

# E.P.E.A.

European Prison Education Association.



NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 10.

Spring 1996



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# Editorial

# Spring 1996

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This edition of the EPEA newsletter has been compiled and edited by Mary Kett (Wheatfield Prison, Dublin, Ireland) and Peter Doyle (Portlaoise Prison, Ireland).

Thanks to all those who have made the effort to contribute articles and information about their work.

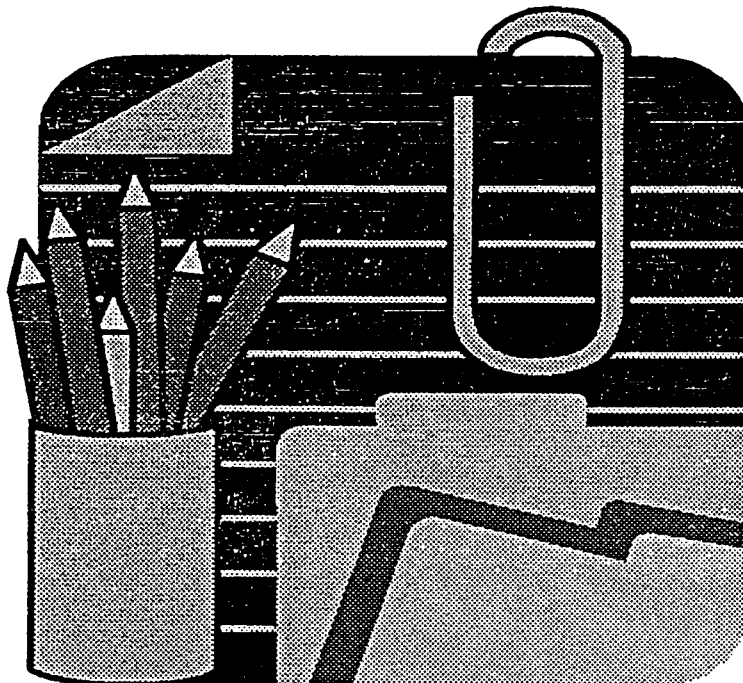
Two further editions of the newsletter are planned for 1996. Details of editors etc and addresses are to be found elsewhere in the newsletter. We

would like to appeal to contact persons in each country to actively recruit members to supply articles for these later editions. The newsletter

is a way of making direct contact with many other



people working in the field of prison education. Articles do not have to be lengthy - and you may use the newsletter to publicise new ideas and initiatives



and to look for information relating to particular curriculum areas or new areas of work.

The editors' work is much reduced if you can supply your work on disk. Please make the effort to do this - if you don't have access to a computer, ask a friend or colleague to put your work on disk. We would suggest **Microsoft Word 6** for Windows as a package that currently seems to be in widespread use. Alternatively, you could save your files in Ascii or Rich Text Format.

# E.P.E.A. Conference, Bristol, England.

## "Memory Bytes" of the E.P.E.A. Conference at Coombe Lodge, England: 1 - 4 October 1995

- Coombe Lodge in Autumn - what a beautiful setting ! Once upon a time home of the Wills family - but very few smokers at this conference !
- Arrival at Mendip Centre - Dave and Pam greeting everybody warmly; seem to know us all. I'm impressed.
- An atmosphere of camaraderie about. Is it a reunion of old cronies ? I wonder.
- My first encounter - a colleague from Hungary as we both make our way on foot to Blagdon village. Was this just a chance meeting or was I subconsciously organising a trip to Budapest for the next conference.
- Great enthusiasm about for the workshops - one hadn't to ask what was going on, it was being talked about all the time.
- Atmosphere permeated by optimism ! Lack of realism ? Hardly, these people have been in prison education since ... well a long time ! Look at the greying beards and hairless domes !
- The highest award for work honestly done must go to Dominic for his merry-go-round shuttle bus service.
- And the honour for the most dubious activity of all is awarded to the judging of the Europrison Song Contest. Despite his protestations to the contrary, Ian had to be an ordinary mortal like the rest of us and succumb to the blatant bribery of some delegations ! (Note: names are with the editor !!)
- I liked the workshop arrangements - but yet it was maddening to 'miss' so many. What a pity not to be in four places at the one time.
- Time off ? Well some walked, talked, studied, slept, imbibed... Others rehearsed, rehearsed, and rehearsed for the Europrison Song Contest. Alas to no avail as still the cacophony reigned !
- But as Judge Ian, prior to delivering his verdict, remarked with all due weightiness: "The choice of winner was a triumph for lack of talent, sophistication and simple know-how !"
- Here's to the next conference.
  
- Sean Wynne, Portlaoise Prison, Ireland.

## Two "snapshot" impressions of the EPEA conference in Blagden, Bristol, England, October 1995

### 1. Martin Druke from Germany:

It was the first time I took part in an E.P.E.A. conference and I was very impressed by the atmosphere.

All the sessions and workshops in which I took part were very interesting and given by people who have practice and experience and who gave me advice for my day to day work.

I was also impressed by the optimism with which all prison teachers spoke about their work and how convinced they were by the necessity for it. Without optimism we cannot help disadvantaged students.

Finally, thank you to the organisers. Everything was perfectly arranged.

2. **Martine Fuchs,**

**Luxembourg**

This statement outlines the views of one of the youngest participants and also one who is new to this business, as I have only worked in prisons for a year. That is the reason I couldn't share much from my own experience with other people. I have been a consumer throughout the entire conference and have done it so

well that I am going home with plenty of ideas (and also plenty of papers to read). I gained most from the workshops and the many discussions with other people, learning about not only what they have achieved but how they did it and what were the problems and the successes. However, information and concrete ideas were not all I obtained. Perhaps more important is the motivation I found here and which I will carry

home with me; the motivation to achieve a few projects step by step in my country where prison education is not as well organised as elsewhere. I hope that in the future it will be easier to convince people of the need for education in prisons, as it works in so many European countries and we should no longer lag so far behind.

I am grateful to have participated in the conference. Thank you, I enjoyed it!



# Spring School Conference

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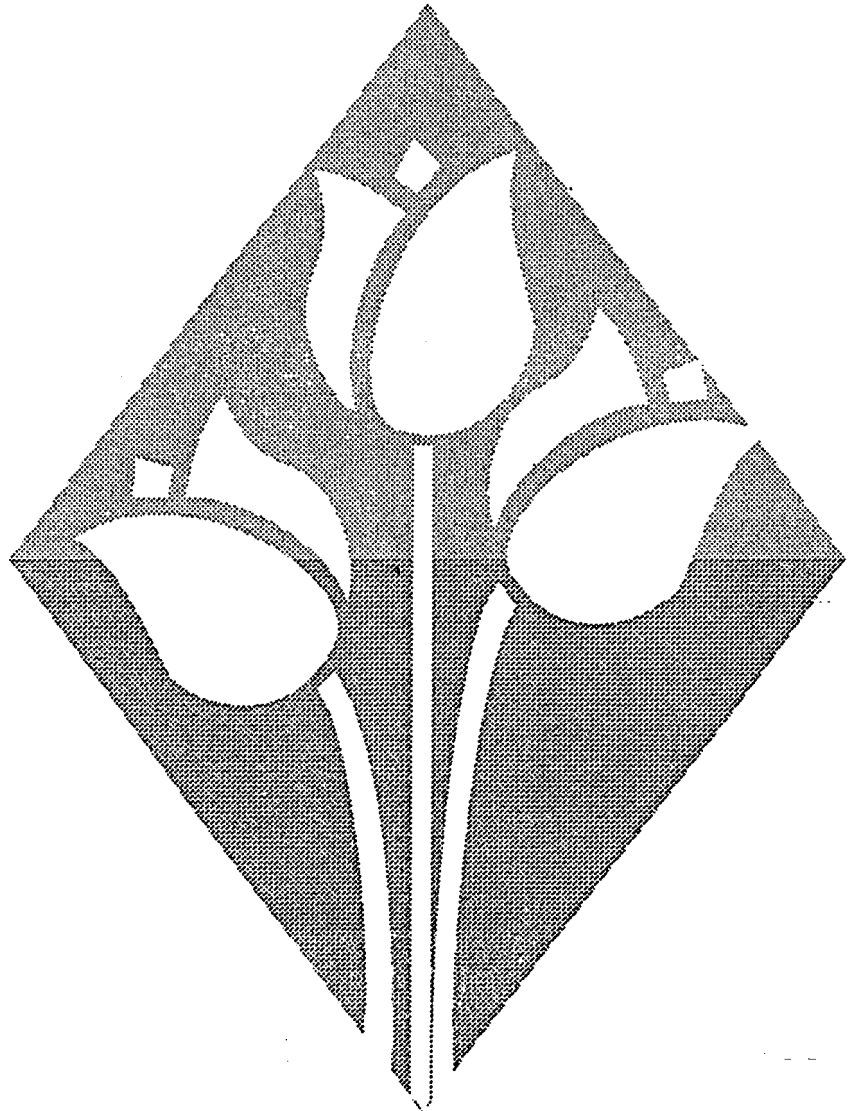
Spring School, Portlaoise,  
Ireland.

Spring was in the title but was noticeably absent from the air as prison teachers from all over Ireland, and further afield too, fought their way through sleet and snow to the first Irish conference for prison teachers at Portlaoise, or Porta Louisa, or the home of ... all that is good ! About forty Irish turned out, representatives from almost all of the hallowed halls of Irish prison education, to be re-energised, refreshed, rejuvenated. Okay so we set unattainable aims sometimes. We were joined by ten guests from foreign shores, they were there to add an international air to the event, and add they did, each of the invitees contributed in some way to the conference mainly through the workshops - although the Swedish drinking song workshop wasn't on the programme, it was very well attended !

Seriously, though, the quality of presentation at the Spring School was excellent. Joy Clarke's Keynote address on Friday "The Value of Prison Education", set the standard of well presented, thought provoking, challenging yet entertaining contributions which every speaker managed to maintain all weekend. There was a healthy mixture of keynote speeches and workshop on topics such as

pre and post release programmes, European models, addiction and isolated prisoners. Discussions and debates always had to be cut short only to be picked up again over lunch or coffee. Patrick Galvin from Cork read to us some of his wonderful poetry and prose on Saturday morning. I didn't envy

him his job as fifty sleepy looking heads sat before him, he excelled, a welcome break from policies and theory, he was most entertaining. By Sunday morning the excesses of the weekend were beginning to take their toll, no longer sleepy looking, some people appeared to be comatose. Against all odds Alan



Robert's paper "Issues and Policies in Prison Education" was by far the most challenging thesis this teacher has ever heard in such a forum, it was a superb finish to an excellent conference. I hope by the next conference that Alan will have figured out the solutions to at least some of the issues he raised.

In case any of you who were there are beginning to wonder if I'm writing about the right conference... Yes, lots of fun was had by all. We sang (in at least six languages), we danced (well we gyrated around the dance floor in the Killeslin Hotel. EPEA won't be losing any of these members to Broadway!), we ate (at least five delicious meals a day), we played (a version of 5 - a - side soccer) and most importantly we made new friends and allies and contacts. Well done to Anne Costelloe and her organising committee. Here's hoping that the Spring School will become an annual (midweek!) event.

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### Joan Dinneen

I suppose the most obvious advantage about attending the Spring School was the fact that it was residential and was organised over a period of several days. There was ample time to 'settle in', to gain distance from the bustle of daily routine and more importantly to focus on the various topics and themes that were presented both through the addresses and workshops alike.

The most lingering impression for me was a sense of identity, a sense of belonging to a larger structure which transcends ones belonging to a particular unit, unique and individual as they all might be. This impression was heightened by the exchange of ideas and methods with contributors from outside the Republic, and the common strands in prison education, wherever the location, could not be missed.

The opportunity to meet so many new people is always welcome - but to do so in such a fun-relaxed setting must surely be a bonus. I still haven't figured out how the perfect balance between 'work' and crack was managed but it was a mighty combination!

Finally, I feel that perhaps prison education is about to shift up a gear or two and I think that the Spring School might prove to be one of the levers in that process.

**Brenda McMullan**

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### Report on the Spring School Conference, March 1995, Ireland.

In Ireland in March 1995 a three day long conference on Prison Education took place. It was organised by a national In-Service Committee on prison teachers in response to requests from Education Units around the country. Its broad aims were twofold: first to give recognition to the achievements of Prison Education to date, secondly to

offer encouragement, support and help nurture new ideas for future developments. The overriding theme was one of renewal and celebration and thus the "Spring School title and timing As well as involving teachers nationally we were delighted to be able to invite colleagues from Denmark, England, Netherlands, Northern Ireland and Sweden.

A workshop based format was decided upon as it was hoped that this would provide an atmosphere conducive to learning and fellowship, both elements being seen as equally important. The following five workshops provided the focus for the event:

- Addiction and Prison Education
- European Models of Prison Education
- Isolated Prisoners
- Post-release programmes
- Pre-release programmes

The presenters of these workshops were teachers from various Education Units. They managed quite successfully to trigger interesting and stimulating discussions, thought and interaction.

To launch the conference, the keynote address by Joy Clarke, Chief Education and Training Officer, Northern Ireland Prison Service, raised pertinent questions regarding "The Value of Prison Education". Later during the plenary session, delegates attempted to address many of the issues raised by her paper. The conference was closed by Dublin teacher Alan Roberts,



who in turn raised broader philosophical questions in a paper entitled "Issues and Policies in Prison Education".

On the first day of the conference a session entitled "Looking Back to Look Forward" told the story of the development of Irish Prison Education to date. This provide to be entertaining and informative and showed up the similarities between each Unit but also the diversity of curricula and regimes.

On a lighter note a relaxed and informal start to Saturday morning was provide by Cork born poet and novelist Patrick Galvin who read from his work.

That afternoon some delegates took part in a soccer match against a local side while others, not so energetic, attended a relaxation session with Phyl Herbert.

On the first evening of the conference delegates attended an evening of traditional music and ballads. Great craic was had by all ! On the final evening a formal dinner took place. Joining the delegates were guest from the local Vocational Educational Committee and staff from nearby Portlaoise prison.

At the end of the conference participants were asked to

complete an evaluation form. The feedback was very positive. The general consensus was that a genuine spirit of renewal had evolved. People felt they had benefited from he event and it had been pleasant and helpful to meet colleagues from at home and abroad. Finally it was suggested that similar conferences should take place on a regular basis.

**Anne Costelloe,  
Chairperson, Spring School  
Committee.**

*Copies of the official conference report, including the papers presented at it, are available on request from -*

*Pam Lorenz, The Education Unit, Fort Mitchell, Spike Island, Cobh, Co. Cork, Ireland.*

# Learning opportunities for remand prisoners in Bergen Maximum Security Prison, Norway.

Alfhild T. Heldal, Educational Officer, Asane Upper Secondary School Department, Bergen Maximum Security Prison.

Bergen Maximum Security Prison (BMSP) is a fairly new prison, opened in

1991, with a capacity of 152 inmates.

A total of 120 inmates serve inside the walls, and of these, about 60 are involved in education: about 40 receiving full-time education, the remainder taking part in courses combined with jobs.

. BMSP serves both remand and convicted prisoners, and approximately

40 to 50 inmates are remand prisoners.

. In principle, only prisoners with sentences of more than 18 months are to serve their time in BMSP.

Unit D, placed outside the perimeter wall, has room for 32 prisoners. This unit is operated as an open prison and represents the last "stop" before release. Approximately 20 inmates achieve partial liberty from unit D outside the institution.

Experience shows that learning opportunities should include

courses of short duration directed towards young prisoners on remand, especially prisoners who have difficulty with long-term planning and who do not cope with life. To meet this need we have introduced a package of courses called Educational Workshop.

These courses include practical work, training and basic education. The aim is to produce certain handicraft products and to introduce simple artistic elements. As far as possible the basic education is closely linked to the actual products and the experience gained from producing these. In this way we have been able to show how simple mathematics are useful in solving practical problems, and that proper knowledge of the Norwegian language can be used to describe products, processes and for making notes related to thoughts, feelings and ideas.

Courses like this require very close teamwork. The Educational Workshop covers 180 lessons (a period of 6 weeks) and is limited to a maximum of 5 participants.

The main goals of the Educational Workshop are:

- . to prepare and motivate the participants for further education
- . to give the participants an insight into vocational training
- . to enable the participants to adjust better to life and to set

realistic goals.

Developing courses related to adjusting to life as a step towards further education is not specific to prison education in Norway. An educational reform (Reform-94) has recently been introduced in Norway which, in addition to a wide range of changes, also sets out the formal right of all young people between the age of 16 and 19 to receive secondary education.

The goal is to have a school system that includes everybody.

Prison education is currently going through a period of change. A committee, appointed by the ministry a few years ago, made several proposals for improving prison education. One consequence is that the courses offered must be based to a greater extent on the needs of prisoners for education and training. This is in line with Reform 94 and The Council of Europe's Recommendation No R (89) 12 on Education in prison, states in Art 6.1. "Courses should not be limited to conventional subjects; it is the potential student's right to learn what is paramount, and some learning needs may not be met by traditional academic classification."

In August 1995 we started a one year course in art subjects.

# Released - What Now ?

## The System of the Norwegian Follow-up Class

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By Gudrun Halvorsen and Arild Kavli, KIF Skolen i Steinkjer, Norway.

Education has a high priority in Norwegian society. This also applies to those who are committed to a correctional institution. An increase in education and competence is, by the Norwegian authorities, viewed as one of the most important means to achieve rehabilitation of young criminals. In addition to the regular institutional instruction, so called Follow Up class arrangements have been made.

These classes cooperate with the Probation Service and other public institutions, in order to provide an educational offer to prisoners who do not complete their education in prison. This offer also includes those who are a part of a follow-up programme and need help to either complete or improve their grade school and upper secondary education.

The placement of follow-up classes in the system.

Our follow up classes are a branch of the normal upper secondary education, although they are not located in the same area. Nevertheless, we have a common principal who take care of the overall management. However the branch principal

and the head teacher are responsible for the class.

The Follow-up class may see like a small, isolated, protected unit, where influence and cooperation with others is minimal. After looking at it closely we realise that the school in fact is in touch with other, nearby institutions to a large extent. The school cooperates with the correctional facility in Trondheim concerning our Follow up students. Our teachers often visit the prison in order to prepare for release and further education of inmates.

### The Follow Up Class - a Crossroads

In the class environment society at large has been incorporated. The skills of handling life and society, in addition to crating attitudes is done through model teaching. The achieve knowledge through theoretical classes. In addition to this they go through group work learning how to handle responsibility, where the focus is on such matters as housing, finance, family matters, drug problems etc.

The school sets aside a lot of time for conversation and communication, and we carry through a well planned programme for personal growth and development.

The gradual release of students

starts the first day of school, and this is why the follow up is a continuing process. The follow up class personnel can take part in he continuing work with the student for several years..

A group of responsible person is being formed for each student. The public institutions that the students have to deal with on a daily basis, are all represented in this group. For example, the police, doctors, the Probation service, the job-service office, the social service office, family members and the representatives from the school. Each student makes the agenda, and summons the meeting approximately once a month. The different cases on the agenda can be co-ordinated and followed up this way.

Furthermore, the schools has often visits or phonecalls from former students. They use the school as a meeting place/place of assistance, and the school always has time and resources for this type of activity. Some students may want to work during part of the school year. We are also willing to help out with this.

### Follow up students - who are they ?

The students are between 18 and 30 years old, and boys are mostly recruited. They have only incomplete or no high

school, due to early experimenting with drugs and/or crime. Many of them have tried, unsuccessfully, different types of public institutionalised assistance programmes. They have low self esteem, and lack faith in their own ability to learn anything. Their social network is infiltrated with drugs/crime and the majority of them are also struggling with mental problems because of problems when growing up, or long-term drug abuse.

#### The Follow up class - tiny steps.

The physical frame around our school is very different from other Norwegian schools. We are located in an older mansion in a normal neighbourhood. Some of the rooms have obviously been re-modelled so that lectures can be conducted in them however all of the ground floor is just like a Norwegian home. This allows us to emphasise what we define to be home and family values. We believe that these values can be transferred to the students when they experience the safety and security of this environment. This "lecture room" is to us the necessary platform that we need in order to carry through an academic and social development adjusted to each student's needs and capabilities.

One can use a stairway to illustrate the contents of the education process. A stairway that points out the different phases in the process of development that the students go through during their stay with us.

#### How do we do it ? Preferred phases:

##### 1. Preparational admission work

- motivating conversations in prison
- key questions on this level are: Do I dare ? Do I want ? Do I have to ? Should I ?

##### Observational period

- To create a new understanding of each student
- To create motivation/sense of belonging
- To create groups of responsibility

##### Education

- Establish academic goals together with the student
  - Learning how to be a student (role expectations)
  - Academic tests
  - Finding an in-depth study for each individual
  - EXAM
- Development of personality/integrated issues
- Skills in handling life: mentally and practically

#### Comments

The different phases can not be viewed as isolated parts. They make what we call a complete pedagogical profile, with emphasis on the total need of training that this type of target group has.

According to our experience, it is important that the students are able to see the interrelationship of what they are learning. It can be a useful means for them to help them get out of the criminal environment in which they have

#### Summary

The follow up class is an alternative to the normal school. This is an intermediate phase after the often difficult and critical periods following the release. We segregate them for a period of time, and then integrate them on a more optimal level. They can climb the stairs personally and academically, in a partly protected environment, and also transfer this to other areas in society.

We do not succeed with everyone, but nonetheless progress is being made.

The personnel who work at this school are not all pure idealists, however we do have an internal code:

#### TO CARE

One must act now, not tomorrow or next week.

# A Drama Production by Prisoners in Pescara, Italy.

Over the past few years the number of special initiatives relating to the education and rehabilitation of prisoners has grown considerably. These initiatives have taken place not only in big towns like Milan Turin, but in smaller ones as well.

We would like to make a special mention of an initiative undertaken in Pescara at the local remand house, where a group of inmates prepared an exacting drama which they performed in the local theatre on 30 July 1995. It was based on the famous play intitled "Natale in casa Cupielle" (Christmas at Cupielle's) by the great writer of comedy, Eduardo De Filippo.

The producer was a prison teacher called Paola Capone, who works in the women's section of the Penitentiary. Every year she transforms herself into a producer and changes the inmates into actors.

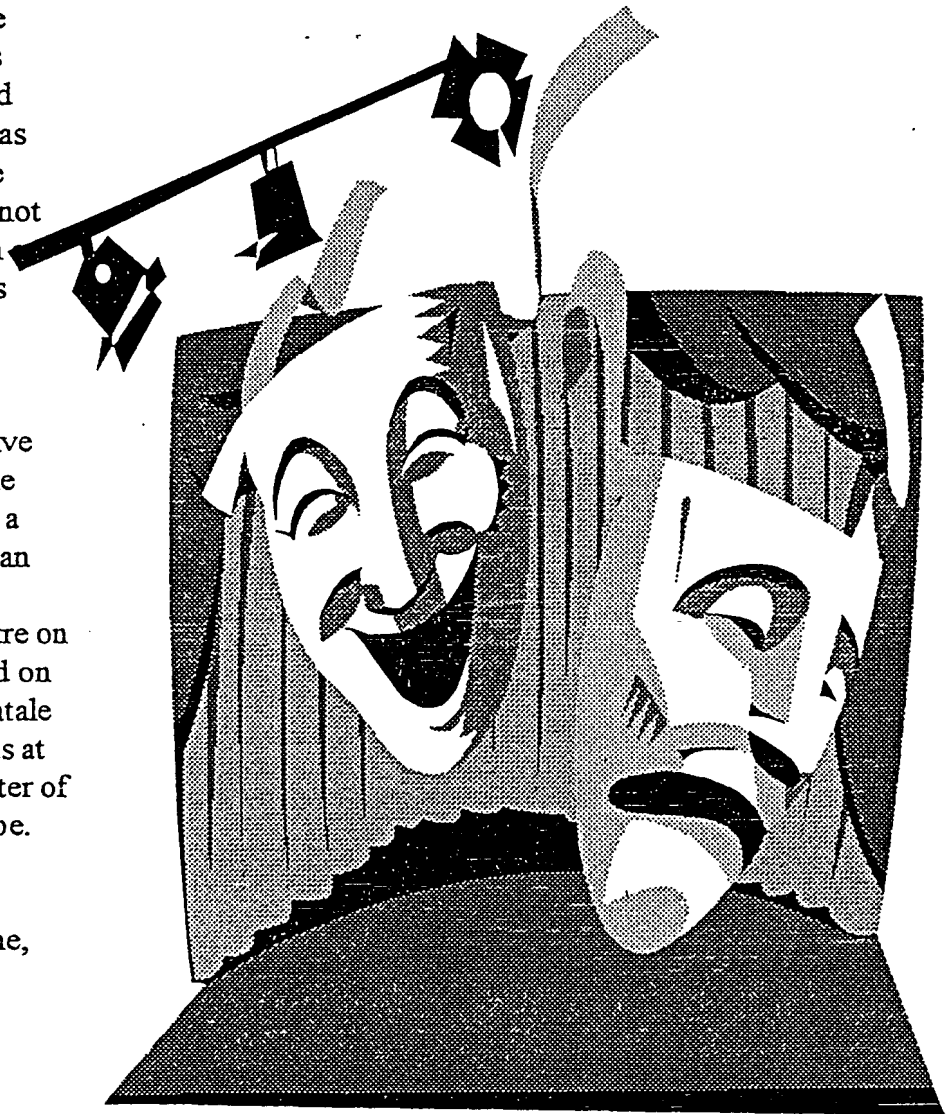
She says: "Drama in prison is a way of creating moments of contact, socialisation and mutual understanding and it is a chance for prisoners to prove that they want to get involved and show that they are able to do something positive."

The inmates of the Remand House in Pescara have been testing themselves for a number of years with performances in

the Institute, using both Eduardo's plays and other works written by women inmates. Last year, however, for the first time men and women performed together in front of the citizens of Pescara, to show that prison is part of the community and that we must acknowledge prisoners' humanity. Their humanity must be appreciated, not only in relation to their excellent acting, but

because of their generosity: all profits from the performance have been entirely devoted to local charitable activities.

**Angelo Ruggieri and Maria Armellino**



# Decreasing School Education: Prison Education in Hungary

Since 1989 and the change of political regime, the Hungarian Republic has ratified many international treaties and there have been many changes as a result of the new democratic thinking. This change in thinking has also changed attitudes towards prisoners' rights and the internal management of prisons. A new Prison Act was implemented in 1993, the main aim of which is to maintain prisoners' self respect, improve his/her responsibility and to facilitate the preparation of prisoners for independent life after release. The word "education" is interpreted as meaning to protect, to develop and to correct individual traits of inmates with appropriate treatment, regular teaching, cultural, social and sports activities, individual and group activities, work and vocational training.

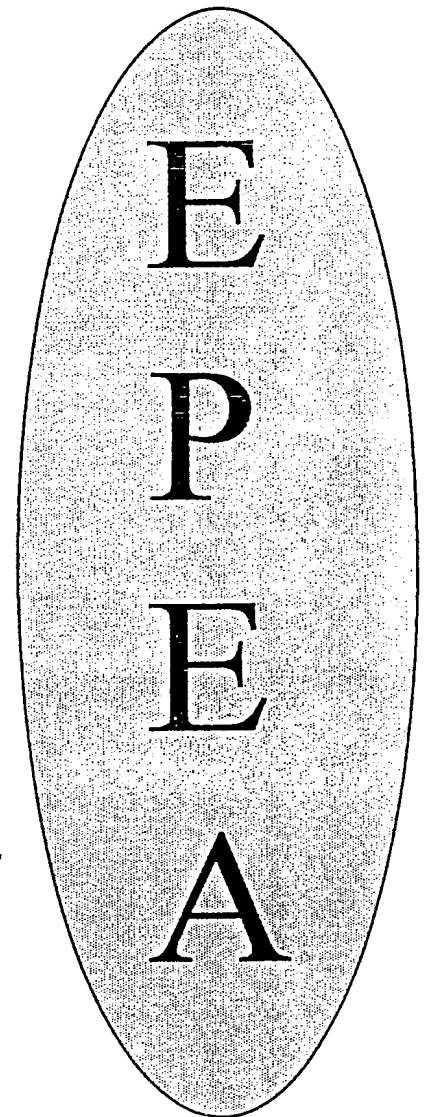
Many organisational changes have been introduced in an attempt to eliminate the harmful effects of the former totalitarian system which dominated Hungarian prisons in the past. In the new democracy, prisoners have the right to choose from the range of activities provided by the prison. Work is obligatory, but education (either elementary or secondary) is voluntary. The prisoner is now regarded as an adult, not a child. Until 1989, elementary school was obligatory for all those under 40.

What is the outcome of this situation? Formerly some 2000 prisoners took part in education. In the last year only 480 took part. (The total prison population is 13000).

At the moment prisoners don't see the need to gain elementary certification or to become semi-skilled workers, because they have no real chance of getting a job after release with the help of these qualifications. Unfortunately there are 500,000 unemployed people in Hungary, so ex-prisoners stand little chance of getting a job. Staff try and improve prisoners' motivation, but the outcome is not good. Also there is not enough financial support for education and training so it is actually an advantage in some prisons that only a few prisoners are interested in taking part in these activities.

I do hope that this is only a temporary situation, in between the old regime of high dependency and the new regime which emphasises free choice, and that prisoners will come to see the advantages of these changes for themselves. In the meantime staff are trying to maintain the momentum of change, hoping that better conditions will prevail in prisons and the country as a whole.

Laszlo Csetneky

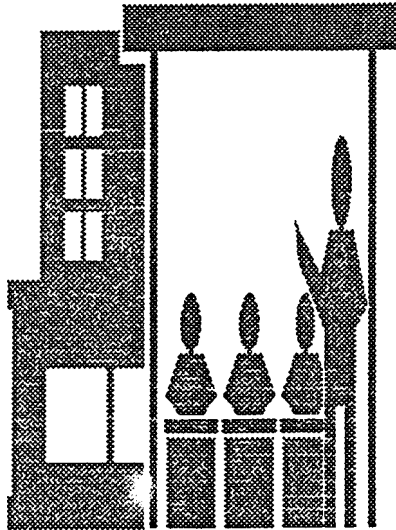


# Prison Education in Estonia

It was in 1991 that Made Kirsti from the Estonian Ministry of Education took part in the Third International Conference on Prison Education in the Netherlands. The window to Europe was opened. A warm reception, a well-organised conference and new contacts gave us the courage to arrange a similar meeting in Lohusahu in May 1992. We had little to show but wanted to listen and study from Dirk van Kooten, Robert Suvaal, Henning Jorgensen, Pam Bedford, Tessa West, Svenelov Svensson, Eva Kirkunen, Kirsti Juivajarvi and many others. We received confirmation that prison education is an inseparable and extremely valuable part of prison life. Conferences in Sweden and Poland, trips to Finland and Sweden and close co-operation, particularly with people from Finland, followed this event.

Today (DEC 1 1995) there are 10 prisons and 4049 inmates (1623 on remand) in Estonia. 3 special vocational schools with general schools attached serve 6 prisons, under the co-ordination of the Ministry of Education. 480 prisoners are studying a range of 10 subjects in vocational schools and 270 prisoners are studying in the general schools. 3 prisoners have started university or technical school studies.

A number of new prisons are planned between now and the year 2000. In organising prison education we have accepted the



recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the European Community, no R(84)12 to member states in relation to the development of prison education.

We monitor closely to ensure that every prisoner has access to education and that this education is of the same standard as that offered to the same age groups outside prison. We accept that education in prison should be as important as work. For us the aim of vocational training is to develop a range of skills for the individual while accepting the demands of the labour market. The curriculum includes communication studies, English, Estonian (for Russian groups), basic law and economics. We also plan to teach

social programmes. We are still devising policy on prison education in Estonia. Co-operation between the Ministry of justice, the prison Department, the Christian Prison Fellowship of Estonia and the prison administration is very good.

Problems:

- because of prison reforms most of the prison budget is used for construction and the teaching facilities and materials budget is not very high
- In most prisons there are very few opportunities for work (20% of inmates have constant work). Vocational schools have therefore very few opportunities for work experience.
- many teachers are not qualified
- although there is very little activity for prisoners, there is a low participation rate in education

Solving these problems is the main priority for the Ministry of Education and the Prisons Department.

This is the current position relating to prison education. We are, however, optimists and believe that we are little by little moving towards a better future.

**Mart Korre, Ministry of Education**

# The European Research Project

## European Social Seminar

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2 - 3 March 1995,  
London

The Rainer Foundation arranged a "European Social Seminar" on 2 and 3 March 1995 in London. The focus was on a "European Social Project: The Rehabilitation of young ex-offenders in the labour market". The project is financed by DGV of the Commission of the European Union, in Brussels and is being undertaken by the Rainer Foundation in London.

The Rainer Foundation is a charitable organisation and was created in 1876. It is a national voluntary organisation whose primary purpose is to provide community based services for young people who are homeless, offending, or in difficulty with their families and helps them to determine their place in society.

22 - 24 participants from 11 countries in Europe attended the seminar.

The Rainer Foundation has analysed the situation concerning the rehabilitation of young ex-offenders in the labour market in every member state in the European Union. This analysis has resulted in a national report for every country.

The complete report was presented and discussed at the conference. There are also short contributions from the participants which focus on strategies and methods in work in the rehabilitation of young ex-offenders in the labour market. The report points out three main reasons why social and vocational rehabilitation has been a major issue:

- A large number of young people are marginalised (eg in France, where approximately 25% of 10.8 million young people aged between 12 and 25 years need support)
- The massive budgets used for targeting this group of young people.
- The high unemployment rate in many member states of the European Union, particularly for people aged between 15 and 24.

Rehabilitation, therefore is a priority issue although it is difficult to give a precise definition of the concept. The report underlines that it is important that the European Union pressurizes the member states towards a strong policy on exclusion and marginalisation. The Social Policy of the Commission should be extended to address the problems of marginalised

groups.

The report referred to Mrs Lenoir-Degoumois who strongly emphasises the need for education to be an integral part of young offenders' sentences, allowing them to catch up on studies, occupational training, constructive leisure activities etc. She also emphasises the need for qualified staff

The report concludes with the following proposals:

- Put more emphasis on vocational training and work projects
- Support projects run by non governmental organisations in partnership with other agencies who work with unemployed offenders.
- The need for a major involvement by other Government departments, ie Departments of Labour and Welfare.
- The need for real cooperation between the different agencies involved in this area.

Svenolov Svensson, Sweden,  
& Torfinn Langelid, Norway.



# GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY AT THE GOLDEN GATE: GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY MISSED?

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## INTRODUCTION

Under the slogan "Golden Anniversary at the Golden Gate", the North American based CEA (Correctional Education Association) held its 50th Conference last July in San Francisco, California. The CEA has close to 3,000 members from a wide field of prison/correctional education work, including just a handful of us from Europe. The organisation has a respected quarterly journal, and extensive regional and local activities throughout the U.S. The CEA holds a special honoured place in the formation of the EPEA, providing us with a role model at our inception in 1989 and sharing knowledge and activities with us on many occasions since then.

So, going to the CEA's 1995 conference in San Francisco should have been a little like visiting relatives. And, having been to one such conference previously (in Vancouver in 1990), I knew to a large extent what to expect, with 700 or so delegates adding a jamboree atmosphere to the huge range of workshops, sales-pitches and social life. Moreover, I travelled to San Francisco, not from Europe, but from San Bernardino in Southern California where I had spent the previous three months as a

Fulbright Scholar at the Center for the Study of Correctional Education run by Carolyn Eggleston and Thom Gehring. So, I brought with me to the CEA Conference, then, some familiarity with Californian penal institutions, correctional education, issues and colleagues.

And, maybe, that was the problem. Having encountered a horrendous scale of imprisonment, severe cutbacks to and disfiguring of correctional education (and yet, in places, some heroic work by educators), I suppose I felt a CEA Conference in such circumstances must address these crises, at the very least by acknowledging the difficulties. But, I heard very little of the articulation of different values, which seemed to me to be so necessary, from the "top table" correctional educators. Indeed, as I'll speak about below, the most encouraging voices were from a sheriff, a judge and a comedian (!) in the plenary sessions, and thankfully, also in subterranean places such as small workshops and in conversations along corridors, where those working on the ground spoke of what was really happening.

This note, then, is not so much a conference report, as a personal reaction to an occasion. I

emphasise the word "personal", for I am speaking from my perspective, bringing my values and experience in Europe and California into the mix. Perhaps it is also a cry of warning against a rampant and destructive ideology which puts vengeance at the heart of the penal system, an approach that has had some expression already in parts of Europe (for example recently by Michael Howard, the "Home Secretary" or Minister for Justice, for England and Wales). As prison or correctional educators, I think we need to think through where we stand in relation to such attitudes.

## CALIFORNIA LEADS THE WAY

I am going to be severely critical of Californian (and by implication general U.S.) penal policy. So, it is only fair (and diplomatic!) to put that in context by saying how impressed I was by other elements of American social policy. And the contrast between the two only adds to my puzzlement. For example, California (and possibly the U.S. generally) can truly boast of unique achievement in cultural integration (how different that is from so many parts of Europe?), education (especially access to college education), inclusion of and access for the disabled, national and state

visited San Quentin, 415 prisoners were on death row. Elsewhere in the State, at Chowchilla, seven women were awaiting killing by the State.

### **THE SHERIFF TO THE RESCUE**

So, who presides over this piece of civilisation? Enter one James Gomez, Director, Department of Corrections, California. He spoke to us in the Grand Ballroom at the Opening Session of the CEA Conference. He told us about the 132,000 inmates in his prisons and the 38,000 staff. He spoke to us about rehabilitation, told us that he was on a major search for data to show that education works. Sounds good, but wasn't this the same Department of Corrections which recently (like many but not all other States) abolished all college education for its inmates? And this is a community renowned for its high participation in college education! (California Youth Authority, who deal with some of the more serious 16 - 25 year old offenders, have, to their credit, bucked this trend and continue to provide college, and much other, education).

I suppose that's when my troubles started. All the talk about things being wonderful, yet it didn't connect with the reality as I had found it and as so many correctional educators on the ground told it. I waited in vain to hear the CEA leadership speak to this reality. Some help was at hand, however. Also on the platform that first

morning was the Sheriff of San Francisco, welcoming us to what is certainly a lovely and friendly city.

Sheriff Michael Hennessy didn't speak for long, but he did quote some pieces from a current issue of the *New Yorker* magazine (10 July 1995): "*We lock people up to keep them away from us, to humiliate, degrade and condemn them, and to deprive them of dignity, privacy and autonomy. And we lock them up so they will come out changed for the better, ready to live and work in our communities. These conflicting goals have been at war throughout the history of the American penitentiary*". He also quoted evidence that "inmates who complete education courses are less likely to return to prison. . . . A study released in 1991 by the New York State Department of Correctional Services, for example, found that male inmates who complete one or more years of higher education in prison had a recidivism rate, four years after their release, more than twenty percent lower than the average for all male inmates." Did Director Gomez, having heard from the Sheriff the evidence he sought, jump up and cheer and announce the immediate restoration of college programmes for prisoners? I'm afraid not.

### **A CHOICE FOR THE CEA : DENIAL OR DEFIANCE**

The conference as a whole was a well-organised and friendly event, with many interesting talks and workshops, and was a

credit to Lindy Khan and her organising committee. But I kept looking for values that are contrary to the prevailing repressive climate to be articulated. Many educators, in top table speeches, disappointed me on that score, but maybe I don't understand their difficulties, maybe whistling past the graveyard is all they feel they can do just now. I felt at least more acknowledgement of the problems would have helped and this was given by other speakers. Judge Frank X Gordon of Arizona strongly criticised the policies of mandatory heavy sentencing, saying incarceration doesn't work and judges were "restive" and "frustrated" by the situation. (Couldn't somebody at least say the educators were frustrated too?) He spoke of half of Arizona inmates being "functionally illiterate" and called for resources to be diverted to help children earlier in their lives. Michael Pritchard, who was billed as a "humorist" and "youth advocate", gave a marvellous and encouraging closing speech to the conference which I expect gave correctional educators courage in the face of present difficulties, with comments like, "Picture the world without this Group [of those who educate offenders] and its not a very good picture", and "Whatever the question is, the answer is education".

Elsewhere, in smaller or informal events at the conference, I found much that was illuminating or heartening. Others will have found other things of value but among those I recall are : an art teacher from Oregon who,

despite recently losing his job (art is hardly "in" at present) still made his own way to San Francisco to give a workshop; Bernard Finney, a poet, speaking about his book *Harlem Horses and the lives of those who are imprisoned*; those who took part in a workshop on Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. And many other individuals who reinforced my belief that those of us who work in prison education really do share a common purpose.

I once jokingly remarked to American colleagues (all of us members both of CEA and EPEA) that the difference between the EPEA and CEA was that EPEA had a clear philosophy but a ramshackled organisation, while CEA had a sophisticated streamlined organisation but no clear philosophy. I was mistaken. While an event like this conference does not bring it to the fore sufficiently, there is a wonderful progressive tradition behind the CEA itself and in American penal practice generally that I am only just beginning to discover. Many Americans working in the education of offenders know little about it. Nowadays, this tradition tends to get buried and forgotten about, especially with recent repressive avalanches. Yet, there are some great writings that pre-date and are as good as, if not better than, the two core policy documents we look to in Europe, i.e. The Council of Europe's *European Prison Rules (1987)* and *Education in Prison (1990)*. Most striking, however, is how close these half-lost American

perspectives are in their essentials to the European documents.

Austin MacCormack, once Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, is generally credited with being the main founder of the CEA. His name is often mentioned, but I am not sure many CEA members have read his book, first published in 1931, *The Education of Adult Prisoners* (reprinted, ATM Press, New York, 1976). *Coming across it this year, I was amazed that its progressive "adult education" philosophy, its prescription of a wide curriculum geared to "the whole person" and its general advocacy of education for prisoners prefigured so much that is in the Council of Europe's recommendation and report on prison education. Likewise, there is little essential in the European Prison Rules that is not advocated (and put into practice!) in Kenyon Scudder's story of running the California Institute for Men at Chino in the 1940's, as told in his book Prisoners are People (Doubleday & Co, New York, 1952). American correctional educators can gain strength and guidance in these dark days from such authors and the CEA might well give greater voice to their ideas, in defiance of the current vengeful mood. And we too in Europe could learn much from such books.*

But the sources of American inspiration (and I hope defiance) are not all in the past. Just as

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some of the great works on the theory of Adult Education are North American publications, so there is inspiring work being done and written about in that field at present. But current correctional education practice seems very unconnected with it. Some links with this source of power are being made, however, as shown in a recent book edited by Howard Davidson, *Schooling is a Total Institution* (Bergin and Garvey, Westport Ct., and London, 1995) or in an article by Kathy Boudin in the *Harvard Education Review* (Summer 1993) "Participatory Literary Education behind bars - AIDS opens the Door".

I'm not sure I'll ever have the privilege again of attending a CEA conference, but if, in years to come, I do, I would love to see such rich American sources of inspiration much more centre stage. And, hopefully, also, the wheel will have turned in penal policy and strong humanitarian values will have reasserted themselves once more.

Note: If any readers are lucky enough to be in the U.S. in the coming summers, the upcoming conferences are in Minnesota (1996), Texas (1997) and Salt Lake City (1998). Information on these, CEA membership and other CEA activities may be obtained from: Correctional Education Association, 4380 Forbes Boulevard, Lanham, Maryland 20706, U.S.A.

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Kevin Warner  
Ireland

**Joanna Gallagher from St Patrick's Institution for Young Offenders in Dublin visited Stateville Prison in Joliet, Illinois, USA last summer. She gives her impressions of the Education Programme there below:**

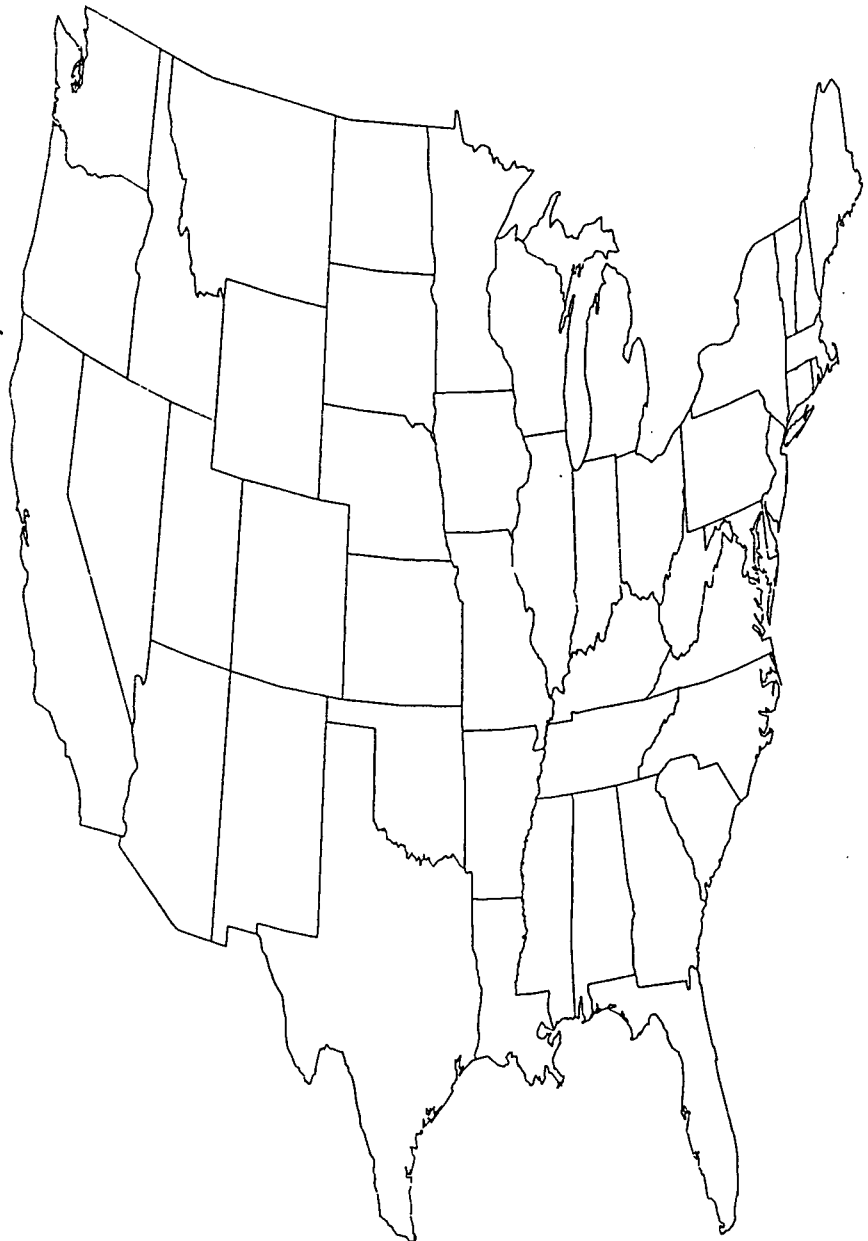
My visit to Stateville was mainly concerned with the education provision of which I am myself involved in here in Ireland. Sheldon Liebmann the Education Organiser at Stateville had invited me to see their provision at first hand. Sheldon has been in charge of the University and College level courses and studies at Stateville. All students who wish to do degrees or study at third level must have first completed the high school levels and exams. The lower levels - primary and high school levels are very competently organised by another member of staff. All students who come to the school want to learn and are motivated by this desire and by one another. When I was there there was a very relaxed atmosphere mainly because it was the end of term and exams were either completed or being prepared for.

Sheldon Liebmann explained that the State had recently rescinded funding for third level education in Stateville with the result that the teachers were being redeployed to other prisons. Sheldon was concerned to continue his work with the prisoners in Stateville through the Open University type method which they refer to as Distance Education, so that at least those of the prisoners

who wished to complete their degrees could do so. It was interesting to hear that over half the books in their library were law books and that most of those studying at third level were studying law. One of the other most popular subjects was computer graphics.

The majority of the prison population were Black and Mexican. Those I met and spoke to were quite vocal and knowledgeable. They seemed

sincerely interested in continuing with their education. One had organised a meeting of the "brothers" to discuss their African American culture. They evidently research their subject then give a lecture and have a discussion afterwards. Sheldon said my visit to Stateville would be an experience and he was right - it was !



**EPEA Steering Committee for 1996**

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\* Martin Druke (Germany)

\* James O'Hare (Scotland)

From Summer 1996:

Pam Lorenz (Ireland)

Katinka Reynards (Netherlands)

Janine Duprey Kennedy (France)

Deputy Secretary position to be filled by ballot of members (Spring/Summer 1996)

The person elected will be Deputy Secretary 1996/7 and then Secretary from 1997/9. Nomination details etc will appear in the next bulletin.

The next EPEA conference will be held in Hungary in November 1997

A Steering Committee meeting took place over the weekend of 1 - 3 March in the Prison Staff Training College, Lunde in Denmark.

The next newsletter will be a Swedish/German issue. Articles to Sven Svenson (mid August deadline). After that (Spring, 1997) the issue will be Dutch with Robert Suvaal as the contact person. Addresses and telephone/fax numbers will be found in the section giving details of the Steering Committee.

Please send articles on disk if possible to Agneta and Robert. Sending articles on disk greatly reduces the amount of work editors have to do, so please adhere to this request if you possibly can. If you do not have access to a computer yourself, please ask a friend or colleague to type your article for you and give it to you on disk. Thanks !

Please refer to the bulletin for deadlines for contributions and details of appropriate software in which to submit your article.

Liason Persons for EPEA 1996

Denmark: Aksel Christensen and Bjorn Petersen  
 England and Wales: Dave Marston and David Poole  
 Finland: Tuula Aamuvuori and Claus Andersin  
 France: Yves Le Guennec  
 Ireland: Pam Lorenz and Sean Wynne  
 Luxembourg: Carlo Reuland and Martine Fuchs  
 Netherlands: Joke Holdtgrefe and Katinka Reijnders  
 Northern Ireland: Dominic Henry and Paddy Rocks  
 Norway: Torfinn Langelid  
 Scotland: Janet Ivol and James O'Hare  
 Sweden: Rolf Blomberg and Hans Sjoberg

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 Germany: Maximilian Weidenhiller  
 Greece: Alexandros Athanassopoulos and Helen Koukopoulou  
 Hungary: Laszlo Csetneky and Atilla Hevenyi  
 Italy: Angelo Ruggieri  
 Latvia: Vacheslav Korzhanov and Olga Salfetnikova  
 Lithuania: Igoris Zareckis and Valdemaras Vadoklis  
 Malta: Mark F. Vella  
 Spain: Pilar de las Heras and Pedro Perez Hortiguera  
 Switzerland: Claude Neuhaus  
 Turkey: Yusuf Ogmen and Bulent Dogan

Number	Deadline for contribution	Sent to all members	Contact address
11	Week 33 1996	Week 42 1996	Svenolov Svensson Swedish Prison & Probation Adm Regional office of Gothenburg Box 5423 S-402 29 GÖTEBORG Sweden Fax +46 31 833922
12	Week 10 1997	Week 16 1997	Robert Suvaal DJI Postbus 30132 2500 GC Den Haag Netherlands Fax +31 70 3702910
13	Week 33 1997	Week 42 1997	?

