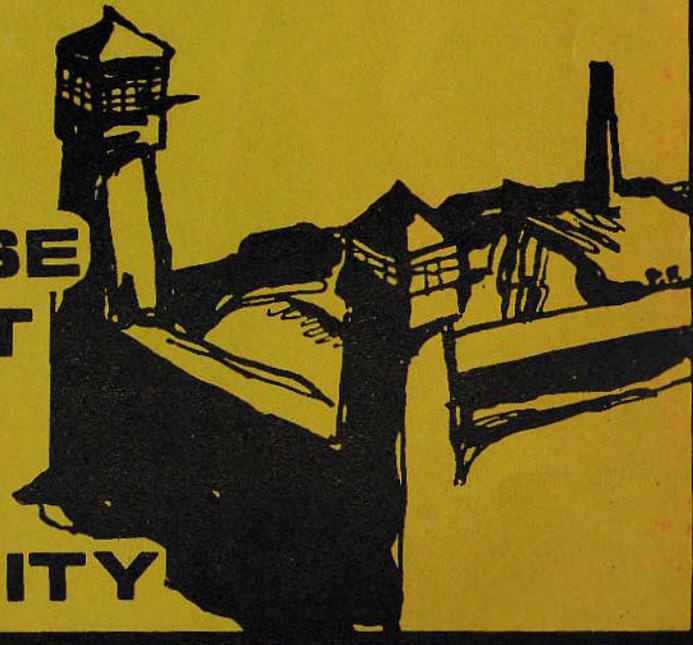


**FREEDOM  
ON OUR  
TERMS**



**THE CASE  
AGAINST  
THE  
ADULT  
AUTHORITY**





People who come out of prison can build up the country.

Misfortune is a test of people's fidelity.

Those who protest at injustice are people of true merit.

When the prison doors are opened, the real dragon will fly out.

Ho Chi Minh, Prison Diary

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At the height of the strike, when the joint was almost totally paralyzed, a small group of cons got Warden Nelson's approval to make a run through the four major cell blocks to collect individual grievances. These consisted of about 4,500 letters and lists of complaints. The gist of these complaints was almost unanimous in attacking the procedures and policies of the Adult Authority in its exercise of unprecedented power - a state agency with power to determine and redetermine length of sentences and release on parole and return to prison at whim - a power accountable to naught but its own self-righteousness.

From the preface to the convicts' written report from the strike at San Quentin, January 1968.

*we take so much for granted - we should question every value that we are taught and ask the reasons behind decisions who makes the decisions for what reasons.  
power - the oppressed*

"I remember very distinctly the moment I first found out that George Jackson was dead. I was in Seattle standing in front of a fish stand on the waterfront, and there in front of me were the headlines of the Seattle Daily News - 3 GUARDS DEAD AT SAN QUENTIN - 2 Inmates Shot - George Jackson Dead....

Fear, shock, pain...despair and rage filled me as I looked around. Nothing was happening. All I could think of was getting back to the Bay Area to be with my friends. Together we could act, we could express our solidarity, show our anger, overcome our frustration. But, as it turned out, we had trouble finding directions to move in. The Weather bombings were one outraged reaction, but there was not enough response to the murder of a man who had shown so many what it was to be truly human in an inhuman environment, not enough response to the wave of repression that followed the murder."

This was one person's reaction to the murder of George Jackson.

Most of us who worked on this pamphlet had very similar reactions to George's murder. We pinpoint that date as the beginning of the effort that we have made here and of our continuing commitment to support the prison movement.



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Our concern in this pamphlet has been the Adult Authority. We feel that the Adult Authority is not just a small part of a large bureaucracy but rather a cutting edge of the entire prison system. The prisoners inside and the parolees outside have expressed this feeling very strongly. Abolition of the indeterminate sentence and the policies and procedures of the Adult Authority is the number one demand of California state convicts. Understanding of the function of the Adult Authority is key to understanding the ways in which the prison system serves as a major means of social control in the interests of a small clique of arrogant white men.

The responsibility of the Adult Authority is very clear. It has complete control over the conditions that any male felon prisoner must meet before parole. It also has the power to release prisoners to parole and to revoke that parole. The Women's Board of Terms and Paroles is the parallel structure for women felon prisoners. These boards have tremendous power over prisoners and parolees. Despite the real danger involved, many prisoners resist the Adult Authority's and prison system's attempts to mold their lives. Some have hopes that before their lives are wasted away in prison the moment of reckoning for the Adult Authority and all it stands for will come... "with a little help from their friends."



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Sec. 3020: In the case of all persons heretofore or hereafter sentenced under the provisions of section 1168 of this code, the Adult Authority may determine and redetermine, after the actual commencement of imprisonment, what length of time, if any, such person shall be imprisoned, unless the sentence be sooner terminated by commutation or pardon by the governor of the state.

Sec. 3052: The Adult Authority shall have power to establish and enforce rules and regulations under which prisoners in state prisons may be allowed to go upon parole outside the prison buildings and inclosures when eligible for parole.

The length of term is not to exceed the maximum or be less than the minimum term of imprisonment provided by law for the public offense for which such person was convicted.

\* Minimum and Maximum Sentences

Sentence	Crime	Sentence	Crime
Life or Death	Murder, 1st degree	6 mo. to 15	Burglary, non- house
5 to life	Murder, 2nd degree	6 mo. to 14	Forgery
	Robbery, armed		Other check offenses
	Burglary, house	6 mo. to 10	Assault with a deadly weapon
	Sale or possession of narcotics (ex- cluding marijuana)		Grand theft
	Sale of marijuana (depending on prior convictions)		
3 to life	Rape	*Within these limits, the average time spent in prison is 36 months; the national average is 24 months.	
2 to life	Possession of nar- cotics (excluding marijuana and de- pending on prior convictions)		
1 to life	Robbery, unarmed		
6 mo. to life	Possession of mari- juana		
6 mo. to 50	Statutory Rape		

# SOME HISTORY

Under early California law, judges had responsibility for fixing prison sentences, with wardens giving time off for good behavior, and an administrative board making parole decisions. In 1917, the indeterminate sentence law was passed. Liberals hailed it as a major reform because time spent in prison was to be determined by how long it took to be rehabilitated and not by a fixed number of years of punishment. The new law removed sentencing power from the judges. The legislators, by law, set the minimum and maximum time that could be served for each crime. The power to make the rehabilitation decision within these boundaries was placed in a Board of Prison Directors, who were also responsible for the "charge and superintendence of the state prisons". Wardens, however, could still give various forms of good time credits. In 1931, the parole power was transferred to a new board called the Board of Prison Terms and Paroles. This board was to be free from prison management considerations altogether.

During the 30's, a period of economic depression, a growing labor movement and general social unrest, the parole board responded vigorously. Length of time spent in prison rose dramatically. The power to control parolees began to be used more harshly. In their 1936-37 report, the Board spoke of a "strengthening of policy that they had instituted". They made it clear that they were using the power to refix sentences with "increasing severity" to deal with parole violators. (A person sent back to prison for a parole violation had his sentence "refixed" at the legislatively determined maximum.) That this policy toughened during the struggle for jobs and human rights of the 30's gives an inkling of what behavior was seen as criminal by the parole board. But the warden's power to grant good time credits still stood in the way of the Board's ability to exercise complete control. The wardens, as prison managers, were concerned mainly with keeping the prisons cool and not overcrowded. As a result, they tended to give credits on the basis of behavior in prison without regard to keeping down unrest in the society as a whole. In a successful bid for power, the parole board put pressure on the legislature, and in 1944 the California Adult Authority

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was constituted with both parole and credit power. (In 1953 credits were abolished altogether.)

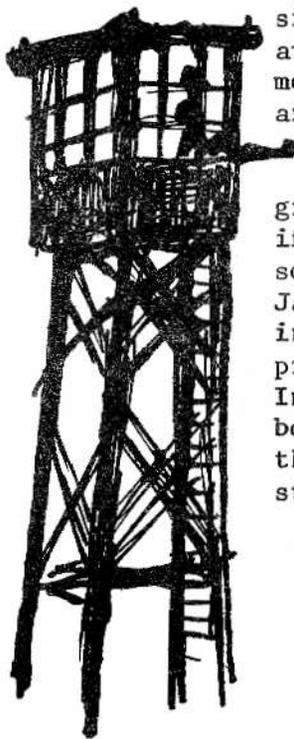
The popular uprisings of the 1960's again highlighted the relation between rehabilitation and "law and order". The 60's saw the rebellions of Watts, Newark, and Detroit, the call to struggle by Malcolm X, the taking up of arms by the Black Panthers, the growth of Black Power under the leadership of Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown, the movement of angry welfare mothers, the rent strikers under Jesse Gray, the community takeovers by the Young Lords. The 60's were the years when the struggles in Africa, Indochina, Cuba and China became linked in people's consciousness to the struggles here. The 60's witnessed the growth of a white counter-culture and a white underground. All of this and much more helped to create a belief in the minds of many that much of what the law defined as criminal was, in fact, justifiably rebellious behavior. As this pamphlet will explain, it was a short step from there to the understanding that "rehabilitation of criminals" is nothing less than control of an angry population. The California Adult Authority has now clearly entered the 70's as a primary agent of the state's plans to suppress insurgency, as a colonial body aimed at quelling uprisings among black and brown peoples.



# POWER & POLICIES

The people on the Board are God and they know it. They have you in their hands. They control your salvation, your heaven and your hell. Once a year you stand before that God and they decide whether or not you stay in hell for another year. (a prisoner's statement)

Starting one month before a man's minimum sentence is served, he begins his appearances (usually once a year) before an Adult Authority panel. The panel may be made up of two Adult Authority members, a member and a case hearing representative, or two case hearing representatives. In most cases, a prisoner can not receive a parole date unless his case is reviewed by two members. When a representative sits on the hearing panel, he must make his recommendation in writing, and it must be concurred in by a member. Negative recommendations from representatives are generally just rubber stamped by board members.



The power that the members have is to deny parole, grant parole or set a date when parole will be granted, if certain conditions are met. For example, a man serving a one year to life sentence, as George Jackson was, might be told that he will be paroled in three years if behavior is satisfactory, and the prescribed program of rehabilitation is completed. In considering any individual case, however, the board itself often ignores the very programs on which they place such great emphasis. As one prisoner stated:

For three years I was the model prisoner. I had perfect work reports. I graduated from High School and was taking college courses. I didn't have any disciplinary infractions except for one or two very minor things. I stayed away from the militants. I went regularly to therapy programs - group therapy, alcoholics anonymous, and even a Yokefellow group. So when I went to the board after three years I felt positive I would get a date. The Adult Authority shot me down a year. They said that they didn't feel I was

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Even when the date, the member years are up on. There are no real law. They have on what they tell words:

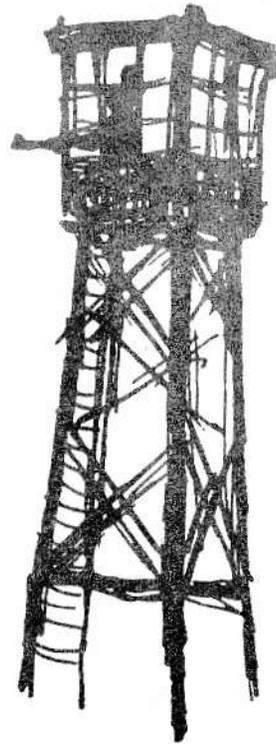
The June 1 significant postponement eighth time insitutional board hearing I would be walked back a "date". days later been made postponed for that I was San Quentin at Soledad. When the place, date panel. I the promise I was denied. Sometime year before the previous if I had been released promise, never made

sincere. They said that I was just con-wise and was playing a game with them. Now I don't know what to do. If I get any write-ups or stop going to therapy, they will take this as proving that I was faking it before. But if I don't do anything new, they will just say the same thing next year.

Even when the board has set a prisoner's parole date, the members will release him when the number of years are up only if his record meets their fancy. There are no requirements or standards prescribed by law. They have no responsibility to follow through on what they tell the prisoner. In George Jackson's words:

The June 1969 appearance, however, was very significant because it followed a six-month postponement. I had gone to the board for the eighth time in Dec. 1968. I was told by the institution employee who always sits on the board hearings that I was "granted a parole". I would be back on the street on March 4. I walked back to my cell telling everyone I had a "date". I even wrote to my family. Three days later I was informed that a mistake had been made. Consideration of my case was postponed for six months. They explained to me that I would be transferred to Soledad from San Quentin. If I did well for six months at Soledad, I would be given parole for certain. When the June 1969 appearance finally took place, different people were on the board panel. No one could find any reference to the promises made to me by the earlier board. I was denied for another full year.

Something very similar had happened the year before at the Dec. 1967 appearance. At the previous meeting they had promised me that if I had seven or eight clean months I would be released. When I reminded them of their promise, they laughed and stated that "we never make deals like that".

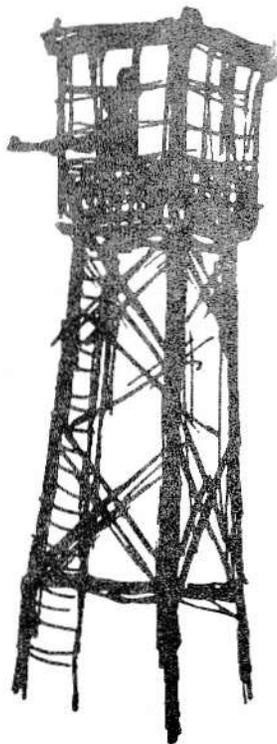


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# THE HEARINGS

re- mind one of an assembly line. A survey conducted in 1963 found that the average time per hearing was 13.7 minutes, including the time for deliberation after the con left the room. One member reads the file for the next case while the other quizzes the prisoner before him. The file includes inmate background, staff recommendations, statements from community people (employers, etc.), statements regarding the prisoner's "institutional adjustment" and more. The prisoner is never allowed to see his file, nor is he permitted to have any representative, lawyer, friend, etc. at this hearing. The prisoner usually gets time only to make a short statement. The board is in complete control of the hearing, making up or disregarding rules as they go along. The prisoner can not call or cross examine witnesses used by the Authority against him. For example, a guard might write up a con for a disciplinary infraction. This might be the whole reason for parole denial. Yet, the con can not confront this guard. As one prisoner, locked up for 21 years, wrote:

The Adult Authority annually presents unsubstantiated accusations that I am a dope smuggler and/or that I am a "chieftain" in the "Mexican Mafia" within the prison social structure. I most earnestly take exception to these accusations and allegations and deny their validity. I have denied them annually before the Parole Board. In both cases the allegations are untrue, unfounded, and are untenable reasons for justifying the many years that I have been held in custody...It is extremely difficult to overcome these charges when I appear before the Parole Board, as I feel they literally want to believe the accusations, and based on their



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erroneous beliefs, continue to deny me my freedom.

I want to bring to your attention that the only conceivable reason for denying me parole has been hearsay accusations on which I have never been tried. The board is not required to state a reason for parole denial, but now, under public pressure, they will put a brief reason for its action in the prisoner's file for the next panel to read.

With prisoners known to be politically active, much of the hearing is concerned with exploring the prisoner's political beliefs. When a young black prisoner, openly a member of the Black Panther Party, sat down before the Adult Authority, the first question he was asked was, "Tell me, why are you a Panther? What do you see in them?" He responded by saying, "All Black people in America are really Panthers because all Black people in America are oppressed." According to the observer at this hearing, this response set off a long and heated political discourse after which the hearing was ended and the prisoner denied parole.

Often the board appears to try deliberately to create situations in which a prisoner will be forced to make statements that give the board a "reason" to deny parole. One white prisoner described this type of experience:

I was sent to prison for possession of marijuana. So far I have done two and a half years. The last time I went to the board they asked me if I believed in legalizing marijuana. Now how am I supposed to answer that? If I say no they will just assume that I am lying. If I say yes they will think that I intend to continue to break the law when I get out and that I am not rehabilitated. I told them that I thought that the penalties were too severe but that I didn't know whether it should be legalized or not. They denied me a year.

With no recourse to appeal outside of the Adult Authority and with no recourse to due process inside the Adult Authority hearings, prisoners find themselves, as long as they remain in the system, in a situation in which they are powerless to effect the outcome and their release from prison depends totally on the judgement of the board members.

# THE POWERS OF PAROLE

Parole is not granted as leniency or as "time off" for good behavior; neither is it a right to which any inmate is entitled. Rather, it is a part of the continuous treatment program of the Department of Corrections which assists the inmate in working through his problems in the realistic environment of the community. (from the Visitor's Guide for Attendance at a Hearing of the California Adult Authority, put out by the Department of Corrections.)

If the Authority should decide to parole a man, they then determine the conditions of parole. These include: requiring written permission before drinking, driving, traveling, moving, or associating with "individuals of bad reputation", including all former prisoners. In addition to these conditions, the Women's Board gives its parole agents the right to determine whether or not a paroled mother may have her children back.

The Adult Authority also has the power to determine how much time a man must serve on parole. They can, for example, release a prisoner with a life top (maximum) and keep him on parole for life. On the other hand, they can set a definite amount of time for which he will be on parole. They also have the power to cut loose a parolee at any time.

If a parole agent thinks a man has violated parole, the agent reports him to the Adult Authority. Every Friday morning in San Francisco's Ferry Building, two members and two representatives meet with the head of the local parole office to decide whether or not to send people back to prison. No parolee can be present, nor does anyone get a hearing until a month or two after being put back in prison. Similar procedures apply in Los Angeles and Sacramento.

Once a person's parole is officially revoked, his prison term is restored to the legal maximum and he must begin the Adult Authority process all over again. Thus, out on parole for a crime with a life top, a man could break parole by taking a drink without permission and end up back in the joint with a life sentence.

Despite the fact that the Adult Authority has this very broad power of revocation, they have not yet seen fit to use it to its fullest potential. In fact, most people sent back to prison as parole violators have been charged with new crimes while on parole, rather than with technical violations such as drinking or associating with another ex-con. However, to the Adult Authority, the mere charge of a new crime often is grounds for parole revocation.

←  
incredible!

Furthermore, the potential use of revocation powers can not be overlooked. Key to understanding parole (and also probation) is the effect it has in deterring people from engaging in various forms of expression. Though it is rare to get sent back for something such as associating with another ex-con, the Adult Authority has the power to do so, and it is always possible that they might choose, at any time, to exercise that power.



WALTER GORDON



HENRY KERR,  
CHAIRMAN



JAMES HUTTON,  
REP



Oct. 20, 1966

Dear Robert,

Very likely I will be given a parole date this year. If so, or perhaps to increase the possibility, I should have a job offer here on record...

Take care of yourself.

George

Dec. 9, 1966

Dear Mama,

...I go to the board in December and as I have stated before I have met all of their terms. My release is almost assured...

Take care of yourself.

Love,

George

Dec. 19, 1967

Dear Robert,

I went to the board yesterday; they told me that if I kept this next year clean and clear of disciplinary infractions I would have 18 months clean next time I saw them. Of course I have not seen the official results yet (maybe Friday I will) but it was pretty clear that I got another year to do. I'll write again when I get the final word...

Take care of yourself.

George

Jan. 1, 1968

Dear Robert,

...They denied me another year, I go back next December. It will be eight years then.

Take care of yourself.

George

**GEORGE JACKSON**

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June 29, 1968

Dear Georgia,

I'll be out of here soon, perhaps in eight or nine months. I'll have eighteen months clean when I go to the board in December. You know that I have my time in. That's what they want, time and clean conduct...

George

August 17, 1968

Dear Mother,

...It is clear that they are not going to give me a chance. You were right, that is exactly what they fear. Just because I want to be my black self, mentally healthy, and because I look anyone who addresses me in the eye, they feel that I may start a riot anytime. I've stopped more trouble here than any other black in the system.

George

June 12, 1969

Dear Mother,

Final results: Denied, one year, go back to board next June 1970.

George

June 14, 1970

Dear G.

The California Adult Authority board and inmate Jackson A63837 clashed for the final time in June '70 (the usual arrangement is once a year), I refused to go. I was already under indictment for the murder of the pig and it wasn't very likely that I would be given consideration for anything but the firing squad...

Power to the People,  
Comrade George



**THE ADULT  
AUTHORITY.**

# THE ADULT AUTHORITY

The Adult Authority is made up of nine men appointed by the governor for four year terms (there is currently once vacancy). All of the present members have been appointed by Reagan. Of the eight, one is black and one is chicano. Two were previously in California police departments, one was an FBI agent, two were with District Attorneys' offices, two were prison guards, and one was a parole officer.

The Authority appoints eleven other men as case hearing representatives. The reps assist the Adult Authority in carrying out all of their functions. Although final power rests with the members, in practice, the recommendations of the reps in day to day matters is generally followed. To the cons, the reps and the members serve exactly the same function. Almost all of the reps were prison guards or parole officers before becoming reps. Many reps serve for long periods of time and build up influence as the years pass. Lorian, a rep who shot George Jackson down three times in the 60's is still around. Cons report that the reps tend to be heavily right wing.

The Women's Board, also appointees of the governor, is composed of five persons, three of whom are, and by law must be, women. All of them are white. They are Eleanor W. Hiller, Lucile Homer, Addison H. Fording (an ex-police chief of Berkeley), Kay Riddle, and Joseph E. Regan. The AA members are:

*Henry Kerr, chairman: 2833 Alta Vista Drive, Newport Beach; Los Angeles police department, 1937-1967; assistant commander of the Detective Bureau; former director of the LA Fire and Police Protective League; Republican; 58.*

*Manley J. Bowler: chief assistant U.S. attorney for Southern Cal., 1953-57; chief deputy district d.a., 1957-64; Vice president and legal counsel for Transamerica Title Insurance Company 1964-67.*

*Charles Brown: 46 Miramonte Drive, Moraga; Richmond police department for 24 years; police chief of Richmond, 1955-68; former member of the Women's Board; Democrat; 62.*

*James H. Hoover: 3808 Chino Ave., Chino; prison guard, 1956-63; rose to rank of sergeant; correctional program supervisor, 1963-66; correctional personnel training official, 1966-69; Republican.*

Curtis Lynum: 644 W. Hillsdale Blvd., San Mateo; FBI agent, 1941-68; headed San Francisco office of FBI, 1963-67; Republican; 54.

Daniel Lopez: 2788 13th St., Sacramento; worked 18 years as a prison guard; special agent coordinating CDC activities with state and federal judicial and law enforcement agencies; 4 years with the state Department of Human Resources Development, retiring as deputy director in charge of job training, development and placement; Republican; only Mexican American on the board; 52.

Walter Gordon: 1074 Craymont Ave., Berkeley; Alameda County probation department, 1948-53; California parole agent, 1953-67; his father was on the Adult Authority and was governor of the Virgin Islands and U.S. District Judge; Republican; only black member of the board; 49.

Leleand M. Edman: 1650 W. Browning Ave., Fresno; Fresno County deputy district attorney, 1954-57; private practice, 1957-67; Republican, 49.

**Representatives:**

*The following two reps operate out of the Ferry Building in San Francisco:*

James Hutton: prison guard, 1947-8; parole officer, 1948-54; guidance center sociologist and counsellor at San Quentin, 1958-60; associate superintendent for classification and treatment at Soledad; rep since 1960.

Robert Lorian: prison guard and guard officer, San Quentin and Soledad, 1948-58; associate warden for classification and treatment at San Quentin, 1963-5; professor of military science and tactics and commander of cadets, Tamalpais High School, 1948-51; responsible as "administrative noc" for supervision of up to 200 Japanese POWs, 1944-6; resided with parents who were then superintendent and matron of Marin County Juvenile Hall.

*The other reps are:*

W. G. Ballachey, Paul Chamlee, Bernard Forman, William Lawson, Walter Isenberg, Robert Miller, Robert Del Pesco, Robert Searbridge, Brick Yarchin

Incarceration Rates by Race, Age and Sex: National Data  
 (number of individuals in jails and prisons on an average day in 1960 for each 100,00 people in the relevant populations)

Age	Black Men	Black Women	White Men	White Women
10-19	585		150	
20-24	3700	195	860	27
25-34	3850	231	620	21
35-44	2500		410	
45-64	1001		230	
64+	205		57	

\*Prison/Parole Population by Sex in California - 1970

	Prison	Parole
Total	21,119	11,000
Men	20,531	10,000
Women	588	1,000

Prison Population by Race in California - 1970

	Men	Women
White	52%	53.5%
Black	29.8%	34.2%
Chicano	16.6%	7.8%
Other	1.6%	4.5%

\*This ratio of men to women changes somewhat for the county jail population. For instance, the ratio of women to men in Alameda county jails is 1:12, while in the state prisons it is about 1:30. The increased proportion of women in the county jails is probably due to the fact that prostitution is a misdemeanor and not a felony.

Prison Population by Offense in California - 1968

	Men	Women
Violence Crimes	18.8%	23.1%
Property Crimes	59.8%	52.1%
Victimless Crimes	21.4%	24.8%

One out of every 22 blacks in California between the ages of 20 and 24 is behind bars on an average day as compared to one out of 83 whites.

\* \* \* \*

At any given moment in time one out of every seven or eight black men in California between the ages of 20 and 24 are either in prison, in jail, on parole or on probation. For whites it is one out of thirty.

\* \* \* \*

There are more black men in prison than in college.

86.5% of the prison population in the nation has not graduated from high school while only 65% of the general population does not have high school diplomas.

\* \* \* \*

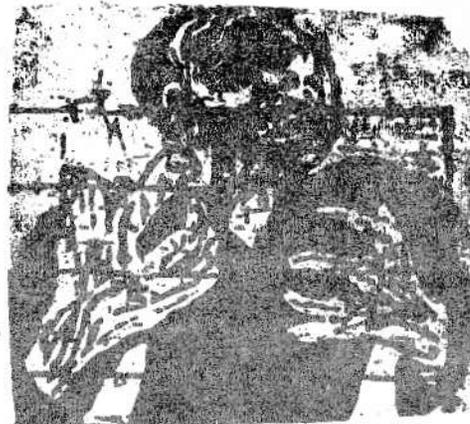
The national prison population has three times as many laborers as the population as a whole; the general population has four or five times as many professionals, technicians, managers, and owners as the prison population.

\* \* \* \*

Only 1/6 to 1/7 of those convicted of tax fraud spend time in prison; over 1/2 of those convicted of robbery spend time in prison.

# "REHABILITATION"

The first requirement a prisoner has to meet is good behavior inside the prison. Any beef by a guard against a con can lead to parole denial. Kerr, chairman of the Adult Authority, stated, "Usually, we figure...that a man who can't behave under the regimented controls of a prison is likely to go to pieces on the outside." As one black prisoner stated, "One disciplinary infraction can wipe out a whole year's good work reports. They (the Adult Authority) see a recent 115 (disciplinary write-up) in your jacket (file) and they think that this means you are still a criminal and that you need more time to mend your ways." Good behavior, however, can not be understood in a conventional "outside" respect. Good behavior on the inside means essentially a posture of submission, a willingness to be and do whatever the guards want, no matter what level of debasement that includes. There are no principles for the judgement of behavior - rather it is based on the individual whim of the guards and their relationship to individual prisoners. Good behavior, on the other hand, will not alone guarantee release. A prisoner could be good without being "cured".

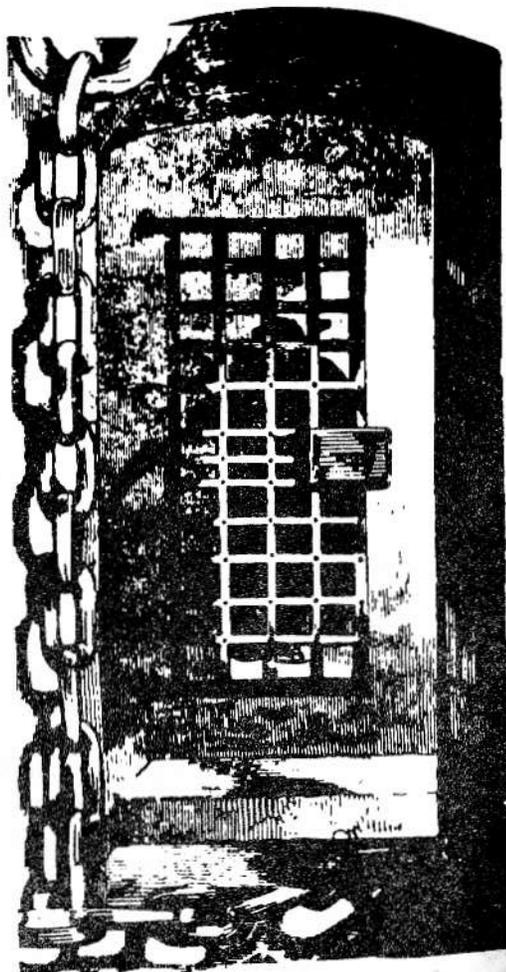


A prisoner must also, according to the board, complete a program of rehabilitation. Most "programs" are archaic and do not correspond to real job situations on the outside. While in prison, women are supposed to have access to courses in cosmetology, keypunching, and other secretarial skills. They are also encouraged to participate in creative dynamics, a group therapy program in which women role play in pressure situations. When a prisoner comes before the board to have her parole date set, the board claims to look closely at the extent of her participation in these courses and her success with them. In their own words, they look to see how well she has "programmed herself for parole". Men are programmed in similar ways for fitting into predefined roles on the outside.

However, it must be remembered that the board itself is not even consistent in the emphasis they place on these rehabilitation programs. Programs called for by the board as a condition for parole are hard to find. Many prisoners are told to enroll in a particular program and then are sent to a prison that does not have that program - "catch 22"

Though the board claims to rely on whether or not a con carries out a program, many cons speak of contradictory decisions rendered by the board in virtually identical cases or in the same case heard by a different panel. There is a randomness that smacks of power running rampant. One con was told at one appearance he did not have enough time in, and at a later appearance that he had too much time in to be able to adjust to life on the outside. In another case, a prisoner wrote:

To point out an obvious injustice: I was convicted together with a co-defendant. My co-defendant served 13 years and was paroled. He was on parole for a period of nine months and then was apprehended for possession of narcotics. He was tried, convicted, sentenced to prison on a sentence not less than two years and not more than 10 years. His parole was revoked and again he was serving his original life sentence plus the new sentence. It is interesting to note that my co-defendant was paroled for the second time in June of 1971.



What appears to be "catch 22" and random is really part of a less apparent pattern. Prisoner and observer experiences before the board bring this pattern to light. There is a constant attempt to get prisoners to admit their guilt, that they were wrong and society was right. This is the essential step before the board is willing to accept either good behavior or program. One observer tells of the case of Clarence H. who said he violated the weapons law because he was illiterate since he had worked from early childhood. He was told:

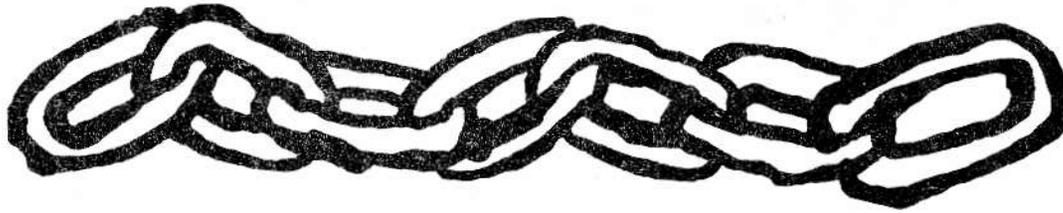
I know a million people who have worked all their lives and didn't have much school - but they read and write. You can't shuck it off like that. You're just too lazy to get up off your duff and learn.

The same observer reported, "In hearing after hearing, inmates are told to accept responsibility for their acts, to stop defending themselves by blaming circumstances or someone else." In a prisoner's words:

Without reservation, I want my freedom and I want to be with my family. Yet, I am told this can not be accomplished unless I stand before the Adult Authority and admit that all the allegations made against me are true and correct....This is a calculated risk. They are asking that I admit to totally untrue accusations and then they ask that I take a chance that they may or may not parole me then or ever.

Until a prisoner admits his guilt and thus accepts his passive place in a blameless society, he can't get out. This admission is then seen by the board as the factor which negates one's claim to be a political prisoner. One prisoner who mentioned black oppression was told, "There has been a certain amount of injustice against Negroes over the years, but things have gotten much better recently, and I just don't see how you can say that you are oppressed." The board also seems to take a great interest in organized political activity, particularly left wing groups. According to an observer's account, a prisoner who had been actively involved in the Minutemen before being sent to prison was asked by one of the Adult Authority members:

"Are you still a Weatherman?" "Weatherman?" replied the inmate, "There weren't any Weatherman when I was on the outside. You mean Minuteman!" The member replied,



"Weatherman, Minutemen - they're all the same thing anyway." Later in the interview, the prisoner was asked, "What do you now feel about Minutemen, Weathermen, Nazis, Panthers and those kinds of groups?" The inmate tactfully replied, "Well, like you said, they are really all the same. They may have different rhetoric, but there is no real difference in their organizations. They are all on ego trips." The prisoner was recommended for a parole.

As even Louis Nelson, warden of San Quentin admitted, "...some prisoners are probably being kept in prison because of their avowed revolutionary ideology."

Accepting guilt and not engaging in any activity or thought against the system seem to be the key elements in the search for clues to "rehabilitation". Consider the implications of this in a time when almost all black and brown and many white prisoners consider themselves political prisoners, in the sense that they are in prison for being poor and/or third world. As George Jackson wrote:

An individual leaves his individuality and any pride he may have had behind these walls. When you first enter, you're required to write a confession that will be placed right in the front of your jacket under your picture and number. Failure to write this confession means...you haven't taken the first step toward rehabilitation. All this is carefully explained to you ...no confession, no parole. No one walks into the board room with his head up...if a man gets a parole from these prisons...it means that he crawled into that room...

No black will leave this place if he has any violence in his past, until they see that thing in his eyes. And you can't fake it, resignation - defeat, it must be stamped clearly across the face.

# REVOLUTIONARY REHABILITATION

There are only two types of blacks ever released from these places, the Carters (Bunchy Carter) and the broken men...This camp brings out the very best in brothers or destroys them entirely. (George Jackson)

There are, it appears, two opposing directions of change which men in prison may take. One is the course laid down by the prison officials and the Adult Authority - passivity and submission, resignation and defeat. The only other alternative is resistance to the entire system, fighting back. The prisoners who take this latter alternative become consciously a part of the growing prison movement as well as leadership for those on the outside. George Jackson, Bunchy Carter, Eldridge Cleaver, Ruchell McGee, and Malcolm X are all striking examples.

This program of resistance involves, first of all, the prisoner's search for an understanding of the system that put him in prison and keeps him there. Eldridge Cleaver understood well how this search for understanding put him in opposition to the prison officials:

It may be that I can harm myself by speaking frankly and directly, but I do not care about that at all. Of course I want to get out of prison, badly, but I shall get out some day. I am more concerned



with what I am going to be after I get out. I know that by following the course which I have charted I will find my salvation. If I had followed the path laid down for me by the officials, I'd undoubtedly have long since been out of prison - but I'd be less of a man. I'd be weaker and less



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certain of where I want to go, what I want to do, and how to go about it.

Given the time prisoners have for reading and thinking, many engage in a rigorous program of political education. In addition to learning Spanish and Swahili, George Jackson read extensively in the fields of social-economic and political theory. Eldridge sought out, among other things, the writings of Marx, Lenin and Bakunin. While the prison officials provide some limited vocational training for prisoners, the prisoners themselves supply each other with the education they really want and need. Books, magazines and newspapers are circulated through the prisoners' network; political discussions and study groups take place right under the nose of the prison authorities. George Jackson described the result of this study:

There are still some blacks here who consider themselves criminals - but not many...with the time and incentive that these brothers have to read, study and think, you will find no class or category more aware, more embittered, desperate or dedicated to the ultimate remedy - revolution.

Armed with clear political understandings and motivations, increasing numbers of prisoners are finding the strength to resist and confront their seemingly hopeless situation. As George wrote:



...the blacks are fast losing the last of their restraints. Growing numbers of blacks are openly passed over when paroles are considered. They have become aware that their only hope lies in resistance. They have learned that resistance is actually possible.... Up until now, the prospect of parole has kept us from confronting our captors with any real determination. But now with the living conditions deteriorating, and with the sure knowledge that we are slated for destruction, we have been transformed into an implacable army of liberation.

Faced with this glaring evidence of the failure of their "rehabilitation" program, the Adult Authority, especially since the murder of George Jackson and the Attica uprising in New York, seems to be trying out a new strategy. Recently a few prisoners, visibly identified with revolutionary politics, have been released on parole. It is clear that the reason for such releases by the Authority is to "cool out" the prisons. But this strategy, too, must fail since the more political agitation and rebellion there is on the outside, the more the whole legal and penal system is pressured to tighten up. The Adult Authority is caught up in its own contradictions.



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# CONCLUSION

Although the prison system in general and the Adult Authority in particular appear as a smoothly operating repressive machine, in reality, there are many tensions and contradictions inherent in their functioning.

First, there is the response of the prisoners themselves. The more the Adult Authority uses its power to deny men their freedom, the more the prisoners demand that freedom. At the same time, the more black and brown people on the outside move to take control over their lives, the more the Adult Authority feels the necessity of maintaining control over those already on the inside. Secondly, there is the response of people outside of the prisons to the treatment and conditions of prisoners. The Adult Authority is subject to conflicting pressures. It must "get tough", but it must also "reform".

Finally, there are divisions among the people on the Adult Authority. Many times these divisions will lead to a non-unified policy in parole considerations. Despite this, the differences remain within a basic framework which sees the function of prisons as a primary means of maintaining the power of rich white men against insurgent peoples. The differences today on the Adult Authority are parallel to those which faced prison officials in 1917 and the 1930's - whether to show the iron fist to prisoners to make them submit or to give them earlier paroles (particularly to troublemakers) to keep things cool.

Moreover, it is important to note that the overt repression now so easily observable will most likely change its form in years to come. Blue Ribbon panels of experts will make report after report about the conditions of prisons, "reforms" will be initiated (just as the Adult Authority, itself, was a "reform"). The appearance of change will constantly be put forward to the American people as a sign of the flexibility and adaptability of our "democratic system" to the changing times. But, there will be no democracy, no justice, no freedom until we have a new language and a new reality where criminal is not equated with being poor and law is not equated with the protection of capital. Until then, freedom will only be found in the struggle.

HE CAN'T EVEN RUN HIS OWN LIFE, I'LL BE DAMNED IF HE'LL RUN MINE.

(from a popular song)



There are 20 prisoner prosecution witnesses in the Soledad Brothers trial. 2/3 of them have been granted parole by the California Adult Authority.

The Adult Authority meets every other Monday in open session in Sacramento, 714 P Street