

apart from not helping him in the slightest does not apparently make him any more popular with the medical staff. He proceeds to describe the layout of the 300 bedded institute and soon discovers that there is even a section there for sluggish schizophrenia, a variety of the illness practically unknown in the West.

Nekipelov gives a lively description of a number of his fellow prisoners. There are interesting vignettes of flamboyant and also pathetic individuals; the majority, it appears, are faking mental illness in the belief that there is some advantage and protection to them in being regarded as insane. These malingering criminal characters try to trick the doctor into regarding them as not accountable for their actions are the *Fools* of the title of the book. Some of them who know the ropes claim indeed to be politically motivated and adduce appropriate argument and protest with the full knowledge that this is an almost invariable short-cut to a psychiatric diagnosis. Others make crude and desperate attempts to hoodwink the doctors, putting on a fake catatonia or delirium which would not deceive the average British charge nurse for 24 hours.

Nekipelov underwent a physical and psychological examination (which included a Rorschach) and also a skull X-ray and what appears to have been an abortive EEG. Understandably he was more interested in the psychiatric examination, and he makes perfectly clear the perfunctory and naive questioning at the initial interview and the farce of the final medical panel with the notorious Dr Lunts present.

Amazingly enough, Nekipelov manages to retain his critical faculties and powers of observation, but towards the end of his two months stay, deprived of visits from his family, he does become depressed and even suspects that he might have been drugged unknown to himself. In the end, after all, Nekipelov is found sane and exchanges the Institute for a labour camp.

The overall impression obtained is of an unreal dream world, a topsy-turvy prison hospital in which a hierarchy of psychiatrists (for whom Nekipelov reserves his most blistering comments) goes through the motions of sorting out from a very mixed prison intake the many criminal types who want to be regarded as insane from the political activists and dissidents who insist on their sanity. Nekipelov has blown the gaff on Serbsky. Whatever it was formerly designed for, it is now no more or less than the centralized state establishment concerned primarily to process those presenting a threat to the regime and to attach where politically expedient a psychiatric label in order to provide a pseudo-scientific basis for their prolonged or indefinite incarceration in a prison mental hospital. This is a damning indictment by a brave and outspoken man determined to reveal the truth from the inside.

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Psychiatric Probation Orders: Roles and Expectations of Probation Officers and Psychiatrists by Peter Lewis. Institute of Criminology. £2.50.

This pamphlet of 40 pages discusses the results of a survey of psychiatric probation orders by a Senior Probation Officer when holding a Cropwood Fellowship at the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge. The subtitles describe the main thrust of the study, though it also includes a summary of the history and development of the order and a useful statement of the law and regulations governing it—revised in Section 3 of the Powers of the Criminal Courts Act of 1973.

The survey deals with all the psychiatric probation orders in force in Nottinghamshire on 1 April 1978, of every length, though more than two-thirds had been operating for over a year. Nottingham magistrates make orders rather more often than other benches—10 per cent of probation orders have a psychiatric condition compared with the national average of 5 per cent. The author studied 118 (out of 120 made) by means of fairly detailed questionnaires sent to doctors and probation officers concerned. From our point of view, one of the startling results was that 7 of the 23 doctors did not return their questionnaire, and one of these was a psychiatrist responsible for 39 of the cases, more than anyone else! Lewis tactfully makes no comment.

The type of case dealt with was no doubt influenced by the particular attitudes of magistrates and psychiatrists as well as of local treatment facilities, but compared with Grunhut's original series (collected in 1953 and described in 1963), there were much fewer sex offenders, more cases of addictions, and an interesting group of offences of domestic violence. There were also 15 subnormals, mainly in-patients, a group often spoken of as unsuitable for probation.

The main and universal value of the study, however, is Mr Lewis's very detailed description of the many methods of social work used—family and marital work; specially chosen employment assignments and training; hostels; group homes; joint treatment by several officers; and above all, the need of officers, psychiatrists and sometimes nurses to understand what each is aiming at, and to learn to co-operate effectively.

At times he is rather a perfectionist, e.g. in suggesting that a complete treatment programme might be outlined by doctor and officer in the initial court report; but he quotes cases in which neither the court nor those treating had any notion of why or how the order had come to be made, and it is useful to describe the best practice.

The pamphlet gives a good idea of the scope and power of the nation's most efficient social work agency and should be in the library of every hospital and clinic and recommended to psychiatrists in training.

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