



COMING CLEAN

Drugs research in a prison setting

Carol Martin

The Addictive Diseases Trust (now renamed the Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust) introduced its Substance Abuse Treatment Programme into HMP Downview in April 1992, the first specialised 'residential' treatment programme for prisoners with addictions to alcohol, gambling or drugs. The ADT programme is based on a therapeutic approach to a 12 step model of abstinence similar to Alcohol/Narcotics/Gamblers Anonymous which aims for life-time abstinence from addictive behaviour. In 1994 the Prison Service commissioned an independent study of the programme.

Setting up the study

Interviews were carried out with 33 prisoners who had applied for a place on the programme, 29 members of staff including governors, officers of all grades and other professional staff and 17 ADT 'refusers' - prisoners who wanted nothing to do with the programme. It was difficult to identify current drug users who had not applied for ADT but who would participate in the research so random selection was abandoned in favour of the opportunistic 'snowball' approach. Once several interviews in this category had been successfully completed, other prisoners either volunteered or were suggested by their fellow inmates.

Without exception, they reported that the effects of treatment had radically altered their lives, had changed their attitudes towards crime and re-offending and had made a significant impact on their personal relationships.

Of these ADT refusers, not all of the men on 'normal location' (ie not 'drug-free' landings) were drug users and conversely, some men on the drug-free landings stated that they continued to use drugs. What became apparent from this part of the research was that only a very few who admitted to using drugs

whilst in prison and who had not applied for the programme, saw their drug use as problematic or as something they wished to change. These were predominantly cannabis users, although some stated they used any available substance whilst in prison including heroin, cocaine,

crack, Ecstasy, LSD and speed. Unlike those who had been accepted for ADT, these men saw their drug use as largely recreational and something they did not wish to give up at that time. Only two of these did not use drugs whilst in prison although neither of them was located on the drug-free landings.

The majority of staff were supportive of drug rehabilitative programmes in general and ADT in particular, seemingly because they had first hand experience of what they perceived as beneficial changes at Downview since the introduction of the integrated drugs strategy. One of the key factors in the success of the ADT programme at Downview was the nature of its integration within the establishment. Whilst some staff complained about the lack of training and information available about drugs and available treatments, as well as the programme within their own establishment, almost all supported the overall drugs strategy at Downview in which ADT was seen as playing a pivotal part. The benefits of the apparent reduction of drug use within the establishment permeated throughout the prison and seemed to precipitate the perception of a safer and more congenial working atmosphere for all grades of staff.

The demands of treatment

Of the 33 men who were waiting for a place on the ADT programme during the fieldwork, 6 dropped out of the course either before it started or shortly thereafter. The concept of accepting their addiction (which is fundamental to any 12 step programme) was not uniformly popular, and some men simply did not accept they were addicts. These men tended to be habitual cannabis users, some of whom used other drugs



David Kidd-Hewitt

occasionally or heavy drinkers who did not feel they were alcoholics. Others found the intensely personal nature of the therapeutic regime with group therapy, one to one sessions with counsellors and written assignments to be completed in their own time, too much to cope with. Those who were most likely to persevere with the treatment programme were heroin users or alcoholics in their late 20s/early 30s who had experienced a physiological state of dependence and acknowledged their addiction.

During the research period 23 ADT 'graduates' still located at Downview were identified who had successfully completed the programme - 6 from the original 33 applicants and a further group of 17, including 8 peer counsellors. 'Success' was defined as remaining on the course for a minimum of 10 weeks and achieving at least the first nine steps of the programme. All but two of these men claimed to have remained totally abstinent from any drugs or alcohol whatsoever since completing the programme - in some cases for as long as 2 years; this was supported by a review of the results of random testing. The two men who, on their own admission, had not remained entirely substance free both stated they had drunk alcohol only on periods of temporary release (neither of these men had ever experienced a problem with alcohol in the past). All of the graduates felt they had gained significantly from being on the programme, not only in being free from their former addictions but also in the wide-ranging transformation of their personal characteristics. Without exception, they reported that the effects of treatment had radically altered their lives, had changed their attitudes towards crime and re-offending and had made a



LETTERS FROM...

significant impact on their personal relationships.

An analysis of 395 applications to the ADT programme from April 1992 to November 1994 showed there was no shortage of men wanting to apply, with requests for places recorded from 35 other prisons across the country. These men were not representative of the national prison population, but were more serious and persistent offenders, serving medium term sentences. They tended to have long histories of substance abuse; almost two-thirds had been drug and/or alcohol dependent for over ten years and only 10% had a dependence of less than five years. It was noted that there were greater numbers of black prisoners applying from within Downview, which seemed to support a view that black and other ethnic minority inmates are no less interested in specialist treatment within prisons, as has been suggested elsewhere (see Genders & Player, 1995), but that they were more likely to apply if they had first hand knowledge of what the programme involved.

Within the timescale, the research could not attempt to assess the longer term implications for the men who had completed the programme, either in terms of their addictions or their future criminality. Neither did the research conclude that other drug rehabilitation programmes should be implemented exclusively on this model. It became clear during the study that ADT offers a treatment programme which appeals predominantly to self-confessed addicts with (usually) a long history of drug and/or alcohol abuse. However, during the course of the research, across all categories of interviewees, very few expressed negative views about the ADT treatment programme which was thought to fulfil a need which exists within the prison setting.

Carol Martin is Research Development Officer at ISTD

References:

Genders, E and Player, E. *Grendon: A Study of a Therapeutic Prison* OUP 1995

Player, E and Martin, C A *Preliminary Evaluation of the ADT Drug Treatment Programme at HMP Downview*. Prison Service, 1995

(also published as *Research Findings No 31* Home Office Research & Statistics Department 1996).

The drug economy, the inner city and social policy: Letters from America

Nigel South

One of the major developments in drug-crime research since the 1960s, has been the understanding of participation in drug cultures as alternative work, in alternative markets, in interaction with the wider economies of urban communities (Ruggiero and South, 1995). This article draws attention to some recent work from the USA which has adopted this perspective, and then contrasts two visions of future social policy responses to inner-city drug problems.

The USA experience

Despite the urban social programmes of the Democrat decade of the 1960s (the Kennedy-Johnson 'War on Poverty'), the illegal/irregular economy of the innercity was evidently thriving. It is therefore unsurprising that by the end of the 1980s, the effect of a decade of Reaganite conservatism and neglect of the inner city had been first, to produce a new population of the dispossessed, identified by the media and moral-right as a problematic 'underclass'; and second, to generate a drug market characterised by violence and profit on unprecedented scales. In terms of commodities, it was no longer just heroin and marijuana that generated mega-profits but now cocaine and crack. The impact of this new sector of the drug market is graphically described in the following case studies, from the East and West Coasts respectively.

A letter from New York

In a powerful description of the crack economy in New York, Philippe Bourgois (1989) has described how 'employers or new entrepreneurs in the underground economy are looking for people who can demonstrate their capacity for effective violence and terror', and how 'a powerful ideological dynamic ... poisons interpersonal relationships throughout much of the community by legitimising violence and mandating distrust'.

Street life in the drug economy is brutal, yet it is still the case that

ambitious, energetic inner-city youths are attracted into the underground economy ... because they believe in ... the American dream. They are frantically trying to get their piece of the pie as fast as possible ... They are the ultimate rugged individualists, braving an unpredictable frontier where fortune, fame and destruction are all just around the corner. (pp.632-7).

From our Los Angeles correspondent

In LA, as the players in the legal economy have rationalised and MacDonaldised, moved out or 'gone under', it is the illegal economy that has been booming and internationalising. In several works, the social commentator Mike Davis, has described the deindustrialisation and economic restructuring of this region of Southern California. Such changes include the re-financing, re-zoning and re-developing of the city and its legal economy. However, these developments have also invigorated the illegal economic structures and activities of the 'alternative' late-modern city inhabited by the dispossessed. Thus, describing the successful entrepreneurialism and violent rise of the dominant LA street gangs, Davis argues that their 'genius' has been in the ways that they have made international connections, entered the world of commercial importation



Stuart Harkness

...AMERICA

and capitalised on the market strength of their high-value commodity - cocaine. The end-consumers in this market are both the rich of the Westside and the poor of the ghettos. With very high profits at stake, it is worth securing this market against competition and law enforcement efforts at disruption, by resort to levels of violence which are a form of urban armed warfare. (Davis with Ruddick, 1988).

Drugs, social problems and social policy in the American city

In these accounts, the late-modern inner-city has lost its sources of benign localised social control: 'community' is devalued; and there is a cynicism about 'hope', 'idealism', 'the public good' and so on. So, can anything be done? If so, what? To contrast two visions of future urban drugs policy in the American city, let's take Davis's recent (1994) dystopian essay and Elliot Currie's (1993) more optimistic prescription for a re-valuing of community and hope.

Writing on the future of Los Angeles, Davis speculates on where the ongoing process of segregation in the city will lead and he identifies new sectors of the city which he terms 'social control districts'. These may be either semi-militarised areas of intensive surveillance and policing or perhaps areas that will become urban wastelands - 'no-go areas' written-off by the politicians and planners as beyond salvation. In the high poverty/high crime areas that may be eligible for community development funding, the post-riot deal is that this must be accompanied by law-enforcement programmes aimed at anti-gang repression. In the 1990s, urban redevelopment is, according to Davis's apocalyptic scenario, "like a police-state caricature of the 1960s War on Poverty".

This is a 'future' of ever-multiplying control strategies designed to 'keep the lid on' problematic urban neighbourhoods. By contrast, Currie (1993) argues that what is needed and, furthermore can be realised if the political will is there, is a realist, social-democratic programme for the revitalisation of America's inner-cities. The Reagan and Bush administrations 'unleashed a strategy of inequality', says Currie, which has devastated the urban poor and further undermined the already too-fragile civic structures of the inner-city. In this context, the choices available to youth, in particular, are limited.

Hence, Bourgois' report (noted earlier) that the drug economy seems one of the few open routes to the promise of the American Dream. To present alternatives, attack the economic exclusion that has particularly affected minorities, and begin to reverse the process of family disintegration and community decline that underlie America's drug crisis, Currie argues that a social policy agenda must be pursued which embraces the following: 'Expanding the opportunity structure', 'Revitalising public health care', 'Supporting families', 'Assuring shelter' and 'Rebuilding the infrastructure'. What is important about Currie's proposals is that they are not pulled from the thin-air of liberal-wish-making nor simply presented as an unevaluated and unrealistic list of 'radical demands'. Rather, Currie is careful to persuasively evaluate the funding viability and prospective contributions of such initiatives.

'Over There' and 'Over Here'

The UK experience remains distinctively different to that of the USA and we must certainly not over-dramatise our drug problems. Indeed, our experience has far more in common with our European partners. Nonetheless, the UK debate on the 'underclass' thesis has flourished, alongside an increase in drug-related violence and crime in several major cities. In this context, to speculate on how the drug economy might and might not develop 'over here', it is informative and important to take note of the "Letters from America" sent by our colleagues from 'over there'.

Nigel South is Reader in Sociology at the University of Essex.

References:

- Bourgois, P (1989) In search of Horatio Alger; culture and ideology in the crack economy. *Contemporary Drug Problems*, Winter
- Currie, E (1995) *Reckoning: drugs, the cities and the American future*. Hill and Wang
- Davis, M with Ruddick, S (1988) 'Los Angeles: civil liberties between the hammer and the rock'. *New Left Review*, 170
- Davis, M (1994) 'Beyond Blade Runner: urban control'. Open Magazine Pamphlet, New Press
- Ruggiero, V and South, N (1995) *Eurodrugs*, UCL Press.

EURO...

Nicholas Dorn discusses recent research on drug control in cities across Northern Europe.

"They know how to behave." So police officers from Sussex regarded heroin users whom they targeted in an operation against a quietish heroin scene. But over two thousand attenders at a rave could be a different matter. In their description of a major dance venue, Andrew Fraser and Michael George say it remained virtually unpoliced for some time, due to a split of opinion amongst the police over the relative merits of targeting heroin dealers and dance drug distributors, lack of resources for 'big jobs', and fear that displacement would occur to the town centre. Police inaction provoked rumours of a pay-off somewhere along the line and, eventually, the police mounted a series of raids, learning and fine-tuning tactics as they went along. One result, commonly observed throughout the UK, is that nowadays more 'punters' obtain and take their drugs before setting off for the evening, leaving only the incompetent to get arrested for dealing or being in possession at or around the venue. In other words, displacement does occur - not so much to one site, but rather as a process of osmosis into everyday life. Normalisation, unintended.

Drugs in Holland

Normalisation intended is what the drug policy of the Netherlands is all about. The most important aspect of the policy is 'market separation', which aims at keeping separate the markets in cannabis and less acceptable drugs, such as heroin, by permitting cannabis supply in certain places - the famous/notorious coffee shops. Of course, this policy has many detractors, some of whom do not understand its aims, some who think the aims improper, some who think that it does not work, and some who think that it results in drug tourism and gives a regional base for traffickers. Liesbeth Horstink-Von Meyenfeldt, a prosecutor, writes that the policy must be tightened up in order to save it; abuses such as the many coffee shops which blatantly advertise to tourists must be curbed, or criticism from home and abroad will kill the policy. There have now been two waves of tightening up, the first



DRUG POLICIES

concerned mainly with licensing of the cafes, the second with the amount of drugs users may possess.

The Nordic Union

Where the Dutch have felt under pressure, first from Germany and latterly from France, the Danes have Sweden and Norway, historically tied together through the Nordic Union. Criminologist Lau Laursen has researched the history of this from the Danish point of view. In the early 1980s, for example the Swedish Parliament debated the 'Danish threat' in which it was said

"The drug hole of Christiania is a stinking abscess that spreads infection to a large area of the region... The free handling of drugs in Christiania is not only a Danish problem, but a matter for the entire North."

Whew! Laursen's colleague Jorgen Jepsen speculates that now Sweden has entered the EU, the Union may become the platform where national policy debates will be played out. If he is right then what are we to make of the statement of Leif Lenke and his colleague Börje Olsson, representatives of left wing Swedish criminology, that conservative parties are relatively more 'liberal' when in power than when in opposition? They suggest that the conservatives have had a tendency to focus on the drug problem and the 'need for repression' when in opposition. Lenke and Olsson suggest that factors other than drug policy are important in determining the level of heroin problems - for example, the geographical position of the country in relation to the flow of the European drug market, and the level of employment.

Jepsen himself describes a long-running police operation aimed at tackling the drug problem with saturation policing in two areas of Copenhagen, including Christiania. He presents some evidence of short term effectiveness - and of negative consequences. But for him, behind the 'effectiveness' question lies the problem of explicit versus implicit goals: is the main aim of the investment to improve the drug situation - or to give the police a new, badly-needed legitimacy in the face of criticism of their inability to slow the importation of illicit drugs?

Hamburg and London

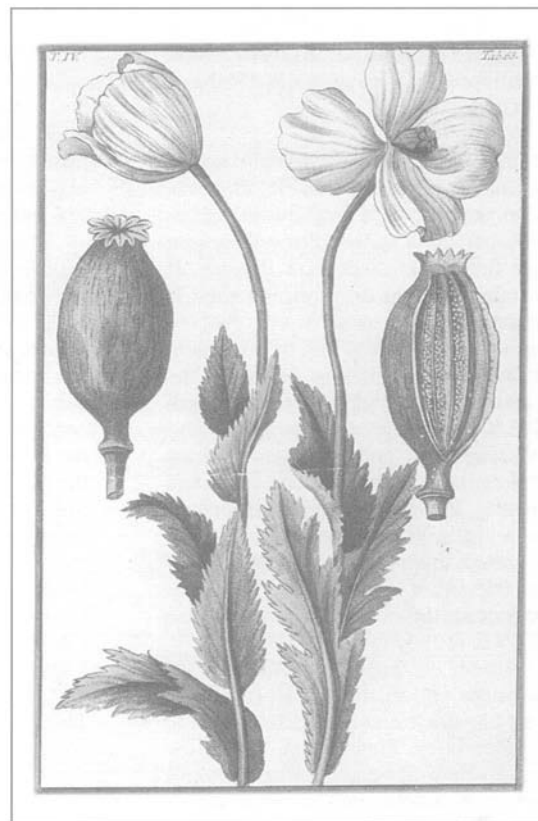
Hannies Alpheis begins his description

of Hamburg's policy towards the 'open drug scene' with that city's success, in 1992, in getting the federal Drug Enforcement Act reformed. The reform allows police prosecutors to drop a case of simple possession, although the drugs would be seized - in practice, leading some police to 'turn a blind eye' to drug injection in public. In spite of this, the city ordered a crackdown because of the negative aspects of the open drug scene - which included drug injection in public, littering, drug trafficking in public, shoplifting, burglary, robbery and violence within the drug scene and declining shop revenue.

So Alpheis argues that it isn't only reactionaries who go along with street drug enforcement. No doubt that judgement would be welcome to the local councils, health authorities and others implicated in aspects of Operation Welwyn in the Kings Cross area of London. Maggy Lee's research gives a careful description of partnership thinking in the police. She tries to balance the danger that vigorous drugs enforcement (as recommended by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs) may exacerbate the potential excesses of policing in British cities, against the positive effect of greater partnership to tackle urban deprivation. She remains agnostic on whether Operation Welwyn did much on balance in relation to drug dealing.

Euro strategies?

So, *quo vadis* European drug policy? Will we all pull in the same direction and, if so, which direction is that going to be? For Ernesto Savona, the transition to a broader, European, indeed international stage is a welcome one, for the issues at stake include not just those of community safety and police reputation: the survival of the state itself is at stake, organised crime is the target, and the world is the stage. In a few years, through the leadership of G7's Financial Action Task Force, it has been



Wellcome Institute Library, London

possible to construct an international anti-laundering system, intended as a coordinated set of international, regional and domestic policies and mechanisms. These policies reflect two main strategies: discouraging organisations from pursuing criminal activities by increasing the 'law enforcement risk' for criminals; and protecting the transparency and integrity of domestic and international financial systems.

According to that script, the currently fashionable focus on 'drug demand reduction' is a little off target, and the debates over local variations in hard versus soft policy responses are more a matter of style than of substance. Hmm... so, could the same be said of the options at international level? Where does that get us? Surely there must be another way to think about this problem.

Nicholas Dorn works for the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence.

European Drug Policies and Enforcement edited by Nicholas Dorn, Ernesto Savona and Jorgen Jensen was published by Macmillan in May 1996.