

The Inquiring Mind

This series of articles, on many different subjects, results from work by senior students at the school of journalism at the University of Oregon. Each is a condensed version of a full-length thesis written as partial requirement for graduation at the school.

ABOLISHING PUNISHMENT OF CRIMINALS

By Jack Sweet

Public ideas and attitudes are changing all the time. For instance, there is a theory that punishment of criminals eventually could and should be done away with. This is so startling a concept that further explanation is demanded. The theory goes something like this: Punishment is nothing but vengeance, benefiting no one and causing irreparable harm to the criminal. The criminal can't be allowed to remain free in society as long as he represents a danger to that society but he should be helped, not further warped by a vengeful penal system.

In most cases the law-breaker could be reformed by competent guidance. If emphasis were on this reformation rather than on punishment, all that would be lost would be the satisfaction some people get out of seeing "sinners" suffer.

Gradual Drift

A gradual drift away from punishment as such is taking place now. We have begun to consider a criminal's mental state before we decide whether to try to cure him or to punish him. Psychiatric aid is replacing solitary confinement, though slowly, to be sure. Under a certain age, criminals are called "juvenile delinquents" and every effort is made to turn them into useful, happy citizens. If we could keep raising this arbitrary age level we might one day consider all people eligible for our sympathy, understanding, and help.

Removing the concept of intentional punishment would not mean letting criminals roam free. If it is found that a person cannot be reformed, then that person must be segregated from the society he endangers. He need not be locked in a barren cell but merely kept away from the community. This might be accomplished in such a way that the law-breaker would be receiving no more punishment than a person confined in a mental institution or one detained in quarantine with some communicable disease. Every means would be taken to effect a "cure."

means of combatting crime. But is it necessarily the only means? Surely society can find an alternative to vengeance.

State punishment is an aspect of rule by fear. It tends to make cowardice a virtue, in that fear promotes honesty. If we train our people in fear who will protect our nation in time of war, when cowardice becomes a contemptible crime? We ask too much in desiring a man to fear no enemy but to fear his own legal system.

It sounds impractical, perhaps completely unrealistic, to say that moral standards must be strengthened to replace government by fear. However, much in our society is based on man's fundamental honesty.

We must so often rely on cooperation and decency. It is almost certain that some men will refuse to give this cooperation and will break the established laws. But it isn't essential that Justice must draw her sword and revenge society. If the criminal can be reformed into a good citizen, society should not demand some arbitrary pound of flesh.

Worse Than Crime

The punishment, in so many cases (if not in all), is worse than the crime. If, say, a fit of jealous anger causes a man to commit murder, in his crime as any worse than the crime of society which will treat its erring citizen like a caged animal for thirty years, or longer. To punish wrong seems such an obvious and natural rule to most people. It fits in so well with their view of their God's intentions. But is it not also the will of this God to reward virtue, and who talks of a court of justice for that purpose? Why is such a pleasant notion rejected while the vicious notion of punishment is taken for granted?

Necessary Evil

When we get right down to it, the best that some might say for criminal punishment is that it is a necessary evil. But is it necessary? For thousands of years we have tried the brutal use of punishment for crime. Crime has not vanished by any means. Our system is not perfect. Perhaps we should try a

They'll Do It Every Time



Bill Isaacs Gets \$500 Scholarship

Bill Isaacs, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Isaacs, 1120 Bellview st., Ashland, former Medford resident, has received a \$500 national scholarship award by the National Council of State Garden clubs.

He also has been named a research assistant under a grant by the University of Washington for work on a botanical project next September. He will be a senior at the University of Washington next year.

Young Isaacs is now attending the summer session at the University of Michigan biological station as an assistant to Dr. Alexander Smith, head of the Mycological department at the university.

system which involves insight, understanding, and compassion, rather than punishment. Such a system, being run by men, would surely not be perfect. But our present system too is unsuccessful.

Even if a system without punishment should be no more successful in preventing crime than a system with punishment, at least we will have a more humane system. If, as individuals, we cannot refrain from an occasional criminal act, we can, perhaps, as a society, abolish the crime of punishment.

Quotes From the News

By UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
London—Mrs. Bessie Braddock, Laborite member of Parliament, replying to a fellow Laborite who asked that a select committee be named to investigate physical damage sustained by prize fighters:
"No boxer is compelled to box. It is a completely voluntary matter, and if it is a question of looking at the things that hurt people there are many other things that may be looked at to more advantage that kill people off much more quickly."

Little Rock, Ark.—President Everett Tucker Jr., of the Little Rock School Board, after a federal court killed two Arkansas anti-integration laws which Gov. Orval E. Faubus used to close four Little Rock high schools last fall:
"I see no alternative but to proceed with some plan of integration."

New York—The appellate division of the New York State Supreme court, in a decision holding that a person who used a coin-operated laundry machine on Sunday was not violating the Sabbath:
"Committing one's own wash to the automatic laundry machine is labor-saving and is not inconsonant with the purpose of Section 2140 to promote rest on the Sabbath."

Denver—Chairman Thurston B. Morton of the Republican National committee, telling a group of young GOP party workers to attract more young people to the Republican party:
"I am convinced that literally millions of young people do not participate in the political activities of either party for the simple reason that no one has ever encouraged them to do so."

'PEEPER' NEARLY BLIND
Milwaukee, Wis.—UPI—Elmer Mueller was fined \$25 Thursday on conviction of being a "peeping Tom." Mueller is blind in the right eye and has very limited vision in the left.

New York—UPI—Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller announced Thursday night that he had effected another \$500-a-year saving in the state budget, by eliminating state payments for calling cards for deputy superintendents of the state Department of Insurance.

Medford Man in Plumber Contest

Ronald Bertram of local 418, Medford, was one of four plumber contestants in the sixth Oregon State Pipe Trades Apprenticeship contest at Oregon State college recently.

The event is planned by the international union to assist in "the making of all-around, better qualified journeymen for the plumbing and pipe fitting industry."

Eugene Halverson, local 51, Portland was winner in the plumbing division and Terry Lee Howden, local 235, Portland, was winner of the pipe fitting division.

They will enter the international contest at Purdue university Aug. 10-14.

Shady Cove Youth Arrested by Police

A 17-year-old Shady Cove resident is in the juvenile detention home today charged with burglary, state police reported.

The teenager is charged with burglary on Medford Corporation property about a half mile west of Butte Falls, officers said. Property stolen was valued at \$92, but most of it was recovered with the youth's arrest by state police last night, police said. The property included miscellaneous hand tools, fire extinguishers, some gasoline and a five gallon can of oil.

The property was reported stolen about May 23, state police said.

Ashland Council Adopts Amendment

Ashland—An amendment to Ashland's city zoning ordinance allowing owners of non-conforming properties in residential areas to install parking lots was adopted by the city council Tuesday night.

Attorney Sid Ainsworth, representing landholders in the area of Beach st. and Siskiyou blvd., opposed the move. Market owner Everett McGee is planning to install a parking lot adjacent to his business in the Beach st., Siskiyou blvd. area.

Ten Area Boys Are Named to Offices

Corvallis—Ten boys from Southern Oregon schools have been elected to offices at American Legion Beaver Boys State at Oregon State college.

More than 450 high school youths are attending the week-long session in citizenship training.

Among those elected to city offices were Kirby Fox, Medford, mayor of Applegate; Ray Konopasek, Medford, recorder for Whitman; Jim Schmidt, Medford, and Nathan Parrish, Crater High school, Miller councilmen; Pat McLaughlin, Medford, and Burton Deakins, Medford, Lewis councilmen.

Trip Hammer, Cave Junction, Astor treasurer; Sam Knudsen, Talent, Meek councilman; Jerre Randolph, Medford, McLoughlin mayor; and Tom Tomjack, St. Mary's, McLoughlin treasurer.

Eads is Member Of Allied Lines

Eads Transfer and Furniture company, 123 South Front st., has been named to membership in the Allied Van Lines, Inc., the firm announced today.

As an Allied member, Eads will be able to provide worldwide moving service. Richard LaBelle, Allied president, cited the new membership "as another in a long series of service improvements by the company over many years of service to Medford."

Eads, founded in 1904, is headed by Leon L. Evans.

MAIL TRIBUNE, Medford, Friday, June 19, 1959

MATES ON JURY

New York—UPI—A husband and wife were picked on the same jury Thursday, a circumstance which involved their coincidental selection in four separate processes from the entire New York county jury list. It had never happened before in the memory of court attaches.

EASTMAN HEAD DIES

Rochester, N. Y.—UPI—William G. Stuber, 95, who was chosen by the late George Eastman to be third president of the Eastman Kodak Co. died here Wednesday.

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