

## FINDINGS OF THE ACC-PARC REVIEW TEAM

AT MOUNTAINTOP SCHOOL FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED - WAPWALLOPEN, PENNSYLVANIA

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1972

The ACC-PARC representatives were Virginia Thornburgh, Barbara Sistik and Bob Nelkin. Jean Isherwood participated as a representative of PARC.

The ACC-PARC Team found or heard reports of:

1. Beatings by staff. Several boys spoke of beatings by the staff members. This may have been a form of punishment. They told about physical punishment by stick, rod and axe handle.
2. A punishment, "stomping". Two fellows reported that they were punished by "stomping". This punishment was described as Mr. Swetz stepping on them. It is not clear whether "stomping" is a name for the punishment or whether Swetz kicks or steps on a resident once he is down on the ground.
3. Early bedtime. Fellows told us that they had been punished and sent to bed at 7:30 for a week or even an entire month. Regular bedtime for one 14-year-old from Pittsburgh was 7:30.
4. Confinement to bed. One punishment was to be sent to bed for the entire day. One resident was confined to bed for two weeks. He was allowed only to eat and go to the outhouse.
5. Orders to use the "outhouse". Residents were ordered to use the outhouse rather than indoor toilets. Without regard for the season, everyone had to use the "outhouse" during the day. Residents of the main house could use indoor plumbing at night.
6. Unpleasant, unsanitary outhouse. Urine and fecies were piled to ground level. The smell was nauseating. There was no evidence of sanitary measures. No lye was present and the waste was not washed away. A rat or mouse scampered back into the mess as we stood there.
7. Inadequate staffing. When we arrived at 3:30 P.M., after school, there were approximately 43 residents and only one attendant. This was identical to the supervision that we saw on our July visit.
8. One student's bruises. One fellow complained of bruises, black and blue, covering the upper part of his arm. He pulled his shirt apart and showed us the black and blue area. We heard from Mr. Swetz that this happened because he went around asking for people to punch him on the arm. He claimed that it was Mr. Swetz who had hit him.
9. Intimidation. The fellows had been warned not to talk to any inspectors or visitors. They were threatened with punishment.
10. A cold bedroom. One room, a bedroom off the gymnasium, was purposely without any heat. On Friday, when we visited the school again, the room was very cold, as charged by the residents.



11. Extreme punishment for running away. We were told about degrading treatment: "baldy haircut", prolonged confinement to bed, having your shoes taken away, or being forced to wear only underwear and a large diaper for embarrassment.
12. Punishment by deprivation. Mr. Swetz deprived individuals of meals, desserts, movies or right to leave the facility. These lists were kept both by staff and by trustees (residents who were asked to watch the others). Some of the deprivations were for long periods, such as one month. One fellow lost his movie privileges until 1973, or approximately 3 months.
13. Censorship. One fellow accused Mr. Swetz of censorship. His letter was censored and prohibited from being mailed.
14. Shabby and impersonal clothing. There are two sets of clothing. One set is for special occasions. Everyone wore the same army-issue type khaki or green pants. In many cases clothing was wrinkled and dirty.
15. No vocational program. There is no vocational program for those wanting to learn a skill or trade.
16. Confiscation of personal belongings. One fellow in particular told us that he had a nice winter coat and as soon as he came up to the facility they took it away. Others indicated the same. Their own clothing is "given to other people".
17. Inadequate bathing. Two young men said they are forced to bathe in the creek during the late spring and summer. They bathe there even after others eliminate up the creek a little. Residents are allowed showers only twice a week.
18. Limits on bathroom. Individuals in the main house were allowed to go to the bathroom twice during the night. If they went more than twice, they slept in their wet sheets and clothing.
19. Loss of wages. Two young men who work in the cigar factory earn between \$70 and \$80 a week. Approximately one half of this money is taken by Mr. Swetz as payment for living at the facility.
20. Insensitive treatment. The youths were deceived by Mr. Swetz that they did not have homes or parents. When someone would ask about going home, Mr. Swetz would say, "You don't have a home". "Yes, I have a home; I have a mother and father". "No, you don't have a home".
21. Pockets sewed closed. The pockets were sewed shut on almost all pants. This was to prevent either masturbation or concealing contraband.
22. An untrained staff. None of the staff were trained in special education or child development.
23. Less staff in 1972 than in 1965. According to the Department of Public Welfare file, there is a trend of decreasing staff. In 1965 there were 4 staff for 24 residents. In 1972 there were twice as many residents and only 5 staff.



24. A recent beating. Several residents witnessed Mr. Swetz beating "Resident A". This occurred on Saturday. "Resident A" showed the bruises on the back of his neck, leg and back. Mr. Swetz used an "axe handle".
25. Inadequate medical and dental records. According to the Department of Public Welfare files, no medical or dental records were kept until late in the summer of 1972. It is not clear whether all of the individuals received medical or dental check-ups.
26. Inadequate menu keeping. Daily and weekly menus were not kept. It is not clear that the individuals had a proper diet.
27. Deprivation of meals. Meals were part of the deprivation scheme. Many individuals said that they were not allowed to have lunch when they were punished.