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## PERSONNEL

THE TRAINING OF THE PERSONNEL OF PENAL  
INSTITUTIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS

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of Justice of the Netherlands, The Hague



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I. Introduction

The need for the efficient education and training of the personnel of penal institutions in the Netherlands has been felt for many decennaries. As early as 1886, the Netherlands Association for Rehabilitation, raised the question at a general meeting as to what means would be appropriate to exercise influence upon the training of governors and prison officers (wardens), and more especially those of penal institutions, where prisoners are detained in solitary confinement. In 1917, the desire to meet the urgent need of such training was felt even among the prison staff. In a pamphlet, issued by the then Association of Clerical Officers, it was stated that it was not only necessary to investigate the educational standard before appointment, but also to introduce complementary training.

The efforts directed towards a solution of this problem were not confined to critical appreciation only. In 1927, the personnel-organization combined in organizing a training course for prison officers, under the auspices of the School of Social Service at Amsterdam. This was a four-year course, given from 1929 to 1933, in two parts: one devoted to general education and one to professional training, the latter comprising pedagogy, psychology and penal law. Attendance at this course was not compulsory. Of the 700 eligible prison officers, 317 enrolled, but 196 withdrew, so that only 119 prison officers attended the complete course. Such a result appears somewhat disappointing, but in evaluating it, one should not overlook the then prevailing ideas about the functions of prison officers; consequently the standards of selection were very poor, as compared with present standards.

In 1937 and 1938, a course was organized for executive and clerical officers. This course consisted essentially of a series of lectures on penal law, criminology, psychology and psychi-

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In accordance with the tradition of past Congresses, it has been possible to secure the co-operation of certain national prison administrations for the printing of documentation for the First United Nations Congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, which is from an historical point of view the Thirteenth International Penal and Penitentiary Congress. Thus the present report has been generously printed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons of the United States of America, in the prison printing plant at Leavenworth, Kansas.

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atry. The officers of these groups were again enabled to take regional courses in 1949, when the instructors made special efforts to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired to the practical performance of duties.

The above-mentioned training courses thus had been organized by private societies, but with the aid of Government subsidies. In recent years, the Prison Administration has, however, taken the view that the training of personnel is such an important matter that it should not be the responsibility of third parties. This view has been largely inspired by the modified views on the fundamental problems of penology. The need for proper training of personnel consequently has become more urgent than ever. Since 1945, the Netherlands penal system has been completely reorganized. Soon after the war, the Minister of Justice appointed a Committee, charged with the task of drawing up a report on the penitentiary system and recommending the lines along which the modernization of this system should be accomplished. In the Committee's report, which appeared in 1947, an important chapter was devoted to the personnel of penal institutions. The Committee held the view that the prison system depends entirely upon the quality of this personnel. It stated "Even though the organization of the penitentiary system may be splendid on paper, it will be doomed to complete failure, unless it is supported by a capable and loyal personnel. On the other hand will it be possible for an efficient personnel to make the best of a badly organized system? For this reason, a solution of the personnel problem is of major importance and can be reached only by constituting the best possible staff. This in its turn, will require such a training and selection of personnel as will warrant the latter's capacities to meet the most exacting requirements." In their report, the Committee subsequently dwelled upon these requirements.

In 1948, a Committee was appointed with the following terms of reference: to carry out the recommendations made in the aforementioned Report and to devise ways and means for arriving at an efficacious training of personnel. In its report, this Committee stressed the desirability of centralized training, which requires a training centre, more especially with regard to selection and instruction. The Committee rec-

ommended differential training of (1) prison officers and trade instructors, (2) social welfare officers, (3) clerical officers, eligible for the performance of executive functions in the future. The Committee furthermore proposed to divide the training course into two separate courses, one for basic training, and one for continued training to be given at regular intervals during the period of employment.

After this review, a brief description will be given below of the organization of training at the present time.

## II. General education of personnel

Although the Prison Administration holds the view that it is not responsible for the tuition of prison officers to enable them to attain the minimum standard of general education, it was of the opinion that the plans made for the continued training of personnel prevent it from neglecting this matter. During the 1940-1948 period, the general shortage of labour and the comparatively low pay of prison personnel made it necessary to recruit prison officers and trade instructors who did not meet the normal standard of general education. A refresher course was, therefore, given to improve the general education of those officers, who were unable to produce the proper certificates and were engaged pending permanent appointment. After completion of this course, they had to undergo an examination for a diploma. This diploma or some other recognized certificate of general education was required for a permanent appointment. Since 1950, the general education of every prison officer and trade instructor is ascertained by a special examination. These measures not only ensure an adequate standard of general education, but they are also a sound basis for further training.

As regards information on education available to prison personnel, there is in the first place the Study and Information Centre, attached to the Prison Administration. Any staff member wishing to receive advice may apply to this Centre, which publishes a periodical, in which important penitentiary questions are discussed. It also organizes the so-called annual "study-days" attended by a large number of executive officials of penal institutions during which lectures on the penitentiary system are given.

Then, there is the Monthly Review of the Prison Administration which contains a great deal of information, including articles on various theoretical and practical matters. A large number, over 80 per cent, of prison officers are subscribers to this periodical. The editorial staff originally doubted the possibility of editing this review in such a manner that it would appeal to the various strata of personnel, but this doubt proved to be unfounded.

Several categories of the prison personnel are given an opportunity to attend regional and central educational meetings. Meetings are held for physical training officers, trade instructors, chief officers (captains), social officers (qualified social workers), chaplains, medical officers and governors. Some details of the meetings of trade instructors and chief officers are given below.

In 1952, a course, open to chief trade instructors, was given. The subjects of study, treated during this course, which lasted several days, included: improvement of working methods, saving of materials, labour analysis, internal transportation and routing. In 1953 and 1954, further courses, with an aggregate period of twenty-five days, were given. In the evenings, various penitentiary problems were discussed by experts.

The meeting of chief officers was held last in the summer of 1954. The attending officers themselves introduced a number of practical questions, such as the introduction of new prison officers, the supervision by prison officers of the visits received by detained persons, etc. These subjects were subsequently discussed by groups, with the result that certain conclusions were formulated. The results of such meetings proved to be most satisfactory.

The meetings of members of the personnel which are held at intervals of two or three months in the several penal institutions, are also of importance in as much as they contribute to training and information. The subjects discussed at these meetings include general penitentiary matters which are treated by experts, as well as specific institutional matters.

The Prison Administration is making every effort to promote attendance at special courses and participation in correspondence courses. This form of instruction is subsidized by

the Government on the condition that it improve the efficiency of the personnel.

### III. Training of Personnel

#### (a) Training of a special squad of prison-guards

In the first place attention may be called to the training of a special squad of prison-guards (gestichtswacht), a body of men charged with keeping the outside watch over the buildings of those penal institutions which have to cope with special problems of custody. The first six weeks after these guards have assumed their duties are devoted entirely to their training, which covers the following subjects: organization of the prison system; elementary knowledge of law; instructions for the prison guard; the handling of detained persons; the manual of fire arms, etc. After this training is over, they may take courses in the elementary principles of sociology, psychology, first-aid in case of accidents, etc.

#### (b) Central Training Institution for Prison Personnel

The most important event in the training of personnel was the opening, on 16 October 1951, of the Central Training Institution for Prison Personnel, which has its quarters in one of the buildings of the prison compound at the Hague. This compound consists of a house of detention, a prison for adolescents sentenced to detention for a very short term, an institution for mentally abnormal offenders, and a prison for offenders sentenced to imprisonment for terms ranging from six months to three years. This aggregate of institutions affords very favourable opportunities for in-service training.

Since 1951, courses have been given to social welfare officers and executive officials, in groups of twenty persons. For both categories, 80 hours are devoted to the lectures; the curriculum is adapted to the qualifications required of these officers.

The course given to social welfare officers covers the following subjects:

|                        |          |
|------------------------|----------|
| law                    | 12 hours |
| criminology            | 16 hours |
| psychiatry             | 10 hours |
| prison routine         | 8 hours  |
| procedure of reporting | 4 hours  |
| pedagogic principles   | 10 hours |

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| problems of rehabilitation | 6 hours  |
| social aid problems        | 4 hours  |
| discussion                 | 10 hours |

The course for executive officials covers the following subjects:

|                      |          |
|----------------------|----------|
| law                  | 8 hours  |
| criminology          | 16 hours |
| psychiatry           | 10 hours |
| prison routine       | 16 hours |
| pedagogic principles | 8 hours  |
| executive policy     | 12       |
| discussion           | 10 hours |

These courses, given by highly qualified specialists, have produced very satisfactory results. It is intended, however, to adapt these lectures in a greater measure than heretofore, to the practice of daily duties. Another part of the scheme is to arrive at the institution of a refresher course, to be given by the Training Institution, at least once every two or three years.

The organization of an elementary training course is contemplated which all social and clerical officers should take as soon as they have assumed their functions. Although it is planned to carry out this scheme in the near future it has not yet been worked out in detail. The clerical officers constitute the category from which the executive officials are usually chosen, hence special care should be devoted to their selection as well as to their training.

The Central Institution has also initiated the training of prison officers, while paying special attention to the elementary training of newly appointed prison officers. As this instruction had to be given in the buildings of the aforementioned institutions at The Hague, it was preceded by a psychological training course, given to all prison officers employed by The Hague institutions, so as to teach them the proper attitude towards the new-comers.

In groups of twenty, these prison officers took a course of twelve lectures on the following subject:

- nature and purpose of punishment;
- maintenance of authority;
- custody and regime;

- criminal procedure;
- teamwork;
- social care;
- maintenance of discipline;
- attitude towards detained persons;
- procedure of reporting;
- observation.

In addition to the lectures, ample opportunity was given for a further discussion of the subjects of the course.

After a most careful selection, two chief officers and ten prison officers were appointed instructors to be charged with in-service training. To be qualified as such, these instructors had to take a special training course during a number of months.

After completion of these preliminaries, a start could be made with the training of newly appointed prison officers. Whereas, formerly, candidates were examined by the governor of the institution where a vacancy occurred, it is now intended to have the Central Institution examine them in so far as this is feasible. Any candidate having passed the preliminary examination has to take at once a two-month training course, on the completion of which he will proceed to the institution where his services are required.

During the 1952—1953 period, the total numbers of candidates tested by the Central Training Institution was 290. Only 96 of them passed the test. These 96 candidates were admitted to an initial training course lasting two months. After completion of this course, 16 candidates were refused with the result that the total number of prison officers appointed by the Prison Administration did not exceed 80.

This training course is intended to give psychological training, a general knowledge of the aims and problems of the penitentiary system, and practical experience. The complete course, comprising approximately 416 one-hour lectures, includes:

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| theoretical lessons      | 20 hours  |
| physical training        | 18 hours  |
| manual of fire-arms      | 4 hours   |
| in-service training:     |           |
| in the prison for adults | 185 hours |

in the prison for adolescents . 90 hours  
in the house of detention 95 hours  
general discussion 4 hours

The theoretical course is given by the Director of the Central Training Institution, some executive officials and a number of social welfare officers. The in-service training is entrusted to a dozen instructors, acting under the supervision of the Director of the Institution.

The Central Training Institution is still in its infancy. The results achieved by the courses and exercises, which have been given up till now, are satisfactory. Although the possibility of increasing the Institution's capacity for admitting pupils is being studied, it will be some years before all members of the prison personnel have received the necessary training.

## Résumé

On est conscient depuis plusieurs décennies, aux Pays-Bas, de la nécessité de donner une meilleure formation au personnel pénitentiaire, et on a voué à ce problème une attention particulière depuis 1945, date à laquelle on a commencé une réorganisation complète du système pénitentiaire. Depuis ce moment, la formation du personnel est devenue l'un des buts principaux de l'administration pénitentiaire.

Le système actuel de formation a été conçu comme devant remplir un double but, à savoir d'une part l'instruction générale du personnel, et d'autre part sa formation particulière pour le service pénitentiaire par l'Institut central de formation. Le premier de ces buts est poursuivi au moyen des services d'un Centre d'étude et de formation, de la publication de la Revue mensuelle de l'administration pénitentiaire, de réunions périodiques régionales et centrales de certaines catégories du personnel pénitentiaire, ainsi que de réunions régulières des membres du personnel dans chaque établissement.

L'événement le plus important dans le développement du système de formation du personnel pénitentiaire a cependant été la création, en 1951, de l'Institut central de formation pour les fonctionnaires pénitentiaires, qui a ses locaux dans des bâtiments du groupe d'établissements pénitentiaires de La Haye. Jusqu'ici, on a donné des cours de formation pour les fonctionnaires d'exécution et pour les agents du service social en service actif. On a l'intention d'organiser à brève échéance pour les fonctionnaires appartenant à ces catégories qui ont été nommés récemment des cours de formation de base, qui devront être suivis par les intéressés durant la période initiale de leur service.

L'Institut central de formation a en outre pris en mains la question du choix et de la formation centraux des fonctionnaires des prisons récemment nommés. On a désigné à cette fin un personnel spécial d'instructeurs. Chaque fonctionnaire pénitentiaire employé dans une institution, dans laquelle il reçoit une formation en cours d'emploi, a dû en outre suivre un cours de formation psychologique. Les fonctionnaires de cette catégorie qui ont été nommés récemment suivent, après

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