

PRISON DEPARTMENT CYPRUS

PRISON DEPARTMENT

Historical elements regarding Cyprus Prisons

According to the report of the British Police Governor for the year 1899 in Cyprus, there was one Central Prison functioning in Nicosia. Inmates from all Cyprus whom the sentences were more than six months, were kept there.

Inmates whom the sentences were smaller than six months were kept in the District Prisons that functioned in the rest of the 5 cities of the island.

The District Prisons began closing down progressively after the year 1940. During the year 1950 only two District Prisons were functioning, in Paphos and in Famagusta that were closing down as well, by the end of 1951.

The central Prison of Nicosia was accommodated in an old building, the Bougiouk Han , which in the old days was used for keeping animals.

The Bougiouk Han was taken over on 5th February 1879 by the British, who designed the place in a way that the ground floor was used as the Prison and the first floor was used to accommodate the Prison Guards.



The food in the Prison, for the detainees was only one piece of bread and nothing else. Inmates were not allowed to have any visits. Because any contact with the free society was forbidden. Inmates worked every day endless hours by force in exhaustive and monotonous jobs, like the fracturing of stones, or the manufacture of rope and so on.

The only purpose of the Prison was the safe detention within and the exemplary punishment of detainees. Neither medical care, hob concern for their families or their children existed. The deprivation of all essential pleasures in life, the endless and cold monotony and routine, the continuous Isolation in unhealthy cells and the cruel behavior of the wardens changed the

inmates into living ghosts. The only sentiments dominated in the prison were the hostility, hate, rebellion, malevolence and scorn. Sentiments which many times led to losses of human lives.



The first Prisons of Cyprus were built by the British in 1894 according to the Victorian model of British Prisons. As it was natural with the construction of prisons the way of administration also changed, as well as the methods of treatment of the inmates, reflecting the spirit and the new ideas of that era. Unfortunately the improvement of the situation in the Cyprus Prison stopped at the period of the Independence Fight of EOKA in 1955-1959, and the Prisons changed once again to become a place of terrorism, torture and death for the fighters of freedom.

They are one of the most unique phenomenon in the world. Young patriots, fighters of freedom, were buried in the same place where they were tortured hanged and executed.

The real change in the perceptions for the mission and the purpose of the Prison began after the declaration of Democracy of Cyprus Republic in 1960. Particularly the last few years the prisons ceased to be considered as a place of torture and punishment and they are rather considered to be a place of isolation of inmates from the society for a certain period of time and simultaneously as a place of preparation to reintegrate into the society as a useful and self-sustained citizen, also a person that can control himself and his actions and as an individual that can undertake his familial and social responsibilities.



Aiming to the achievement of this new mission of the Prison, new legislations have been introduced for the treatment of detainees, adapted from European models and from the international statements and conventions on the protection of Human Rights. New modern buildings for accommodation have been constructed and new systems of education and professional training have been applied. New institutions, like the **Open Prison** and **Guidance Centre and out of Prison Employment** have been tried out with a big success and continue to work relations between personnel and detainees has been improved. As a result, the collaboration replaced the dispute, the comprehension replaced the animosity, the dignity replaced the humiliation, and hope replaced despair.

Today the Cyprus Prison Department favorably compared with the Prisons of most European countries from the point of legislation and technical infrastructure, as from the point of personnel's vocational skills. Also the methods of education and the programs of re-establishment of detainees are the most progressive of most of the European Countries. However, this doesn't mean that the effort for further progress should not be continued. On the contrary, this effort is continuous with higher intensity and with better programming, with the result of the upgrade of the safety conditions. The food and nourishment of detainees is improved qualitatively. The programs of education, training and vocational training are enriched and the environment as well as the living conditions and work are improved. Generally the life in the Prisons is more human and with more creative content.





Prison Department mission

The policy of Ministry of Justice and Public Order of the Republic of Cyprus and by extension the Prison Department is supported upon four major issues: safety – humanitarian treatment – education - rehabilitation

That is why the Prison Department has as his basic mission:

- The secure detention of individuals sent to prison from the courts.
- The safeguard of detentions conditions that guarantee the respect of human dignity.
- The equal treatment of detainees without any unfavorable discrimination of race, color, sex, language, nation, social origin or convictions.
- The encouragement of self esteem, feelings of responsibility of detainees with the benefit of education, professional training, creative entertainment, engrossment, self - criticism and self –acknowledgement.
- The guidance and assistance for a new beginning of detainees in their life.

The achievement of this mission is aimed by :

- The observance of the discipline within the prison area.
- Respect and adherence to the Laws and Regulations of the establishment.
- Moral, psychological, personal and social support of detainee to assist them to accomplish smooth rehabilitation in the society.
- The best possible exploitation of economic resources that is provided from the department for the development of building installations ,the enrichment of educational and other programs as well as the improvement of the working environment and the increase of the educational level of the personnel working in the Prison.



CYPRUS PRISON DEPARTMENT

In the Republic of Cyprus there is only one Prison, the Cyprus Prison Department.

The Cyprus Prison Department is divided in three sections: Closed Prison, Open Prison and the Guidance Center for out of prison employment and Rehabilitation of prisoners.

Closed Prison

The Closed Prison is of high security conditions and is subdivided in 10 blocks (1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3, 4, 5, 8, JUVENILES AND SPECIAL8 and block 4 (isolation block)). In every section of the closed Prison there are kitchens where the prisoners have their breakfast, lunch and dinner. Beside the kitchens, there are two visiting areas where families and friends of prisoners can visit them after authorization.

A medical center is held where a General Pathologist examines all prisoners. Additionally, there is a second infirmary staffed by nurses who are responsible for blood examinations, minor injuries and helping the Pathologist when needed.

There are Football fields, TV Rooms, gymnasiums, a theatre, church, mosque, school and various workshops around them the prison in order to train, and educate prisoners, as well as to keep the occupied through their sentence in the prison.

JUVENILES

In the past, juvenile offenders were staying in the same wings with other offenders. There was no separate section for them. With our accession to the European Union a new prison wing has been constructed for young detainees between the ages of 16-21. During the day, young offenders can move and take part in the activities with the rest of the prisoners. However if they create problems for the staff or other detainees, they will be moved back to their wing to spend the day. A new building is now under construction to be used exclusively for young offenders to avoid contact with older prisoners or more serious criminal offenders.

Block 3

Block 3 is the female prisoners Block. It is held separately from the other Blocks so that female and male prisoners do not have any contact or communication between them. (Though, in cases when a male prisoner is closely related to a female prisoner special arrangements are made in order to visit each other once a week).

In Block 3, there are workshops to occupy the prisoners, such as, gym- field TV-room/ kitchen and garden.

The main aim of the administration is the reformation and rehabilitation of the prisoners and so special emphasis is given on the educational, vocational and rehabilitation programmes for the detainees and their linear reintegration to the society.

Some educational programmes that are applied are:

A. Educational programmes

1. Greek language
2. English language
3. Turkish language
4. Russian language
5. Creative writing
6. Social Psychology
7. Applied Mathematics
8. Folklore dance

B. Vocational Rehabilitation Programmes

1. Plumping
2. Carpentry
3. cookery
4. computers

The programmes are adjusted regarding the preferences of the detainees.



The Open Prison

The Open Prison is of lower security conditions and is located separately from the Closed Prison, so that prisoners held there; do not have any contact with prisoners of the Closed Prison.

Since a prisoner has completed approximately a third or / a quarter of his/ her sentence is allowed to apply for induction in the open prison, and a special committee decides that the prisoner acquires the criteria to stay the in Open Prison.

The conditions in the Open Prison are considered to be better, given that almost all prisoners stay in single cells by themselves.

In the Open Prison, there is a kitchen, a gymnasium, and a visit area for the prisoners. Besides the Open Prison there is a farm where the inmates plant vegetables, and care for the olive trees.

Guidance Center for out of Prison Employment and Rehabilitation of Prisoners

The Prisoners in the Guidance Center stay for a period of time that cannot exceed twelve months or be shorter than one month.

The prisoners work in the free market, on the same terms of employment as the rest of the employees in the free market.

The Center has a kitchen that can be used by the prisoners, to prepare and cook their food at their own expense. Not many facilities are provided because the prisoners spend many hours of the day outside the Prison, and are allowed to house visits more often (1-4 times per month, according to their sentence).

Female prisoners who are selected for out of Prison employment continue to stay in the women's wing (Block 3).

Renovations and new buildings

The buildings in the Cyprus Prison Department were built in the 1890s and in the 1980s and are in need of continuous development and renovation.

In 2012 the construction of the new Medical and Mental Health Center will be one of the main development projects for the department.

In the near future, Block 9, the Block for juveniles and young offenders will be ready to host youngsters up to the age of 21.

A new extension of the Block 3, which is for women, will be constructed in 2012.

Main Problems

One of the main problems of the Prison is over population and the large number of foreign detainees.

