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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

ALFRED R. LINDESMITH [Ed.]

THE AMERICAN PRISON SYSTEM. By  
*Fred E. Haynes*. New York:  
McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1939.  
Pp. vi+377. \$4.00.

Dr. Haynes gives us an excellent and valuable book on the American Prison System. As he points out, it is almost twenty years since a general study of the American prison system has been presented to us. The American prison scheme is given in broad outlines but filled in with a wealth of well defined material clearly presented, so that we have a complete summary of everything that happens in our state and Federal prisons. The author states that his purpose is to describe the types of existing institutions, their administration, their problems, and the methods used in the efforts to solve the difficulties involved in the punishment and reformation of criminals. Because of the admirable organization of the material in it, the book can be readily consulted.

The nature and magnitude of the prison problem is dealt with in the introduction, followed by chapters on the development of prison architecture. There are three chapters devoted to the different types of institutions developed for the care of men and women and of minor offenders. Penal administration, classification, health and medical service, education, inmate organization and prison labor are given six chapters. The southern penal system is separately de-

scribed. The closing note of the book is on the abolition of the prison system.

The author keeps his feet on the ground and does not present personal points of view but gives the best thinking in the field sufficiently tested by experience, time and competent authorities.

Comprehensive studies in the various fields have been gathered for us and placed in this single compact volume. Facts about prisons and reformatories have been gathered chiefly from the Handbook of the National Committee of Penal Information and its successor the Osborne Association and from various reports including those of the American Prison Association, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the P. I. R. A. and state reports and studies.

For his discussion of health and medical services the author relies on the report of Dr. Frank L. Rector; for discussion of education on reports and studies of Commissioner Austin H. MacCormick; for prison labor on writings of Louis N. Robinson, Howard Gill and reports of the P. I. R. A.; for penal administration on writings of Clair Wilcox, the National Commission on Law Obseance and Enforcement, and the National Crime Commission; for classification on reports of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, state administrators and leaders in this field.

Chronologically the studies range

from 1924 to 1938. The picture of penal administration is largely for 1929-30; that of prisons from 1932-34; for classification from 1931-35; for health and medical services from 1929; for education from 1927-31; for inmate organization from 1933-36; for prison labor from 1931-37; and for prison architecture from 1927-37.

During the year 1933, 693,988 individuals were committed. Of these, 8,333 were committed to Federal prisons and camps, 59,204 to state prisons and reformatories, 608,484 to county and city jails, and 17,967 to institutions for delinquents. The 1933 figures were the last comprehensive figures the author had from all sources.

The so-called definite sentence which was the prevailing one during the nineteenth century is revealed as now used in little over half the cases. Only a small proportion of the whole number of prisoners serve sentences of more than 10 years, and only a small fraction of the number of indeterminate sentences were for minimum sentences of more than 10 years. The highest ratio of commitments was for males 20 years old, and the next highest was for males 19 years old, and from these high points the ratio for males apparently declines somewhat gradually up to age 24 and more rapidly from then on. For females the ratios are high for ages 18 to 29, the highest being for age 19. But in striking contrast, we learn that of the prisoners received in county and city jails, 10.7 were under 21 years old, 69.6 were 21 to 44 years old.

Today we have 100 prisons used for long term prisoners in the United States. Eighty per cent

are the Auburn or fortress-type. Of 67 prisons, eight still in use were built more than 100 years ago and include some of the largest institutions.

We agree that it is not surprising, therefore, that with the age of our prison buildings an obstructive stereotype has developed which impedes progress in prison administration, because we have become firmly convinced that the safe custody of criminals depends on building prisons like fortresses and upon surrounding them with high walls and a garrison of heavily armed guards.

Not often has there been so clear an analysis of prison architecture beginning with the medieval prison system down to the modern small prison of today, carried over into a chapter on some new types of prisons including a description of the Northeastern Penitentiary, New York Medium - Security Prison, State Prison Colony at Norfolk, Massachusetts, Borden-town Prison Farm, and the Federal Industrial Reformatory at Chillicothe, Ohio. But only a few states and the Federal Government have been courageous enough to experiment with new types of prisons.

A thesis is developed in favor of the small prison; a prison cannot be economically smaller than 250 or larger than 1,000 to 1,200, and that 500 is the ideal size. A typical state with a prison population of 2,500 should have a reception unit for 250, maximum security for 500, two limited security units for 500 each and 3 minimum security units or farms for 250 each.

In his discussion of women's reformatories, Dr. Haynes presents the Federal Industrial Institution

for Women at Alderson, West Virginia, State Reformatory for Women in Bedford Hills, New York, Reformatory for Women at Framingham, Massachusetts, State Reformatory for Women at Dwight, Illinois, Reformatory for Women at Clinton, New Jersey, and the State Industrial Home for Women at Muncy, Pennsylvania.

These reformatories are the more hopeful of all penal institutions and furnish a valuable lesson after which institutions for men should pattern. It is noteworthy in describing new women's reformatories that Dr. Haynes often tells of them in terms of the women who direct or founded them, as still blazing the trail and pioneering in the field in which the other institutions can follow.

But in discussing men's prisons, Dr. Haynes goes back to the beginning of reformatory and prison work when Brockway began his work at Elmira. The women's reformatories have modern buildings and the men's are usually old prisons. Dr. Haynes reminds us that in 1926 Professor Liepmann told Americans that the reformatory has plainly failed to retard youthful delinquency, and gave one reason for that in the fact that a great number of reformatories are distinguishable from prisons in name only. However, the two Federal reformatories at El Reno and Chillicothe, the institution at Anandale, New Jersey, Algoa Farms, Missouri's intermediate reformatory, and the New York Institution at Coxsackie are a departure from the stereotype. They have different types of buildings; they are unwalled and deal in some instances with a different type of offender, representing efforts to meet

the needs of young or first offenders along real reformatory lines. These institutions comprise one of the outstanding new developments in correctional work, and indicate that the reformatory system is alive to the needs of the present day and is trying to meet the demand for constructive treatment of these needs.

European countries have handled the problem of men offenders more successfully than is the case in the United States. England has given up its local prisons. Belgium and Switzerland, two small countries, have been responsible for two noteworthy experiments — the Swiss Colony at Witzwil and the Belgium Colony for Vagrants at Merxplas. The methods used with misdemeanants for Switzerland and Belgium have been tested in the United States in the State Farm at Bridgewater, Massachusetts, the Penal Farm of the District of Columbia at Lorton, Virginia, the Prison Camp at West Rutland, Massachusetts, and the Borden-town Prison Farm, New Jersey.

Much space in this book is rightly given to a discussion of the Norfolk State Prison Colony where the author spent a month and the controversy concerning its program and purpose in the community is analyzed in detail. Here is a different type of prison, a supervised community within a wall, with great emphasis laid upon the restoration of the inmate to normal and the reduction of his criminality by education and special treatment. Group housing, a diversity of industrial shops, a hospital, a school, a social and religious center, recreation areas, a town hall, a police station and a jail are found in the community.

We hear the oft told tale that penal administration is still largely political as to personnel. Only ten of the 48 states have civil service commissions with jurisdiction varying from state to state.

In the great majority of states some form of centralized administration of the penal system has been established. Each of the forms of penal administration has its advantage. Institutional boards of trustees exist in four states, enlist the interest of the best citizens of the community in the work. The Board of Control form of organization makes it fairly independent of politics. Experts in government, we are told, now agree that efficient administration is best obtained under a single executive. Some of the more recent setups, the administrative board suggested by the Illinois Prison Inquiry Commission and the state department of corrections established by the 1937 Legislature in Michigan, are analyzed.

The author brings the book up to date with a discussion of classification, health and medical services. The Feder, New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts services are discussed rather fully. The systems developed in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Texas, Wisconsin and Maryland are commented upon in terms of their salient features. The discussion of health and medical services in prisons follows Dr. Frank L. Rec-tor's survey with some analysis of the work of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and public health service.

The author quotes Austin Mac-Cormick's statement that not a single complete and well-rounded educational program, adequately financed and staffed was encoun-

tered in all the prisons of the country. Although a number of reformatories for men are elaborately run, no programs are to be found and that despite the emphasis on education a great many reformatories for men must be described as failures. Most of the reformatories for women made education in the broadest sense their objective. They are the most encouraging of all penal institutions. The situations in the prisons is by far the worst; thirteen out of 60 Federal and state institutions having no educational program.

He brings up to date the discussion of the much debated programs of inmate organization. His discussion of prison labor is tied up with the future of prison unemployment and use of classification as a means for developing a sound system of prison labor.

Professor Haynes does not wish to see the present prison system continue. He sees something else in store for the future. He states that what the English call "the break-up of the prison system" has already begun. Prison camps he sees as the only way by which the handicap of the old, massive, fortress-type buildings in cities and towns can be avoided, with a probation system doubled and trebled for its work.

He approves of the English proposal for the prohibition of imprisoning persons under 21 years as a means by which we would cut off one of our sources of habitual criminals.

In discussing the three penal programs — probation, imprisonment and parole—he points out probation and parole are the natural result of the abolition of imprisonment, probation keeping

people out of prison at one end and parole taking them out of prison at the other end. The analysis of the advantages of probation and parole are well balanced and carefully presented.

In working out a sequential relationship between probation, parole and imprisonment, the author assumes that with more men and women on probation and parole, there will be less in prison and vice versa. It may be said, however, that a new probation stream may come from those who are now fined or are otherwise inadequately dealt with by the present system without ever going to prison.

In other words, probation instead

of reducing the prison population may be a new method for dealing with those who should be under state supervision but do not get it now either in prison or on probation. A larger stream may enter prison also of those who are now improperly placed on probation or carelessly sent to institutions for petty offenders. Similarly, paroles may increase with the prison population increasing at the same time.

The volume is invaluable both to the student of prisons and the worker in the prison field.

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