

OPEN PRISONS IN TRUST AND NON-SELF-GOVERNING
TERRITORIES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF
WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM IS
RESPONSIBLE

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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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The development of the open prison system has been carried forward with success in a number of the territories in question in America (the Caribbean), Africa, and Asia. It appears indeed to be especially suitable in such territories for several reasons—the economy of construction is welcome where financial resources are limited; there is usually less difficulty finding suitable sites than in more closely settled countries where the local economy is mainly agricultural; open prisons are well equipped to provide suitable training for the prisoners in agriculture; problems arising from integration of the prison in the social and economic fabric of the neighbourhood are less likely to arise, if at all; and both Africans and Asians appear to accept and profit by this form of treatment with, possibly, less difficulty than Europeans.

In these territories, special allowance must be made for differences of culture, and different levels of social and economic development in applying the general principles of training of the draft Standard Minimum Rules. Thus the level on which education programmes are conducted will vary, and training in skilled industrial trades may in certain territories assume less importance than in others, or it may be sufficiently provided for in the workshops ancillary to an efficient agricultural project. And 'two-way traffic' in social contacts may be found to be either undesirable or impracticable. But in general the principles of these institutions are derived from those of the United Kingdom, which have often been studied on the spot by the officers responsible for establishing open prisons in these territories.

The following studies of examples of open institutions in

East and West Africa, and in Asia, are based on material furnished, at the request of the Colonial Office, by the governments of the territories concerned. The writer has also had the advantage of visiting penal institutions in East Africa, including the open prison at Kingolwira, Tanganyika.

I. YOUNG ADULTS

Gold Coast

The Borstal Institution at Maamobi receives lads between the ages of 16 and 21, irrespective of whether they are sentenced to imprisonment or ordered to be detained at the Institution. This Institution is conducted on exactly the same lines as are open Borstals in the United Kingdom.

The following activities are carried out:

Religious instruction, educational classes, both during the day and in the evening, gardening, mechanised farming, building construction, carpentry, shoemaking, tailoring, blacksmithing, physical training and gymnastics.

The spirit of the lads is on a very high level and to maintain this attitude, indoor and outdoor games are provided, a library is available for all who wish to use it, and a drum and fife band adds a little music and colour to the daily existence. A Scout Troop is also maintained which is very popular and there is keen competition for membership.

The Institution is divided into two Houses, and each House is sub-divided into Dormitories. An annual Athletic Meeting is held and the parents of the lads and prominent members of the public are invited to attend. At the conclusion of the meeting an institution shield is awarded to the winning House and a cup is awarded to the winning Dormitory.

Malaya

In the Federation of Malaya the institutions for young adults (17-21) equivalent to Borstals are known as Henry Gurney Schools. There is one for boys and one for girls. The period of detention is indeterminate within a maximum of three years. A young adult sentenced to imprisonment may also be transferred to a School if he has at least two years imprisonment to serve.

Girls—The Henry Gurney School for Girls is quite small

and there is accommodation for 25 girls. The School is situated in an ordinary two storied house in a large compound. The upper floor contains dormitories, each accommodating six inmates, and a common room. Each dormitory is provided with a tiled bathroom with modern sanitation. The lower floor is comprised of a work-room, dining-room and school-room. There is also a work shed in the grounds. The large grounds provide ample space for recreation and there are badminton and volley ball courts.

There is a resident matron in charge. The girls are taught needlework, dressmaking, tailoring, lacemaking and toy-making. They maintain their own fowl farm and garden. In addition to the ordinary educational training, regular lectures are given on health and hygiene.

The School is completely open but the main entrance door is locked at night. The bounds of the school are marked by hedges. Girls can walk anywhere within the grounds without supervision. They visit schools in the area to play badminton and teams visit the School. There is a number of ladies of all nationalities who are voluntary visitors to the School. In general the system of training is similar to that at the boys school.

Boys—The School is organised on the 'House' system. Each House is a completely self-contained unit with its own common and 'blues' (special grade) rooms, and each has a House-master in charge. The Houses are widely dispersed over the whole area. There is a central administration block and school rooms. Each dormitory accommodates 10 to 12 inmates and has modern sanitation, wash basins and showers. A separate building contains the common room, reading and wireless room and 'blues' room. The doors to the dormitories are secured at night with a bolt and padlock. Apart from this, there is no other security measure except periodical visits during the night by the patrol.

Some 15 trades are taught at the School. The workshops are equipped with modern machinery. Qualified instructors are employed for all trades and training is given in both theory and practice. Later trade tests are set by the Industrial Manager and Certificates of Trade Efficiency are awarded.

There are three grades in the School. The beginners grade lasts 3 months and the second—or probation—grade another

3 months. The second grade can be of indefinite duration if a lad is considered not fit for promotion. Lads in these grades can wander anywhere within the school grounds in their leisure time. This includes the beach which is a favorite spot for fishing and 'crabbing'. When a lad is promoted to the special grade—or 'blue'—he is permitted to go for unescorted walks outside the school, can go to Malacca town six miles away to attend the cinema or church and visit other schools in the area. 'Blues' proceed to labour and work without supervision and are entitled to proceed on home leave.

There are four certificated teachers at the school and every lad is required to spend at least six hours per week in education. The curriculum is laid down by the Education Department and classes are held in both the vernacular and English. There are special arrangements for illiterates and the Laubach method of teaching is used.

The inmates elect their own representatives to a central Committee. The electoral system is similar to that used at municipal elections and the purpose is to give the lads a grounding in civic duties and an understanding of the democratic system of elections. Courses in civics are part of the training system and the election of Committee representatives is related to the general political development in the country.

The Committee is entirely responsible for general welfare in the School, the canteen, library, sports fixtures and entertainment. No officer is on the Committee but once a month it meets the Superintendent and Housemasters to discuss plans and obtain funds.

Recreational facilities are wide and varied. The School has its own cinema and swimming pool. Teams of all kinds visit many clubs and schools in the area and entertain visiting teams in return. The inmates compete at all inter-school athletic and sports meetings. There is a school band and a flourishing Rover Scout troop. Rovers attend week-end camps with other scouts without supervision. In the evenings, handicraft and hobby classes play a not unimportant part in the school's activities.

The staff do not wear prison uniform. Housemasters are European but Asians are being trained as Assistant Housemasters and will eventually take over Housemasters' duties. Junior officers are carefully selected and trained and

now take an active part in all activities and show great interest.

The Institution Discharge Board interviews every lad brought before it three months before release, and makes arrangements regarding employment and, where necessary, accommodation. Every boy is found employment on release or other satisfactory arrangements, e. g., a boy may return home to continue his education at a local school. Many boys enlist in the Armed Services.

The School was opened in July 1950 by the late Sir Henry Gurney. During the past four years it has been proved that the youths—many of whom have committed serious offences and have bad records—can be trained successfully by trust and responsibility under open conditions and with the very minimum of security. Since 1950, only two inmates have absconded, while out of 344 lads who had been released by the end of 1953, only six had been reconvicted and three had their licences revoked.

II. MEN

Gold Coast

There are two farm camps for adults, at Ankaful (350) and James (108).

Ankaful receives both first, and selected second offenders, who have received sentences from six months upwards. In addition to farming, the long-sentence (three years and upwards) men are taught carpentry, tailoring, blacksmithing, shoemaking and building construction. Educational classes are run for all prisoners, and religious instruction is available for all denominations. The privileges of the Camp are earned by stages and an Earnings Scheme is in operation.

The farm is run on scientific lines and mechanical equipment is available. Professional advice is obtained from the University College of the Gold Coast and from the Agricultural Department. Poultry farming and animal husbandry also form part of the activities.

James Camp is entirely a farming camp and only prisoners with an aptitude for this type of work are sent there. First offender prisoners, only, are received by this establishment. An Earnings Scheme is in operation at this camp. It is pro-

posed to extend the accommodation at this camp and provide extra work-shops.

Tanganyika

Kingolwira Prison Farm—This is a large establishment accommodating over 1000 prisoners of 'first offender' type with sentences of two years and upwards on an estate of over 20,000 acres. There are three widely separated camps, prisoners being moved from one to another on a progressive system in which supervision is gradually relaxed. The reception camp is not 'open' but medium security with close supervision. The main camp houses about 600. The third camp houses 120, and is for men in the last few months of their sentence. The two latter camps are surrounded by light barbed wire fences, primarily to keep wild animals out by night, and the families of the staff and others out by day.

The economy of the camp is based on agriculture and the maintenance of a large dairy herd with a fully mechanised dairy. The farming is on modern lines, and the prisoners may receive full instruction in the use of tractors and machinery, animal husbandry, poultry farming, etc. The ancillary work-shops provide good industrial training in carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, and light engineering with machine tools. All the bricks used are made in the prison brick-yards.

Prisoners working outside the compounds are almost completely unsupervised, but escapes are almost unknown.

There is provision for education, particularly for illiterate prisoners.

The European Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents have an African discipline staff of 114 and 21 technical and clerical staff.

Malaya

Telok Mas is an open camp for 250 men of 'first offender' type serving sentences of over 12 months up to life. Selected prisoners not of this class, who are suitable for training in open conditions, are also included.

The huts in which the men sleep measure 70 ft. by 24 ft. and are divided into two dormitories. Each dormitory accommodates about 12 prisoners and is provided with modern sani-

tation, wash-basins and bathroom. All buildings are lit by electricity. The camp buildings includes administration offices, school-rooms and workshops. There are separate bath-houses and latrines for day use. All prisoners take their meals in association at dining tables provided in separate dining sheds. Workshops and dining sheds are open at the sides.

The minimum of supervision is applied and prisoners are given the responsibility for internal discipline and cleanliness under their dormitory leaders. The men are located in dormitories according to their Stage and dormitories occupied by the highest Stage are not supervised. The wooden doors to the dormitories are secured at night by a simple bolt.

The workshops are large and fitted with modern machinery and there is a full scale vocational training programme for suitable prisoners. Much of the constructional work in the camp is undertaken by the prisoners. The camp has a farm of 25 acres, five large fish ponds for rearing fish and a large fowl farm. An officer of the Agricultural Department acts as advisor and instructor to the prisoners.

Prisoners are permitted to walk anywhere within the bounds of the camp. There are badminton and volley ball courts inside the bounds and outside there is a sports and football field which is used every evening during the recreation period. Teams from the camp visit local clubs in the district and entertain visiting teams.

Educational classes are very popular. The Laubach method is used for illiterate prisoners. Others attend school every evening. Handicraft and hobby classes take place each evening until 9 p.m. The camp is provided with a radio and record player with extension speakers to dormitories.

The response by the men has been excellent. The interest with which they approach their work and their cheerful attitude are most revealing. Since the camp was opened only two prisoners have absconded. They were quickly recaptured but it was interesting to observe the indignation of the other prisoners when the escapes became known. A deputation asked that a number of volunteers should be permitted to leave the camp to search for the absconders and bring them back. It is evident that a definite tradition has been established and that prisoners constantly try to live up to it. The general conduct has been excellent. The average daily population over the past

four years has been 212. The average number of offences in the institution for each year has been 26 and most of these were in respect of minor infringements of the camp rules.

Pre-release Camp—There is a camp of similar type for 150 men selected from long-sentence prisoners in closed prisons who are within six months of release, for pre-release training.

The staff is very small and trust and responsibility are placed entirely on the inmates. The work is chiefly agricultural but some prisoners are employed in a neighbouring rubber estate and others on building and maintenance at the camp. The main object is to accustom prisoners, who have served long sentences under institutional control, to conditions of freedom in preparation for release.

In their work the prisoners find that a great deal is left to their initiative and they are forced to make a decision on their own. Similarly, during their leisure time in the camp, the organization of classes, games and so on is left to the prisoners who, perhaps with a little guidance and a few suggestions, are encouraged to plan out the use to which their leisure time should be put. Special pre-release lectures are given and evening classes in elementary carpentry, tailoring and shoemaking are in force.

When the first batch of prisoners was transferred to the camp it was interesting to note the reaction by prisoners from different prisons. It was observed that men from the Training prison very soon adjusted themselves and indeed became the leaders in internal organisation. It was very obvious that men from other prisons where security was more strict, were bewildered and a little uneasy at the unexpected freedom. They hesitated to express their views and were not inclined to think or use their initiative. At recreation they were inclined to bunch together and regarded the open conditions with suspicion. This attitude soon disappeared and it was most interesting to observe the flowering of personality and individuality as the men became accustomed to the system.

In all cases the men have responded to the trust placed in them and no untoward incident has occurred. If nothing else has been achieved, the change in the attitude of the men who have been subjected to long months of 'institutionalisation' would alone make the experiment worth while.

RESUME

Le système des établissements ouverts est utilisé avec succès dans certains territoires des Caraïbes, d'Afrique et d'Asie pour l'administration desquels le Royaume-Uni est responsable. Il paraît particulièrement approprié pour ces territoires pour les raisons suivantes :

1. le caractère économique de la construction requise ;
2. la possibilité de disposer d'un endroit adéquat pour un établissement ouvert dans des territoires relativement peu peuplés ;
3. le caractère agricole de l'économie locale ;
4. l'intégration facile de ces établissements dans le milieu social et économique environnant.

JEUNES ADULTES

Côte de l'Or

L'établissement Borstal à Maamobi est organisé sur le modèle de Borstals ouverts du Royaume-Uni, et reçoit des jeunes gens âgés de 16 à 21 ans. On y pratique l'instruction religieuse, des classes d'instruction générale, le jardinage, l'agriculture mécanisée, la construction de bâtiments, la charpenterie, la cordonnerie, les métiers de tailleur et de maréchal-ferrant, l'éducation physique, la gymnastique et des jeux.

Malaisie

Dans la Fédération de Malaisie, les établissements pour jeunes adultes de 17 à 21 ans correspondant aux Borstals sont connus sous le nom de "Ecoles Henri Gurney". Les délinquants y sont renvoyés pour une période indéterminée, mais pour un maximum de trois ans. Il existe un établissement pour garçons et un pour filles.

L'école pour filles reçoit vingt-cinq détenues auxquelles on enseigne la broderie, la couture, la coupe, la dentellerie, et la fabrication de jouets ; en plus de l'instruction générale, on leur donne des cours d'hygiène et de santé.

A l'école pour jeunes gens, on utilise un système progressif à trois degrés. Les nouveaux détenus font partie du premier

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