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THE PAROLE INTERNESHIP: ITS SCOPE AND FUNCTIONS

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To the serious student of parole, a period of internship affords first hand approach to parole's problems and ramifications. The parole internship should be an essential part of his professional training. The medical interne's work is established and accepted as a necessary and indispensable part of a physician's training. But the internship idea in the field of parole is new and not widespread. Simply stated, the parole internship is established when a graduate student in the social sciences takes residence on a prison reservation or in the living quarters of a penitentiary during a period of his graduate study with opportunities for study and observation, and, more important still, for actual participation in some of the prison's work which prepares for and leads up to parole. This arrangement is made between the prison and university officials. He is necessarily a student who is focusing his studies and research on correctional work and who intends to remain in this field after the completion of his dissertation or dissertations.

During this period of prison residence, the interne is presented with a live panorama of the many aspects in the field of criminology. He lives in quarters with prison guards; he associates with prison people during most of the day; he sees the prisoners eat, work, and play; he knows what they think, how they talk, and how they feel; and their attitudes toward parole, guards, officials, and society. He knows why they feel this way. He is able to discount newspaper propoganda and ballyhoo which almost universally surrounds crime in its various phases. His theoretical studies are properly supplemented by an accurate picture of the practical part of the profession. An internship is further beneficial to the student for he breaks into the work while studying. This makes it less difficult for him to find desirable placement when he concludes his academic work.

An internship may not only benefit the student. Mutual benefits may be derived by the prison in a well set-up plan. Present

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day research in the field of criminology is confined to the work of a few individuals. Their work is comparatively restricted. They come into prisons from the outside and make studies from cold records. The interne is on hand to make a study or studies which may be of particular benefit to the prison and to the field in general because of his intimate position. Further, he injects a more scientific and generalized viewpoint into the thinking of the prison officials, for even though many have not been professionally schooled in their work, they sometimes come to recognize the value of such training. Frequent conferences between the warden and interne soon shows they have much to give one another. The research project should usually consist of one long-term study which can also be used as a thesis to meet the university disciplines, and other short-time studies, the need for which will arise from time to time. All studies which the student makes should be supervised by his major professor or the professor of social research at the university in which the student is a member. These research projects may be of some constructive use to the prison officials in convincing the proper authorities for the need of more funds if the studies reveal inadequacies in certain programs. They may also show how custody (physical and otherwise) can be improved. Administrative problems may be investigated and improved where a need is shown. Ways and means of interpreting the prison to the community may be explored. Needs for various educational programs may be tested. The possibilities of studies are unlimited and the benefits which the penitentiary might derive are directly proportional thereto. That assumes, of course, that those in charge do not regard a prison as merely a place "in which to keep a man." According to the laws of learning the student should gain much from this educational process.

We can term the research work which the interne carries on as *special work*. In addition to this, he may have regular duties which might be termed *routine work*. From his (the author's) personal experience, the author (he) has found one project on which the student may be employed with profit to himself and possibly to the institution. Parole work properly begins when the prisoner is indicted. The parole interne should interview prisoners at the jail (or usual place of detention) after indictment, and before removal to the penitentiary division of the organization. During the preliminary interview, the prisoner should complete an established form or schedule if he is able to read and write. If he is

illiterate, the interne should fill out the schedule during the course of the interview. The case should then be cleared through the Social Service Exchange. From the initial interview and the Social Service Exchange clearance, leads may be secured which will enable the interne to make contacts with the family. The record should then be developed through this contact. The interne should visit the home of the prisoner if that prisoner's family lives in or near the city where the prison is located. He should interpret the prison to the members of the family. He should inform them about the prison rules and regulations and rules concerning correspondence and visiting. They should be advised of the professional services offered by the institution, available without cost, and should be made to feel that the prison is interested in helping them. Services needed by the family should be noted by the parole interne during this interview.

From the initial interviews with the prisoner and his family, a report should be written and recommendations concerning the needs of the family outlined. These recommendations should be followed by the interne after leads have been placed in his working notebook. Recommendations as to the institutional plan for the inmate should also be outlined. This will assist the classification committee in making occupational placement, in controlling correspondence and visiting, and in aiding the educational adviser to make placement. The report should be filed at the jail or temporary place of detention of the man and follow him to the penitentiary. The interne should sit as a member of the classification committee and contribute such information and suggestions as are necessary and pertinent.

If a man be a transient or one with a short period of residence in the city, the interne should write to a branch of a qualified social work agency in or near the city where the prisoner's family is residing. The letter sent to them should contain all the information the prison has. They should be requested to make family contact and verify legal residence. Where reciprocal parole services are established, contact should be made through this cooperating agency.

After the prisoner is in the penitentiary, the parole officer at the institution should inform the interne what new information he has found and what program he is developing with the prisoner so that the interne might be aided in subsequent contacts with the family, or forward the information to the social agency working with the family.

The interne should interpret the community situation to the prison and the prison to the family and community services. His case work with family members should be supplementary to the degree needed with agency workers. In the absence of such agency contact, he should do the work himself.

There are prisons where this work is carried on by regular members of the staff. In this case the interne might serve an apprenticeship in the appropriate department.

The interne's situation with reference to the prisoners is a most delicate one. He must understand them. He should gain their confidence as a person to whom they can come for assistance. But he should maintain an attitude of professional aloofness which will prevent undue familiarity.

The interne is in a position where he may do the institution and the prisoners much good. At the same time, his situation is so delicate that he can do much harm by even one improper action. He must not allow himself to be pandered. Obviously simple "don'ts" such as carrying a letter or package for the prisoner out of the prison or in to him are many times overlooked by persons new in prison work. A prisoner may impress the student interne with his urgent need for getting a letter to a close member of his family or to a friend. The prisoner might stress the fact that the letter cannot wait for the regular prison mail channels since it will take several days longer. If the interne should be so fooled by the prisoner as to accede to his wishes by mailing the letter for him, he may precipitate serious trouble by his action. The mailing of the letter, which the interne might consider harmless enough, may be the cause of an escape or riot later in the prison. In that case, the interne would have involved himself, unknowingly, as an accessory to a serious offense. On the other hand, during one of the interne's visits to the prisoner's family, a member of the family might impress the student with the urgency of delivering a package to a certain prisoner so that the prisoner will not have to wait several days for the channels of the prison to deliver it to him. The interne may have the best of intentions when he carries the package to the prisoner, but at the same time he might actually deliver serious contraband into the confines of the penitentiary. Sometimes these actions may be due to ignorance. At other times actions of this sort are purposeful. Therefore, the interne should be, firstly, intelligent and trustworthy. This warning seems superfluous, but many prisoners will use every device to try the interne out or haze him. When

they see that they cannot do anything, he is then accepted and established.

Any writing which the interne does while in training should be legitimate. It should always have the approval of the warden. It should never be for newspapers, but always for accepted professional journals. He should never give information to newspapers directly, but refer them through the usual and accepted channels for the material. The interne, of course, because of his privileged position as guest and student assumes certain obligations toward the institution in which he is living. These obligations must be scrupulously and rigidly observed.