

which the problems of prisons can be constructively resolved.

The United States is far from being transformed into a socialist society. For the moment, the concrete problem that prisoners face is not how prisons can be reconstituted in a future, revolutionary era, but how they can cope with the oppressive reality of their lives today. That oppressiveness is rooted in the internal power relations within American prisons and in the role those prisons play in American society. As the prison movement becomes an element in the internal power struggle within prison, it can begin to mitigate some of the harshness of the prison regime. And by becoming part of a broader radical movement, it can help to create the social conditions in which prisons can eventually be fundamentally transformed.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

In early 1971, a number of lawyers and legal workers came together and formed the Prison Law Project in Oakland, California. The idea of the group was to provide legal services for prisoners and a focus for energies of lawyers and various groups working for change in the prison system. I joined the Project as a writer in order to concentrate my energies on writing *The Politics of Punishment*. It was through the Project that various contacts were made for most of the chapters in the book which I did not personally write.

In November, 1971, there emerged out of the original Project two completely autonomous organizations, the Prison Law Project and the Prison Law Collective. These two groups were characterized by different types of internal organization and differing emphasis on various kinds of activities. The royalties from the book will be divided evenly between these two groups, and used entirely for legal assistance for prisoners.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ERIK OLIN WRIGHT graduated from Harvard University in 1968. From 1968–1970 he studied history at Oxford University in England. Upon his return to the United States, he entered the Starr King School for the Ministry (Unitarian-Universalist) and worked as a student chaplain at San Quentin prison. He is currently a doctoral student in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.

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THOMAS LOPEZ MENEWEATHER served eight years as a prisoner in the California Department of Corrections. Six of those years were spent in various adjustment centers; three and one-half years were spent without a break in the adjustment center of Soledad prison.

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FRANK L. RUNDLE was head psychiatrist at Soledad prison from December 1970 until May 1971. He was fired for "insubordination" when he refused to turn over to the prison superintendent the confidential files on one of his inmate-patients. Dr. Rundle is currently the supervising psychiatrist for the treatment programs in several New York City correctional institutions.

JAMES F. SMITH is a lawyer with the Sacramento Legal Aid Society. In 1970 and 1971 he acted as legislative advocate for the California Rural Legal Assistance program. He was intimately involved in most of the legislative attempts at significant reform of the prison system in the 1971 state legislature.

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