

6 What the Alliance has to say about Dr. Barry's letter...

What becomes immediately clear to us when we read this letter is the low view Dr. Barry has of "mental patients." He implies that "mental patients" are too stupid and/or confused to make decisions about their lives. What Barry is particularly upset about in this case is that inmates have been receiving information about the dangers of Thorazine and other "tranquilizers," and have been refusing to take drugs as a result. Dr. Barry implies that these inmates/"patients" are "vulnerable" and "paranoid," and are being brainwashed by the Alliance. He can't admit, of course, that "patients" refuse psychiatric drugs because the effects and side-effects feel terrible. Nor does Dr. Barry ever directly charge that the information we have been providing about drug side-effects is false; he knows well that Thorazine can cause permanent brain damage, yet justifies Haverford's forced drugging of inmates as "chemotherapy." Barry seems clearly to be advocating the censorship of material containing factual information about the effects of "tranquilizers," and of material which makes references to the huge profits that the medical and drug industries make off of those labelled by psychiatry as "mentally ill."

It should be recognized as well that Dr. Barry apparently believes that the label of "mental illness" is sufficient cause to deprive a human being of his or her constitutional rights, such as the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech and expression. He believes that mental patients having lawyers to defend them against the abuses of psychiatry is a bad thing. Barry again reveals his contemptuous attitude toward "mental patients" when he states (or blatantly implies) that it is impossible for psychiatrists to relate to a "psychotic" person as an equal in a "doctor/patient relationship." All this becomes especially frightening when it comes from the man who is responsible for just about every involuntary commitment to Haverford State Hospital.

The overall impression one gets from reading this letter is that of a man who is desperately trying to maintain a self-righteous, humanitarian image as his power is challenged by former and present victims of psychiatric oppression.

HAVERFORD PATIENTS SHOW SUPPORT (continued)

"Since my time in Haverford State Hospital, I have gone through extreme terror. The epitome of authoritative derision against the unknown "mental illness" is practiced here. I have been screamed at, demands are constant; rules and regulations cloud the real problems that exist in one's attempt at mental health. I have been drugged with terrifying physical and mental results. I have learned to suffer in silence with unexplainable pressure in my head. Thoughts and ideas have been warped and destroyed through forced drugging. I BELIEVE THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS TREATMENT HERE- JUST CONSTANT AGGRAVATION OF THE HUMAN BEINGS' CIVIL RIGHTS. I have virtually been thrown through the so-called court so many times, watching the manipulations of lies and deceit which have no proper place in our enlightened society. I would hope there would come a day WHEN THIS HOSPITAL WILL NOT HAVE THE LEGAL RIGHT TO EXIST. Until then, there are many who suffer the disastrous effects of forced commitments, and forced drugging..."

"I can do without a boring bingo game. The staff here on 3-South have made it impossible for us to get and have the use of our dormitories and rooms during the day...which we feel is a violation of our right to privacy."

"If you call the Psychiatrist and speak to him, you are going to get a negative analysis..."

"Every time I decided to leave my husband, he paid Psychiatrists to label me 'mentally ill'. I was railroaded into Norristown and then into Haverford State Hospital. I was continually treated by doctors and judges as "incompetent" even though I have always been intelligent, competent as a teacher and artist, and perfectly able to make decisions for myself. It seemed that all they wanted to do was beat me down more and more. SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT THESE KANGAROO COURTS AND MENTAL PRISONS, AND THE SOONER THE BETTER!"