

PRISON INSTITUTIONS of the UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA




Number 1

The first of a series of five publications issued by the
Department of Prisons to portray the advances made in
modernizing the country's prison institutions

Prison Institutions of the Union of South Africa

NUMBER 1



Non-white prisoners at:

Colesberg Prison

Biën Donneé Semi-open Institution

Zonderwater Tubercular Section

Foreword

THIS short pictorial publication is the first of a series of five similar brochures which will be issued by the Department of Prisons at convenient intervals to portray the advances made in the Union of South Africa in modernizing the country's older prison institutions and in the construction of modern types of such institutions with all their necessary ancillary buildings with a view to providing improved facilities for the housing, treatment and training of prisoners in accordance with accepted penitentiary trends. Remembering that some of the Union's two hundred odd penal institutions have been in existence since well before the turn of the last century, it will be realised that, despite earlier efforts at modernization, many of those older prison institutions still fall short of present-day standards in important respects.

As a result of what has already been accomplished in this direction, it has been possible for the Department of Prisons to give wider effect to its plans for the systematic decentralization of prisoners from the large overcrowded institutions in the cities and bigger towns to the smaller ones in the country towns and villages as may be required in conformity with the prisoners' pre-determined individualized classifications. The underlying aims of these procedures are the reformation and rehabilitation of offenders by means of appropriate corrective treatment and training under hygienic conditions at the different types of institutions available and which are equipped with a variety of up-to-date training facilities for the respective classified groups of prisoners.

The issue of this series of brochures was foreshadowed in the concluding chapter of a recently published pamphlet entitled: "A review of developments in the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders in the Union of South Africa during the five-year period ended 30th June, 1957". In them it is sought to present mainly visual impressions, with only limited narrative amplifications where necessary, of the practices followed by the Prison Administration of the Union in its efforts to reform and rehabilitate offenders. The remaining numbers of the series will comprise:—

- No. 2: Non-white prisoners at Leeuwkop Prison Farm, with brief references to certain other Prison Farms.
- No. 3: White prisoners at Pretoria Central Prison—Zonderwater Semi-open Prison—and Kroonstad Prison.
- No. 4: Non-white prisoners at Withbank Prison.
- No. 5: The Women's Section of Nylstroom Prison.

Part I

COLESBERG PRISON

IN progressing towards full achievement of the ideal of decentralization of prisoners from the large overcrowded prison institutions of the cities and towns to the more congenial atmosphere and surroundings of smaller institutions in the rural areas so as to implement its current policy of intensified individualized classification of prisoners—a policy which obviously cannot be methodically and successfully applied at institutions where overcrowded conditions persist, the Department of Prisons, from its own resources of building trades personnel and prisoners, is gradually replacing those of the more or less obsolete types of prison institutions as do not conform with the concepts of the internationally approved Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners by modern institutions complying with the required standards.

A case in point is the newly-built modern prison institution at Colesberg. It is in fact typical of a number of other similarly designed institutions which are now in commission in various parts of the country. As Colesberg Prison is the most recently completed rural institution of its type, it has been selected as the subject for illustration in Part I of this brochure.





The picture opposite gives a general bird's-eye view of the layout of the prison buildings with the staff quarters and recreational amenities sited in a valley on the outskirts of Colesberg town, a part of which is visible in the distant wooded area to the right rear of the photograph. The staff bowling greens form the central part of the foreground and the whole area surrounding them is in course of being laid out and beautified as a landscape garden. A close-up view of the bowling greens and the hillock in their rear appears above.

Below is a distant frontal view of the prison and a part of the personnel married quarters, with the bowling greens receiving attention by prisoners in the foreground.





The picture above depicts a general view of the prison terrain, looking down from the rocky hillock in the foreground towards the floriculture and landscape gardening operations. In connection with such operations, it is pertinent to mention that the Department of Prisons is "teaming-in" with the authorities of the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in the Cape Peninsula, the Caledon Wild Flower Gardens, and the Worcester Karoo Gardens to ensure the best results in these fields at all prison institutions at which operations of this nature are practicable, not only for beautification purposes but to provide sound training for the prisoners employed on them.



The bottom picture on the opposite page shows a frontal perspective view of the main prison building. The institution has a rated capacity of 200 prisoners and on its completion the Department was able to transfer 150 prisoners—all first offenders—serving sentences of upwards of four years to it from the overcrowded prison in the city of Durban in pursuance of the policy of decentralization to promote effective training. At all institutions of this type the prisoners receive their training extra-murally.

On the right is a corner within the prison kitchen showing the steam-cooking facilities, while the picture below reveals another modern feature of the kitchen activities—the steam-operated food-warmers which ensure that after the dishing-up process the food can be stored and served piping-hot at meal times, no matter how many individuals are being catered for, in the interests of the prisoners' physical well-being.



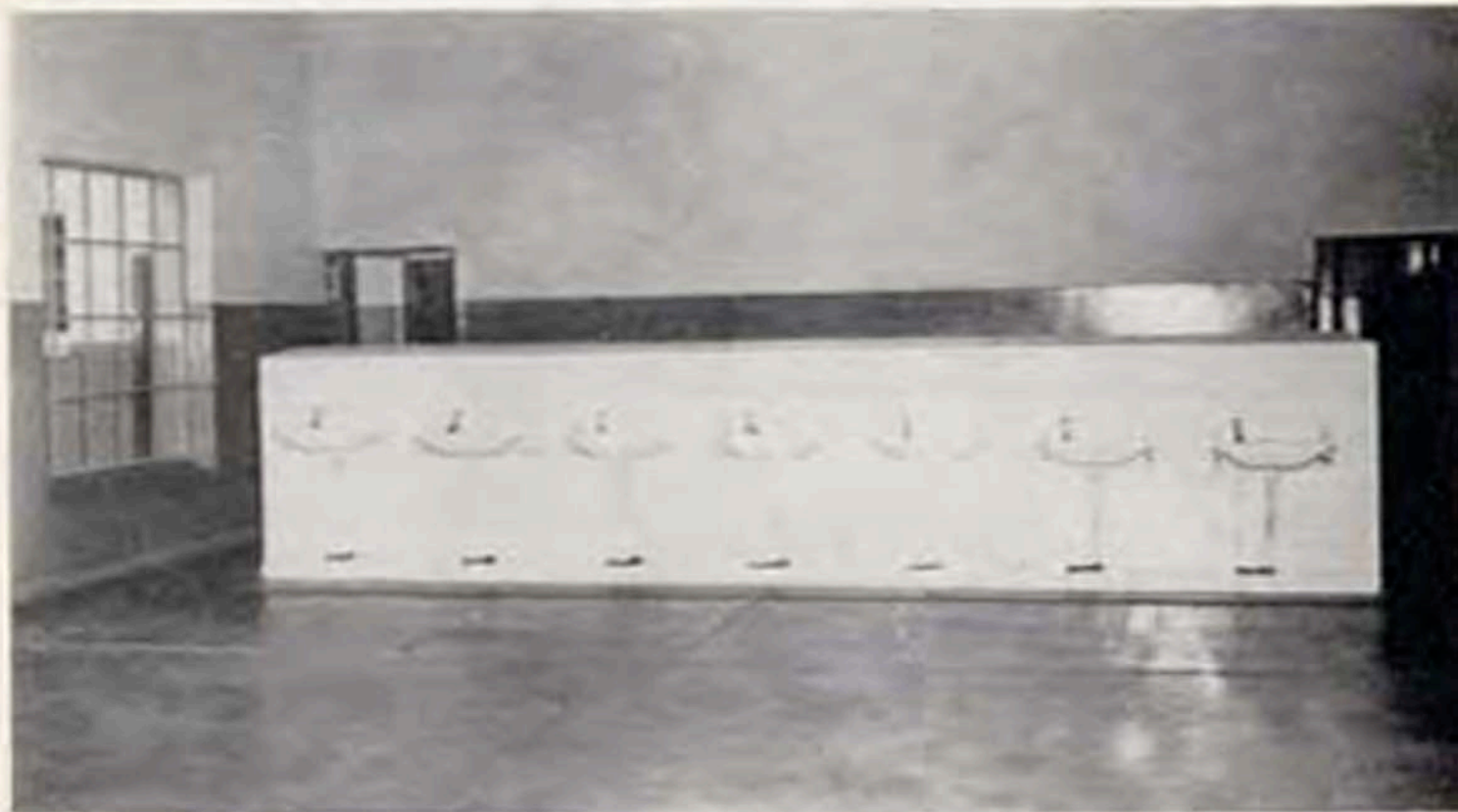
A part of the airy, sunlit and well-grassed quadrangle within the prison, with a prisoner busily engaged in mowing the lawn, is shown in the picture below. Lawned quadrangles such as this are particular features of most prison institutions in the Union.



The inside view of the communal cell depicted below is characteristic of those provided for this type of institution. The abundance of prisoner-space, light and air available will be readily noted.



The sisal from which the sleeping mats are made is produced in the sisal plantations operated at Barberton Prison, where the manufacture of the mats in sufficient quantities to meet prison requirements throughout the country forms a major part of the vocational training of the long-sentenced prisoners incarcerated there.



The picture above shows the ablation facilities provided for the prisoners' use in the Colesberg Prison, as well as in other prison institutions of the same type, while the one below depicts an ambulatory prisoner patient taking a bath in the bathroom of the hospital section of the prison.





The provision for visiting and interviewing prisoners at this type of prison institution has been specially designed to facilitate those privileges and rights. The picture above shows a group of prisoners conversing with their relations or friends or being interviewed by their legal representatives at the Colesberg Prison.

Colesberg is situated on the National Road to the North, approximately midway between Cape Town and Johannesburg, and consequently the prison is easily accessible to visitors in transit along that highway.

New prison institutions of the type illustrated in respect of Colesberg Prison have already been built at Ventersburg, Winburg, Brandfort and Senekal in the Orange Free State Province; at George and Worcester in the Cape Province; and at Nylstroom, Pietersburg and Barberton in the Transvaal Province. The map on the last page shows the geographic positions of the institutions mentioned in this brochure. The Department of Prisons is proceeding systematically in like manner at a fairly high tempo in a number of other places spread over the four Provinces of the Union. All such building operations, including the manufacture of the doors, windows, framing, etc., required for them, are carried out in their entirety, under the supervision of the Department's Building Group personnel, by prisoners who have been trained for these tasks in prison institutions. These building projects also provide facilities for the training of additional selected prisoners in the trades falling within the building industry.

Part II

BIEN DONNÉ SEMI-OPEN INSTITUTION

THE Bien Donn  semi-open institution is situated on a State-owned farm bearing that name in the district of Paarl, some 35 miles from Cape Town. The farm is used as a Fruit Research Station by the Department of Agriculture, whose professional officers also conduct courses for students in the latest scientific methods of viticulture and fruit culture. The farm is in the heart of the vast vineyards and fruit producing farms in the Southern and Western sectors of the Cape Province, which are more commonly known in this country as the "Western Province".

The homestead was built in the year 1800. It is now used as a hostel for students participating in the courses mentioned above. A close-up view of the front section of the homestead appears below. The "H" formation of the structure and the gables with their elaborate friezes and other ornamentation are characteristic features of the old Cape architectural style of buildings erected in that part of the country during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries, many of which are of great historical interest and have, therefore, been maintained in their original form and style.





The picture above shows part of the experimental vineyards with the original gabled homestead and farm buildings at the foot of the picturesque mountain range in the background.

Biên Donné semi-open institution was designed and built by the Department of Prisons' Building Group personnel and prisoners to harmonize with the style of the historical buildings on the farm, on which an area of eight morgen of land has been made available for prison requirements. A frontal view of the institution, with the cloud-capped mountain in the background, is shown below.





The picture above was taken from just inside the main gates of the institution. It shows the griled entrance to the quadrangle with the kitchen and open-air courtyard in the background. The grille gates and the flanking grilles in the foreground were manufactured in the workshops of Pretoria Central Prison, where considerable quantities of ironwork are fashioned and produced for departmental prison building projects throughout the country.

A view of the open-air, turfed and paved courtyard within the institution appears below.





The rated capacity of this semi-open institution is 150 prisoners, all of whom are members of the Coloured community—the predominant non-white racial group in that area. The picture above shows a view of the interior of a typical institution kitchen and the steam-cooking facilities available, while below is a picture showing part of the inside of a communal cell with rolled sleeping-mats and folded blankets stacked for the day.

A view of the airy, sunlit hospital ward with a prisoner-patient





receiving medicine prescribed by the medical officer from a fellow-prisoner hospital orderly appears above.



A view of the ablution and sanitary facilities provided for the prisoners' use is shown in the bottom picture on the opposite page.

The prisoners at this semi-open institution receive training in modern methods of viticulture and in all other phases of intensive fruit culture. A picture of a group of prisoners picking experimental peaches appears below, while another group engaged on picking experimental grapes is pictured on the previous page.



A group of prisoners is seen above preparing contour walls between the rows of vines in the experimental vineyard, while in





the two pictures above the prisoners are shown extracting and screening soil specimens under the supervision of professional officers for chemical analysis at the Government Fruit Research Station on the farm.



Part III

ZONDERWATER TUBERCULAR SECTION

A special self-contained hospital section for non-white prisoners—principally those of the Bantu group—suffering from tuberculosis in a communicable form was recently established on a portion of the large prison reserve of Zonderwater semi-open institution, which had itself come into being during 1952 as a "Halfway-house" Prison to prepare long-term prisoners for re-adjustment within the community on release. The institution is situated in pleasant rural surroundings at Cullinan (Premier Mine) on property which had formerly been used for military purposes by the Department of Defence. The cantonments and other military buildings were modernized and adapted for prison needs by the Department of Prisons Building Group personnel and prisoners and it has now been possible to set aside a complete section for the segregation and medical treatment of tubercular prisoners in conditions which will facilitate their recovery.

A frontal view of the hospital section for such prisoners is shown below.



The prison hospital section is set in juxtaposition to the fully equipped Tubercular Hospital for civil patients administered by the Department of Health, whose medical officers are also responsible for the care and treatment of the criminal patients confined in the adjacent prison hospital section, with the assistance of prison personnel who are fully trained in hospital duties. In the picture on the right a prisoner-patient is seen being examined by the doctors.



The following two pictures illustrate the X-ray photographic equipment in operation on prisoner-patients. The official appearing in the first photograph is a trained prison hospital officer.



Below is a view of the inside of a ward with bed-patients in the prison hospital section. The generous provision made for sunlight and ventilation and the absence of window-bars are particular points of interest.



The prison hospital section is separated from the civil hospital and the other prison divisions by a perimeter fence.



An inside view of a ward of the adjacent section for civil patients is shown on the right.

The prison hospital section provides accommodation for 266 tuberculous criminal patients. At the moment, there are 147 such patients under treatment in the section, of whom, as will be observed from the picture appearing hereunder, a fair number are ambulatory cases, but even so the physical condition of these men renders them incapable of doing any but the lightest form of work.





For medical reasons associated with dietary problems, the kitchen facilities have been designed to meet the joint requirements of the civil and prison hospital sections. A view of the steam and electric cooking facilities available in the kitchen is shown above.

These tuberculous prisoners are concentrated at Zonderwater Tubercular Section from all prison institutions in the Union so that they will not be a menace to the health of other prisoners. Except in extraordinary circumstances, release from imprisonment on medical grounds is rarely considered in these cases, since the prisoners' inability to work, coupled with past persistent criminal tendencies, would simply result in the community being endangered and preyed upon. Those who have not been cured of the disease or rendered non-contagious by the time their sentences expire are admitted to civil institutions for further medical treatment after release.



The map above shows the geographic positions of the prison institutions mentioned in this brochure.

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