

Bureaucracy and the Tin-Pot Stasi

by Theodore Dalrymple



A pure bureaucracy, which is what the British criminal justice system has become in all but name, will do almost anything rather than solve the problem with which it is presented. It will invent any number of complex procedures ostensibly meant to solve a problem, but really just designed to keep itself busy. A problem solved, after all, poses a potential threat to a bureaucracy, insofar as it might be used to justify a reduction in its size whenever the next round of budgetary cuts is proposed.

A fine British example of a bureaucracy's tendency to invent extra procedures rather than find a genuine solution to a problem is the so-called Gang Injunction, a civil disposal of youths who commit crimes of violence while belonging to a gang. Various conditions are imposed on them (such as not entering certain areas or associating with certain people),

the violation of which may, in theory, lead to their imprisonment.

A young man named Callander O'Brien was recently made [*Library of Law and Liberty*](#).