

SAN QUENTIN

MUST BE CLOSED!

The opening of this temporary information center at the very gate of San Quentin by an Ad Hoc committee of people connected with the prison movement represents the beginning of an effort to focus attention and bring pressure on the *individuals* who actually run San Quentin . . . the guards, the administrators, the counselors and the other people without whose active cooperation places like San Quentin could not exist. People have been allowed to rationalize their actions with such clichés as "Somebody has to do it" . . . or . . . "I don't make the rules I just follow orders" . . . or . . . "It's a job and I have a family to support." It is time that those responsible be held responsible.

After all of the damning newspaper articles, all of the television documentaries, all of the petitions, and all of the court battles, places like San Quentin still exist. Instead of closing as promised they are still open. Instead of withering they are expanding. Instead of fewer human zoos we are to have more. The rhetoric of modern penology is becoming an impotent mockery. The people whose task is to protect society by "correcting," fail at their work about 80% of the time . . . and yet somehow they keep their jobs!

SAN QUENTIN IS THE AUSCHWITZ OF CALIFORNIA

The people who work there are as responsible for what happens and doesn't happen at San Quentin as were the Kommandants and Sturm-*bandfuher*s of Auschwitz. Even the empty promises of the Adult Authority that hard work will win release is remindful of the infamous sign at the entrance to Auschwitz "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work will make you free). There are, of course, limits as to how far this analogy can be drawn since nothing in all of human experience is equal to Auschwitz in its monstrosity. It was only after consultation with actual survivors of Auschwitz and much soul searching that we dared to use the name Auschwitz in connection with something other than itself. But as one of our members, herself a survivor of Auschwitz, has remarked "even a little bit of Auschwitz is too much . . . something to be fought against . . . to be resisted . . . to be destroyed."

Last year hundreds of men were stabbed and beaten at San Quentin; dozens died. The death of one man, stabbed over twenty times, was officially labeled as resulting from "natural causes!" But it is the other kinds of death that allow us in good con-

science to make the symbolic confession to Auschwitz. We refer to the slow tortured death that comes not to the body but to the soul. The death that comes to any human being, be he Saint or Sinner, when he is locked away for years in a 4½ foot by 9 foot windowless cage like an animal with no real control over even the most minor business of life, living in real fear for his life, surviving only by degrading submission, or by somehow mustering enough personal force of violence to shield himself.

THE INDETERMINATE SENTENCE

Victor Frankl, the famous psychiatrist, and himself a survivor of Auschwitz, has said that the most psychologically destructive aspect of the death camps was not knowing when or if it would ever end. California's system of indeterminate sentencing has the same spirit killing effect. Yet it continues; and the politically appointed members of the Adult Authority exercise their arbitrary powers to imprison without restriction or accountability.

WHO IS CIVILIZED?

Not too many years ago pickpockets had their hands cut off, prisoners were branded and ripped apart on the rack. Today we no longer do these things because we view them as inhumane and beneath the permissible level of behavior for a society

trying to act in a civilized manner. Keeping human beings penned up in cages like animals must now be rejected for precisely the same reasons.

WE ARE ALL ACCOUNTABLE

It is time now that the people who operate the prisons of California be called to account for what they are doing to human beings, their families, and to society by their actions. It is time that the children of Department of Corrections employees become embarrassed by what their fathers are doing. It is time that the wives of Department of Corrections employees insist that their husbands abandon this indecent work. It is time that friends and neighbors of Department of Corrections employees express their abhorrence of prison practices and urge abandonment of this indecent work. It is time that businessmen withdraw their tacit approval of this monstrous primitive, inhuman scheme of torture and destruction by expressing their disgust and withdrawing their financial and service support. Perhaps then some of the stronger of the Department of Corrections Employees will stand up and say "No more! . . . I will no longer be part of this at any price . . . this is wrong . . . this is not the way I will spend my life . . . this is not what I want to be remembered for . . . I will seek other work." Then San Quentin will close, as surely it must.

WHO IS THE COMMITTEE?

The names of the good people listed as members of this committee are in this brochure because they are concerned and happened to be near when the idea for this information center was born. No doubt there are thousands of other people whose

Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Bradley
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Berger
McKinley Davidson
Anne Dowie
Mark Dowie
Pat Donnelly
Sarah Duskin
Ray Figueroa
Tom Grapshi
Elizabeth Gribbon
Patrick Hallman
Morris Hodges
William Holder
Eva Korn
Richard Kirschman
George Lopez

HOW CAN I HELP?

The following local organizations, while not necessarily affiliated with this committee, are substantially dedicated to the eradication of places like San Quentin:

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
593 Market Street, San Francisco 94105

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE
COMMITTEE
2160 Lake Street, San Francisco 94121

CONNECTIONS
3189 - 16th Avenue, San Francisco 94103

NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND, INC.
12 Geary Blvd., 8th Floor
San Francisco 94108

names should be on the list. And what of the more than 40,000 men and women now in jails and prisons here in California, their predecessors, their families and friends. Perhaps there are really hundreds of thousands on this committee:

Suzanne Lilienthal
John Maher
Eve Pell
Zev Putterman
Mr. & Mrs. Stefan Ponak
Mr. & Mrs. Irwin Ritz
Margo St. James
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Sheehan
Barbara Stren
Joseph Sierra
William Toliver
Patricia Van Talge
Alice Watson
Daniel Weinstein
Elizabeth Zarlengo

NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD
PEOPLES LAW SCHOOL
PRISON LAW COLLECTIVE
SAN FRANCISCO COMMITTEE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
WOMAN'S JAIL PROJECT
558 Capp Street, San Francisco 94110

PRISONER'S UNION
1350 - 18th Street, San Francisco

TRANSITIONS TO FREEDOM
1251 - 2nd Avenue, San Francisco 94122

DELANCEY STREET FOUNDATION
3001 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco 94115

COMMITTEE FOR PRISON
HUMANITY AND JUSTICE
1029 Fourth Street, San Rafael 94901