

met a group of young burglars for three sessions was assessed, where it was concluded that the victims benefited from the meetings by acquiring more positive and realistic views of offenders and by becoming less angry and anxious about their own burglaries. Offenders benefit by appreciating what victims think and feel and both parties recognise the unresolved conflict which results from burglaries. In the words of one offender 'victims deserve an explanation'. It will be interesting to learn how this work develops.

This book does cover a wide range of topics and it is informative and informed. It is good that the psychologists have now put their heads above the prison walls. Inevitably the question arises whether their work reinforces the system or helps to ameliorate the conditions. On the showing of this work, and I have to declare an interest for I was a prison psychologist, they do endeavour to bring sense where there is nonsense. Probably the most significant contribution has been to assess the effects of staff training, of treatments, and management, and to point the way to good practice. Much of it does have implications wider than for just the Prison Service. Now for a companion volume on Applying Psychology to Probation!

ROY TAYLOR

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Management by Objectives in Probation

LORRAINE PARRY-KHAN

SWT/UEA Monograph, 1988; pb; £3.50

This monograph avoids some of the frequent problems created when a research dissertation is converted for publication; Lorraine Parry-Khan had a case to argue, and she puts it over well. First, she shows how in recent years the principles of SNOP (which she relates to Peter Drucker's 'Management By Objectives' (MBO) approach) has been introduced throughout the Probation Service at the instigation of the Home Office. Second, she argues that MBO designed for business use, is inappropriate for a human service organisation, and hence that instead of its intended unifying effect it has brought conflict and division. Third, she argues that the Probation Service should improve its management of conflict, and channel this into

working with an 'ad hoc' structure, described in Henry Mintzberg's *The Structuring of Organisations*.

Lorraine Parry-Khan makes a very clear analysis of how the change into working by objectives has been received in a wide number of field probation offices. Based on her experience in parts of the Midlands, she argues effectively that practising probation officers have reacted against the lack of any mention of 'values' in SNOP, have been concerned about the apparent relegation of throughcare and civil work, and have also had a new autocracy imposed on them, where previously Probation has been a more loose-knit 'professional bureaucracy' (*viz* Mintzberg). She argues that individual probation officers should not be pathologised for some irrational reluctance to change, but should be seen as experiencing 'role dissonance':

'... a form of psychological discomfort and stress arising from a discrepancy between the expectations of work performance in the light of training and the experience of the job in practice ...'

However, although her portrayal of some of the effects of the change to MBO is effective, the analysis of why this change has come about seems to me to be rather poor. The political analysis is limited to some statements about the general trends towards more punitive sentencing and cutting public expenditure. In such a context the Home Office become 'pathologised' as the new villains of the piece, whose reasons for enthusiastically bringing in Drucker-style MBO come to appear somewhat perverse.

An extended political analysis would have shown that the changes in the Probation Service are in the context of an all-pervading revolution (explicitly brought about by the ideology of the new Conservatism) in the whole concept of how public expenditure is to be managed. In these extreme winds of change the new concepts are that services are tailored to meet cash limited budgets (i.e. services are budget-led, not demand-led), that whoever pays for a service can demand how that money will be spent, and that there should be some kind of tangible 'output' in terms which can be related to cash expenditure.

In this context, it is possible to argue that it was an imaginative move by the Home Office to identify a priority objective for the Probation Service — working with 'high-risk' offenders

and keeping them out of prison — one which went along with the best ideals of the Service, and which also met a pressing Government objective, to save money on the extremely expensive Prison Service. Without these new objectives, there was a real danger, in the current political climate, of the Probation Service becoming obsolete. Failure to consider this, or any other interpretation of the national Home Office strategy, weakens the effectiveness of the author's argument.

Consequently, Parry-Khan's proposed solution has great attractions but is flawed in the way in which it is put forward. I share her view that an adhoc approach fosters the kind of creativity with which the best Probation work is done, but it seems to me to be naive to expect us to be allowed to carry this entirely 'on our own terms'.

'In many ways I feel that the Government needs to be actively counselled by the Probation Service for it to be allowed a greater degree of flexibility and control over its own affairs. Such a task will not be easily achieved . . .'

This is not just an understatement, it advocates sailing directly into the wind of change.

Equally we do not have to just turn and 'run before the wind', which would mean that we'd have little control over where we might end up. Instead we can tack into the wind, and although the route is indirect, we could still end up sailing forwards. Hence we still have a lot to gain from the concept of local objectives, both to demonstrate our effectiveness in terms of SNOP and to find new creative ways of working with offenders. Parry-Khan's portrayal of working by objectives is almost entirely negative — yet even in an adhococracy people are working to objectives. We may yet find it a valuable means of furthering creative professional work — as well as perhaps ensuring our continued existence.

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Understanding Child Abuse (2nd Ed.)

DAVID JONES ET AL
Macmillan, 1987; pb; pp 357

This book is a comprehensive and readable exploration of the complex theoretical and

practice issues inherent in the area of child abuse. The varied professional backgrounds of the authors; social work, paediatrics and psychiatry means that the view taken is multi-disciplinary and interagency co-operation in intervention in families who have abused their children is stressed.

Part 1 of the book sets the concept at child abuse within a social and historical framework. It goes on to outline the medical aspects of physical abuse, neglect and failure to thrive. There is no detailed specific discussion of sexual abuse. A broad typology of abusing parents is presented which is clearly argued but not rigid; great emphasis is placed on individual differences. Issues of honesty, confidentiality and authority which so often cause difficulty for workers, are clearly addressed.

Part II deals with the initial crisis of abuse or suspected abuse, beginning with the first interview and going on to discuss the diversity of professional roles. There is a detailed examination of social work assessment, investigation and the evaluation of information in the assessment of future risk, for the child and siblings. The rationale for holding case conferences is explored and criticisms of the system examined. There is also a clear and useful section on relevant child care legislation.

I found the final section particularly welcome as it discusses methods of ongoing work with the family beyond the initial crisis. In particular, it looks at work with children, sometimes lost sight of in therapeutic attempts to help parents.

This book is clearly written and covers a complex and emotive area thoroughly and displays a sensitive understanding of the emotional needs of clients and workers. It would be useful to any professional involved in this area of work. I particularly appreciated the emphasis on multidisciplinary working and was glad to see workers' feelings and anxieties addressed with care throughout the book.

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'Groupwork'

A new journal devoted to groupwork practice in social work was launched in January 1988, as a forum for practitioners. Edited by Allan Brown and Andrew Kerslake, three issues per year cost £30 (organisations), £15 (individuals) from Whiting and Birch Ltd, 90 Dartmouth Road, Forest Hill, London SE23 3HZ.