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by this rash act. He has left dependants surviving him. Yet, when you consider that this was a motiveless offense where there was no apparent planning, when you consider that this defendant never knew the officer, never had any trouble with the police, harbored no grudge against them for any previous act upon their part, it can readily be seen that this deed does not deserve the extreme penalty. If he had been drinking this liquor to nerve himself to commit a hold-up, or to revenge himself against a police officer, if he had said to anybody that he would kill a policeman on sight, then I can see where there would be a motive to the thing. I could then see where the argument might be made that as soon as this officer came in his path he saw red and gave vent to the inner urgings of his heart. From the evidence before me, the finding of this court will be that the defendant is guilty of the crime of murder and his sentence is hereby fixed at fourteen years in the State Penitentiary at Joliet."

THE NORFOLK STATE PRISON
COLONY AT MASSACHUSETTS*

HOWARD B. GILL¹

To give individual direction and purpose to the work *now* being done

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in prisons seems the next logical step in the development of our penology. To this end there is being developed at the State Prison Colony at Norfolk, Massachusetts, a prison plan and a prison plant designed for individual treatment as well as for security.

To date the function of the State Prison Colony like most prisons has been largely custodial. Such therapy as has existed has been mainly of a relief or incidental nature. The prison physician has cared for those too sick to work, the dentist has pulled or filled teeth which ached, and evening school and the prison band has relieved the tedium of otherwise idle hours, industries have kept inmates passably busy during the day, and religious services on Sunday, the library, and the administration of such relief to families as the law provides, have constituted the chief forces for social rehabilitation. Undoubtedly such a program has had its effect. Now and then it has seemed as though an individual were benefited; but in most cases the results were so uncoordinated and general that they were not very effective individually.

The Norfolk Plan

Under the Norfolk plan we assume that segregation in prison automatically protects society for the time being and is in itself punishment for offenses committed; but that the ultimate aim of prisons is to return the individual to society better fitted to meet the normal demands of that society. This is not a new principle. It was in effect enunciated by those Quaker reformers who first evolved the Pennsylvania System with its individual cells in which men lived, worked, ate, and slept completely isolated from their fellow-men—in order

that they might have the opportunity to contemplate their past and prepare for the future. It was the aim of those who introduced the Auburn System in which individual cells were supplemented by congregate work-shops, and which is typical of most prisons in America today. The plan which is being evolved at Norfolk does not differ in principle from these; it differs mainly in the equipment and the method of its application. And it does so because the character of many laws and hence of many prisoners have changed during the past 100 years and because we have developed a social, medical, psychological and educational technique in addition to the industrial and the religious, when trying to solve adult social problems. To attempt to apply these techniques in a prison of the Pennsylvania or the Auburn type would be like asking a modern surgeon to operate on the kitchen table. It can be done if necessary, but the best results undoubtedly can be obtained where the facilities and the equipment match the methods employed.

In general, the plan contemplates the careful classification of prisoners and their division into small groups of not over fifty men each, each group to be housed and fed separately under the direction of the house-officer and an assistant. It proposes that for each man confined in this prison a definite program—physical, mental, social, vocational, avocational—shall be developed for the period of his incarceration, and carried out under the direction of his particular house-officer who shall act in the nature of a resident case-worker. To make this possible, in addition to shops for as large a variety of industries as practicable, it is proposed to erect

a modern hospital, a school, and a social center within the institution in charge of specialists who shall direct the activities of their respective fields. There will also be a "jail" in this community for those who cannot be trusted to live decorously within the wall and a police force to guard the wall and preserve good order.

Eight buildings of three units each, to house 1,200 inmates, have been so designed that their strength and interior arrangements can be varied to meet the needs of different classes of prisoners as experience dictates. Even the Disciplinary and Receiving Building (the jail) will have different sections for different types of prisoners. The first building, now under construction, has been built for 150 grade-A inmates, divided into three units of 50 each. It is of ordinary fire-proof construction without bars or special security devices. Each unit contains 25 single outside rooms, 3 seven-bed rooms, 1 four-bed room, 2 officers' rooms and bath, a toilet and shower-bath room on each of the three floors, a common-room, a dining-room, a barber-shop, a locker-room, and a basement work-room. Subsequent buildings will vary from this first building according to the needs of the particular group for which such is designed bearing in mind first, security and second, *treatment*. The hospital will have its operative, infectious, tubercular, infirm, and out-patient departments, and be equipped for psychiatric work; it will have adequate laboratory facilities. The school will be especially adapted and equipped for adult education and each shop is planned to include a technical class-room. The social center is planned as a building for religious, personal, and recreational

social work. These together with the usual administrative and service buildings comprise the group within the wall.

To insure security a "safety line" 100 feet from the wall inside has been established, between which and the wall no building shall be built. The wall itself will be guarded day and night with all the known devices for preventing escapes, and the guard-house outside the wall will be headquarters for the police reserves of the institution. The very division of the population into small groups closely supervised and separated from each other and the avoidance of mass action of any kind, further insures a greater degree of *security*.

Without the wall, a thousand acres of wooded and farm land give opportunity to establish at close hand a farm colony to supply part of the necessary food and to act as an honor camp for the most trusted inmates or for the sick and infirm who may safely be allowed outside the enclosure. So much for the general outline of *plan* and *plant*.

Group System of Housing and Supervision

For the past two and a half years, while building the Wall, Dormitory Building No. 1, the Kitchen and the Power House which will be ready for occupancy in January, we have adapted our temporary quarters to the Group System of Housing and Supervision and have made the beginnings of the system which it is planned to carry on within the wall. Beginning with about fifty men in one building we have enlarged the population gradually to two hundred in five buildings during the summer and fall of 1930, each in

charge of two house officers who alternate in living with the men twenty-four hours a day. These officers are each superintendents of a little colony of 40-50 men. When on active duty they are with the men at work, at play, during visits; they read the men's mail; they look after their problems whether it be a new pair of shoes or a pardon petition; they get to know their men thoroughly and intimately.

The greater ease in understanding and handling inmates and their problems in small groups has been demonstrated, and the plan of having house officers live with the men has had a most desirable effect. In some respects the disadvantages and difficulties of close association have increased but these are more than offset by the greater understanding and control which have developed.

Community Organization on a Basis of Joint-Responsibility

As a direct outgrowth of the group system, an inmate organization, called the Council, has been developed and together with the staff, it constitutes the community government of the institution. This is not to be confused with the strictly penal administration of the Colony which is in the hands of the Superintendent and his assistants. Also in contrast to inmate organizations in some institutions which are founded on the principle of self-government in the hands of inmates only, this community organization operates on the principle of joint-responsibility in which *both* officers and inmates take part.

The Council consists of fifteen inmates, three nominated and elected by the inmates from each of the five houses for a term of three months. The three council-men

from each house and the house officers act as a house committee which meets weekly, and a weekly meeting is also held in each house with all members and the house officer present. Questions affecting the welfare of the house or the institution are discussed at these meetings. Such questions are then carried by the council-men to the weekly Council meeting and by the house officer to the weekly staff meeting. The Council elects its own chairman and secretary and appoints its own committees on construction, education and library, entertainment, athletics, food, maintenance, store, etc. The Staff also has its chairman and committees on construction, education and library, entertainment, athletics, food, maintenance, store, etc.

Questions relating to any of these fields of activity are taken up in weekly joint meeting of the respective committees and by them referred also to the weekly meetings of the Council and the Staff. The Staff and the Council meet weekly with the Superintendent who refers any action taken in the meeting to the other for confirmation. The Council has advisory powers only and final action always rests with the Staff; suggestions may originate in either body, however, and are referred to both before final action. However, in the thirty months during which the plan has been in operation, the two have failed to agree finally on only one decision. The plan does not always give the "best men" the leadership—frequently otherwise, and it has been interesting to note what responsibility does for these others. That the plan has not run into difficulties frequently encountered by inmate self-government organization where control has soon passed into

the hands of the bold and unscrupulous, is due to the very important and sincere part played in it by the officers, who (contrary to the usual circumstances) are whole-heartedly a part of it and who act as a proper balance wheel. On the other hand, the very presence of the average man in the Council demonstrates that it is not an "administration affair" and the very concrete advantages derived for the men by the cooperation of the Council and the Staff continually demonstrate its vitality.

Every effort is made to eliminate "politics" and individual "wire-pulling" by holding the Council strictly to the consideration of general policies and programs affecting the whole institution. Matters affecting individual house groups are settled by the house officer and the inmates affected. Individual matters are settled between individuals.

In general the plan has worked, although it is neither an "honor system" nor "self-government," because it is founded frankly on a basis of results for both Staff and men. In several crises the question of whether the Council should continue or not has been raised and each time it has been answered in the affirmative solely on the basis that both the Staff and the men can operate more satisfactorily with it than without it. Neither officers nor men give up their independence or their responsibilities, and each continually checks the other to insure square dealing; but both agree that cooperation works better than opposition where men must work and eat and live together, whatever the circumstances.

To date the success of the plan is evident, both in the morale of the men and in the results achieved. Not only have grievances been

aired and ironed out before they became acute, but constructive measures initiated either by the Staff or by the inmates have been carried out with much greater success than would have otherwise been possible. During the first six months, production on construction was doubled by actual record due to the cooperation of the committees on construction, and the entire program of the institution in all its activities has been given an impetus and a vitality not otherwise possible.

Cooperation and constructive service, instead of opposition and destructive enmity, on the part of both inmates and officers, continually break through the traditional prejudice of keeper and convict. And it is through such rifts in the old armor that one glimpses the normal, human, living body, the restoration of which is the aim of our whole endeavor.

Individual Programs for Treatment

The group system of housing and supervision makes possible not only the development of community activity and responsibility on the part of the inmates themselves, but it also enables us to institute a program of case work to a degree which at best would be difficult under any other system of housing. A number of state prisons throughout the United States have developed very careful case studies of each man entering prison. Such studies cover the man's developmental history, his physical, mental, psychological, social, industrial, and religious condition when he *enters* the institution and they form an excellent basis for the diagnosis of the case. But invariably they stop right here and almost inevitably so. First, because it is impracticable to work out pro-

grams to meet individual needs where all men are housed in cells and under a system designed to safeguard the worst criminal; and second because the staff is not intimately in touch with the men except at work or sufficiently familiar with the personal lives to be able to understand and help them. Under the group system of housing and supervision and with participation in and responsibility for community activities, inmates can develop both social and individual habits of living and the staff has the media through which to carry out the development of such habits—almost impossible under any other system. The extent of course to which any individual may be allowed to participate in such a program depends on many factors and may vary from the dangerous professional criminal whose program may be little different from what it is now in the average prison to the real first offender, who is as trusted and responsible a member of the committee as though he were one of the staff.

Through a grant from the Bureau of Social Hygiene (New York City) there was begun at Norfolk in September, 1930, a program of case work based on the developmental history record of each inmate, and his physical, mental, vocational and social needs as determined by the doctor, the psychiatrist, the teacher, the industrial manager and the social investigator. And the significant feature of this program as it is beginning to be applied, is not the thorough-going case summaries and diagnoses of each case which result from a thorough investigation—these *must* be assumed—but rather in the development of a concrete and specific program of *treatment* in each of these fields for each

inmate during the term of his sentence and the intimate personal contact with each inmate on the part of his house-officer which is essential to any successful carrying out of that program. In most prisons it is possible perhaps for a shop foreman in some prison shop to become interested in an inmate and do something to help him; it is possible for a guard to get to know some of his charges well enough to give a pretty good size-up of his character; it is possible for the prison doctor, the school teacher, the chaplain or the social worker to touch the lives of individual men here and there; but unless *some one* is responsible for seeing through and getting done a coordinated unified program with some very definite objectives, the effect of individual effort is apt to be dissipated and the results disappointing. Hence the development of Personnel Officers in our prisons. At Norfolk by combining the functions of Personnel Officers with those of House Officers under the Group System of Housing and Supervision, it is possible to conduct institution case

work not only during formal interviews or during work hours, but also when the men are most themselves—during the hours of relaxation and in moments of unguarded natural reactions. One cannot live with a man day in and day out and not come to know him pretty well. It is impossible to maintain the typical prison mask twenty-four hours a day. Undoubtedly such close personal relations break down some of the more formal principles of prison life which have been regarded as axiomatic, but they also bring about greater knowledge of what is actually being dealt with both as regards *men* and *officers*.

It is of course too early to evaluate the program at Norfolk. The Group System of Housing and Supervision, Community Organization on a Basis of Joint Responsibility, and Individual Programs of Treatment for felons in our State Prisons are problems so far reaching in their implications that only the experience of a couple of decades will tell us whether we have accomplished anything or not.