

# Recent Books

Reviewed by N. J. TYNDALL

## SIR LIONEL FOX REMEMBERED

A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS in English and French entitled *Studies in Penology* (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 22.50 Gldrs.) has been published, four years after his death, to the memory of Sir Lionel Fox, C.B., M.C., by his colleagues in the International Penal and Penitentiary Foundation. It has about it a whiff of nostalgia for the past glory of the Prison Commission and is a reminder of Sir Lionel's influence both nationally and internationally in the years 1942-1960 when he was chairman.

A. W. Peterson evaluates his contribution during these 18 years. The twin pillars of Fox's policy were his constant questioning of all aspects of penal administration, never being content with existing methods, and his firm conviction that the public should be adequately informed of what was being done in its name. This questioning led to wide increases in the social and educational facilities for prisoners, rapid expansion of open prisons and the inauguration of the hostel scheme, all springing from humanitarian considerations.

Though most of the other articles pay personal tribute to Fox in

passing, they are not directly concerned with his work. Aulie, of Norway, strongly condemns attempts to argue that criminal policy is a science and consequently that the psychiatrists should have responsibility for sentencing and treatment. He claims that medical "experts" are in danger both of themselves assuming too great a skill in prediction and of being pushed into an omniscient position by befuddled laymen.

There are differing views on the worth of present-day penal administration. Sanford Bates of New Jersey takes an optimistic view, praising the work of the last 30 years, in particular the growth of open prisons. But to Professor Lopez-Ray many of these improvements are merely patch remedies. In a major article entitled "Analytical Penology" he wants root and branch reform, maintaining for instance that "overcrowding is more the sequel of obsolete prison and criminal justice systems than a lack of space". As well as criticising the building in the 1960's of Blundeston-type cell blocks and the continuance of minimal prison earnings, he wants multi-purpose buildings, such as locals, to be

abolished in order to give each establishment a clearer task. It is the failure to tackle this problem that has generated the present rush of interest in after-care. But no useful after-care will be achieved while treatment inside is so haphazard.

Various open prison systems are described in detail. In Holland anyone serving over eight months is eligible for open prisons, which consist of no more than 25 men and are more akin to our hostels than our open prisons. Finland has a differentiated open prison system with labour colonies for short-term prisoners who serve no time in closed prisons first, prison colonies as a progressive stage for long-term men, and labour camps for released prisoners. But in these three different types of prisons, all men receive full wages and have considerable independence.

English open prisons receive a searching examination from Phoebe Willetts in *Invisible Bars* (Epworth Press, 12s. 6d.). She prefers Holloway to an open prison any day. As a nuclear disarmament, wife of an Anglican clergyman, she is not a representative prisoner, but many of her complaints sound typical enough. She couldn't get a prison brassiere to fit and wonders why women shouldn't wear their own. She hated the lack of privacy in the dormitories. She thought it incongruous to "trust" women in open conditions, then make them walk in crocodile like school girls.

The real burden of her complaint

is more fundamental. She feels the opportunities afforded by open conditions are wasted. Every effort she felt was taken to deprive the women of their individuality and sense of personal worth. Though there are no physical bolts and bars, there might as well be, for the apparent sense of freedom was a myth. It was in Holloway that she really felt she was treated as a responsible human being. The open prison was a boarding school which reduced human dignity to a condition of helpless dependence. To add insult to injury the inmates were expected to be grateful for being there. The highlight of the year was open day, which is described in terms worthy of similar occasions recounted by Brendan Behan and Frank Norman.

Tony Parker, Prison Visitor with a tape recorder, has switched his interest to the other sex in *Five Women* (Hutchinson, 25s. 0d.), case histories of, curiously, six women. I would not agree with the dust cover that it is an important book, but it is short and easy reading, and fact is more interesting than fiction. He hammers home that we must constantly look for the person behind the prisoner; that the person is very often hopeless, futile, unlovely and very difficult to help.

Two books about work being done to help people in the community are worth mentioning. *The Samaritans*, edited by the founder of the movement CHAD VARAH (Constable, 18s. 0d.) is part descriptive of the work being done

to prevent suicides (6,000 per year successful, with an estimated ten times as many attempts) and part simple accounts of how to help people in distress. de Berker contributes a chapter on befriending those suffering from guilt, and other chapters discuss depression, loneliness and sexual difficulties. *Christians and Social Work* by

Kathleen Heasman (S.C.M. Press, 8s. 6d.) looks at the need for social work in a welfare state, touches on group counselling at Pollington Borstal and Claybury Mental Health, and talks about the layman's approach to counselling or casework. People's problems inside prisons are no different from those outside.

## CONTRIBUTORS

A. TAYLOR is an officer at Camp Hill. Apart from cartooning, his interests are the study of birds and animals.

A. F. RUTHERFORD qualified in social studies and criminology at Durham and Cambridge. He has been an assistant governor at Hewell Grange borstal since 1962.

E. PERRY, recently retired after over 25 years' service in many different types of establishment, was hostel warden at Pentonville for three years.

D. W. BUTLER is an officer at Maidstone Prison.

W. C. E. HARTLEY, a bank cashier who is an economics graduate, is an authority on Yorkshire banking history and lecturer to the Institute of Bankers.

For some years he has been secretary at the Harrogate committee of the West Riding Discharged Prisoners Aid Society, frequently visits Thorp Arch prison and co-operates with the Probation Service, local Guild of Help and other bodies in voluntary after care work. His wife is a magistrate.

### Pen Pal Please

Mr. C. K. AGBALE, a 24-year-old Ghanaian prison officer, working in Accra borstal (P.O. Box 129) wishes to have a pen friend in the United Kingdom.