

In the final section, the author scrutinizes the current alcohol situation in Italy, which at the moment is undergoing great changes: the level of consumption is decreasing dramatically, especially the consumption of wine, and the traditional wine culture is losing some of its popularity. It is being replaced by new drinking patterns among both the middle and the working classes, and among adolescents. The whole field is now open for alcohol policy measures and for broadening the discussion.

The hegemony of the biomedical perspective has been in harmony with the traditional wine culture, as no measures against drinking have been taken, and only the unfortunate side effects have been taken care of. But this is no longer enough. It is possible that the new "Anglo-Saxon" drinking patterns will promote more uncontrolled use of alcohol. The more the traditional social control of drinking is weakened, the more the formal means of control will have to be strengthened. The drunkards and alcoholics may thus become a new "good enemy," along with the drug addicts. But it is also possible that the richness of the wine culture will be combined with the modesty of modern life, thus promoting a healthy life-style.

Juha Partanen

A new Gulag — western style?

Nils Christie: *Crime Control as Industry; Towards Gulags, Western Style*. Routledge 1993.

First came the grim shock after Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen. Such systematic evil just was not possible — at least not in the heart of European culture and by the people nurtured on Goethe and Schiller.

Then came the Gulag, that gruesome, devastating archipelago of des-

truction.

And now, there is a message about a new form of large-scale liquidation which is under way — albeit a more sophisticated and civilized version. This is about a systematic elimination of the dangerous social classes that is being prepared in a constellation of prisons similar to that of Gulag.

A tasteless joke? Not according to Nils Christie, a well-known Norwegian criminologist. In his latest book, *Crime Control as Industry*, he illustrates thoroughly that this is exactly what is currently happening.

How to eliminate the dangerous surplus

The starting point for Christie is the alarming growth in the number of prison inmates in the western countries. In the USA, the leading country in this questionable development, there are more than 500 inmates per 100 000 inhabitants, which is 100 percent more than ten years ago. And according to Christie all signs indicate that these numbers are still increasing. This should be compared with the average on the European continent, which is between 50 and 100 inmates per 100 000 inhabitants. Here too, however, the numbers are growing — even in a country as permissive as the Netherlands.

The main reason for this development becomes absolutely clear in Christie's merciless analysis: there is a constantly increasing need of pacifying those parts of the population made superfluous by so-called development. The market economy creates, with frightening effectiveness, categories of potentially threatening people, who live on the margins of society. And a brief glance in the rearview mirror of history shows that this by no means is a new problem — an observation that is a merit in the book.

In the early childhood of industrialization, it was possible to send some of the problematic surplus into exile in the new colonies. Others were deported to the new mental hospitals. The latter process is well described by

Michel Foucault in his work on the history of madness and imprisonment. When this imprisonment reached its peak, Christie notes, 1 percent of the population (1 000 out of 100 000 inhabitants) was sent into some kind of penal treatment.

Perhaps we have a tradition in our way of handling the "dangerous classes" of society which is as long as it is gruesome? Christie may sometimes write in a provocative manner, which makes the wicked patterns of history a little bit exaggerated. The style resembles that of his friend Ivan Illich, to whom the book is dedicated. But what is lost in historical accurateness is definitely balanced by an effective revelation of the patterns of imprisonment.

Every fourth young African American

The numbers of prisoners in the USA today are truly shocking. About half a million African American men are currently in prison, which is about 3.4 percent of the black, male population. (Compare this with the number imprisoned in the Soviet Gulags which, at most in 1950, was 1.4 percent of the total population.)

But this is not all. If we concentrate our analysis on the crime-ridden areas and problematic age groups, the rates become almost unbelievable: far more than every fourth young, African American man living in the slum areas of the larger cities are under some kind of crime control.

Does this, then, mean that criminality has become the kind of menace moralists of all kinds usually are appalled at? By no means. Several studies, on the contrary, show that criminality is decreasing, at least according to the numbers of victims. The explanation for this discrepancy is, from a criminological point of view, rather self-evident: the number of crimes and the number of prisoners are statistics that hardly have anything to do with each other. Or, as Christie pregnantly puts it: criminality does not exist, criminality is created.

Criminality is, he emphasizes, socially constructed. The less we know about each other and the potentially dangerous groups (from our point of view), the greater our need is to construct images about their alleged criminal behaviour. As in his earlier books, Christie is markedly critical against many aspects of modernization. He states, with certainty, that the book is not a result of a longing back to forms of society without formalized social control. At the same time, however, he is deeply worried about the way crime control is becoming a new type of industry, replacing earlier ways of informal control. One of the aims of his book is to discuss the limits of this development. "When is," he asks, "enough, enough?" Is it when 1 percent is imprisoned; or 5 percent? or 10?

Social scrap

The prospects for the future are not very bright. The supply of "raw material" (the number of people that, for one reason or another, could potentially be imprisoned) is constantly growing. If we add to this the increasing privatization of the prison system (especially in the USA), and the improved sophistication of the technical means of crime control, we can draw the outlines of a profitable control industry with an ever expanding potential.

The war against drugs, Christie argues, is something we have to understand against this background; it gives a very good opportunity to create a "good enemy" (a concept which Christie created with Kjetil Bruun in an earlier book — for some peculiar reason not referred to in this one). The statistics are, in this respect, overwhelming: the growth in the number of drug sentences in the USA is so large that the tables in the official statistics on crime recently had to be reorganized!

Nils Christie even sees the first signs of a new caste-based society, in which the "unclean" on the bottom of society (all those using drugs, having HIV or AIDS and so on) are subject to overt

disgust and aversion. As a matter of fact, he writes, their position is even worse, because they do not even have a recognized status resembling of the paria: they are just the raw material for the control industry.

The way we speak about the poor and otherwise marginalized people is also revealing. Christie mentions an expression like "social contamination." I, myself, have recently seen the following examples of verbal creativity: "social scrap," "social hospice," and "disgust towards the esthetic dimension of poverty." All these are signs of a psychological mobilization against the presumed dangerous categories of society, a form of mobilization that makes a modern and high-tech version of Auschwitz a bit more possible — although in a more sophisticated way.

The normality of holocaust

Nils Christie shows that the reasons for these atrocities are not to be found in some kind of abnormality, but in our own "normality," an approach that Zygmunt Bauman, famous for his analysis of the mechanisms behind holocaust, has also used. The systematic liquidation of everything deviant is an in-built part of our social structure and is held back only by a thin layer of humanism.

This, of course, is nothing new. For example, the philosopher Simone Weil formulated already during the war a farsighted critique of the perverted worship of rationality so typical of the Nazi ideology (See her book "The need for roots"). What Nils Christie fears, following Weil's tradition, is not so much the irrationalities of the totalitarian ideologies, as the perverted rational pretention they have; namely, that we all shall be endowed, thanks to science and technology, with the kind of "courage" Hitler had — the courage of playing God ourselves. The courage of doing the unthinkable.

Or even worse?

Christie is clearly provoking. But blind

are all those who deny that the societal equation simply cannot be solved if the development continues like this. Concentration camps of destruction are perhaps not literally necessary; it is enough if the growing non-productive parts of the population are stored somewhere. "Gulag therefore," he concludes, "is a more adequate expression for what is needed than concentration camps."

Let me add to Christie's list of cruelties some additional potential forms of elimination — because you don't necessarily have to criminalize the dangerous classes in order to get rid of them.

The most brutal one, of course, is simply to kill them — in the way policemen add to their income by killing streetboys in the Latin American metropolies. This kind of street-cleaning is of course revolting — but we easily avoid remembering how many well-off people in these countries find this totally acceptable; the more so, the more streetboys there are. A society that creates children living like dogs sooner or later starts to kill them like — dogs.

A more sophisticated way is to let them drug themselves to death, which probably is one of the motives (although unconscious) behind the trend towards drug liberation. When Nils Christie and Kjetil Bruun argued some years ago, in the context of references to control damages, in favor of a modest liberalization of cannabis, this came "from the left" so to speak. They could hardly imagine that their way of arguing later would be picked up by people "from the right," as an excuse for a political ideology aiming at simply letting people die from drug abuse. This would mean a society hardly different from the dystopical nightmares of Aldous Huxley.

The most sophisticated solution, and at the same time the most tormenting (at least potentially), is to manipulate the problem the medical way. The ethical standards adopted by the medical and scientific professions are still relatively strict, but the scientific development is nowadays so fast, that alterations in these standards quite well

might be made as a result of political and economic "necessities."

The aim of the global research project called HUGO is, for example, to unmask the secrets of the human genome within the next decade. Many scientists (and, for sure, even more outside the research community) dream of finding the genetic disposition for things like criminality, alcoholism and drug abuse. The latter was, once again, supposed to have been found the other day, although researchers themselves strongly disagree about whether this is possible. It would, however, perhaps be more essential to ask oneself whether the search, altogether, is desirable.

The day the genetic dispositions of different forms of deviant behavior are found, we can be sure that these findings also are going to be put into practice. And this will be in a way that will make some Mengele look like a total amateur.

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Nils Christie is, no doubt, deeply pessimistic. But it is, as we can see, possible to sketch even more horrifying scenarios. I am, however, convinced that these glances are necessary because only then is it possible for us to recognize them and keep them at a distance. Or, as Christie puts it: "If we wish to have the devil under control, we have to know him."

Thomas Rosenberg

Taking the 'vice' out of female prostitution

Margaretha Järvinen: Of vice and women, shades of prostitution. Scandinavian University Press, Oslo and Oxford University Press, London 1993. 191 pages

Social problems such as prostitution, illegal drug use, homosexuality, or ethnic tensions — social marginality *per se* which is viewed as offensive to Finnish moral sensibilities — tend to be either under-researched and/or the subject of public scorn. This introductory statement is not meant to be either a cynical comment on Finnish culture or a criticism of the assumed homogeneity of Nordic societies. Rather, it is a considered opinion intended to highlight the social value of and indeed theoretical need for the kind of sociological research provided by Margaretha Järvinen in her recently published book "Of vice and women, shades of prostitution". Hence, this book is educational in the 'truest' sense of the word: it draws out ideas and notions from an area of study with a refreshing, intellectual vigour. Maintaining the integrity of her subjects (i.e. female prostitutes) as 'speakers', the author takes a scholarly approach to her area of study. Standard protocols on prostitution and indeed traditional stereotypes of female prostitutes in Finnish society are not her main concern. As a critical thinker, she has a welcomed disregard for social convention.

While this book is based on the author's dissertation work on female deviant behaviour, it is not your traditional and at times, boring or somewhat academically removed 'Ph.D replay'. On the contrary, the focus of the book is controversial, while its style is very accessible to both the uninformed reader and the interested expert. In the main, this text offers a

comprehensive understanding of Finnish prostitution within a social constructionist/feminist perspective, building upon and refining previous work. Female prostitution and female prostitutes, the key issues, are framed in a gender-sensitive light. In this way, the author reveals a distinct empathy for the subjects of her research — an empathy which allows for a 'insider's view' on the lives of this stigmatised group of women.

The basic assumption which can be seen to inform many of the arguments throughout the book is that commercialised sex is a direct reflection of the gender structure of our society (p.14). Given its critical focus, this theoretical supposition can be seen to be located within the current sociological discourse on sexuality. Here, we find the decisive, post-modernist notion of sexuality, viewed as 'plastic' and increasingly freed from the needs of reproduction (Giddens 1992); the arena for an 'embattled Eros' (Seidman 1992) where conflicting definitions of sex and sexuality emerge; and the domain in which observable differences in how femininity and masculinity are inscribed on the body by the self in interaction with society can be most clearly seen (Holland et al. 1993). By implicitly privileging this discourse, Margaretha Järvinen manages quite skilfully to expose that commercialised sex transactions do not differ qualitatively from 'normal', acceptable heterosexual relations. This is the pathbreaking message of "Of vice and women, shades of prostitution".

Margaretha Järvinen differs dramatically from other authors writing in this area in two respects. Firstly, she deconstructs prostitution as a social problem, while placing this issue firmly within a feminist perspective. For example, we learn about the interrelationship between the now extinct Vagrancy Act repealed in 1987 and efforts to define prostitution as a public health, social policy, youth, and public order problem. Here, the author privileges the need to consider the residual effects of this interrelationship as an *overall gender policy issue* in contemporary Finnish society. Secondly, un-