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PRIMER CONGRESO DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS EN MATERIA DE
PREVENCION DEL DELITO Y TRATAMIENTO DEL DELINCUENTE,
GINEBRA, 1955

P E R S O N A L
SELECCION Y FORMACION DEL PERSONAL PENITENCIARIO
EN COSTA RICA

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NACIONES UNIDAS

establecimientos abiertos o cuando menos semiabiertos para las mujeres y los menores.

En el tratamiento de menores el Reformatorio de Mujeres funciona bastante bién. En el Reformatorio de Varones, se ha tratado de introducir bastantes mejoras, especialmente en el régimen disciplinario y en la educación: se está en un período de transformación y hay que esperar los resultados.

SUMMARY

Our legislation contains no provisions concerning the recruitment and training of the staff of penal institutions. Article 4 (f) of the Civil Service Act (No. 1581 of 30 May 1953) excludes the supervisory staff of penal and correctional institutions from the provisions of the Act; article 5 of the Social Defence Act (No. 1636 of 17 September 1953) lays down very general rules and divides the staff into three categories: administrative, technical and supervisory.

In essence this article requires that the officials selected for such posts shall have advanced training, experience in the particular type of work involved and personal aptitude; in addition it stipulates that any candidate for appointment to any post or employment connected with Social Defence must be a graduate of the School of Penal Studies if the post is of an administrative or supervisory nature, a graduate of the School of Social Service if the post is to be held in the Social Service Section, and a graduate of the National Institute of Criminology or the National University if the post is of a technical or specialized nature.

It should, however, be pointed out that although the law contains these provisions they are not applied in practice, as appointments are made by the Ministry of Justice without any competitive examination and without the advice of the Civil Service.

The two principal penal establishments, the Central Penitentiary and the San Lucas Agricultural Colony, which is really a correctional institution, are military in nature, so that the Ministry of Public Security may intervene in the appointment of the Directors and Assistant Directors, and technical qualifications do not seem to constitute the determining factor.

Most of the personnel employed by the Social Service are not former members or graduates of the University School of Social Service. The technical staff is relatively small: there are few teachers, one visiting medical officer for the Penitentiary and another for San Lucas; a psychiatrist has been appointed recently to serve the whole penal system. The administrative staff is small and rather inadequate.

There are no training courses for staff and the School of Penal Studies is not operating; neither is the National Institute of Criminology.

In the institutions for women, that is to say the reformatory for minors at Guadelupe and the women's prison for adult offenders, the staff are recruited from among the nuns of the Order of the Good Shepherd who administer these institutions.

The San Dimas reformatory for male juvenile delinquents is an entirely civilian institution and is being remodelled. There is no system of recruitment for the staff.

As a consequence of this state of affairs, the necessary correctional organization does not exist in institutions for male adult prisoners, resulting in escapes, murders and other crimes of violence. There are no rehabilitation programmes for prisoners. The lack of suitable staff is one reason for these grave defects in our penitentiary system. In the institutions for women there is order and a greater desire to rehabilitate the prisoners; there is a marked desire for improvement in the reformatory for male juvenile delinquents.

It is to be hoped that, if the provisions of the Social Defence Act are applied, this state of affairs will improve.

This archiving project is a collaborative effort between United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and American Society of Criminology, Division of International Criminology. Any comments or questions should be directed to Cindy J. Smith at CJSmithphd@comcast.net or Emil Wandzilak at emil.wandzilak@unodc.org.