

The three "papers" by the actual inmates reveal a very distressful isolated existence in prison. The simple, primitive act of survival becomes horrendous. The options are so few and so definite. Cooperate with the guards and you become a "rat." Run with the prisoners who semi-defy the institution and you become a "problem." Retreat into your own self-world and become an emotional mess. Relatively minor items of normal life are blown vastly out of proportion. A singular cigarette becomes an item of dear value. It obviously is a life that must be lived to be fully understood. Words do not appear to be able to adequately convey the unrelenting misery.

A special commendation should go to Hans Toch, a Professor of Psychology at New York State University in Albany, for his most exquisite use of the English language in describing the "autopsy," as he calls it, of two successful prison suicides. Actually one is a jail suicide and the other a prison suicide. He encompasses a wealth of material in his analysis. Finally, let me praise the prime force behind this book, Bruce Danto, M.D., for compiling this work and forcibly calling our attention to the plight of suicides in the correctional system.

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Kind and Usual Punishment (The Prison Business). By JESSICA MITFORD. New York, A. Knopf, 1973. Pp. 297. Price \$7.95.

This book has been selected for review not so much because it deeply touches on psychiatric work in prisons, for it does not, although it does deal with the subject adequately; but because the author's fine reputation will probably ensure a wide reading audience with its attendant effect on public opinion. A *New York Times* book reviewer, David Rothman, extracting thoughts from her book, characterized prison "psychotherapy" (in quotes) as administrative spying, and so disposed of that entire area. Ms. Mitford is more thorough.

In one chapter labeled Treatment she tends to concentrate her research results concerning psychiatry in prisons but, of course, the question of "Treatment" of prisoners runs throughout the book. After presenting the views of Dr. Karl Menninger and ex-Attorney General Ramsey Clark, that most people who commit serious crimes have mental problems; she quotes other sources, including Dr. Thomas Szasz, for the proposition that criminals are no more disturbed than any other sampled population. She caps this off with a footnote accredited to Thomas Shaffer, Dean of Notre Dame Law School, to the effect that the arrest rate among former mental patients is about half that of the general population, whatever that may prove.

After pointing out that nationwide only 5 percent of the prison budget goes for all services labeled "rehabilitation," and that many states make no pretense of giving any psychotherapy, she proceeds to shoot down the argument that insufficient funds and personnel are the reasons for the failure she sees in the programs. Ms. Mitford has the deserved reputation of being a fast-drawing shooter (the undertakers never recovered fully from her disclosures) and inaccurate hip shots are not her style. Here she draws ammunition from at least three sources. The California State Prison for male adult felons, supposedly one of the best; the Maryland Patuxent Institution for "defective delinquents;" and the Draper Experimental-Demonstration Project for youthful offenders in Alabama.

Speaking of the California system she quotes Dr. Bernard L. Diamond, Professor of Law and Psychiatry at the University of California, as saying, "In good prisons, like those in California, physical degradation is replaced by psychological degradation." This is in direct contradiction to Dr. Karl Menninger's earlier high opinion or hopes in his book *The Crime of Punishment*. She talked to Dr. Powelson, head of a psychiatric clinic at University of California at Berkeley, who was resident psychiatrist at San Quentin prison in 1950. It is from him that she primarily got the idea of psychiatrists being used as administrative spies and the punitive aspects of some forms of therapy such as electric or insulin shock. Dr. Frank Rundle, chief psychiatrist at Soledad prison for a short time in 1970-1, endorsed Dr. Powelson's position very strongly. His

career terminated when he refused to release a prisoner's confidential file ordered by the warden when he was investigating the murder of a prison official and suspected the prisoner-patient. He was relieved of the file by forcible means.

Ms. Mitford discusses the Patuxent system of "graded tiers" in which the patient must earn his way from the bottom or first tier to the fourth highest tier. Here the basic flaw is felt to be the compulsory nature of the treatment. A rather stalwart patient named Edward Lee McNeil refused to talk to any of the examining psychiatric personnel because his conviction on assault and rape, attained without a jury trial, was up on appeal and the Patuxent people naturally wanted to talk about his crime and any other antisocial acts he had committed. He sat in the bottom tier stubbornly for six years while his case inched its way to the United States Supreme Court. That court, Justice Douglas speaking, felt he had every constitutional right not to be forced to say anything that might endanger his case. Obviously the tools of psychiatry are dulled into uselessness without communication with the patient. The dilemma is how can the patient be protected and the psychiatrist do his work? It would seem nobody has solved this problem to date.

The authoress' indignation really gets going when she tackles the subject of new drug, or other medical experimentation, with prisoners as guinea pigs. She has accumulated facts concerning all sorts of financial arrangements with drug companies and grant getters and the prisoners. In fairness she states the \$1 per day most prisoners earn in these programs is actually a high source of income for them because they appear to earn about 2 cents an hour from the state for their work. Also it seems they get some "good points" on their records for this work and many of them avidly seek such assignments and the wardens use it as a sort of "reward" for the cooperative ones. She discusses the use of sweeping consent forms the prisoners sign to depress law suits. It is true experimentation can be dangerous but I suspect the prisoners fully know that. I also believe that new drug testing is not usually done so carelessly as to be a serious danger assuming the animal work has been completed, as it must by law, and the investigators increase their dosages very cautiously, as any good ones would. I think this area is more shocking to a lay person than to any doctor familiar with the history of medical growth.

The book contains long discussions on questions like the validity of the utilization of the indeterminate sentence, the parole system, prison budgeting, prison riots, statistics, and the like. In most instances she presents a reasonably balanced picture before expressing her personal attitude or taking any positions. It was, perhaps, a wise decision on my part to review this book, because out of the entire membership of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, there probably are few members with so little first hand knowledge of prisons as myself. I read this book with the same inchoate naivety I assume the American public will read it and that might have value.

In concluding Ms. Mitford cannot bring herself to advocate total abolition of prisons although the temptations are strong. The alternatives are too staggering, too mind boggling to consider what might ensue if there were literally no place to put the "bad guys." What then, if we see the limitations on criminal deterrence prisons have? Here finally she weakens as I suspect many who have worked substantial years of their lives in this field have weakened. What's left then if present prisons are so ineffectual? Ms. Mitford tends to dribble away into talking about prison unions, and loosening drug abuse laws to reduce sentences, revising criminal codes, and the like. I minimize these suggestions because they have a *deja vu* element about them that her book does not possess and despite her rational containment; one hoped for more. Maybe there is no more and that would be a sad day indeed.

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The Malpractice of Psychiatry. By DONALD J. DAWIDOFF. Springfield, Ill. (American Lecture Series No. 874), C. C. Thomas, 1973. Pp. xiii, 164. Price \$9.75.

Criticizing this book would be like attacking Hillary if he failed to scale Mt. Everest. The