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The pressure group, like yeast, has a fermenting effect on the whole. Surreptitiously but persistently it presents its case, not by ranting outside but by personal relationships with those within. Its *modus operandi* is more generally a letter to the paper or lunch with a Commissioner than a public meeting or a national campaign. And its *raison d'être* that, while others are busy with administration, "it sits and thinks."

N. J. TYNDALL.

**PRISON AFTER CARE:
CHARITY OR PUBLIC
RESPONSIBILITY**

Pauline Morris

Fabian Research Series 218.

**The Pakenham-Thompson Committee
report published as "Problems of
the Ex-Prisoner".**

National Council of Social Service 5s. 0d.

1960 MIGHT BE CALLED After-Care Year in the world of prisons. N.A.D.P.A.S. vigorously stepped up their number of Prison Welfare Officers, a radio programme, "Who Cares", criticized the whole system with unusual outspokenness, Christopher Mayhew devoted one of his four television programmes about Crime to it, the two Reports under review were published, and the Home Secretary promised that his Advisory Committee for the Treatment of Offenders would once more look specially into the matter. Will 1960, therefore, prove to have stirred progress in what Lord Pakenham calls "this most neglected corner of the Welfare State"?

Certainly these two Reports leave the reader in no doubt as to the

need for drastic reforms. Pauline Morris's Fabian pamphlet gives an accurate picture of the present "dual system" tug-o'-war, analyses the position of the discharged prisoner in relation to all existing and not-yet existing possibilities of help, and suggests a clear plan of what should be done. She starts with Oscar Wilde on the discharged prisoner: "(Society) abandons him at the very moment when its highest duty towards him begins" and the ethics of public responsibility inspire three main requirements in action:—

- " 1. After-Care must be interpreted as the final phase in a process of social rehabilitation begun inside the prison at the time of conviction
2. Men on leaving prison must be accepted back into the community as human beings, not as criminals, and they must be made to feel that someone cares about their rehabilitation.
3. One single category of worker responsible for the rehabilitation of the offender must be established and the services of the Welfare State should be drawn on where necessary."

The Pakenham-Thompson Committee was set up as a result of Peter Thompson's investigating the circumstances of a man who stole from him, and discovering for himself that a discharged prisoner has employment difficulties. The Committee consisted mainly of people in business, not social work (although Pauline Morris and others in the sociological field served on it), and they intended to survey the employment prospects of men newly released from prison. But, of course, they learned that finding a job is only one of the many problems, and in a time of full employment many men find it harder to keep a job than to get one.

The Pakenham-Thompson Report is remarkable for the practical and

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financial details of its recommendations and, though described as a "rapid survey" it gives the sources of its opinions in appendices, which the Fabian Pamphlet does not. It condemns much in the present After-Care system, but also has the fair-mindedness to publish a sensible and self-critical memorandum from the Secretary of N.A.D. P.A.S., and practitioners in the field of After-Care will be consoled to see how he seems to have a better grasp of facts than the Committee. For instance, the British Transport Commission told the Committee "a lapse on a man's part should not necessarily be regarded as debarring him from the opportunity to make good, but the utmost care and discretion needs to be exercised in dealing with individual cases". The Committee conclude that with a "Sponsor" a discharged prisoner might be employed, but Commander Hague has the truth: "Acceptance into British Railways is unlikely at any level".

After-Care workers certainly need consolation if they take these two Reports to heart, because they have little good to say of the present state of affairs—either organisation or personnel. The crucial proposition of both reports is that successful after-care work cannot begin without the appointment of case-work trained officers both inside and outside the prison, working together in a unified system like the Probation Service. Pauline Morris does not go into what should happen to the local D.P.A.'s, but the Pakenham-Thompson Committee offer them a formidable programme of helpfulness involving everything but what they have done till now.

Unification is important, but if Pauline Morris attributes the inefficacy of the D.P.A. workers and Committees to their "paternalism", would professionalism be any more acceptable to the clients? The Pakenham-Thompson Committee draws an analogy between after-care work today and agriculture twenty years ago, both bristling with suspicion of the scientifically-trained worker. College-trained farmers are certainly welcome today and it may be that in twenty years' time all prison social workers will show Social Science diplomas as a matter of course, but recalcitrant sheep and recalcitrant men are far from the same and the prisoners' dislike of welfare officers goes deeper than contempt for a bungler and a do-gooder. I think it is a class reaction, a determination to look at all people in authority as part of the punishing "Them". Caseworkers are trained to bridge culture gaps and win confidence, but men in prison have plenty of time to work out what another man is. Their trust may be given, if at all, to a man who understands their way of life because he has lived it, or at least lived alongside it. He needs to be someone not too unlike themselves, and, most important, someone who visibly enjoys ordinary non-delinquent life. Until the social work profession attracts more of this type of men (the public still think of social workers as aristocrats and/or homosexuals) I think the After-Care authorities should consider the personality and experience of their workers more important than academic qualifications.

I hope that these Reports will be widely appreciated (and that the Home Office will do something when they have the money and

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the courage) but I should like to record contrary opinions on three issues.

Firstly, the Pakenham-Thompson Committee's attempts to justify the existence of the present D.P.A. Committees are unrealistic. Most D.P.A. Committees consist of committee-type men and women who have no interest in, or aptitude for, the practical work now suggested to them. If the time has come to end flag-days for discharged prisoners and the running of the welfare work by local notabilities, the Government should face up to hurting these volunteers who in the past have borne all the burdens, just as it faced superseding the Friendly Societies with the 1946 National Insurance Act. It would be far kinder to tell the D.P.A.'s that they are irrelevant to the new meaning of "after-care" and not expect them, as now, to contract gracefully, or, as the Pakenham-Thompson Committee suggest, to alter their whole outlook. In fact, it is tragic but true that in the vast amount of voluntary work that will always need to be done the label "D.P.A." can only hinder.

Secondly, I think that both Reports are misguided in advocating short-term (one or two weeks) hostels for homeless discharged men. Certainly nowhere could be less rehabilitative than the large London hostels, but I see no advantage in introducing a man to a friendly landlord and good food for a fortnight, and then expecting him to transfer happily elsewhere. It is obviously not widely known that Norman House started as just such a short-term home ("Hostel" has a pejorative ring in the prison

world and is guaranteed to put a man off), but very quickly it became obvious that chance did not make men homeless—the homelessness was really a problem, often a more important one than criminality. The Warden accepted men as "simple cases of no fixed abode", and then found they were unfit to be moved into ordinary lodgings straight away. Thus evolved of its own accord the therapeutic living-together that Norman House proved worthwhile. The only other similar home, in the United States, which has a qualified staff but the same "family" approach, has just decided that they must keep their men for longer than the six weeks' breathing-space originally intended. "Homeless" men, at least from a local prison, are not men with just an accommodation difficulty. A fortnight's comfortable digs would probably do more harm than good.

Finally, both Reports divide the recidivist population into those who intend to return to crime as their profession, and those who intend to go straight, but for lack of proper help do not manage it. They ignore the intractable bulk of recidivists who do not intend anything in particular. They are convicted from and return to an environment where most men work intermittently, and spend their free time in cafes or billiard halls where there is always the chance of "getting on to a good thing". All they want from after-care is cash. Both of these Reports dismiss the extension of *compulsory* after-care, but how else can the way of life of such men be altered? Pauline Morris particularly emphasises that rehabilitation must begin at the time of conviction and that "after-care and rehabilitation

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should be an integral part of the whole penal process". If a man is compelled to submit to rehabilitative treatment inside the prison, surely he can be as justly compelled as part of his sentence to accept supervision when he is back among real temptations and difficulties. Compulsory after-care is hard both for workers and clients, but it has a logical place in the penal system and without it the problems of recidivism will not be touched.

SHIRLEY TURNER.

GANGS OUTSIDE . . . and Groups (or gangs) Inside . . . might well be the omnibus sub-title for a collection of books which take as their subjects the kind of people, not necessarily always young people who 'gang up' in one way or another, often against authority, sometimes for perfectly good social purposes, sometimes in such a way as to attract and possibly deserve considerable criticism, but always in a group.

Delinquency and Opportunity by Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin is published in Messrs. Routledge and Kegan Paul's series, The International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction, at 25s. Od., and its 211 pages give the reader a pretty clear idea how delinquent gangs arise. The authors are members of the professorial staff of the New York School of Social Work at Columbia University, but their writing tells of a world far removed from the campus. It is about delinquent gangs, as typically found among adolescent males in lower-class

areas or large urban centres, and tells how these subcultures arise, develop various law-violating ways of life, and persist or change. Three distinctive types of such gangs are described by the authors in their opening chapter. These are "the criminal gang" devoted to theft, extortion or other illegal means of securing an income; the "conflict gang" where joining in various kinds of violent behaviour becomes an important means of securing status; and the "retreatist gang" where addiction to drugs is prevalent. In the British Isles we have the "criminal gang" and we have the violent groups but the "retreatist" group is less well-known, perhaps less in actual numbers. One of the most useful ideas to be gleaned from this book is concerned with the way in which members of these gangs look upon other members of the community. The 'criminals', for example, are said to believe that the world is populated by "smart guys" or "suckers", members of the 'conflict' groups see their "turf" as surrounded by enemies, while the 'retreatist' regards the world about him as populated by "squares". Similarly, say the professors, each subculture is characterised by distinctive evaluations "the criminals value stealth, dexterity, wit, 'front' and the capacity to avoid detection: street warriors value "heart": the retreatists place a premium on "kicks". The fundamental difference between members of these groups and the other members of the community is clearly stated in a footnote to a description of the activities of the gangs. "It should be understood" says the note "that these terms characterise these delinquent modes of adaptation from