

# Taking Liberties

No 21

June 1997

30p

Free to Prisoners

## DRUGS IN PRISON

Welcome to Taking Liberties, the paper that subverts our jails. As regular readers will know, we try to report on the abuse and brutality of the Justice system, and the many individual and collective ways working class people fight back against it. As well as discussing some of the issues that and problems that arise from these struggles.

We occasionally try to concentrate on one particular issue: this time around we have put together several articles about drug use inside. Mostly they are about the Mandatory Drug tests, introduced in 1995 to (allegedly) cut down the massive use of illegal drugs inside. We had hoped there would be more stuff here on other aspects of the "Drug Problem". We have some stuff on the internal workings of prison drug culture. One issue largely untouched is the whole question of LEGAL drugs prescribed by the authorities to keep prisoners subdued, the chemical cosh etc. We have very little on this because no-one has written about it. However just because it's not in this issue

doesn't mean someone out there will be writing off on this subject to us even now...

As always, this paper is there for prisoners to use as their own, so any prisoners (or those on the outside) who want to respond

### SPECIAL ISSUE

or add anything to what's covered here, criticise, whatever, please get writing.

One last thing. most of these articles were written before the General Election in May, due to the slow process of producing this newsheet, we didn't get it out in time. We haven't changed every reference to Michael Howard, the Tories etc. We wait to see if Jack Straw will carry on being bloodthirstier than thou when it comes to crime and prisons. We suspect nothing will change, as usual. Straw's list of proposed 'anti-crime' measures more than carry on with Howard's dreams control and repression for working class communities.

MORE ON MICHAEL HOWARD - PAGE 4

## LIKE STRANGWAYS NEVER HAPPENED

This article was written before Mandatory Drug Testing was introduced. Before all the recent tests showing the tests to be increasing prisoners' use of hard drugs. Clearly it didn't take Mystic Meg to see what would happen.

Razor Smith. PJ2679.

Control Unit HMP Albany  
Newport I.O.W

This year sees the introduction of random drug-testing into British prisons. A large percentage of prisoners are adamant that they will refuse to be tested and will instead opt for the 'bad boy' wings which are being set up to house the incorrigibles who refuse to give up their cannabis. With Home Leave cut by 40%, more and more people going to prison every day, and a Home Secretary who seems to think that our prisons are not 'austere' enough, is it any wonder that the prison system is on the verge of some very major disturbance? Random drug testing is just another kick in the testicles for the prison system, it will take up more man-hours that could be put to better use, such as rehabilitating the prisoners, for instance. The Prison Service manifesto claims to treat prisoners with respect and dignity. As one long-termer at HMP High Down commented, "There ain't nothing dignified about pissing in a bottle, it ain't so long ago we was pissing in buckets instead of toilets, the system seems to be going backwards."

Prisoners have been told that random tests have been introduced so that the authorities can "identify the prisoner who does not take drugs and reward him with forward moves, temporary release, 'drug-free' wings and prisons etc." Derek Lewis [head of Prison Service at time of writing - Ed], on the other hand, told parliament that the reason for drug-testing was "...to identify the drug-users and punish them." The official Home Office version seems to differ somewhat from the version told to prisoners. So why have drugs suddenly become the hot issue of the moment in prison? The answer is simple, it is a smokescreen to cover up the shortcomings of the prison system as a whole and the inadequacies of the ministers in charge. The spate of distur-

bances towards the end of last year were blamed on drugs, and with the help of the tabloid press the Home Office are painting a picture of berserk prisoners, high on drugs going around starting riots, wrecking prisons and just generally being responsible for the breakdown of the system. Anyone who has spent more than a week in prisons will know this is absolute nonsense.

Up until the mid-1970s, the currency in prison was tobacco. The only drugs a prisoner ever saw were normally given to him in handfuls by the medical staff or administered via needle by several large members of staff, usually after the prisoner had kicked off. In the 1980s cannabis became the main currency among most prisoners although it has never replaced tobacco altogether. By 1992 there were three main bartering currencies in prison, tobacco, cannabis and phone cards. Cannabis became the oil that kept the wheels of imprisonment turning, with cannabis you could get both phone cards and tobacco and likewise with phone cards and tobacco you could get cannabis, a nice balance. Cannabis tends to make the user mellow out and retreat quietly into himself, it is not the sort of drug to take if you are just about to participate in any sort of disturbance, neither are you likely to get into many arguments while under the influence of cannabis, unless it's about how many mars bars you can eat. In fact most prisoners use cannabis as an aid to sleeping. A joint before midnight can make even the hardest prison bed seem comfortable! Cannabis is not a riot drug and up till now most prison officers have turned a blind eye to it for precisely that reason. Cannabis = quiet laid-back prisoners = no control problems. But things are rapidly changing.

Consider this, if drug tests become compulsory in prison are the prisoners likely to stick to their present pattern of drug taking, ie smoking cannabis? It would seem not, as this would mean a 28 to 1 against chance that he or she would test positive. Cannabis is a 'bulky' drug, an ounce is

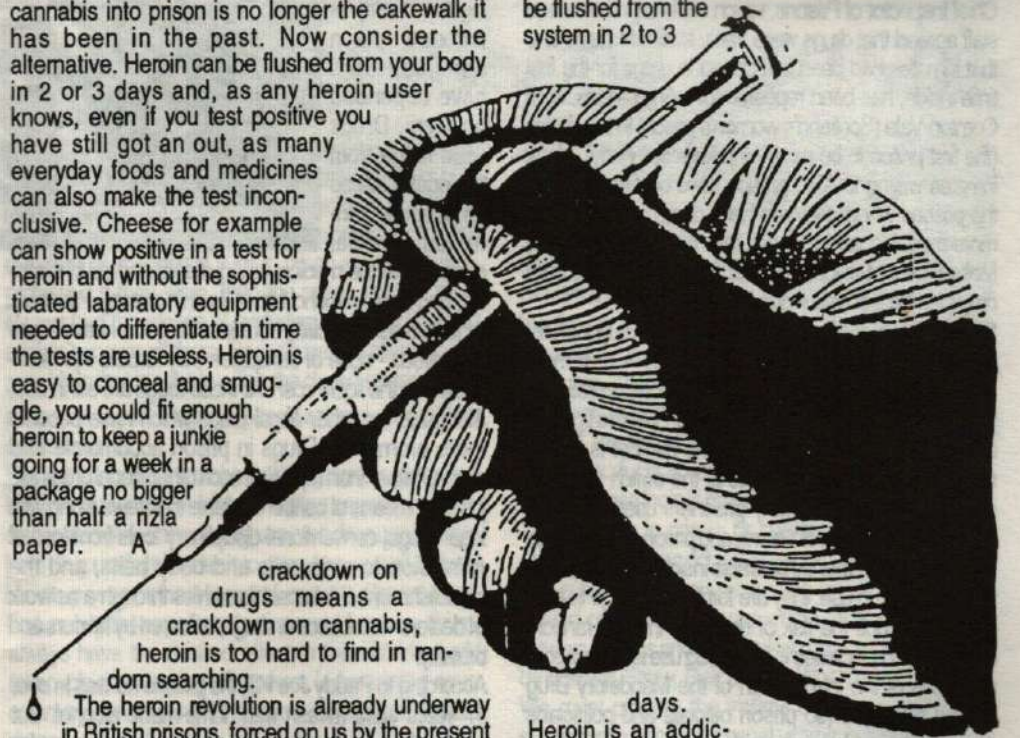
the size of a golf ball and pretty hard to conceal. With visitors being routinely targeted, smuggling cannabis into prison is no longer the cakewalk it has been in the past. Now consider the alternative. Heroin can be flushed from your body in 2 or 3 days and, as any heroin user knows, even if you test positive you have still got an out, as many everyday foods and medicines can also make the test inconclusive. Cheese for example can show positive in a test for heroin and without the sophisticated laboratory equipment needed to differentiate in time the tests are useless. Heroin is easy to conceal and smuggle, you could fit enough heroin to keep a junkie going for a week in a package no bigger than half a rizia paper.

A crackdown on drugs means a crackdown on cannabis, heroin is too hard to find in random searching.

The heroin revolution is already underway in British prisons, forced on us by the present climate of 'austerity' issuing from the Home Office. When the bleak and barren landscape inside British prisons is being touted by the Home Secretary as "Not austere enough" most prisoners will combat his new regimes by reaching for the skag. After all, if the Home Secretary lives in a fantasy world why shouldn't the prisoner? At this moment the heroin heads are in the minority but it will not be long before the occasional cannabis user sees the light and gives up his risky puff for a nice safe addictive boot of heroin.

Every prisoner knows that the residue of one joint

can be detected in the body for up to 28 days after being smoked. Heroin on the other hand can be flushed from the system in 2 to 3



days. Heroin is an addictive drug (unlike cannabis) and is the cause of more violence and trouble in jail than any other one factor. Heroin addicts will do virtually anything to get their hands on their drug. They will sell their own possessions and anyone else's they can steal. They will rob other prisoners (and on one occasion a BT engineer in a prison to repair a phone!) at knifepoint. They will run up large debts that they have no intention of paying and then put themselves in the block and hope for a move to a jail where they will repeat the process over again. Cont. on back page



### Supporting Class Struggle Prisoners

# DRUGS, PRISON AND THE PRODUCTION OF CRIME

*Despite frequent random and targeted drug testing of prisoners, the imposition of strict penalties against those who test positive (and the probable consequence for them that they won't get parole), despite intrusive and meticulous searches of visitors and prisoners, drugs continue to be more readily available inside prison than out.*

*Prisoners become addicted while they're inside. ABC activists have come to know prisoners well, know that many never touched hard drugs before they went inside, and now see them, friends and comrades, using heroin because they are inside. Prison is not only taking them from us, but giving them a physical dependency, changing them into something they don't want to be. One ex-prisoner said he'd never even seen heroin before he went inside. He was offered it there, and because he was bored and depressed, he tried it. "Luckily I didn't like it," he said. "Otherwise I'd be a junkie now." As Judge Tumim said of Styal prisoners: "enter a shoplifter, leave an addict".*

*We are not passing judgement on drug use or drug users. It isn't our business what people choose to take. What makes us angry is seeing people, especially people we have come to know and respect, made vulnerable by prison, pushed into hard drug-taking, and thus linked to the organised crime that serves the interests of the state. Howard is doing his best to turn our mates into junkies. What better way of permanently reducing their effectiveness? Yet prisoners are not stupid. they are very angry at what is being done to them, cynical of the claims of officials and politicians - they are, potentially, radical if not revolutionary. If we want to know how they feel, to hear what they can tell us, we have to intervene and give help where it's needed.*

## A SERIOUS PROBLEM

In 1989, 6500 people were said to be drug-dependent on entry to prison. This official figure is probably accurate. If prisoners are addicted when they enter the prison system, it is in their interest to say so, because they (unlike those who become addicted while inside) will not be punished but given medical treatment. This is however much more limited than they would receive outside, in the NHS, and so withdrawal problems are likely to make them start to use illegal drugs: the effect of NHS treatment is likely to be reversed in prison (*Drugs on the Inside 4*, Penal Affairs Consortium, *DI* hereafter). So the Home Office estimates that the number of drug addicts in prison is now 3000. The others have vanished from the statistics, even if they remain addicts. This, and all other figures for illegal drug users in prison are necessarily underestimates, because punishment must cause at least some prisoners to refuse to admit use. Official reports say drugs are more available inside prison than outside. The finding of the famous 1995 report on Styal Womens Prison by Judge Tumim, then Chief Inspector of Prisons, which said that inmates and staff agreed that drugs were freely available inside and that inmates had been introduced to drugs for the first time inside, has been repeated for many prisons, from Compton Vale (Scotland's women's prison) to the Wolds (the first prison to be run by a private company). Many inmates writing to ABC groups have confirmed that in the prisons where they are held, drugs continue to be more available, and cheaper, than on the streets of say Moss Side or Brixton, and that they were offered hard drugs for the first time when inside.

Several recent studies of drug use in prison suggest that about 10% of male prisoners and 11% of female prisoners are drug dependent. In a prison population of 60,000, that men's over 6000 addicts - but this figure is certainly an underestimate and the number is rapidly rising. A major reason for this is the switch from soft drugs to hard drugs. Many prisoners used harmless drugs like cannabis before entering prison, and continue to use drugs to make life bearable inside. But if they wish to continue drug use, they are forced to change to hard drugs to reduce the risk of detection through random drug tests. The increase in hard drug use is a direct consequence of the introduction of the Mandatory Drug Testing designed (so prison officials and politicians claim) to reduce drug use in prison.

The reason is simply that traces of cannabis can remain detectable in the body up to 30 days after consumption, while heroin and cocaine are out of it in only two days and amphetamines are out in 2-4 days (*DI 12*). This information spread throughout the prison grapevine as fast as the tests were introduced.

A prisoner from Perth, Brian Hosie, wrote to *Inside Time* (Summer 1996): "prisoners who once took a smoke of hashish to get them through a black spot of tedium, are now going over more and more to hard drugs that are out of their system in days rather than weeks..." Nor was it a secret known only to prisoners. Even the Home Office recorded some "disquiet" that inmates were switching to hard drugs for this same reason, and that prison staff were aware of the fact (*DI 7*). Screws,

experts and civil servants all know that random mandatory testing must increase hard drug use in prison, and if the politicians don't know this, it's because they're wilfully ignorant or stupid. Or both.

## CONTROLLING PRISONERS

Those who study prisons have long accepted that prisons cannot function unless inmates co-operate with their guards. It would be prohibitively expensive for the state to run prisons if prisoners were always obstructive. Drugs have long formed a means of ensuring the docility of prisoners - prison administrators have depended on them. Drugs used range from the legal (tobacco as prisoner-controlled internal currency) to the medical (tranquillisers and psychotropics) and illegal (alcohol brewed within prison). Prisoners regarded as especially troublesome got a heavy - and dangerous - dose of tranquillisers by forcible injection - known as the liquid cosh. All those drugs are still in use. Alongside the other illegal drugs which have become more prominent. Drugs in prison accumulate and spread rather than replacing each other. Illegal drugs are just one means of control available to screws along with legal drugs, conventional disciplinary tools from loss of remission to strip-cells and body belts, and the establishment of internal hierarchies through a network of dealers - in tobacco or drugs, enforced by favours and brutality.

According to Paddy Joe Hill, the prisons he was in over 17 years were awash with home-made alcohol. But alcohol has its drawbacks - drunk prisoners can be violent and disruptive, and prisoners, not screws, control its production and distribution. Howard's policies promised that prisons would soon be badly overcrowded, while economies were forcing cutbacks in staffing levels and prisoner privileges and distractions, like education. Illegal drugs offered a solution. It's easier for screws to control supply and distribution, because drugs have to be brought in, and since they are much more compact than alcohol, it's more feasible to smuggle them in. By 1992, Judge Tumim was reporting that not only were prisoners openly drinking home-made alcohol in front of staff in Long Lartin, but hard drugs were easier to find inside the prison than out - in Wymott, where they were openly on sale. In 1994, Anthony Middleton reported in the *Big Issue* (no. 105) on the wide

availability of cannabis in prisons. "Undoubtedly cannabis makes prisoners more acquiescent", said Stephen Shaw, of the Prison Reform Trust. "I would think that any prison warden would want prisoners to take cannabis, rather than prison-brewed alcohol." Prison officers were said to turn a blind eye to its use and even to deal in it themselves, to make their job easier. Occasionally screws have been caught and themselves jailed for dealing. And there was a suggestion that they might 'collude' with prisoners to prevent disorder when testing was introduced, so that the peaceful situation might continue. An official report blamed the 1994 riot in Everthorpe on a crackdown causing a shortage of drugs in the Humberside prison.

In *Inside Time's* 1995 survey, equal numbers (44%) of prisoners reported that they had access to alcohol and hard drugs, but hard drugs were much more frequently available than alcohol, and cannabis continued to be more readily available than either. But Tumim's headlining-grabbing reports had geared up Michael Howard's new prison agency to prevent prisoners from getting stoned out of their minds every night on the drug of their choice. The Criminal Justice Act (1994) gave screws legal power to make prisoners give piss samples for drug testing, and by March 1996, mandatory random drug testing was routine in all prisons. Cannabis makes possible the economical control of prisons, but does little to change its users. Drug testing changes drug use, giving the same control to screws, making prisoners docile, while creating drug-dependent users committed to crime, who also remain amenable to control. The state is prepared to spend £4.2 million a year on drug testing, although as a means of discovering the extent of the drugs 'problem' or of reducing it, the drug testing

instantly available. A copper's dream.

## THE DRUG ECONOMY

If the state contributes £4.2 million towards this scheme of control, then prisoners and their friends probably contribute even more. Illegal drugs make control possible literally at the expense of those subject to control. But who gets the money? The answer depends on who brings the drugs in.

We are constantly told that it's visitors who bring drugs in. Those of us who visit prisoners frequently know that can't be wholly true. We are no longer allowed to take anything in, such as pens, unsealed packets of cigarettes (sometimes no fags at all), nappies for babies we may have with us. Purses, wallets, coats and shoes pass through a sophisticated X-ray machine, while we go through a sensitive metal detector... Then we're rubbed down in a mildly embarrassing fashion - although some people (we've only heard of it happening to women) are subject to full strip searches. If you were reckless, you might get a tiny quantity of drugs through, in your mouth or a thick bit of clothing. You'd then have to pass it over to the prisoner a few feet away from a screw who has nothing to do but watch you, underneath a TV camera. The prisoner must then get it through a further search, which may include an internal body search, which may be videoed. **It is simply impossible for the large quantities of drugs consumed in prisons to be brought in by visitors.**

That leaves service workers and screws to bring drugs in. The allegation that screws bring drugs in has been made before. In *Inside Time's* survey in 1995 (before testing was widespread) 14% of respondents said they got their drugs from visitors and only 12% got them from screws. But 64% got them from other prisoners, and 31% wouldn't say who supplied them. And the survey says nothing about quantities. A few screws could be bringing in large quantities, and supplying the dealers inside. There are serious allegations that they bring in other things. It's been forcibly argued (by Mike Mansfield on BBC TV Newsnight on 24th January 1997) that prison officers brought in boltcutters used to cut through a fence so as to enable six top security prisoners to (attempt) escape. If they were brought in by visitors, then they would have to have first been taken into the visiting room. "How a prisoner might then take receipt of them and secrete them during a strip search is an alarming thought," muses Jeremy Hardy, comedian and campaigner for one of the 'escapees', (Danny MacNamee, a fitted-up prisoner). "They were 2 feet long." Clearly screws can bring in what they like, even to the highest security jails. And they have strong motives for bringing in drugs - it makes their job easier, and they make a lot of money. Strict searching of visitors and prisoners can serve to maintain monopoly control of the drugs business. A weaker case than the above has landed many prisoners inside with long sentences. But what are we alleging here? That the state spends money so as to enable it most lowly servants to profit and exercise power illegally and so beyond its control? Or is this a state conspiracy?

It seems like it. What we're saying here may not often be said in public, but it's not secret, and nor is it mere speculation. Everyone involved in the penal system right up to Michael Howard must know that drug tests are inaccurate and ineffective in preventing drug use, that they push inmate cannabis use towards hard drug use and that screws deal drugs. Everyone knows that hard drugs are integral to the prison system and that control of prisoners depends on them. The switch to hard drugs due to the continuing enforcement of drug testing cannot be regarded as an unfortunate side-effect unintended by state officials. Dealing by screws and by inmates who are not addicts but professional dealers in or outside prison, is not done in defiance of the state but in conformity with its politics - and so it continues, more firmly entrenched than ever.

The pattern is familiar. The privatisation of control, tried and tested in prisons in the years of the tobacco barons, has been extended and taken over by the state's own officials acting in a private capacity, much as public resources like water have been privatised and handed over to other favoured individuals. In return, the officials deliver a service (in prisons, of control and of the production of a preferred type of prisoner) for which the state can deny all responsibility. What screws do, need not be directly controlled: the context in which they do it and the limits on what they can do ensure that their work,



PRISONERS ARE BUSED OUT OF WYMOTT JAIL AFTER THE 1995 "DRUGS RIOT" THERE.

system is worthless. It's inaccuracy is notorious. One academic study says that 5-10% of tests give wrong results, both false positives and false negatives. The number of reports that ABC and other organisations have received suggests that the tests are even less accurate. Some prisoners substituted tap water for piss and the tests gave a positive result for the presence of drugs (what do they put in prison tap water?) Prisoners can have another test done by a laboratory, but they have to pay for it - we understand the cost is £18, a lot of money for a prisoner and more than most have available. The lab test is not necessarily any more reliable. Brian Hosie (*Inside Time*, Summer 1996) wrote: "I have knowledge of prisoners who have been taking drugs heavily and yet their test came back negative... In another instance, three drug users used a clean prisoner's urine and the result was that two came back negative and the third proved positive for alcohol." Now, prisoners have to piss in a jar while screws watch, which doesn't make the test any more accurate but prevents prisoners from showing how inaccurate it is. Prison officials are gullible, and private companies are always selling them security devices that cost a lot and don't work properly. Drug tests are just another of these. But the £4.2 million isn't wasted. The fact that the tests are crap doesn't matter: they are simply another means of control. Prisoners tell us that they are not in practice particularly random - some prisoners are tested quite often, others not at all. They are very much under the control of the screws, and so wide open to the fabrication of results. Prisoners can be instantly fitted up, with 'incontrovertible' scientific evidence against them

# NEWS...UPDATES...NEWS...UPDATES

## "LET JUSTICE BE DONE OR THE HEAVENS FALL"

Raphael Rowe of the M25 Three went on hunger strike for three weeks in March-April, in protest at the endless Home Office delaying of the reviewing of his case. Raphael, together with Randolph Johnson and Michael Davis, was jailed for life for a night of robberies and murder in Surrey in 1988. The evidence against the M25 three was negligible, with plenty of alibi evidence. Witnesses' descriptions didn't fit them, but did fit early suspects, who later became prosecution witnesses and may have been paid rewards to testify against the three - despite admitting to some involvement in the crimes. This is only the tip of the iceberg of the dodgy stuff in this case.

On going on hunger strike, Raphael issued this statement:

"As of Monday 31st March 1997 I will be refusing all food substances and going on a hunger strike for justice. To protest to death my innocence and wrongful imprisonment, and to protest over the unjust way the Home Secretary Michael Howard has dealt with my case in the past three years, by misleading me into believing a decision on whether he would refer my wrongful conviction back to the Court of Appeal, would be reached before responsibility for reviewing cases is handed over to the Criminal Cases Review Commission on 31st March 1997.

The Home Secretary has caused me psychological torture. In November 1995 I was informed by the Home Office that my representations of May 1994 were receiving priority over all other cases and that my case was being treated with considerable urgency and priority.

This lie was repeated throughout the whole of 1996. In January 1997 the Home Office Minister Timothy Kirkhope admitted that consideration of my case representations were badly delayed in the past but were again being given some priority.

On the 28th February the Home Secretary Michael Howard told the Shadow Home Secretary Jack Straw:

"...in view of the earlier delays in dealing with Mr Rowe's case, he has been given an undertaking that a decision will be taken on his representations before responsibility for reviewing allegations of wrongful conviction is handed over to the Criminal Cases Review Commission on 31st March."

Then on the 20th March 1997 Timothy Kirkhope wrote to Sir Edward Garnier MP stating that:

"...the Home Secretary and I have wanted very much to reach a decision on this case...unfortunately...we have had to conclude that it will not be possible to do so before the responsibility for considering cases of alleged miscarriage of justice transfers to the new Criminal Cases Review Commission...they can decide what action, if any, is required...this inevitably means there will be some further delay before a decision is taken."

I conclude that I can no longer take this torture of injustice and delay. If I die on my hunger strike for justice I blame Michael Howard and the Home Office.

Let Justice be done or the heavens fall."

Three weeks into his hunger strike, the Home Office capitulated, announcing that the case would be going to be reviewed by the new Commission as a matter of urgency. Raphael called off his hunger strike in response.

We must keep up the pressure though, so as New Labour get the message.

- Write to Raphael Rowe in support of his actions. Don't forget the other M25 prisoners (see below).

- Write to the M25 Three Campaign, 28 Grimsel Path, London, SE5 0TB, offering support.

- Write to the Criminal Cases Review Commission, Alpha Tower, Suffolk Street, Queensway, Birmingham, B1, to demand they do deal with this case, and not backtrack.

- Raise this case in your union, political group, community group, street, pub and CREATE SOME ACTION.

Raphael Rowe, MP3660, HMP Maidstone, County Road, Maidstone, Kent.  
Michael Davis, MP3661, HMP Maidstone, County Road, Maidstone, Kent.  
Randolph Johnson, MP3903, HMP Long Lartin, S. Littleton, Evesham, WR11 5TZ.

## SATPAL IN WANNO

Satpal Ram is still serving life for the 'murder' of a racist who attacked him in a restaurant, forcing Satpal to defend himself; the man died after refusing medical treatment. In his eleven years inside, as well as constantly fighting for his release, Satpal has refused to submit to the shit treatment the authorities mete out to prisoners, especially ones who won't play the game (ie admit 'guilt'). Most recently, Satpal was forcibly moved from Gartree prison to Wandsworth in a body belt, after being 'suspected' of involvement in an 'incident'. As usual this was a fitup designed to harass Satpal and justify moving him again. He was denied access to his property, spent two days in a strip cell, and is still being held in solitary confinement.

Satpal went on hunger strike for over two weeks, demanding a move back to Gartree, and end to the brutality and hassles. This was supported by a picket of Wanno by Satpal's supporters on May 3rd. Satpal's tariff (the minimum sentence to be served before a lifer can be released on licence) of 12 years is up next year, but as he refuses to admit 'guilt' they'll probably keep him in longer unless WE force them to let him out.

Contact Birmingham Prisoners Solidarity, PO Box 3241, Birmingham, B8 3DP, or the Free Satpal Campaign on 0121 331 1511.

Satpal Ram, E94164, has been moved to HMP Exeter, New North Rd, Exeter, EX4 4EX

## RONNIE LATEST

Ronnie Easterbrook is still on hunger strike after 5 months! He started in January, in protest at his treatment in Belmarsh Prison's Segregation Unit, and demanding that he be moved to a lower category jail.

Ronnie, who is 65, is serving 4 life sentences for taking part in a robbery set up by a police spy. Ever since his conviction he has been brutalised and abused by various prisons, including deliberate floodings of his cell, repeated messing with his food, trumped-up charges. From 1995 he was on a dirty protest against this harassment, which led to him going to Belmarsh where things only got worse.

Ronnie knows he will die in jail, but he wants to go to a C Category jail, and an end to the abuse.

At present Ronnie is on food supplements which have stabilised his weight, and he is in good spirits. There has been no movement as yet from the Prison Service on his demands. More info as we get it.

Send him a letter or card of support:

Ronnie Easterbrook, B88459, HSU, HMP Belmarsh, Western Way, London, SE28 0EB.

The widespread publicity and protest around the case of Roisin McAliskey seems to have paid off somewhat.

Roisin has imprisoned without charge since November 1996, being held in Holloway Jail pending deportation to Germany, where the state wants to bring 'terrorism' charges against her in connection with an alleged IRA bombing in Osnabruck. Roisin is nine months pregnant, the baby was due (at time of writing). Despite this she has been subject to the same harsh and brutal conditions alleged IRA members are kept in: closed visits, ie behind a glass screen; for family and legal visitors, being denied exercise, being kept in her cell 23 hours a day and constant stripsearching. Unsurprisingly given the general treatment of pregnant prisoners, (remember the women being shackled while giving birth last year?), she has been in poor health, and there have been fears for the child.

All this despite the weakness of the case against her in Germany, which relies on one set of fingerprints found on a fag packet, found in connection

a flat german authorities say the IRA used there. Supporters say she is in jail because of her name.

Her mother is Bernadette McAliskey, a prominent republican and former MP, (who once

## FREE ROISIN

used her elected status to physically attack the Home Secretary in the House of Commons after the Bloody Sunday shootings in 1972. That's what we CALL parliamentary privilege!

Roisin's supporters have been campaigning for her release, with pickets, meetings etc, and this has achieved a minor victory in that Roisin was released temporarily on May 23rd to have the baby, on condition she goes back to Holloway afterwards. This is clearly an improvement on being chained to the bed with a screw leering at you as you bring your child into the world.

The campaign ain't over though - Roisin will be allowed to keep her child in Holloway's mother and baby unit (for a limited time), but is still scheduled to be deported. But Kani Yilmaz, the european Kurdish PKK representative, is in the same position: being held uncharged pending deportation to

Germany. He has been in Belmarsh for two & a half years! To help keep up the pressure contact:

Fuascait, (Irish republican prisoners' support group), PO Box 3923, London, NW5 1RA.  
Tel 0181 985 8250.

Meanwhile there's no doubt the campaigning work forced this concession.

Congratulations to Roisin and her supporters. With a bit more pressure maybe every pregnant prisoner will be offered the same concession.

Let's get working!



ROISIN & HER MOTHER BERNADETTE

## Taking Liberties is produced by: THE ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS

The Anarchist Black Cross is a revolutionary organisation, that works towards the abolition of the prison system as part of the class struggle.

We recognise that prisons are an integral part of the class system and vital to the survival of capitalism and the preservation of the rich/the ruling class. Prisons can only be abolished as part of a social and economic revolution that destroys capitalism.

Although we welcome changes in the prison system which make life easier for our comrades inside, we know the prison system cannot be reformed out of existence. We don't believe we have all the solutions, but we are working class people who have faith in our class to find those solutions. We have many ideas on how this can be done, and are willing to work, discuss and swap ideas with others.

We work with prisoners, their families and supporters on the outside, to educate ourselves and other working class people as to the true reality of prisons. This exchange of information is a crucial part of our work.

We support such prisoners as:

- Revolutionary, anarchist, political prisoners, & other working class people jailed for resistance to capitalism, eg strikers;

- people framed by the cops for things they haven't done;

- Prisoners fighting back against the prison system from inside;

- Working class people jailed as a result of having to break the law in order to get by;

- People resisting injustice in their lives, e.g. women jailed for killing violent and abusive partners/rapists, people jailed for resisting racist or police attacks.

We will not support:

- Anyone involved in anti-social & oppressive crime, i.e. rape, child abuse, racist attacks, on that basis alone;

- Crime which is anti-working class, eg mugging/burgling other working class people, in short robbing your own. However we recognise the destructive effect that life under capitalism has on our behaviour, & will consider each case individually.

The ABC is a National Network of local, autonomous groups, meaning that each group is free to carry out work demanded by their local situation. However, each local group is, as part of the collective, responsible and accountable to the other member groups.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Support prisoners. People inside need letters of support, visits, money and practical help. If you aren't sure how to go about it, ask for our leaflets on Writing to Prisoners & Practical Support (see back page).

Distribute information and news. The ABC has leaflets on prisoners cases/prison issues. You can also sell copies of Taking Liberties/tell your mates inside about us.

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Send us news about prisons or prisoners: if you are inside, drop us a line and let us know about conditions, resistance at your establishment.

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# PRISONERS' JUSTICE DAY

Every year on Prisoners Justice Day, August 10th, the Anarchist Black Cross Network and other supporters of prisoners' struggles hold demonstrations and pickets, mostly outside prisons and police stations. This is to commemorate all the people who have died in prison - by their own hand, murdered or through neglect and abuse - and to support and promote prisoners' resistance to the whole 'injustice' system.

In the past we have annoyed the authorities at Pentonville, Holloway, Brixton, Amley, Strangeways, Winson Green jails among others. Last year 80 people marched from Holloway to Pentonville, and there were large and angry pickets of Norwich and Strangeways. Since we are small groups working in a neglected and mostly unnewsworthy area of class society, our actions have usually been small and get little attention. For all that we have had a lot of positive responses from people visiting prisons and other people passing by.

We are starting to get organised for Prisoners Justice Day this year. We would like this annual event to break out of the tiny group of subversives that attend at the moment. In Canada, where Prisoners Justice Day was thought up, 1000s of prisoners go on hunger and work strikes to remember inmate dead, while 100s of people hold marches, vigils, radio shows, gigs and more on the outside. We know how difficult it is to organise inside jails, and the inevitable comeback on any con who sticks their neck out, but wouldn't it be brilliant if loads of prisons here were paralysed for a day - at the least! - as a show of strength and resistance to the way of life and death in UK jails?

If anyone, inside or out is interested in holding a PJD event, get in touch with your local ABC group. Let's make this event big and powerful, and start really threatening the prison authorities control.

## BASH THE FASH

We have learned that William Browning, a leading member of the fascist Combat 18 group, is currently being held in Brixton Prison. According to our informant this gent is bullying and pushing around other cons there, and distributing fascist literature inside. Needless to say, several screws are said to be very sympathetic towards him and his views. (Screws have always been mainstays of far-rightwing groups. In the 70s large numbers joined the NF, some openly wearing NF insignia as part of their uniforms; today not a few are members of the British National Party, or have leanings in that direction.) It is no surprise then that Browning is able to get away with circulating rightwing shite in jail, despite Brixton's 'tough' stance on letting in Class War and Taking Liberties in the past. Scum like this should be on Rule 43 for their own protection, but since he isn't we can only hope somebody decides to deal with him soon, to put a stop to his dangerous and reactionary garbage.

## LONG LARTIN AT IT AGAIN

*Framed prisoner Ray Gilbert has been getting the usual treatment meted out to anyone who steps out of line in today's prison system.*

Ray and several other prisoners went on a hunger strike in the Segregation Unit of Long Lartin jail in May. They were protesting at the way their food was being messed with, their mail repeatedly stopped, and a local decision from the governor to stop paying any prison wages to men in the Seg Unit. Ray's hunger strike lasted 10 days.

According to Ray the Seg Unit is in a terrible condition, showers and toilets filthy, while the heating system keeps screws warm, but leaves inmates' cells are "like an icebox". The Governor's refusal to pay the Seg prisoners wages is being taken to a Judicial Review by solicitors. Ray has been denied access to his own property since he was briefly moved to Woodhill prison two months ago. Since then his gear has been kept from him, in reception. He is also going to court over the way he has been bounced from Seg Unit, to the Wing, and back to the Seg, constantly, having been told the Wings "won't have him."

He asks that people write and protest over this harassment to:

- Mr Mullen, Long Lartin's Governor, and Mr Yeoman, Segregation Unit Governor, at HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, WR11 5TZ.

Send letters of support to Ray Gilbert, H10111, at the same address.

*As we said on page 1, we don't hold out much hope in the New Labour Government improving the lot of prisoners. Having said that it was fun to see Michael Howard get turfed out, and even more fun to watch him being savaged by his former underling, Anne Widdecombe. Nothing like a quarrel among rich thieves to cheer us up! Many of us learned to hate Howard for the rabid middle class lawyer he is. His list of crimes against the working class is too long to mention. Politicians may just be representatives & servants of the bourgeois class, but he was a very effective one. Anne Widdecombe said there's something dark, "of the night", in him,, and she's not wrong. Mind you, she can fucking talk!!*

## BEFORE



Stir crazy.

## AFTER



Not so cocky now, eh?

## Drugs Test Loophole

**Prisoners dealing with Mandatory drug test will no doubt be interested to hear about the following bit of detective work by one of our friends on the inside.**

A copy of a Board of Visitors magazine last summer (AMBOV Quarterly) contained a list of instructions to Governors from the Home Office. It included IG/30/96 as follows; "Amendments to Discipline Manual - New Guidance on drug offences.... reaffirming right of prisoners to contesting sample results, to cross-examine laboratory scientist! (their exclamation mark)."

Our friend tried this out with a mate who tested positive for drugs and was due to go before the governor. He pleaded not guilty and asked to be able to cross-examine the scientist. At first the Governor blanked his request and found him guilty, he lost 21 days. But when the guy complained about the adjudication via a Request/Complaint form, he got a reply from PSHQ, telling him that his conviction was quashed, his days were given back and the conviction was erased from his record.

This is how it works - the paperwork that comes from the lab saying a sample is positive only amounts to hearsay evidence unless the person who tested the sample is there to be

questioned. The Home Office are well aware of this, so what they do is instruct Governors to allow anyone to cross examine the scientist. The one thing that they don't do is tell governors to inform prisoners of this right (surprise!). The rule is there on the books, all nice and legal, but nobody knows it exists except the people who are running the show. Now, for a prisoner to question the scientist, he must be granted legal aid, because a prisoner is not legally qualified to cross-examine an expert witness! No-one can be convicted just on hearsay evidence, not even on a governor's adjudication.

So if a con disputes a test result, he should claim his right under IG/30/96. Ask for a legal aid application and get a barrister on his adjudication. Of course, the cash-strapped prison governor is not going to shell out for a laboratory scientist (who can charge what he likes for his time) to come into the jail for a 2 minute kangaroo court every time a con disputes his test. If everyone disputes their test and claims IG/30/96, the tests will be shelved.

The cost amounts to - the test itself, the re-test, a barrister for defence and a scientist to be cross-examined. Also, in cases where prisoners are granted legal representation at adjudication, the Home Office must supply a Treasury Solicitor as well. Prisoners who are claiming IG/30/96, are being found not guilty. The ones who are losing days are claiming them back via R/C forms. Anyone who pleads not guilty and claims IG/30/96 as their defence will be entitled to get back anything they lose as soon as this becomes public and the prison service/Home Office admit that they have been hiding it all along.

## SERIOUS DRINKING

Dear Black Cross,

Regarding your special issue on drugs in prison: Why not take a good look at a drug that can be a 'one way ticket to prison' for many unsuspecting people; ALCOHOL. This is a subject rarely, if ever, touched on by any group including Anarchists as far as I can tell. Nor is much light ever shone on the shady multi-billion pound booze industry or its advertising campaigns now aimed at out children!

The state takes far too much in its cut from taxing alcohol. Booze is too much the bread and butter of the judiciary and police, for them to care about the untold social carnage being inflicted by it. Anyway the drink helps keep more than a few of us anaesthetised, which suits them. It's quite apt that lawyers are called to the Bar, seeing so many of their customers come via it.

Alcohol has been used as a weapon against the working class for long enough, with little or no protest from progressive organisations. We allow our youth in many cases to run head long into the clutches of the state with a belly full of booze and a head gone West. This we do without a murmur, without even a squeak about some of the major pitfalls of the booze culture, as though it's some kind of natural gauntlet to be run.

But people are fighting back. Many Native Americans, Australian Aborigines and communities on the Indian sub-continent, to name but a few, have started a grass

roots fight back against the booze culture. Young and old have been afflicted; many lives destroyed and too many of their youth locked up through alcohol. This is a lesson we could learn from here.

There are many cut down by Alcohol rotting in prison cells all over the world, who would possibly not be in the hell they are in now if they'd have been made aware of the dangers and politicised in the State's vested interest in this drug. These prisoners deserve our support too.

I feel this area is much neglected by Anarchists. The illegal drug problem fades into insignificance when compared to alcohol which affects whole communities, from the cradle to the grave, generation after generation.

How many times must we read the headlines ad infinitum; 'the accused had been drinking heavily' before we stand up and fight! WE need to fight the booze culture by educating ourselves about the facts. Maybe Taking Liberties could print an issue on 'Blackouts and Black Marias'. If we continue to stay silent we are all guilty of aiding and abetting the destruction of our class, even if that means taking a look at our own petty life styles!

Make no mistake about it, the right amount of the State's liquid concoction and the 'right' circumstances and it could be you banged to 'rights' next.

Yours sincerely

Sean O'Malley.

### Reply:

Sean has to be right about the size of the problem of alcohol abuse in comparison with the much whipped up moral fervour around other drugs. In the same way fags kill thousands, but the government gets it share of the spoils in taxes.

Given how many of us like to drink, and the way it can help us relax, like a lot of drugs, "in moderation" has got to be a good slogan. I can see people wanting to get blitzed now and again to forget some of the shit they live through temporarily. But granted it can also become a way of just accommodating the shit in life rather than changing it. Cannabis, hash, draw, whatever you want to call it can do the same, though it at least it seems to less often result in us caving each others heads in. And it is less physically debilitating. At the end of the day though, people need to respect themselves and their bodies enough to measure their own intake. And this is hard in a culture that glorifies self abuse as some kind of machismo, but ex-

pects us all to deal with more and more stresses of 'modern living'.

I don't think it's fair to say that "the illegal drug problem fades into insignificance", when compared to alcohol, particularly if you consider the effects of heroin on many estates all over the country and the 'crime' people get into to feed their habits. Yes alcohol is more widespread and can be at the heart of many a local brawl and it is known to figure in a lot of assaults by men on their partners (not to say alcohol is the only one to blame here). But most drugs that are physically addictive can cause health and social problems.

People have always drunk and smoked various concoctions to get out of it to varying degrees. There is something of the festival of it, the refusal to be considered, obedient, rational, which always attracts us. But that is no excuse not to take a long critical look at our habits, as Sean argues. Especially when festival or carnival turns to sad compulsion and a longing for obliteration.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### POLISH ANTI-FASCISTS CONVICTED

As we reported in the last issue of Taking Liberties, 13 people from the Polish town of Radomsko were due to be tried for the killing of a neo-nazi bonehead during a confrontation between neo-nazis and local youth back in March of 96. Leading up to this incident, fascist gangs had been regularly bullying and beating up local youths whilst the authorities and police just turned a blind eye. Deciding they'd had enough of being victims, some of these youths gathered together and a fight broke out with the neo-nazis which resulted in one of them being killed. The trial has now finished. 8 people were freed but the following 5 got sent down:

TOMASZ WILKOSZEWSKI - got 15 years for murder; GREGORZ PASAK - 3 years 6 months; RAFAT SOCHA -3 years 6 months; ANDRZEJ SZCZESNIEWSKI-3 years

These are being held at: ARESZT SLEDZCY, UL. W.P. 24, 97-300 PIOTRKOW TRYB, POLAND

MARIUSZ ZYCH - got 3 years.

He is at: ZAKTAD KARNY, MECKA WOLA, POLAND

All are planning to appeal against their sentences but are in need of donations to help with legal costs.

For more information contact: MRE-Box 74, 04-520 Warsaw 106, Poland or ACK/ABC-ul. Gontyna 1/2, 30-203 Krakow, Poland

### UP IN SMOKE

We hear from down under that a riot broke out at the recently opened, high-tech Woodford Correctional centre on April 1st. The repair bill is estimated at over a million dollars as a third of the prison's secured area was damaged by fire. Ironically Woodford is the first prison in Australia to offer 'a non-smoking environment'. There had been problems at the prison since it opened the previous month, such as lack of educational and work programmes, poor food and no provision of nicotine patches or 'quit' programmes for prisoners transferred there. One guard has said that the smoking ban coupled with the lack of activities for prisoners was a recipe for disaster. The authorities ignored warnings there would be trouble 2 weeks before. As an attempt by the authorities to diffuse public outrage, the prisons chief Keith Hamburger was stood down after an investigation into the riot.

### ANARCHIST EDITOR RELEASED

On 24th of January after a 74 day hunger strike and 6 days of thirst strike Spiros Dapergolas, editor of the weekly anarchist newspaper ALPHA was conditionally released. Spiros was illegally kept on remand for 18 months after being arrested for taking part in an unsuccessful bank robbery in June 95. Whilst in prison he also took part in a big riot at Korydallos Central Prison. There were many solidarity actions in support of Spiros around Greece during his hunger strike from demonstrations to arson attacks on banks in Athens.

### WARCHEST PROGRAMME

The Warchest is a programme of the ABC Federation in the U.S. that sends monthly cheques to those Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War (PP/POW's) in North America who have been receiving insufficient financial support during their imprisonment. Running since November 94, the programme currently supports Sekou Odinga, Herman Bell, Marilyn Buck, Ricardo Jimenez, Dycilia Pagan, Ruchel Cinque Magee and Richard Williams who are in prison for explicitly political actions. There is also an emergency fund that is used for other PP/POW's who are in need of one-off immediate financial relief.

A rotating committee of 5 prisoners helps decide how the funds should be used. For a copy of their latest Warchest Financial Report, information on the prisoners supported or to send donations of cash or cheques (payable to 'cash' only) contact:

NJ ABC-BG, PO Box 8532, Paterson, NJ 07508-8532, U.S.A.

# A DOPE OF THE SYSTEM

Since Mandatory Drug testing was introduced at the end of 1995, there have been numerous surveys questioning its effectiveness. Its reliability has been undermined in several cases and its success in curtailing the use of soft drugs has been counter-acted by an increase in the use of hard drugs. Is the considerable cost justified when prison budgets have been slashed by 13% in the past few years, despite a vast increase in the prison population and an expensive building programme?

Data issued by the Prison Service for the months March to September 1996 indicate that little change has occurred over the seven months in question. While cannabis positive results fell by 26%, non-cannabis positive results increased by 18%. Drug-free results increased by 9%. This backs up the numerous articles published over the past few months that reveal many inmates have switched to 'hard' drugs, particularly opiates such as heroin, as they are traceable for a much shorter time in the body.

The programme is far more effective at detecting cannabis usage as it takes between 20 and 30 days to be absorbed by the metabolic system, whereas opiates only require 2-3 days. Therefore it is ten times more likely to show cannabis use

than opiates so the switch to opiates from cannabis could conceivably much higher. Thus the data itself is unreliable. This is born out by personal experience. From 1992-95, many of the women who took drugs in Holloway took cannabis and very few took opiates or other drugs. Once the testing started, cannabis became virtually unavailable in prison whereas heroin and other hard drugs are now commonplace. This is due to the desire to avoid detection by many of the women here. It does not appear that drug-taking has lessened in any considerable numbers but women who have never taken hard drugs in their lives are now tempted to do so to avoid a positive result and thereby miss out on home leave etc. The increase in numbers has meant that the stress in prisons has increased, thereby affecting suicide and self-harm levels. Whereas cannabis may have been beneficial in combatting stress, opiates do little but temporarily block out the pain, leading to problems when the drugs are not available.

Even though testing is supposed to be at random, certain inmates are targeted, thereby allowing for the statistics to be massaged to fit in with specific guidelines. If the positive results are shown to be too high, they may target inmates who are not known drugs users to help balance the figures.

In a paper published in The Lancet, the monthly cost of the MDT programme in a prison of 500 inmates is approximately £18,000, which puts the average cost per test at around £300. Thus just the cost of three tests would feed the Holloway women for a day. However if you look at the cost of how many have apparently been deterred from using drugs, the cost accumulates to over £6000 each. You also have to bear in mind that this figure is suspect, due to the inefficiency of testing opiates. Stafford prison had decided that the cost of such testing is unjustified and therefore suspended any testing a few months ago. Also the reliability of the positive results is uncertain. 6 inmates at Blantyre House, a Category D prison, were moved to Maidstone when they tested positive for drugs. Incensed, they demanded a test of the B Sample which proved to be negative. Another Diane Modahl story in the making?

A woman at Holloway tested positive and despite her protestations, was denied a further test, as she was told it would cost her £200. Is this a fair testing system - or was it an attempt to frame her to prevent her going on home leave?

Many women are sensitive about being tested for drugs when they are menstruating yet Richard Tilt has stated that no special procedures should be

used. Muslim and Jewish women are opposed to exposing their blood as a matter of faith, yet they are liable to be placed on report should they refuse to give a sample. The sample may be contaminated by the blood although statistics show only 1.5% are spoilt from female establishments.

This survey only serves to question the justification of Mandatory Drug Testing. The expense is vast and one can only assume that it is being carried out to gain political kudos in the battles over law and order between the two mainstream parties. Meanwhile prison staff are being made redundant, leading to a decrease in association and loss of facilities for many prisoners. Whilst education budgets are being cut, money is being thrown down the drain to satisfy the bayings of a media-led public. The cash would be spent more wisely on rehabilitation programmes, counselling and alternatives to custody for the vast majority of offenders. Many drug addicts should be transferred to rehabilitation centres rather than being locked up, otherwise the cycle of reoffending behaviour will only continue ad infinitum.

**CLARE BARSTOW**

HMP HOLLOWAY, PARKHURST ROAD,  
LONDON, N7

I never even heard the screws approaching my cell after dinner. "MDT Time", one of them says. "Great timing" I think. I'd only just crushed out a spliff 5 minutes ago. So off I float, down the landing, off the wing, silently cursing the unusual



abundance of cannabis on my block recently, unhappily aware my piss is practically radioactive at the moment.

I'm led into a gleaming room - a cross between a kitchen and a surgery. There's a sink, paper towels, and jars, plenty of jars. Strip search, squat. Out of desperation, some cons I know are constantly carrying small bottles of drug-free urine up their arse. I'm

handed a jar. This is my first test in 7 months of prison, and

## M.D.T Time

I'm required to provide a surprisingly small sample. No gain to be had in refusing, - the penalty for that is harsher than for testing positive. I hand my sample to the screw-cum-scientist who handles with care. "Spill it over your hands yer bastard" sniggers a malevolent voice in my head. Temperature checked, bar codes assigned, signatures required, I'm free to go. The wait is on.

Two weeks I wait before it's returned positive. "Positive for cannabinoids" declares my nicking sheets. "Is that the same as puff?" I think. Down the block the next day I plead guilty, sentenced to 7 days loss of remission and placed on closed visits. As I write this I've been on closed visits for 11 weeks. I haven't seen my girlfriend or child in 11 weeks, all because of some puff in my piss.

I'd never touched heroin before prison, but I have now. It's out of your system in 2 days and can be flushed out even quicker by drinking plenty of liquids. Cannabis seems to stay forever. I was pretty ignorant of heroin a few months ago. The biggest skag-head I knew was probably Zammo off Grange Hill. Nowadays I talk of £10 bags, skag, tackle,

brown, joeys and I know which foil-covered chocolates are most useful.

Luckily for me it's a habit I can't afford regularly.

I'm halfway

through a 3-year sentence and will be happy to leave as I came in a fairly heavy user of "cannabinoids". But then again, I can read, I've got my guitar, I've got my cassettes. In short, I've got things to do to help me kill 20 hours a day in a 10' by 6' cell. The thing is, it's too easy to just sit there, smoke a spliff, or grab a bag of skag and let your time inside just slip away.

Well, it's been a dull day. Prison politics works like this - someone starts a rumour about you, within 10 minutes rumour becomes fact. Today was my turn to suffer, nothing serious, but a mini-downer all the same. I managed to find enough for a couple of joints to help me forget, so I'm off to skin up. Fuck the tests - you take your chances. Next time I'm going "Not Guilty" anyway - it's been known for positive samples to be retested and somehow come back negative. Great foolproof system eh? Well it's the system that introduced me to heroin. The same system to put a glass screen between me and those closest to me for 3 months. So much better to have let me puff in peace.

Oh well, time to spark up. Another day done. Kaz, 1996.

## DRUGS, PRISON AND THE PRODUCTION OF CRIME

### CONTINUED from Page 2

however illegal and unrecorded, gives the desired results. They take what rewards they can get - cash, sex, the indulgence of sadistic desires, a quiet life. No state conspiracy is needed to set up and run this drug economy in which smack and coke are commodities with value beyond their use-value as narcotics. What are the outputs of this economy, the circulation of drugs in prison?

The official policy of non-use as they only permissible choice for prisoners in conditions which promote and encourage use, leads via the switch to hard drugs, to needle sharing, the spread of AIDS, hepatitis and death. (The problem is exacerbated by a parallel refusal to admit that prisoners may be sexually active and hence a refusal to make condoms available.) Government policies of prohibition and denial necessarily obscure the extent of the problem, but we know that the majority of those injecting drugs in prison share needles with others. 29% of inmates who injected in the Scottish prison Glenochil were found to be HIV positive (Peter Wayne, *Inside Time*, Winter 1996). While drugs are relatively cheap in prison, prisoners don't have much money, so they are tending to maximise the effect of heroin by injecting: needle use is increasing. This is obviously a matter of indifference to screws and prison managers (see last issue of *Taking Liberties* on deaths in prison). Killing is the ultimate control of individuals written off as undesirable, as the Nazis also decided. The comparison is more than rhetoric: the incarceration rate for black people is ten times the rate for whites (*Statewatch* November 1996), because racism is endemic in the Criminal Justice System and so the effects of prison are imposed disproportionately on ethnic minorities. But control and killing are merely negative consequences of prison. Prison, as Foucault (in

*Discipline and Punish*) observed, produces criminals and knowledge of them: it is a laboratory producing knowledge and a process producing effects in the society in which it is set. What are the products of the specific combination of prison and drugs - the return on the state's investment?

### THE PRISON INDUSTRY

Richard Tilt, Director General of the Prisons, tells us. "The whole community will benefit if we can break addicts from their habits while they are in prison, if only because they will be less likely to return to crime when they are released." (DI 5) And so it might, but the Director general neglects to mention that he runs the penal system so that it produces the very same problem with which he pretends to deal. Such cliches as this fall frequently from the lips of politicians and overpaid state officials, but just because they are banal and false does not mean that they are unconvincing. It's based on the assumption that drug-related crime is a serious social problem that precedes prison, and that the acknowledged failure of prison is a failure to exclude this problem and as failure to change drug-using prisoners. Tumim reported that "Manchester gangland culture was being replicated on the landings of Wymott Prison." Not for one moment did the famous prison inspector peer beyond his half-moon specs and see that "Manchester gangland culture was being produced in, and by, the prison. Since then prisons have increased the rate at which they bring together crime - usually minor, property-related crime - and drug addiction, and all the hierarchy of organised drug crime to which casual crime committed by the poor is thereby attached. Prison turns casual criminals into professional criminals (prisons have long been acknowledged to be "universities of

crime", as Kropotkin put it), and into junkies. In doing so, it is not reproducing outside society inside, but producing outside society from inside. So the problem of drugs in prison is not just a problem confined to prison, a problem of individual prisoners. Drugs in prison are not a prison problem - if they were, then the prison bosses have always had the means of excluding drugs and helping addicts to come off them. Drug abuse has always been a problem that is soluble within the closed system of the prison, at least. Drugs in prison are only a problem outside prison.

Prison thus forces the cliché that 'drug use causes crime' to come true, just as it takes that other ancient and long-discredited cliché about drug use, 'soft drug use leads to hard drug use' and forces it to come true as well, at least inside prison, where control can be almost total. Fortunately the experiments pioneered in prison do not always have the desired effect in the outside world (although drug testing of workers is becoming more common, even amongst the police - driving them to hard drugs too?)

But the idea that drugs and crime are related, as well as their actual relationship, are currently major and successful products of the prison industry, by which it appropriates working class, casual crime, committed by those in need, attaches it to a physical need and the organised satisfaction of that need, and turns it back on the working class itself - so that prison can present itself as the only available solution to the problem of crime.

### DEALING WITH DRUGS

From our point of view, prison appears absolutely beyond control. It is not a matter of rejecting reform proposals in theory, of regarding reforms as pointless this side of the revolution. Reform is simply not on offer.

And while we may continue to expose the contradiction between what ministers and prison officials claim they are doing and the practice that achieves the opposite: we will only be repeating what is blatantly obvious. The discourse which says that prisoners enter prison with problems (personal and social), and that prison policy is for the reduction of those problems, is constantly reproduced, complete with supporting evidence by a large and powerful institution which is beyond challenge. Its logic is not the logic of policy put into practice, but the logic of the practice of control and production, one of whose products is self-justifying discourse (the policy), one of whose tools is drugs.

Yet drug use in prison, its changing patterns, and its external effects are not things we can ignore. The effects are everywhere - on our mates inside, in the drug-related crime that damages whole communities, in the irritating, vicious and anti-working class rubbish spouted by Howard, Straw, Blair and co. What can we do?

We must prevent the victims of the criminal justice system from becoming penal victims, help them to fight criminalisation and if we can't do that, help them keep out, keep up our commitment to support class struggle prisoners, and help them to challenge drug tests. At present, the only help for prisoners is (typically, in our experience) is provided by prisoners themselves. "Desperate inmate-addicts throughout the system have taken their own initiative and formed self-help therapy groups which have been meeting on a regular but totally unofficial basis during evening association periods," wrote Peter J. Wayne, a long-term prisoner. (*Inside Time*, Winter 1996) "The odds are stacked against them."

**ANDREW GREEN, JANUARY 1997.**

Andrew can be contacted at Conviction (see back page).

# AN ADDICT'S TALE

I was arrested and charged in March 1993 with Robbery and Section 18 Wounding with intent and was bailed to appear firstly at Manchester Magistrates court and then to Manchester Crown court for trial as I pleaded my innocence. I was then 25 years old and had been a drug user for seven years. I was on bail until 18th January 1995 when after a ten day trial I was found not guilty of robbery but guilty of section 18 wounding and sentenced to five years imprisonment.

I pleaded my innocence still and appealed only to be refused leave to appeal. On the advice of my barrister I appealed a second time only to be firstly refused legal aid, which meant I had no counsel present when my case went to the full appeal court and then refused leave to appeal a second time.

The fact that I have appealed twice and will not admit my guilt to a crime I did not commit has almost certainly put paid to any chance of parole I may have had and I am now resigned to doing two thirds of my sentence.

Anyway I could fill pages with the details of my case and the injustice I feel but now onto the main subject of this article which is drugs and drugs testing in prison.

I first started taking "soft" drugs at the age of 18 years old smoking cannabis on a regular basis, but coming from the moss-side area of Manchester and growing up in a culture where although I am white, the majority of my friends and peers are Afro-Caribbean, so this seemed very normal to me and accepted. In fact it was sometimes deemed by my friends and associates that 18 years old was quite late to first smoke a "joint".

Although Heroin at that time (1985) was not widely available in Manchester as it is now I had "come across it" but had never been tempted to use it myself. Indeed it was not until I was in Durham prison serving out an 18 month sentence for burglary in 1989 that I was first introduced to the use and "high" of Heroin. And although then cannabis was the sole drug widely available in prisons at the time I was offered and took heroin on four or five occasions. Upon my release in July 1990 I almost immediately started using heroin on a regular basis and this continued until November 1994, when I was admitted to Prestwich Hospital for detoxification and rehabilitation.

The reason I decided to get myself clean, is probably the only one that would have given the incentive to go in the first place, as I will explain. As I've said I was on bail from March 93 to January 95. I had been in a stable relationship with my girlfriend Ann since December 1990. And in the November of 1993 she found she was four months pregnant. Our daughter Jude was born on the 10th April 1994.

As Anne was on methadone through her pregnancy Jude was born with a methadone habit and had to stay

in the special care baby unit at St Mary's Hospital for three weeks. This both saddened and shamed me and I decided there and then that I would get "clean" for her sake. It was quite a turnaround for me as I had never even considered De-tox before but the birth of my little girl was the incentive I'd never had before. Because of the waiting list I waited until November '94 before Anne, Jude and myself went into Kenyon House (Drugs Northwest) Prestwich Hospital, so we could de-tox.

As I was due to start my trial on 8th January I left Prestwich the first week of the new year as it was not feasible or practical for me to travel five miles daily to court without interrupting my treatment. I started on my de-tox programme as an out-patient and as I fully expected to be acquitted, my place in the unit at Prestwich was kept and I was due to return to hospital the day my trial ended. As it turned out this was not to be. I have told you all of this, as I feel it is important background to what I have to say about Drugs testing in Prison. So I found myself in Strangeways prison with a heroin habit. I was asked upon arrival if I had ever used drugs or was a drug user and after explaining my situation to the officer taking my details was told by him "no problem you'll be able to score when you get into the wing". There was no help available to me in the form of medication and so I was forced to buy the heroin which was widespread and freely available. Thereby although I had made the conscious effort to free myself of heroin abuse by de-tox I found myself forced once again into using.

I was transferred to HMP Garth. Leyland on Valentines day 1995 and on the first day of arrival was able to buy heroin for phone-cards as it was also widely available there. Once again I made the prison aware that I had a drug problem but again was unable to get medication and so continued with my heroin use.

As I did not have the finances for daily use and was not able to get heroin brought into the prison myself my habit was reduced and eventually disappeared, but this took some months and by this time I was firmly entrenched in the prison drugs culture and continued to use when I could afford to.

In October 1995 mandatory drugs testing was introduced at Garth and as I had made no secret of my problem and had indeed informed the prison I had a heroin habit upon my arrival I was one of the first inmates targeted. But as I was not using daily at this time and the drug clears the body in 2-4 days I tested negative. I was told that I was chosen at random by the computer network as 10% of Garth population (50 inmates) were to be tested per month.

Once tested an inmate may not be tested again within 28 days. I was tested again 28 days later! I was told that I had

once again been chosen at random (twice in one month out of 500 inmates) this time I tested positive for opiates (heroin) and received 28 days loss of remission and 3 days Block (segregation). I was not tested again in Garth until my transfer to the Wolds on 4th April 1996.

I feel I know the reason for this. The first two tests I was told were random. The first was maybe but I find it hard to believe the second was as well. After I had given a sample that had tested positive for heroin Garth were well within their rights to test me every 28 days without me being able to complain or say I was being singled out. The reason being I could have been tested under reasonable suspicion as I had given a positive sample. As I've said I was not tested again in Garth in a five month period from November '95 to April '96.

As more inmates were tested a pattern began to emerge and the probable reason was this. If an inmate tested positive for either cannabis or opiates in most cases he was not tested for some time (6 months or more) but an inmate who tests negative was tested one month to six weeks later and should he test negative again would be sure to be tested again within the same time period. I have known inmates be tested 6 times within 6 months and test negative each time.

This certainly doesn't strike me as random, it seems to me that by targeting inmates that are highly likely to test negative and testing them again and again whilst leaving those inmates who have tested positive or are known drug users the prisons are not providing a realistic picture of the level of the drug problem in prison. It seems a deliberate effort to cover the actual number of drug users in prison so that the Home Office looks to be doing an "effective job" of curbing drug use in H.M.P.s.

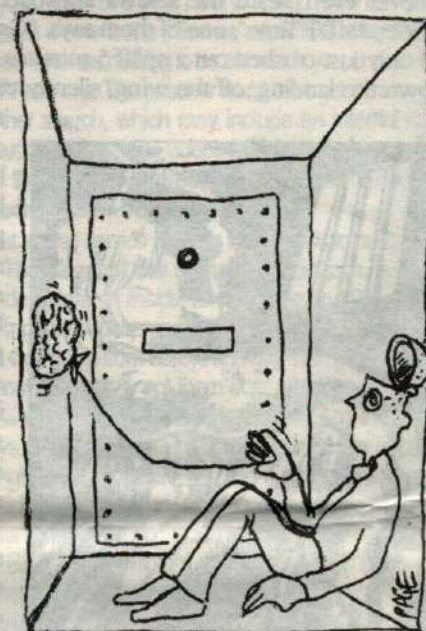
In my experience mandatory drugs testing far from curbing the use of drugs in prisons has only succeeded in converting those who use "soft" drugs to hard drug users! Inmates have found that whereas Cannabis can stay in the system and be detected for up to six weeks, heroin clears the system within 2-4 days and so with the odds being far less of being caught, people who would normally smoke cannabis now smoke or inject heroin.

Hard drug use in prison is perpetuated also as inmates like myself who enter prison with an established drug problem are offered no alternative but to search for and obtain drugs illegally within the prison. This creates a demand which despite the level of security of any prison (camera's on visits, sniffer dogs, strip searching of visitors) will be supplied.

Although some prisons have tried to address the problem through drug awareness courses and drug free wings the problem is so widespread that the number of users far outweighs the available places. Inmates are re-

luctant to apply to move onto drug free wings as it is common knowledge within the prison that such prisoners are bound to give information as to the sources of the drugs they are taking before they will be considered for a place. One example is while I was in Strangeways in January 1995 a drug free wing was in the process of being set up. A questionnaire was given to every inmate. One of the questions on this was "if you saw or knew of another inmate taking drugs would you be prepared to report him to a member of staff?". This set the premise to the whole prison that anybody who was on the drug free wing was a grass or snitch. Inmates who were genuine in their desire to be drug free would not enter the program because they did not want/were afraid to be thought of as a grass! To end I would say that in my view (and I am very close to the issue!) mandatory drug testing is a failure, both for giving an accurate picture of drug taking in prison because of the 'humber juggling' I know takes place, and as a deterrent to drug use in prison, or as a detection and punishment program since inmates have now turned to hard drugs for the reasons already mentioned. I feel that the Home Office would be better and more successful in curbing drug use in prison if they put as much effort into a 'realistic' de-tox and counselling programme for inmates as they do with the vote earning cover up operation they call M.D.T. (Mandatory Drugs Testing).

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Continued from front page

So it seems strange that the Home Office and the prison system seem to be doing everything in their power to create more and more heroin addicts in this country's prisons. Could it just be blind ignorance to the fact that they are creating an army of prison junkies that will one day be released onto the streets to practice what they have learned in jail?

A survey conducted in one wing of a Surrey prison involving 120 prisoners revealed that 40% of prisoners use cannabis every day and another 20% use it at least once a week. At the moment the estimate for heroin users (and therefore addicts or on their way to becoming addicts) is around 15% and rising steadily. Somebody should remind Michael Howard and co that you reap what you sow. Today's heroin-addicted prisoner is tomorrow's problem for society.

**Oh and by the way, whatever happened to the Woolf Report?**

# PISS IN OUR TIME

First of all...we know there is a drug problem in our jails. A bard once said "You can tell the state of a society by its jails." And we know that drugs are a major problem outside.

We also know that prison does not cure drug addicts, all that it does is stop the addict who commits his crime to pay for drugs, now by virtue of being in jail, the crime stops. However the addict is still an addict! And like an alcoholic he will always be an addict. He will simply search the jail until he finds the "dealer".

The least of his interests is the fact that he could be tested and lose remission if the test is positive.

However my point is that very rarely is the addict the dealer. He would take all the drugs himself, with the exception of a very small amount that he would sell for phone cards & tobacco...And maybe the few "sortees" to fellow addicts till they get their visit and return the favour...so

the wheel spins!!!

The dealer who deals outside jail simply transfers his dealing to jail. He doesn't take drugs he sells them, putting the addict in a position where he buys them on tick, with no regard to payment, which is on the understanding that cash will be sent by family to a given address...Or when the inmate has had a visit he will then pay the dealer. This of course puts added pressure on families outside who cannot get by without the £30 to £100 a week the addict demands.

The dealer can get piss tested 100,000 times and each will be negative, resulting in the dealer being granted Home Leave, open jail, parole. The addict goes on closed visits, having tested positive, and will leave jail straight back to crime...He is still in the same position as he came to jail - addicted.

I see no point in the drug test, as no help is offered to the addict, except a leaflet which says an officer is assigned to listen to your problem and try and help.

So now we have situation where ex-bus drivers, plumbers and military men are suddenly expected to advise (with very little training) a drug addict in how to stop doing something the officer has not the slightest idea of in the first place!

What's more, the few drug units that are set up for addicts are now turning into Rule 43 Units, where addicts in debt whose family say "No more cash" have to put themselves (for protection from their creditors) until such time as they can either sort

out their bill or move on!

I could see the benefit of a positive drug test if it was set up to help the addict stop drug use, by saying, "OK, we'll give you a de-tox for 14 days, so you do not come down painfully...And we will suspend the 14 days (28 in some jails) lost remission and you will join a full-time course on drug awareness. And you get tested every 7 days...If you stay clean for 3 months we will forget the loss of remission.

Now none of this takes place! All that in fact happens is, the addict loses time and gets put on closed visits and Basic; so his family must travel from God Knows where to see him for half an hour on closed visit....

Now there's a clever way to beat the piss test...drink two jugs of water (add orange or lemon, it's easier to drink), this makes your piss so weak, it's a negative test. Keep soap behind your foreskin to drop into the test tube, so that it interferes with the piss and renders the result no good.

**I say, if they want your piss - Hell, lads, let 'em have it...by the bucket. Throw it all over the fuckers...Now that's what I call a positive piss test!!!**

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## INTERESTING PUBLICATIONS

**A Ladder for Mr Oscar Wilde.** A pamphlet on the poet's time inside Reading Jail (he was released 100 years ago), with background stuff on jails of the era. Any profits from this booklet will go

to Reading ABC. £1.80 inc postage from Two Rivers Press, 35-9 London St, Reading, RG1 4PS. (Cheques payable to Two Rivers Press).

**The Sojourn.** Issue no 3. This paper covers the case, and fight for freedom, of framed prisoner Kevin O'Neill. Not sure of the price, write to Kevin O'Neill,

Case for Concern, c/o Christchurch, 27 Blackfriars Rd, London, SE1.

**How to Appeal.** A guide to challenging conviction or sentence, from the organisation Justice. Free copies are available to prisoners from London ABC, or with an SAE (31p stamp) from Justice, 59 Carter Lane, London, EC4V 5AQ.

## ABC NETWORK

- Brighton ABC - c/o Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton
- Cambridge ABC - c/o Box A, 12 Mill Rd, Cambridge
- Highlands ABC - PO Box 5754, Elgin, OX30 2ZD
- Glasgow ABC - c/o PO Box 1008, Glasgow, G42 8AA
- Huddersfield ABC - PO Box 381, Huddersfield, HD1 3XX
- Leeds ABC - c/o LAG, 145-149 Cardigan Rd, Burley, Leeds
- London ABC - c/o 121 Raiton Road, London, SE24 0LR (North London: contact BM Haven below)
- Manchester ABC - Box 8, 1 Newton St, Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 8HW
- Newcastle ABC - c/o PO Box 1TA, Newcastle, NE99 1TA
- Reading ABC - Folder 19, Rising Sun Institute, 30 Silver St., Reading, RG1.
  - Sheffield ABC - PO Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY
  - Wolves ABC - PO Box 339, Wolverhampton, WV10

## OTHER CONTACTS

- Conviction - PO Box 522, Sheffield, S1 3FF. (Supports framed prisoners.)
- Birmingham Prisoners Solidarity Group - PO Box 3241, Birmingham, B8 3DP.
- Haven Distribution - BM Haven, London, WC1N 3XX (free books to prisoners)