LETTERS

As a former prisoner in a psychiatric "hospital" in England I was heartened to read of your struggle against the authorities.(Open Road 11).

I understand that techniques of brain control are more advanced in the United States than Britain, from reading Mind Control by Peter Schrag...

They are still about 5-10 years "behind" here in psychiatric treatment, but the gap is narrowing. After 9 weeks compulsory treatment for what they like to call chronic schizophrenia, when they turned me into a zombie with chlorpromazine (I think it's called something else in the States)*, Stelazine, Modecate (again called something else), and halperidol (a real killer), I felt broken and bitter.

I think they thought they had destroyed me but with the help (belated) of my friends and family, I fought the cold turkey when I came off the drugs and survived a suicide attempt and began to come to terms with my existence in a society which is so crazy we live under the threat of mass murder by nuclear weapons.

Please excuse the preaching--the purpose of this letter is to ask you for a copy of your newsletter and any other useful information you offer, so that I can begin to find ways of organizing against psychiatric abuse in this country. The only organization I know of in this country that has anything to do with patients or former patients is MIND or the National Association for Mental Health, but they seem to be professional do-gooders trying to help the poor nutter--which isn't really my sort of scene.

My attempts to help and inform psychiatric prisoners has been thwarted by threats from the hospital administration (St. Augustine's Hospital, Chartham, Canterbury) and I have been threatened with the police. Also my former girlfriend (imprisoned for attempted suicide) was told to keep away from me or face an indefinite incarceration. She agreed to their terms and was placed in a guest house (masquerading as a "family") and she was very unhappy. She disappeared and my efforts to find her have so far been unsuccessful.

I hope your fight is successful.

--Ray Burna
Canterbury, Kent, England

* Chlorpromazine is the chemical name for Thorazine, which is a brand name used by SmithKline, the manufacturers. --ed.

Just received the copy of the Newsletter, for Winter-Spring 1980. It was informative, enlightening. Thank God for your existence.

I was recently hospitalized in the Veterans Hospital in Sepulveda, California. I was drugged with the drug Prolixin. As I state in the enclosed affadavit, I was unable to find my way back to my bunk. I kept dropping anything I would try to carry in my hands.

It is my contention that I was raped when I was in this drugged state. But since reading your newsletter and realizing that I could have been paralyzed just as the person you mention in your newsletter, I guess rape is a minor matter. (We can hardly agree with that. --ed.)

In my drugged state I heard the attendant say to one of the patients, "Why don't you get some of that?" The patient replied, "Can I?" "Sure, she is so drugged she will never remember what has happened to her."

I will definitely attend the Eighth International Conference on Human Rights and Psychiatric Oppression in Berkeley.

--E.B.
Canoga Park, California

Excerpt from "Woman Decries Prison Conditions," Torch, July 15-Aug. 4, 1980.

We the women at State Correctional Institution for Women are crying and pleading for all the help we can get from the outside world. All that we are enduring and all the wrong and evil things that happen to us are terrible...there's the case of Sister Dorothy Finley, she fell and broke her collar bone because of medication she was forced to take. It took the prison officials 18 months before they fixed it...they force women to take medications they don't want or need. If one refuses, they are threatened by the pigs with a write-up or taken to solitary confinement. Also if they don't take the medication willingly they are shot up with it. When the pigs see they can't control you they do anything they possibly can to hurt us. We are fighting for our lives and freedom and better prison conditions. Things are so terrible here that inmates even tried to burn the administration building.

--Thunder Cloud
Muncie, Pa.

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