news is that in October 1984, of the first 100 convicts in New York City offered the choice between jail or light-duty cleaning work with the sanitation department (such as sweeping sidewalks), 97 preferred jail. One obvious lesson one might draw from this is that they should have been sentenced to pick up garbage in the first place rather than being given the option of jail.

*In 1874, the French writer Victor Hugo, apparently under Enlightenment influence, proclaimed that mankind had so much progressed that "torture has ceased to exist." In 1903, a historian, A. R. Allinson, probably similarly influenced, said in an introduction to a work on Torture of Christian Martyrs: "It is sometimes said that torturing quite as barbarous would take place again today if it were
possible. I honestly and absolutely disbelieve in the possibility of this. Men have changed. The old tigerish instinct has been conjured and subdued. The thought of pain and cruelty is abhorrent to all who live in the great centers of Christianity." (Mannix, 1964). Yet torture has been dramatically on the increase recently, and is being practiced in one-third to one-half of all nations.

**Street People, Poverty, & Homelessness**

When poverty becomes abject, it can lead to homelessness. Not all homelessness leads to "street living." For instance, some of the homeless are put up in shelters or even hotels, but some shelters close during the day, forcing people onto the street. Other people have a place, such as a "single room occupancy," but it is so dreary and lonely that they prefer to spend much of their time on the streets. Unattached people are most likely to become street people. Someone once said that the number of homeless women is a much better index of the socio-economic situation of a country than the number of homeless men. Today, we reportedly see even an increase of homeless women with children.

**Destitution**

*Human kidneys are currently being sold for over $13,000. A number of people are selling their kidneys purely for the money (NCR, 15/11/85). We have warned previously of the danger that devalued people, and particularly derelict poor people, may be tempted to sell their kidneys, which will seriously jeopardize their lives.*

*The National Consumer Law Center in Washington, DC, published two studies on the plight of poor and elderly people who cannot afford heating: Cold: Not by Choice; and Homes Without Heat (Aging, 1985, No. 348).*

*"...in the world of poverty, the lines between darkness and light, good and evil, destructiveness and creativity, are much more distinct than in the world of wealth. One of the temptations of upper-middle-class life is to create large gray areas between good and evil. Wealth takes away the sharp edges of our moral sensitivities and allows a comfortable confusion about sin and virtue. The difference between rich and poor is not that the rich sin more than the poor, but that the rich find it easier to call sin a virtue. When the poor sin, they call it sin; when they see holiness, they identify it as such. This intuitive clarity is often absent from the wealthy, and that absence easily leads to the atrophy of the moral sense." (Henri Nouwen, Gracias!: A Latin American Journal)*

*A recent newspaper cartoon made fun of a not very funny reality. It showed people at a party saying about one of the guests there, "I'm told he is so rich he doesn't pay taxes."

*An editorial cartoon in the Syracuse Herald Journal (7/5/85) showed a policeman trying to arrest a street bum for indigency, to which the bum replied, "I'll have you know I pay more taxes than Boeing, General Electric and Texaco combined." The funny sad truth is that the cartoon is probably right, because some of the nation's largest and most profitable firms not uncommonly have years during which they pay no taxes at all.*
The Bum on the Rods and the Bum on the Plush

(From Irwin, 1930)

The bum on the rods is hunted down
As the enemy of mankind,
The other is driven around to his club,
Is feted, wined and dined;
And they who curse the bum on the rods,
As the essence of all that is bad,
Will greet the other with a winning smile,
And extend the hand so glad.

The bum on the rods is a social flea,
Who gets an occasional bite,
The bum on the plush is a social leech,
Blood-sucking day and night.
The bum on the rod is a load so light
That his weight we scarcely feel,
But it takes the labour of dozens of men
To furnish the other a meal.

As long as you sanction the bum on the plush,
The other will always be there,
But rid yourself of the bum on the plush,
And the other will disappear.
Then make an intelligent, organized kick,
Get rid of the weights that crush,
Don't worry about the bum on the rods,
Get rid of the bum on the plush.

Homelessness

*In NY, a police officer with 19 years of experience was sent to execute an eviction order for failure to pay rent on a 66-year old emotionally disturbed woman, who weighed 300 pounds, from her city-owned apartment building. Instead, he executed her. The woman resisted eviction and charged the police officer with a knife. He fired a shotgun at her which completely severed her hand and shattered the knife, after which the old woman was totally disabled. Nevertheless, he then fired a second shot in her chest which killed her.

The situation had become aggravated earlier by the failure of the welfare department to follow up on a housing authority request for an emergency payment of rent so as to halt the eviction proceedings. As is customary in such cases, after an official investigation, the officer was cleared of all charges.

*The number of homeless people in New York City has reportedly swelled to 60,000—a number that in most states would make up a sizeable city in itself.

*Despite its highly developed system of human services, Europe too is faced with homeless people or people living in inadequate housing. In a cold wave shortly after Christmas 1984, 41 people in France froze to death. In addition, 24 people died in a fire in a nursing home near Paris.

*During the 84/85 winter, Toronto had 15 downtown overnight shelters for the homeless, ranging in size from about a dozen to 400 beds. But there is also a daytime drop-in place in Toronto called "Friends of the Shopping Bag Ladies." Even when the weather is bad and there is maximum demand upon night shelter, there are always some people who refuse to go to shelters. Some of the people who refuse to accept night shelter say that going inside would warm them up so that when they had to go out again, they would be too cold (Globe & Mail, 22/1/85).
*A truly perverse controversy, mirroring the insanities of our society, took
place during the bitterly cold weather of January 1985 in New York City. The mayor
ordered that when the wind-chill factor dropped below 5 degrees, the police should
coerce street people into shelters to keep them from freezing to death. The New
York Civil Liberties Union went on a legal rampage asserting, in essence, that
street people had the right to choose to freeze to death.

*Las Vegas attracts a disproportionate number of destitute homeless people.
In December 1984, they had 1250. A private citizen set up a shelter downtown to
take in the homeless for three days during Christmas—and was severely criticized by
local welfare agencies that claim that "it's almost cruel to house people two nights
and then dump them out on the streets and say Merry Christmas." (AP, in SHJ,
20/12/84).

*Even though it apparently admitted there might be as many as 3 million home-
less people in the US, the Syracuse Herald Journal noted that people had proposed
to turn unneeded federal buildings in Syracuse and elsewhere into shelters for the
homeless, and advised its readers not to "collapse with laughter."

*One ploy of local authorities in their efforts to get rid of street people is
to outlaw sleeping in public, as in Santa Barbara, California (Newsweek, 24/12/84),
and outlawing "removal of food from garbage cans without the owner's permission,
as in West Beach, CA.

*An incredibly hostile editorial about street people was published in the
Albany Times Union of 30/12/84. The editorial rhapsodized about the good old days
when we used to "segregate these people in clean and safe surroundings and watch
over them day and night." It deplored the custom of referring to them as "home-
less" as distracting attention from "the root of their problem" by conveying the
impression that all they need is a home when, in fact, they are either "mentally
deficient or unbalanced." The editorial called for "an asylum" that protects them
"from hoodlums," and "where society can be protected from them." One can surmise
that the editorial was inspired by the hoodlums themselves, the downtown merchants
(Source item supplied by Chris Liuzzo).

*The federal government has been trying to close down a shelter for the home-
less in Washington, DC, headed by Mitch Snyder who had been receiving much publicity
in his efforts in recent years. The government is proposing to replace the shelter
with another one in Anacostia—which just happens to be the site of both the only
federal mental institution in the US, several residences for people who have been
on drugs, are delinquent, or have been released from prison, plus the world's
largest sludge processing station (Washington Post, 10/85, source item from Hank
Bersani).

*TIPS readers are probably aware that the World War II hero who froze to death
in Washington in December 1984 did so right across the street from the White House.
For two years prior to his death, he had been helping a companion, another homeless
man who virtually lived in a wheelchair on the streets. Because local community
shelters did not provide access to the handicapped, the wheelchair-bound man was
condemned to a life that did not even include the occasional boon of a night
shelter. However, in solidarity with him, his companion would often spend the
night outside with him even though he could have gone to a shelter (Newsweek,
7/1/85).

*It is rather symbolic, and perhaps even prophetic, that a 74-year old homeless
man has lived for a decade under the steps of the US capitol, eating and sleeping
within feet of where the laws are made (AP, in SHJ, 24/6/85). All one can say is
that from a PASS/PASSING perspective, he has a very image-enhancing address.
A common strategy of modern bureaucratic states since roughly the World War I era has been to denaturalize those of their citizens whom they were about to kill. We have commented before on this phenomenon, of which there are perhaps 15 examples, of which the denaturalization of the Jews by the Nazis and the depersonalization of the unborn by the US Supreme Court are only two. In the last three years or so, efforts have also been made to deny the franchise to homeless people by requiring people to have residential addresses in order to register for the vote. In a city such as New York, this would mean the disenfranchisement of about 60,000 people and about 150,000 in the state overall. Fortunately, in October 1984, a US District Court in Manhattan ruled that this requirement was unconstitutional.

Street people can rhapsodize at length what they would do if they suddenly got rich. Many say they would help those like themselves, the homeless. This fantasy is encaptured by a depression days poem (in Irwin, 1930).

Two bits for a cup of coffee--
So you just blew into town?
Sure, I'll stake you, pal, to the java,
Come on in here; sit down.
Hey! Waiter! A steak, well smothered,
Fried spuds and a cut of pie,
And two cups of hot jamoka
While we're waiting, my pal and I.

So I talk like a 'bo, myself, eh?
But I dress like a bloomin' swell?
Well, I once was a 'bo, but that's over,
And the world is treatin' me well.
Yet I'll never forget the jungles,
Or the taste of a mooched hand-out,
Once the habit gets in you it stays,
As you've learned for yourself, no doubt.

Yes, many's the time I've waited,
Me and my old-time pards,
To nail some red-ball rattler
As she rambled out through the yards.
I've hit the grit and I've decked 'em,
I've taken the wash on the blind,
I've rode the rods and I've trucked 'em
    When the shack thought me left behind.

The old gang--I've heard they're scattered--
Reddy, Chicago Slim,
High Pockets, Blue Nose and Shorty
Over the horizon's rim.
Fat was our mulligan artist,
The Judge was a Princeton man,
No hooch can ever compare with
The alki he mixed in a can.

Well, I see that my coop is waitin'
So I've got to get back to the grind,
Here's a fin, pal, to pay for the dinner,
And enough for a flop, you'll find;
Just remember when next at the wealthy
Some wobbly wop starts to rave,
That although you're a 'bo you're a free one,
While a rich bird like me is a slave!
Although a lot of people say they have never heard the song "Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer," the song has been a top hit during several recent Christmas seasons. This song might be funny if it was not so devaluing of elderly people and grossly sexist. The song mentions that Grandma was on drugs (apparently psychoactive ones), which may have had something to do with her getting into Santa Claus's way. There is an implication in this song that the Santa Claus who ran Grandma over may have been human, and may even have raped her because when she was found (dead), there were not only hoof marks on her forehead, but also "incriminating claws (Claus?) marks on her back." Grandpa is depicted as taking this calamity amazingly well. He calmly sits in front of the TV watching football and drinking beer, while the family debates whether the gifts that were meant for Grandma should be opened or sent back. (Source material furnished by Milton Baker.)

Just in time for Christmas, Heavenly Dolls of Colorado has produced a 13-inch vinyl doll for $31.50 of the Baby Jesus in Anglo, Hispanic and Black models, with a detachable halo that glows in the dark. It comes with a card that says "My name is Jesus. Jesus loves you. I am your friend. Please love me." Its promoter said, "I think that people are getting to the point where they want something to believe in again." (SHJ, 17/10/85)

There is absolutely no end to the insane violations of Social Role Valorization that human services can think up. During the 1984 Christmas season in Syracuse, a Santa Claus appeared at a local workshop for the handicapped and turned out not only to be handicapped and needing a wheelchair to get around, but also to be a woman—with a long white beard. This takes sexual equality too far! On top of all this, in her other life, she is a human service worker.

TIPS has published several human service versions of the Twelve Days of Christmas. Here is yet another. (Submissions for next year are invited.)

A Citizens' Committee Against Psychiatric Violations in New South Wales, Australia, sent out a Christmas letter in 1984 wishing its members "Merry Christmas and a psychiatric-free New Year," and carried the carol, "Twelve Shocking Days to Christmas." The words are as follows: "On the eleventh day of Xmas, my psychiatrist gave to me eleven epileptic seizures, ten nurses needling, nine other doctors, all his delusions, seven days to live, six priests a-praying, five hundred volts, four Latin names, three migraines, two tripping serepax and an extra dose of ECT. On the twelfth day of Xmas, my psychiatrist gave to me twelve more coloureds pills,..."

However, the song has one more stanza about the 13th day: "(On the 13th day of Xmas, my psychiatrist gave to me thirteen names of undertakers—no more pills, no more seizures, no other doctors, the priests could remain, no more volts, a Latin name for death, no more migraines, no more serepax and lastly, no more ECT.)

Interfaces With Religion

Syracuse public television carried a program on Shaker history in August 1985. Shakers were "shaking" (i.e., dancing) quakers. One of the tenets of Shakerism was to actualize more fully that part of human identity that was of the image of God. Since they viewed order and orderliness as one of the divine attributes, they therefore strove to lead lives in which everything was done in an orderly fashion. Relatedly, in imitation of God's perfection, they tried to do everything they did to the very best of their ability. When they labored, they were not aiming primarily at quantitative productivity or the enlargement of wealth, but at carrying a task to perfection, to the degree it was humanly possible. This was the basis of their famous inventive craftsmanship. This ideal is very similar to one that is embodied in the ancient Christian admonition "age quod agis,"
which literally means "do what you are doing," but is meant to convey that one should concentrate on what one is doing and do it right, and not subject oneself to distraction or scattering by being desultory or doing too many things at a time.

These ancient ideals are examples of universals that could be shining and enduring precepts to people in human services. The norm in human service is incompetence rather than competence, being scattered instead of focused, doing things chaotically instead of orderly, not being very clear why one does what one is doing, and ending up with a broken and wasted rather than perfected client.

*The idea, so widely expressed these days, that the formal faith one proclaims as one's own should have no influence over one's attitude towards economics, politics, warfare, sexuality, etc., we find shocking and perverse. It seems as if this idea was expressed by Lew Lehrman, a leading politician in New York State, who converted from Judaism to Catholicism in 1985. When he was asked whether his conversion had any effect on his political views, he said, "No."

At TI workshops, we teach that the only way to tell who or what people's real gods and religions are is to find out what is most central and most important in their lives, what they look to for hope, and whatever they may define as "salvation." So often, people's god is not only an idol, but even an idol that they have created themselves. Common idols are Mammon, technology (a human product), and human intellect and education (the human itself). One's religion controls what one is and does, there is nothing wrong with that, and that is as it should be, except that awful things will happen when one's god is an idol.

*Newsweek (12/31/84) described a "yuppie church" run by a very attractive woman, the Reverend Terry Cole Whittaker, that is a form of church of Mammon. She is the author of a book entitled How to Have More in a Have-Not World, and has promised the worshippers that "You can have it all--now." She also has had a broadcast show carried in 19 cities in North America, and a newsletter sprinkled with testimonials from people who received miraculous intervention in making fantastic business and financial deals.

*Surveys have found that Americans increasingly think of religion as being "mythic and imaginative." An amazing 90% profess a belief in God, and 3/4 of people say that they pray at least once a day. However, increasingly, Americans behave any way they want to regardless of what any religion, including their own, may have to say on an issue. In 1974, 40% of Americans rejected the concept of absolute moral guidelines. By 1984 this had escalated to 60%. Paradoxically, 85% claim that they believe in the validity of the Ten Commandments even though a large proportion cannot say what these are (New York Times News Service, in SHJ, 9/12/84). In a 1984 Gallup survey, 80% of teenagers thought that the Ten Commandments were valid--but only 3% could name them.

*The program director of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago has concluded that Americans look less and less to traditional sources of moral authority, such as religion or their church, and more and more "follow their consciences," which means mostly doing as they please and as makes them feel good. This finding goes along with another one we reported earlier, namely that religion in America is becoming "feel-good religion," according to the recently deceased Gallup pollster.

*As Americans more and more reject the cohesive bodies of beliefs of specific religious denominations, and move more and more toward highly individualistic religious beliefs of conscience, it not only means a greater heterogeneity of religious beliefs in America but also a tremendous increase toward idiosyncracy as people hodgepodge their own personalized religions. One hardly knows which is the greater evil or the greater good.
Extensively, modern pop psychologies have either become religions, or pastoral personnel turn to them for the answers, and psychologize their faith. Some of the products are characterized by what we might term "psycho-theo babble."

If religion has any validity at all, then it certainly cannot be valid if it is vacuous. Yet the incorporation of the empty, insane or detoxifying babble of the pop psychology culture into almost all aspects of American religious life must certainly be viewed as a symptom of vacuity. One of innumerable recent examples is the appearance of a religious (Catholic) publishing house entitled Affirmation Books, an arm of the "House of Affirmation" that also offers such things as workshops on "applied psychotheology." It sells what it calls "affirmation books and tapes" "for your growth." One whole series of tapes deal with "happiness." One of them is entitled "Happy Are You Who Affirm," which is also a title of one of its books. Another one is The Healing Touch of Affirmation.

Another example of psycho-theo babble is a set of tapes of wordless music, called the Journey tapes, sold in the context of religious materials and interpreted to "be for" educators "to encourage right-brain focus," church members to "connect with the Holy Spirit," physicians and healers "to focus on inner powers of healing and balance," prison and service chaplains for "integration," alcohol counselors "for affirmations," writers and artists "to open the flow of creativity," etc. The selections have names such as Skyview, Sanctuary Suite, Valley Mist and Song of the Wind.

One Catholic newspaper advertised a cassette tape on "Praying from the Right Brain." A perceptive reader responded by noting the logical evolution of this to religious technologies such as prayerprocessing, prayer simulation, aerobic prayer, breakpraying (spinning on your head serves as a metaphor for recreating the world), the natural prayer diet and cassette composed of silent periods taped in the great churches, temples, shrines, synagogues, and mosques of the world, with a few silent periods taped in subways for atheists and agnostics (NCR, 21/12/84).


In contrast, the bulk of more traditional theology becomes ever more obtuse, and generates its own form of babble. A striking example is a 1981 book by Roy entitled Experimenting with Truth: A Fusion of Religion With Technology, Needed for Humanity Survival. In it, he denotes God in a most extraordinary fashion as follows: * * * Please note that the first of the three colons is ours, and that the other two are his. Now where except in TIPS would the ordinary TIPS reader find such interesting tidbits?

We have mentioned before (and probably will again) that if one plans to sup with the devil, one must have a very long spoon. Jimmy Carter found that out when he had himself interviewed by Playboy during his race for the presidency, and probably lost a great many more votes than he gained from this interview. The Christian Association for Psychological Studies (composed mostly of Christian counselors) entered into a contract with Playboy Enterprises (publishers of Playboy Magazine) to promote a book entitled Prison Slavery which addresses the abuses of our prison system. If any TIPS readers also happen to read Playboy Magazine, they may see the book promoted there.

When the Vatican moved against the nuns that had co-sponsored the infamous ad in the New York Times that defended abortion, the "Priests for Equality" came to their aid and advised the nuns to "hold firm to the gospel values which had brought them to this point in time and their ministry."
*Unbeknownst to most people, elements of right-wing Christian churches in the US have been providing lavish financial support to the Contra cause in Nicaragua. The leading one among such benefactors is the Christian Broadcasting Network (NCR, 26/4/85). Other major supporters of the Contras have been the Catholic Knights of Malta and Rev. Moon's Unification Church (NCR, 17/5/85).

*It is an amazing coincidence that the material out of which bullet-proof vests are made is named kevlar. Kev.laar (with an extra "a") is a place of Christian pilgrimage in the German Rhineland, and one of Germany's greatest poets, Heinrich Heine, once wrote a poem about it ca. 1826.

*A French film with the title, "Hail Mary," depicted the Virgin Mary naked with Joseph. A court dismissed a suit that claimed that the scene was pornographic (NCR, 8/2/85).

*We recently learned from Bernard Graney that there is such a thing as a National Center for the Apostolate of the Suffering being set up in Chicopee, MA, in order to run retreats for handicapped people. The ideology of the center seems thoroughly segregationist. The movement was supposedly founded in 1947 by the then secretary to Pope Pius XII, brought to the US in the 1960s, and now has 1000 members.

*There is a growing movement of non-violent but active opposition by Christians of all denominations to many forms of deathmaking and repression. One police officer said, "If we want to know when to expect a crime wave of civil disobedience, we consult the liturgical calendar." One peace activist wrote about one defense contractor who is very alert to these things something to the effect that they were probably circulating memos saying, "Beef up security for the Feast of St. Polycarp." (Sojourners, 1/85)

*In September 1985, the 26 Catholic bishops of California issued a strong statement of opposition to the death penalty, as part of an effort to promulgate a consistent ethic of life. So far, there has only been modest opposition in Catholic circles to the death penalty or war as tools of public policy.

*Together with Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin (1877-1949) was the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement which runs soup kitchens and houses of hospitality in many American cities. Though an uneducated peasant from France, he became a self-taught scholar. One of his mottoes was "cult, culture, and cultivation," by which he meant religious faith, intellectual pursuits, and personal engagement with the soil. He wrote a great many essays on the problems of his day which he called "easy essays," because he wrote them in simple words and divided the sentences into small chunks so that people would be able to follow the train of thought one concept chunk at a time. Below we give some excerpts from his easy essays.

"There is confusion of mind. When there is confusion of mind someone has only to shout a word and people flock. When Mussolini shouted discipline people flocked. When Hitler shouted restoration people flocked."

"Sound principles are not new; they're very old; they are as old as eternity. The thing to do is to restate the never new and never old principles in the vernacular of the person of the street."
"Man is more than an individual with individual rights; he is a person with personal duties toward God, himself, and his fellow man."

"A personalist is a go-giver, not a go-getter. He tries to give what he has, and does not try to get what the other fellow has. He tries to be good by doing good to the other fellow. He is altro-centered, not self-centered. He has a social doctrine of the common good. He spreads the social doctrine of the common good through words and deeds.

He speaks through deeds as well as words, for he knows that deeds speak louder than words. Through words and deeds he brings into existence a common unity, the common unity of a community."

"Better and Better Off.
The world would be better off if people tried to become better. And people would become better if they stopped trying to become better off. For when everybody tries to become better off, nobody is better off. But when everybody tries to become better, everybody is better off. Everybody would be rich if nobody tried to become richer. And nobody would be poor if everybody tried to be the poorest. And everybody would be what he ought to be if everybody tried to be what he wants the other fellow to be."

The Deathmaking Scene

The Christmas season lends itself especially to the contemplation of the miracle of child-bearing, birth—and infanticide (cf. the slaughter of the innocents). We have both good and bad news along these lines.

Miscellaneous Abortion-Related Facts

*As we mentioned before, there is a considerable health risk to both the mother and the unborn child in an amniocentesis test. What the risk is for the never chorion biopsy is not yet quite clear. In one recent test series, it resulted in double the amount of damage to the unborn as did amniocentesis (CARC News, 8/85).

*According to the Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology (5/85), abortion has become the 6th most common cause of maternal deaths in the US, and such deaths are underreported by as much as 50%.

*New means are being developed for identifying the risk level of parents for having a child with Down Syndrome. Unfortunately, these developments are being accompanied by pronouncements that this could "prevent as many as 30% of such births," which is a euphemism for saying that births would be prevented by abortion (CARC News, 8/85).

*Evidence continues to come in that embryonic tissue, because it has much greater potential for differentiation, may be useful for all sorts of therapeutic purposes, including amelioration of brain conditions when injected into adult brains. A current example is research on brain tissue injections in Russia. This is rather inappropriately referred to as a brain transplant. However, much of the work with embryonic tissue involves aborted babies (Interim, 10/85).
**Aborted fetuses are not the only source of profits from human cadavers. In Oregon, a state medical examiner was found to be selling skin samples and pituitary glands from cadavers to researchers in order to pay for office parties (AP, 9/85; source item from John Morris).**

*We mentioned earlier that the US Internal Revenue Service had ruled that if a baby being aborted lived even only briefly after being taken from the womb, then the "parent(s)" would be entitled to a dependency deduction for the tax year. There was such an outcry over this ruling that the IRS decided that the rule should be revoked.*

*The term "abortuary" widely used by abortion opponents was apparently first coined by pro-abortion activists at the Judson Memorial Church in New York (Pro-Life Non-Violent Action Project, Fall 85).*

**Abortion: The Protagonists**

*The Orthodox Jewish rabbis of Toronto have come out with a statement characterizing abortion on demand as "a totally untenable notion." "Sanctity and inviolability of life...is not a matter of private religious tradition or personal judgment but a principle of universal morality..." (From PLN, 9/85). At the same time, the rabbis noted that society has the obligation to 'help overburdened families learn to cope with the blessing of additional children.'*

*The Prince Edward Island Association for the Mentally Retarded (now called the PEI Division of the Canadian Association for Community Living) has passed a resolution condemning selective abortion of impaired fetuses, and the performance of amniocentesis with this objective in view. It also expressed opposition to discrimination between competent and incompetent persons as regards provision of life supports. As far as the TIPS editor knows, this is the only parent-based association in mental retardation in North America that has taken so explicitly a stance for life. This is due in significant part to the long-standing efforts of Mac Beck, a psychiatrist, and one of the few pioneers of the Canadian association movement who is still active.*

*One of the movements opposed to abortion has explicitly embraced socially non-violent strategies. It is the Pro-Life Non-Violent Action Project with headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD. Police often do not know how to deal with non-violent people, sometimes are rendered non-violent themselves non-violent when confronted by non-violence, and sometimes are profoundly angered by it and therefore brought to violence. For instance, in Annapolis, one 5'7" protester weighing 130 pounds, and with only one arm, disabled an abortion machine. Yet when police arrived, they greeted him by punching him in the mouth, and then charged him with assaulting a police officer, resisting arrest, hindering the police in their duty, trespassing, and destruction of property. (Pro-Life Non-Violent Action Project, Fall 85; source item supplied by Carolyn Bardwell Wheeler)*

*Large proportions of young women who find their way to abortion clinics are, de facto, delinquent. They are minors who are out of the control of their parents or, for that matter, of any adults. Some of them have been sexually licentious for years; a number of them have had multiple abortions behind them but have continued to engage in promiscuous sexual relationships. In the light of all this it is profoundly paradoxical and even ludicrous that minors who have been leading a clean life and who have been arrested for protesting against abortions in front of abortion clinics have been threatened by the legal system with being placed in foster care with "law-abiding citizens" (Pro-Life Non-Violent Action Project, Fall 85; source item from Carolyn Bardwell Wheeler).*
The pro-abortion forces have characteristically tried to interpret Catholics as being a minority opposed to abortion, so as to divide the opposition against abortion, and then they have tried to divide Catholics by conveying the impression that it is the calibrate old men in the church hierarchy who oppose abortion over the bodies of their flocks.

A most extraordinary event took place in Nelson, British Columbia. A local pro-life group had been sending anti-abortion flyers through the mail, whereupon the local mail carrier union took out an ad in the local paper stating that "we neither support nor condone the position of Nelson Future Life as expressed in their recent pamphlet. We deliver these pamphlets in compliance with postal regulations." (Source item furnished by Gwen Cavanaugh)

The American Psychological Association has submitted briefs to the US Supreme Court supporting the right of a minor female to decide upon an abortion without parental consent, and opposing any legal requirements that a woman be given information about abortion so as to enable her to make an informed consent (APA Monitor, 11/85).

The abortion scene is so bizarre as to boggle the mind. For years, pro-abortion forces have been successful in beating down every attempt to force abortionists and abortion clinics to inform a pregnant woman of her alternatives. Now there is an effort afoot in Congress to eliminate federal funds for clinics that inform clients that abortion is an alternative to an unwanted pregnancy—and all hell has broken loose among pro-abortion parties.

Yet another example of the perversion of language in the struggle for the sanctity of life is an article from the Canadian Medical Association Journal (15/5/85) which exulted over the fact that the new chorionic biopsy can detect whether a woman known to be a carrier for hemophilia is pregnant with a male baby that has the disorder. The article was euphoric over the fact that the woman "may not have to consider an abortion" if the child is unaffected, and if an "abortion is required," it can be performed "before the woman has to tell everyone she is pregnant and before a complex abortion is required." (Source item from PLN, 9/85)

It is amazing that in a German newspaper (Amerika Woche, 17/8/85), attention is drawn to conditions under which birth control pills used by young women may fail, and they are advised to then also take the "morning after" pill—without any mention whatsoever that one thereby escalates from contraception to abortion.

As of Summer 1985, Women Exploited By Abortion in the US had approximately 20,000 members, not counting others who have accepted its services (PLN, 9/85).

Recently, there has been an upsurge of people who are trying to bridge the gap between those who are opposed to abortion and those who are for it. A number of these, which also includes some prominent members of the clergy (e., the head of the theology department of Notre Dame University), have been talking in terms of compromises, middle of the road positions and third ways. Even scientists have jumped in to advocate this "middle road," as in an article of commentary by Hutchinson in the November/December 1983 issue of the American Scientist, who referred to the irrationality "on both sides." What all of this largely refers to is that if only opponents of abortion were rational and reasonable, they would approve of abortion under at least some circumstances. The implication, commonly encountered these days in regard to many controversies, is that the truth is never with either of the 2 sides of an issue, but always in the middle or "compromise" position.
*Allan Péquegnat sent us the following fable.

A surgeon of renown escaped the pressures of his busy practice by raising prize-winning roses. As he was a perfectionist in his surgery, so he was at producing blossoms of great beauty and variety. A labour of love were the many hours he spent grafting, fertilizing, watering and weeding. Dearest to his heart was when the early blossoms were ready to unfurl, and a multitude of tiny buds spoke of pleasures yet to come.

One day after a particularly heavy schedule of surgery, the doctor returned home to his roses only to find that each one of the buds had been carefully snipped off the stem, and left lying on the rich loamy soil. No words could express his torment and grief as he saw all the fruit of his labour—so life-like, and yet so dead and wasted; their potential unrealized. As the surgeon paced in his garden, alternating between rage and dark despair, he found a note which read, ‘Dear Doctor: As in the abortions which you perform each day, I also only removed a small cluster of cells.’

Infanticide

The Washington Times estimated that about 5000 Baby Doe cases occur annually in the US, but Gunnar Dybwad, former ARC-National Executive Director, and a professor emeritus at Brandeis University (who also still teaches a course at Syracuse University) referred to this estimate as "conservative." (CARC News, 8/85)

A baby that survived an abortion was rushed to a Fort Lauderdale hospital where, after initiating treatment, staff decided to terminate all further treatment for 12 hours "to see how the baby does." A nurse who shared her anguish about this decision was fired because of "breaking confidences" and causing "bad publicity," and the case has ended up in court (Interim, 10/85).

The question whether paragraph 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 can be invoked to protect newborn infants from the denial of treatment is now before the US Supreme Court. A joint brief in support of this contention was submitted to the Supreme Court by the American Association on Mental Deficiency, the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, the American Association of University-Affiliated Programs for the Developmentally Disabled, and the National Rehabilitation Association. To get all of these organization to agree to this brief was quite an accomplishment. (Source item from James Ellis)

Child Junking & Child Rescue

Terms such as child junking or child wasting can be applied to a wide range of policies and practices that express devaluation, or even hatred, toward children, and that have a destructive impact on them. In our society, as hatred of reproduction has increased, so has hatred of children, and therefore child junking.

*As of 1983 (the last figures available in 1985), 20% of all children in the US are born to unmarried women.

*Much as handicapped adults are often dumped out of human services so that they experience some kind of conflict with society and end up in prison, so children who are disruptive because of their emotional disorders are sometimes simply dumped on juvenile or family courts (Quality of Care, Summer 1985).

*Some sign of our times is that we now see pictures of missing children on milk cartons, toll road tickets, bulletin boards, TV spots and even on all sorts of unrelated advertising materials. For instance, we recently saw some on mass mail flyers advertising video recorders, water beds, kitchenware, and briefcases.
*Until mid-1982, when the practice was stopped by a Canadian judge, Canada was known to export its native Indian children to white foster homes--even to other countries such as the United States. Purportedly, this was done under the belief that any white home was better than any native home or family. This practice is both a continuation of the exportation of unwanted people begun by England in the 1500s and carried into Canada through the Barnardo's Foundation, as well as a form of genocide of the Indian people. (According to a 1/9/85 repeat episode of "60 Minutes".)

*A puzzling new development in Michigan and New Jersey has been people who were well-informed about the circumstances of specific welfare recipients showing up at the recipients' homes, claiming to be child welfare workers charged with taking away a child from the family because of neglect or poor living conditions. So far, none of these ploys have succeeded. One possibility is that former welfare department employees are involved who are trying to capture children for sale or sexual purposes (Juvenile Justice Digest, 28/1/85).

*When the veterinarian who beat his newborn deformed son to death in 1983 was tried, the jury reported being deadlocked after 15 hours of deliberations, and a mistrial was declared (PLN, 9/85).

*All the time, we run into stories of couples adopting one, and sometimes even several, handicapped children. Some of these stories are utterly amazing and border on the incredible. Some of these have been featured on various national television shows.

*A baby born in Roanoke, VA, with a brain tumor that supposedly will prevent the development of higher brain function and result in an early death was requested for adoption by 200 families. The baby was awarded to a 37-year old nurse who had already adopted three similarly profoundly impaired children, one of whom had died. The nurse said the baby looked beautiful and she was very excited about getting him.

*In Victoria, Australia, a baby weighing just a little over a pound, and four months premature, was born and pronounced dead by the attending physician. However, sometime after birth, someone noticed feeble signs of life. No aggressive medical measures were taken, but she began to thrive on her own, and after 9 hours she was finally transferred to intensive care. A few days later, she could be taken off intensive care and given ordinary supports customary for premature babies. It is noteworthy that abortions are commonly performed on babies of this gestational age (23 weeks) (Age, 19/6/85; submitted by Martin Elks).

*In some parts of North America, so few newborns are available for adoption that many adoption agencies have ceased accepting applications, or have told applicants that they will have to wait 5-7 years.

*One spreading custom is "open adoption" where there is no secrecy, everyone knows who the mother is, and the mother has access to the child. The option seems to be particularly attractive when unmarried young women get pregnant who will be more likely to resist getting an abortion if they know the child will have a home, but that they will not be cut off from the child. Articles on such an arrangement from both such a mother and a set of adoptive parents are contained in the 7/85 issue of Pro-Life News.

*A similar program of "identified adoption" is now possible in CO. This option enables a woman who is expecting a baby, or who has had one, to designate the couple she wishes to have adopt her child, using a licensed adoption agency as the intermediary. The biological father has the option of being involved. Interested parties may contact Walt & Paige Garnett in Wheat Ridge, CO, 303/422-2054.
Other News on Deathmaking & Rescue Therefrom

*A commission constituted by the Dutch government recommended that "euthanasia" be legalized if a patient who is incurably ill requests it, and two physicians agree. However, it is estimated that already, there are 7000 "euthanasia" killings by physicians in the Netherlands per year, and according to polls, 3/4 of the Dutch population support "euthanasia" (The Economist, 29/8/85; clipping supplied by John O'Brien).

*A mentally disordered man in Hamilton County, Ill., had a 6-hour stand-off with police who had been warned not to rush him because of his fear of people in uniforms. Nevertheless, police officers tried to force an arrest warrant on him upon which he lashed out with a kitchen knife, whereupon the police pumped at least 7 bullets into him which killed him. The local Civil Liberties Union said it will not sue because it would cost too much (Indianapolis Star, 9/10/85; source item from Joe Osburn).

*In 1984, an attendant at the Wassaic Developmental Center for the mentally retarded in NY state hit a 54-year old retarded man on the head from which the latter died. The attendant pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide and was sentenced to a maximum of 6 months in prison, but might serve as little as 12 weekends in jail. The director of the facility gravely announced that "this case sends out a message that assaults on the retarded will not be tolerated." (Poughkeepsie Journal, 25/9/85; source item furnished by Chris Liuzzo)

*A woman reported that one of the innumerable abuses to which her mentally retarded brother had been subjected was the following. One day, she came to visit him in an institution and found him tied hand and foot to his bed, as well as straight-jacketed. When she inquired as to the reason, she was told that there were poisonous plants by his bed, and that this was for his own good so that he would not eat them. No explanation was given as to why poisonous plants would be by his bed in the first place, or left there if, in fact, he started to eat them (Institutions, Etc., 8/85, p. 2-3).

*The true story of Woody's tragic death. In Spring of 1985, a middle-aged man with a history of mental disorder whom the TIPS editor had met a few months earlier suddenly died--choking on a peanut butter sandwich. Once again, the death statistics of our society will not record that in reality, the man was a victim of a genocidal deathmaking of devalued and rejected people of our society. How can one possibly choke on a squishy soft peanut butter sandwich? Here is the answer. First of all, the man had been subjected to many years of psychoactive prescription drugging which had impaired the sensitivity and muscular control of his throat, including his gag reflex, as it does so commonly. As if this were not bad enough, he had no teeth left and thus had a hard time chewing food. Of course, this is correctable, but he had resisted having the dental work done--again, for quite understandable reasons. This kind of work requires many sessions with a dentist over a period of time, and would have to be financed by Medicare. This man was well familiar with the bureaucratic hassle that devalued people experience from human service agencies, and could not quite face engaging himself with Medicare to get the work done. Furthermore, he would episodically be admitted at the local mental institution, and knew both that this would interrupt the sequence of work on his dentures, as well as infinitely increase the hassle with Medicare. So he simply kept postponing dental work, and what eventually happened was that even though he was eating a soft peanut butter sandwich, he did not properly chew a chunk of it, and when that sticky chunk got stuck in his throat, his impaired throat function could not get rid of it. Another mentally handicapped man was with him at the time and tried to perform the Heimlich maneuver, but was not strong enough to both hold Woody up from behind as well as squeeze hard enough to clear his airway. Thus, he could do no more than hold him while he died.
At a 9/85 US Congressional hearing (House Select Committee on Aging), testimony was given that 1 out of every 25 elderly people, or 1.1 million, are subjected to abuse, and that each year, the number is going up. In addition, several million institutionalized elderly are routinely denied basic rights, and many are made dead (UPI in Charleston Gazette, 19/9/85).

How many mentally retarded or similarly developmentally handicapped people eat themselves to death every year is unknown. Some people believe that the so-called Prader-Willi Syndrome (which may not be a distinct syndrome at all but merely an overeating habit) occurs in one person in 35,000 and is usually associated with impaired intelligence. If that is so, it would mean that about 7000 people in the US are so affected at any one point in time, and most of them apparently eat themselves to death early in life. Some estimates even go as high as 1 in 10,000 people, which of course would more than triple the estimate. Amazingly, all sorts of technologized treatments are tried on these people, such as drugs, stomach surgery, hypnosis, and different kinds of mental therapies, but the only thing that works is to actually restrict their food intake—which people in the human services find very regretful rather than a positive thing. (Source item from David Wetherow)

Former NY Senator, Jacob Javits, recently testified before the House Aging Committee of Congress that fatally ill people should "get out of the way and stop using medical resources." Since the 81-year old Javits, a victim of Lou Gehrig’s disease since 1979, testified from a wheelchair and with a breathing tube in his throat, one can only assume that his advice was meant to apply only to the poor.

Many people today find it difficult to understand how the vast majority of the population of Germany in the 1930s and 40s could have gone along with, and often indeed given their enthusiastic support to, Hitler and his Nazi regime. In fact, it is common to hear people today say something along the lines of, "I don’t understand how those people could have fallen for him." However, as Chuck Burkhouse pointed out to us, one can observe similar patterns in our own society which give great insight into how people can indeed give their support to persons, organizations, and entire systems which will eventually wreak havoc on them. For instance, in Institute, WV, there is a Union Carbide plant. In August 1985 there was a massive demonstration by a large number of the residents of that town in support of Union Carbide. This demonstration of support followed an accident at the plant in which toxic chemicals were released into the air, and less than a year after a similar accident at a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, killed over 2000 people and maimed tens of thousands. Yet the residents of Institute came out to show that they were behind Union Carbide (primarily because it is the major employer in the city), that they did not want the plant to close, and that they considered the risk of such leaks something that they could live with. In what significant ways does their response differ from that of Germans to Hitler—especially after he eliminated unemployment by putting people to work in armament factories?

We have noted earlier that the animal rights movement is more concerned and protective about the rights of animals than are other groups about the right to life of humans. Indeed, we have also noted that some people who support protection of animal "rights" are strong supporters of abortion and infanticide of the handicapped. Some of the appeals made by such animal rights organizations almost interpret the animals as human, and appeal to sympathies that humans would have toward other humans. For instance, pathetic pictures of animals are shown and readers would be told a sad story of having found the animal "with all 8 children," "without a home," and starving to death, much as some organizations for aiding starving people in the underdeveloped world will report the situation of the people they serve. Similarly, young animals will be interpreted not as puppies but as "babies." We found one such in a "Dedication and Everlasting Love to Animals"
brochure. The president of this association even writes about "being there for" various animals, much as other people talk about "being present to," and "being there for" people. In fact, this organization invites people to sponsor an animal, much as other organizations invite people to sponsor an orphan or poor child in the Third World.

*Another "set-the-stage-for-genocide" film shown on TV in 9/85 was "C.H.U.D.," advertised as follows: "Don't walk your dog after midnight in Manhattan! Bag people turn into Cannibalistic Humanoid Underground Dwellers."

*Yet another work of art or entertainment that may promote suicide is a 1985 novel by Brian Flack, entitled With a Sudden and Terrible Clarity, in which the main actor spends 9 days deliberating, and finally committing, suicide.

*In May 1985, the President of the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded (since renamed the Community Living Association) participated in front of a Montreal institution in a public protest against the low quality of living conditions there, and the absence of a deinstitutionalization strategy.

*In Cincinnati, a 41-year old man was declared "brain dead," his obituary was published in the Cincinnati Enquirer, and a funeral service was held at a funeral home. Rather embarrassingly, the man was suddenly discovered to be breathing and was returned to intensive care (Concord Monitor, 23/9/85; source item supplied by Donna Annicchiarico).

Miscellaneous Human Service News

*For several years, the US Social Security Administration has tried to disqualify social security recipients, primarily handicapped ones. The courts have ruled most of these disqualifications illegal, but SS announced a policy of "non-acquiescence" to the court orders. Eventually, it announced acquiescence, but nonetheless has continued to wage warfare against the handicapped, and continues to try to disqualify as many as possible, or not to reinstate them if they have been previously qualified (NY Times, 20/6/85; Inside Scoop, 7/85).

*The reciprocal people-dumping war between Florida and California has continued, with each state trying to ship unwanted people to the other (Institutions, Etc., 7/85).

*David Stockman, the former director of the US Office of the Management and Budget, claims that one Reagan administration policy was to create budget deficits that would be so great that the only remedy would be to make such drastic cuts in social services as to reverse the social policies started by Roosevelt's New Deal. The fact is that the federal deficit has been getting so massive that something truly drastic is bound to happen--and under the current administration, it is not likely to be cuts in military spending. (Source item from Alexander Grant)

*Clowns and clownery are absolutely overrunning the world, and particularly so in services for the handicapped. One wonders where the clown craze will crest. One of the major organized promoters of clownery for the sick and handicapped is the Tigris Shriners. There are 28 clowns among them in the Greater Syracuse area alone. Since clownery has an ancient tie to death, it is particularly ominous that the clowns (e.g., the Shriner ones) show up in places where children are apt to die, and in religious contexts (e.g., "clown ministry") where apparently, sound theology and the practice of moral virtues no longer exist sufficiently to carry the message.
Years ago, when ICF/MR facilities (nursing homes for the retarded) in the US first became popular, we warned that once facilities had converted themselves to this funding source, one could expect a bearing down on their identity so as to increasingly pervert them. One two-edged example of this has been the November 1984 ruling of the US Health Care Financing Administration that residents in such facilities need to demonstrate "self-preserving" capacity, which includes that they demonstrate their ability to leave a facility within 2½ minutes during an emergency, with only limited physical and verbal prompts. If they fail this test, they are to be "promptly relocated," which would ordinarily mean to an institution or generic nursing home. What makes this requirement double-edged, i.e., adding a positive feature to its sinister undertones, is the fact that the vast majority of retarded people could be taught very efficient emergency procedures if the staff only were competent and committed to the issue. The federal regulation may motivate some personnel to develop these skills in the retarded residents, but such efforts would imply that they develop the necessary commitment and competency, and this in turn might imply that the people in their charge could learn all sorts of other things, which many agencies cannot acknowledge or pursue.

On Saturday, 13/7/85, there was a day-long rock concert, which was broadcast worldwide to benefit the starving people in Africa. It was called "Live Aid," and centered on concerts in Philadelphia and London, although numerous other such concerts were held in other locations throughout the world. At these concerts, well-known rock musicians and bands performed free, and the proceeds from concert tickets, as well as from TV viewers who called in with donations, went to provide food aid to starving people in Africa. The concerts were reported to be some of the best attended concerts ever anywhere, and the television broadcast was reported to be one of the most widely-viewed TV events ever.

Among other things, this event illustrated a point the TI makes in some of its workshops, namely that people are quite capable of being shocked into helping by hearing about the sad circumstances of their fellow human beings on the other side of the world, but that this sort of helping behavior is very sporadic, neither builds upon nor fosters identification, and may take place when people in one's own neighborhood are starving and receiving no assistance.

In addition, many of the individuals and groups who performed could only be characterized as decadent, in appearance, action, lifestyle, and their art, as exemplified by drug use, wanton sexuality, and often the outright promotion of these through their performances. Many have also adopted exceedingly materialistic and wasteful habits of consumption. At the very least, such characteristics and habits seem incoherent with the serious issue for which they were performing, and at worst, such performers gave a serious negative image to the whole affair, at least to some insightful people. Indeed, it is these decadent, wasteful and luxuriant styles of life, writ large (as in the case of many of these performers) or small (as in the case of the vast majority of American citizens), which have contributed to the impoverishment of whole classes and, indeed, whole nations in underdeveloped parts of the world. Of course, this reality is little recognized or acknowledged. Thus, it is ironic that the performers, some of whom are among the best-paid people in any profession anywhere, actually are contributing to the practices which are taking away the food and arable land from starving nations. For instance, in the pursuit of its own hedonistic desires, the developed world forces Third World countries into producing cash crops which destroy their land, thus bringing about famine as in Africa. Thus, for people with insight and integrity, it is hard to be at all enthusiastic over this effort.

St. Nicholas, an institution for the mentally retarded in the Australian state of Victoria, has actually been closed. This is certainly good news, but one perspective to maintain is that the institution had housed only about 100 people. Nevertheless, it has shattered a stereotype of many people who simply thought that such a thing could never happen.
A court supervising the implementation of a class action suit against the mental retardation and mental health institutions in WV since 1981 ordered in September 1985 that all such institutions in the future had to furnish their toilets with toilet paper, and that each toilet had to have a lavatory that had water, soap and towels. This decree once more testifies to the futility of trying to implement program quality through laws or litigation if the capacity to provide quality programs no longer exists within a particular service system or even the culture itself.

Prisoners of Conscience

*The Israeli government has invented a new ploy to punish conscientious objectors who refuse to serve in Lebanon. It keeps calling them up for active service, and everytime they refuse they can be sentenced to jail, which is leading to repeated jail terms for many of them. The conscientious objectors have been accused by the government of "undercutting the foundations of our society" (Sojourners, 2/85).

*An organization of over 500 reformed Jewish rabbis, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, for the first time ever endorsed civil disobedience. They did this in order to support the sanctuary movement (SHJ, 27/6/85). It is regrettable that the brutal policies of the American government are driving more and more and more people of conscience to such steps—which most of them dread.

An appeal for a prisoner of conscience. In November 1984, Helen Woodson, along with a few others, entered a Minuteman missile site near Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, pounded the concrete silo with picks and jackhammers, and poured some of their blood around the area. For punishment, they were sentenced by a federal judge in March 1985 to prison terms from 8 to 18 years. Helen (03231-045, Box A) has 11 natural, adopted and foster children, 8 still at home of whom 7 are mentally handicapped. She wrote us from Cottage 7, Alderson, WV (24910) Federal Women's Prison (a very inaccessible site) that she will not compromise her conscience by appealing for release or review of her 18-year (1) sentence. If a freely-given pardon does not come through, or the world ends before then, she will be in prison until May 2002. Her children are currently being taken care of by friends who have made 3-year commitments, but after that, she needs reinforcements. She hopes to be able to have a group home for them incorporated in Madison, WI, and recruit people to work in it for at least a year at a time. We appeal to TIPS readers to disseminate this plan, and to appeal to others in turn to help Helen and possibly serve in her planned group home.

One can write to Helen at the above numbers and address.

War or Peace, Guns or Butter: Preparation for War & the Destruction of Mankind

*The US is inching ever closer to a 'launch on warning' posture. A computer specialist at Stanford University believes that this negates the constitutional provision that Congress alone shall have the power to declare war, and that the constitutional issue becomes even clearer when one considers that even the President may not be starting a war anymore but a computer. He has filed a lawsuit against the US Defense Department trying to stop this kind of development.

*In 1980, the computers of the North American Aerospace Command announced that 2, then 22, and then 222 Soviet missiles were heading toward the US. US forces went on a nuclear alert worldwide, and the engines on the bombers were running when it was discovered that a 46¢ silicon chip had degenerated so as to indicate the digit 2 when it was supposed to indicate the digit 0 (The Valley Advocate, 4/9/85, source item supplied by Mike Kendrick).
According to an AP story (SHJ, 22/7/85), Nixon, when he was president, seriously considered using the atomic bomb in four different conflicts: twice against the Russians, once against the North Vietnamese and once—believe it or not—against India.

The nuclear war scenario sketched by US government and the Pentagon is that there will be available total verified information, and therefore no uncertainty; there will be complete control by decision-makers; that fatigue and distress will play no role in their behavior; and that a wide range of possible alternatives will be available to them (NCR, 4/10/85).

The emergency plan for nuclear war for Utica, NY, assumed that during a nuclear attack, bakeries will continue to operate as usual, and that refugees would be fed by buying bread from these bakeries.

Adults in the US think of nuclear war as "only modestly probable," but believe that if it happens, it will be horrible and they will die. Nevertheless, when they describe their war visions, they focus primarily on the destruction of buildings and environment rather than on images of human death and injury. Most adults seldom worry about the issue though they overwhelmingly favor a mutual nuclear freeze (APA Monitor, 11/85).

As of mid-1985, five countries were known to have nuclear weapons and three others are suspected of having them. For instance, there is increasing evidence that the unexplained light flash over the south Atlantic in 1979 was indeed what many expected it to be, namely a South African nuclear test (Science, 7/6/85). Three others are working on them, and there are nuclear power reactors in operation in 26 countries and nuclear research facilities in 52. How deluded mankind is was born out by Time's (3/6/85) interpretation of these facts as being "grounds for guarded hope"—simply because things were not worse.

Peace activists have long said that the official defense budget grossly understates the national defense spending. This was spectacularly underlined by figures made public in Science (18/1/85). A NASA space shuttle mission costs about $400 million. To begin with, the space shuttle had to be designed in a more expensive way to have military payload capabilities, though the civilian NASA had to bear the cost. For a fully military mission, NASA receives a payment of only $32 million, and for civilian missions with some military uses, NASA may get nothing. The GAO has estimated that at least about 20% of the civilian NASA budget supports Pentagon use of the shuttle.

Anyone who thinks that in the US, the manufacture of nuclear warheads is paid for by the Dept. of Defense budget underestimates the evil that lurks in the heart of our society. These warheads are currently paid for by the Dept. of Energy! Thus, as we said before, people who only cite the defense budget as constituting what we spend on war are very wrong. Our war preparation expenditures are well hidden in any number of ways to keep the citizenry ignorant of their scope lest they rise up and limit war spending.

In each of the past 10 years, an average of 5100 people have been barred from handling nuclear weapons because they were found to be using drugs, alcohol, or to have psychological problems, despite screening prior to being permitted to handle nuclear weapons. Thus, the conclusion is that the US nuclear arsenal is at least to a significant extent in the hands of people who are either unstable or on drugs (NCR, 4/10/85).
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