ALMP

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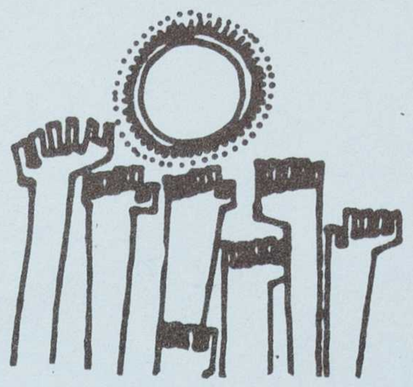

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NEWSLETTER SUMMER 1979

HAVERFORD HOLOCAUST

ALMP MEMBERS BUSTED AT "HOSPITAL"

ON TWO RECENT OCCASIONS, MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE FOR THE LIBERATION OF MENTAL PATIENTS WERE ARRESTED FOR VISITING HAVERFORD STATE HOSPITAL "PATIENTS," INFORMING THEM OF THEIR RIGHTS, AND DISTRIBUTING LITERATURE WHICH DID NOT MEET THE APPROVAL OF INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITIES. FOLLOWING IS AN ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE ARRESTS AND EVENTS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE:

From November 15, 1978 until March 16, 1979, Lenny Lapon, a member of the Alliance, worked as a paralegal for the American Bar Association-sponsored Mental Health Advocates of Pennsylvania (MHAP). MHAP is a legal advocacy project ostensibly created to assist inmate/"patients" at Haverford State Hospital in legal matters.

Lenny proceeded to quite actively advise inmates of their rights. He informed them of the dangerous effects of the psychiatric drugs (including tardive dyskinesia, a form of permanent brain damage). He also informed inmates of their Constitutional right to refuse these drugs. He distributed Alliance literature to the many inmates who were interested in receiving it. One such publication was "The Politics of Phenothiazines," which describes the effects of phenothiazines (Thorazine, Stelazine, Mellaril, Prolixin, etc.) as well as the politics and economics of the rich and powerful drug companies and psychiatrists that profit from their use.

As might be expected, Lenny's vigorous advocacy aroused the anger and resentment of Haverford administrators, especially Dr. Barry, Clinical Director for Forensic Psychiatry and court psychiatrist at the commitment hearings. On March 1, 1979 Barry wrote a letter to Jack Kane, Assistant Attorney General of Pennsylvania, questioning Lenny's right to distribute "political action tracts" and stating that "the equating of mental illness solely with the problems of 'poverty, alienation and discrimination' would appear simplistic and purile (sic) at best and dangerously ignorant, divisive, and subversive at worst." Barry's letter is examined in detail elsewhere in this newsletter.

Haverford State Hospital seems to have a very low threshold for tolerance of criticism. On February 16, while giving sworn testimony at a commitment hearing, Lenny stated that he didn't feel that Haverford State Hospital could safely and effectively "treat" anybody. Dr. Barry then proceeded to attack Lenny's opinion and the views expressed in "The Politics of Phenothiazines"--all

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