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THE INTERNATIONAL PRISON TOUR COHORT GERMANY AND NORWAY

By: Scott E. Peyton

May 20 –28, 2023

Sponsored by: ARrow Center for Justice, Arthur Rizer and Jessi Rizer

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September 2023

International Prison Cohort



Photo taken outside of Billwerder Prison (Hamburg, Germany), the first stop on our six-day tour of Germany and Norway prison facilities.

Cohort Members

Arthur Rizer, ARrow Center for Justice (organizer)
Akua Amaning, Director of CJ at American Progress
Rachel Wilson, ARrow Center for Justice Reform
Damon Hininger, CEO, CoreCivic
Dennis Sukowski, Germany Ministry of Justice
Elizabeth Trejos, Professor at Texas Tech University
Glenn E. Martin, President, GEMrealestate
Nina Hanssen, Norwegian Author, Journalist
Patrick Plein, Deputy Director, Nolan Center for Justice
Stian Estenstad, Norwegian Red Cross
Etiene Martins, Federal Judge – Brazil

Jessi Rizer, ARrow Center for Justice
Marc Levin, Council on Criminal Justice
Andy Potter, Founder of One Voice United
Craig Waleed, Project Director, Disability Rights of North Carolina
Daren Swenson, VP of Reentry, CoreCivic
Christopher Poulos, ED, Center for Justice and Human Dignity
Gerard Robinson, University of Virginia, School of Law
Heather Rice-Minus, Executive Vice President – Prison Fellowship
Nina Zolezzi, Germany – Consultant
Patrick Swindle, COO, CoreCivic
Scott Peyton, Director for Louisiana & Mississippi – Right on Crime
Marc M. Howard, Professor, Founder of the Frederick Douglas Project

Introduction

Welcome to the photo review of my recent visit to Germany and Norway, where as a member of a cohort sponsored by the ARrow Center for Justice, my journey provided valuable insights into the correctional systems of these two nations. These images highlight the diverse experiences and observations gained during this eye-opening exploration of prisons, shedding light on the efforts and approaches employed to promote justice and rehabilitation.

As a former employee of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections and in my role as the State Director for Right on Crime in Louisiana and Mississippi, and my role as Correctional Leadership Director, I have organized tours of state prisons and I have visited Louisiana and Mississippi's most notorious prisons – Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) and Mississippi State Penitentiary (Parchman), which made comparing experiences compelling.

As part of the International Prison Cohort, I hoped to gain additional insight into correctional practices from across the world and use these insights to help create a better prison system not only in Louisiana and Mississippi but throughout the United States. It is critical to public safety and the safety of the correctional officers and for the rehabilitation of those in there custody that we continue to work towards a more effective prison system.

Meeting the Cohort: Sunday, May 21, 2023



I arrived in Hamburg, Germany and began meeting the members of the International Prison Tour Cohort led by Arthur and Jessi Riser with ARrow Center for Justice.

Hamburg is the 2nd largest city in Germany with a population of 1.89 million residents as of 2022. Overall, Germany has a population of 84.5 million residents.

Day 1 - International Prison Tour – Part 1

Hamburg, Germany

Monday, May 22, 2023

After eating breakfast, the cohort was eager to officially start the tour! We boarded the ARrow Center for Justice bus and began our journey

Our first prison visit took place at Billwerder Prison in Hamburg, Germany. To ensure effective



communication during our tour, two translators accompanied us as many of the staff at Billwerder Prison did not speak English.

Among the six prisons in Hamburg, Billwerder stands out, accommodating a total of 738 inmates, consisting of 638 men and 100 women, including 160 pre-trial detainees. The prison is under the supervision of a psychologist who serves as the warden, overseeing a dedicated team of 400 employees. Originally designed as an open prison, Billwerder is now categorized as a closed prison, or maximum security.



Open prisons, or minimum security, lack the high walls and fences and a greater emphasis is placed on treatment, education and work outside of the prison. Upon intake, each inmate is provided with a reentry plan, which they are responsible for implementing. This plan guides their journey towards successful

rehabilitation and eventual reintegration into society from day the outset.

Notably, the prison features an apartment where incarcerated individuals can receive overnight visits from their families without direct supervision from correctional staff. During our visit, we had the opportunity to engage in insightful discussions with the warden and the support staff. Our conversations focused on daily life inside the prison walls, education of the staff, staff retention, and the general operations of the prison.

Day 1 - International Prison Tour – Part 2

Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial

Monday, May 22, 2023

The second half of the day consisted of a guided tour of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp memorial.

The SS established Neuengamme in December 1938 as a subcamp of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. It was located on the grounds of an abandoned brickworks on the

banks of the Dove-Elbe, a tributary of the Elbe River in the Hamburg suburb Neuengamme, in northern Germany. The death register at Neuengamme indicates that about 40,000 prisoners died in the camp by April 10, 1945.



The primary labor activity at the camp revolved around brick production. Prisoners were subjected to forced labor, involving the extraction of clay from neighboring fields and its subsequent placement into rail carts. These carts were then used to transport the clay to the brickworks building where the bricks were fired in ovens. The second photo is a re-creation of the camp detention cells that were used to house prisoners.

In 1948, the city of Hamburg took over the former concentration camp and began using the site as a prison. Near the end of the 1960s, a second prison facility was built where the clay pits had been. Survivors' groups and members of the public pressured Hamburg to move the prisons from the grounds of the former camp. In 1989 it was agreed that the prisons would be relocated; however, both prisons were not closed until 2006.

Day 2 - International Prison Tour – Part 1

Fuhlsbüttel Prison

Hamburg, Germany

Tuesday, May 23, 2023



The first stop was Fuhlsbüttel Prison in Hamburg, Germany. We were given an informative tour and follow-up discussion with the vice warden and other prison staff. This prison is a secure prison that houses 380 inmates, many who are serving long sentences as well as those in pre-trial detention. The average sentence length is 8 years. There are four main wings of the prison where inmates are housed, with the fifth wing being a chapel and visitation area.

The chapel area serves different religions and there are clergy members on staff.

It also serves as the visitation area which can last nearly 6 hours and opportunities for visitation can be as frequent as weekly.

There are also opportunities for those in custody to leave the prison while escorted by two correctional officers. The officers are discreetly dressed in civilian clothing. The purpose of these outside visits are to help with securing housing, employment, and other needs.

Inmates wear "street clothes" and are out of their cells during the day and are free to roam around designated areas of the facility.



The first part of the prison tour included a view of the solitary confinement cells. The middle picture depicts a room with a mattress where, under the supervision of medical staff, an inmate may be strapped to the mattress for disciplinary measures. Corrections officers pointed out that the time in confinement varies and is under the supervision of not only prison staff, but medical personell as well.



The photo depicts a less restrictive confinement room. The staff pointed out that mental health and social therapy are a big focus at the prison.

The inmates have their own keys to their individual cells and are able to lock their cell door. Windows open in the rooms, allowing for fresh air. The inside of the cell has the appearance of a dorm room as opposed to a prison cell.

After walking through a populated hallway, the tour was stopped. The warden and other prison staff were seen speaking with some of the inmates. The warden returned to advise that we would not be able to tour the occupied areas, as those



housed in this area did not want the area they live in to be toured by outsiders. The staff honored their wishes and we continued to another area of the prison. heading The bakery! The smell of fresh baked bread made us all very hungry. Those inside the prison are taught how to bake.



Their baked goods are used at the prison and sold to businesses in the community. Working in the bakery requires being ready to work at 4:00 am.

After a little persuasion, we were given several loaves of bread and escorted to a break area where

coffee, water and bread were served! Jesse Kelley made certain the bread made it to its destination.

While eating the delicious bread, we were able to ask questions of the prison staff. We were excited when the warden accepted our invitation to join the cohort for dinner.



Day 2 - International Prison Tour – Part 2

The Ministry of Justice

Tuesday, May 23, 2023



The cohort then divided into two groups and traveled to Germany's Ministry of Justice. One group was to meet with Ministry of Justice officials and the second group would be sitting in on a criminal trial. I was selected to meet with officials to learn more about Germany's prison system and

their training for correctional officers. While standing outside of the Regional Criminal Court building in Hamburg, Germany, I couldn't leave without my trademark "Capitol" selfie.



One half of the cohort enters the District Court (top left photo) to sit in on an ongoing trial while the second half of the cohort makes the short walk to the Ministry of Justice to begin our roundtable discussion with officials from the German Ministry of Justice and the Correctional Officer Training Department. Dennis Sukowski, Consultant on Prevention of Extremism, Religious Counseling & Family Orientation with the Ministry of Justice and cohort member leads the discussion between cohort members and the ministry.

The total prison population for Hamburg is approximately 2,121 with a 1 in 891 rate of incarceration. Recidivism rates in Germany are 35% and in Hamburg 40%. On average, inmates



are released after serving 2/3 of their sentence. “Re-socialization” of inmates is the focus of incarceration through education and job skills training. There are social therapy units with a psychologist for every 12-15 offenders.

There are six correctional facilities in Hamburg housing nearly 2,121 inmates. Those marked with the red star were toured by the cohort



1. Untersuchungshaftanstalt, Remand prison / pre-trial detention, adjacent to Criminal Court House, occupancy: 504
2. Hahnöfersand - Juvenile prison: remand, all sentences, social therapy, half-way/open detention, occupancy: 104
3. Billwerder prison: sentences up to 2.5 years, back up remand (160 of 733), and female block (remand, all sentences) (100 of 733)
4. Fuhlsbüttel prison: sentences from 2.5 years, (post sentence) preventive detention (determined at sentencing, approximately 10 individuals), total occupancy: 365.
5. Sozialtherapeutische Anstalt - Social Therapy prison (independent facility on the premises of Fuhlsbüttel), occupancy: 174
6. Glasmoor open prison, occupancy: 206

ACADEMY FOR PRISON STAFF



Main Subjects and number of lessons

Subjects	Lessons
Vollzugsberufskunde – Correctional Service/Occupational Studies	60
Vollzugsrecht für alle Vollzugsformen – Correctional Law	50
Psychologie – Psychology	120
Pädagogik – Pedagogy/Andragogy/Education	90
Strafrecht - Criminal Law	40
Verwaltungsrecht – Civic Law	15
Gesellschaftskunde- Politics, Social Studies	20
Jugendrecht/Jugendvollzug – Juvenile Law and Detention	10
Personalrecht - Rights and Duties as a Civil Servant	15
Schriftliche Kommunikation und Rechtschreibung – Literacy and Orthography	20
Sport, Sporttheorie und ETR-Training – Fitness and Security Training	120

The Academy for Prison Staff provided the cohort with a presentation regarding the staff training, which lasts nearly 2 years and covers a wide range of subjects.

Once training is completed, correctional officers earn the equivalent of thirty-three thousand US dollars a year net pay. They must complete a three-year probation period and are eligible to retire at the age of 60. Additionally, 30% of correctional staff are women.

In comparison, Louisiana correctional officers receive less than two months of formal training. There are two Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requirements for correctional officers – level 2 and level 3. A level 2 correctional officer receives 249 hours of instruction to include firearms training while a level 3 receives 92 hours of instruction and is not certified in firearms. A probation/parole officer, or law enforcement officer, in Louisiana receives 496 hours of POST approved instruction. In less than three weeks, a correctional officer in Louisiana has the required credentials to work inside a prison.

Day 2 - International Prison Tour – Part 3

Cohort Dinner and Training

Tuesday, May 23, 2023



inner and presentations at the Oberhafen Canteen in Hamburg. Great food and even better conversations. Nina Zolezzi, Compassion Prison Project (CPP) and cohort member, pictured on the left, started off the presentations by showing a video, Step Inside the Circle. The video highlights CPP's prison initiative that focus on childhood trauma and mental illness. Their focus is on education, mental health, and rehabilitation.

Arthur Rizer, organizer of the cohort, and founder of ARrow Center for Justice provided the cohort an overview,

background, and his vision for the future of the prison cohort.

The warden from Fuhlsbuttel Prison attended the dinner. I was able to have a long one-on-one discussion with him about corrections.



Day 3- International Prison Tour – Part 1

Travel Day

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

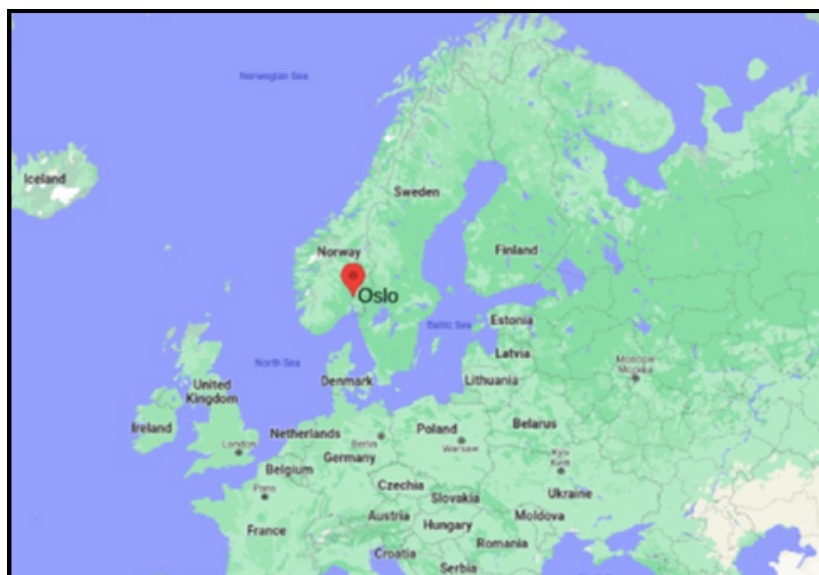


The cohort left Hamburg and headed on our journey to Oslo, Norway.

Day 3- International Prison Tour – Part 2

Dinner in Oslo, Norway

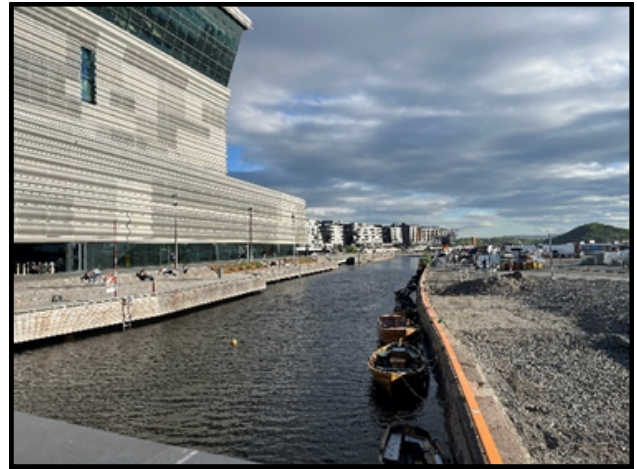
Wednesday, May 24, 2023



Day 3- International Prison Tour – Part 3

Munich National Museum

Wednesday, May 24, 2023



Day 4- International Prison Tour – Part 1

University College of Norwegian Correctional Studies

Oslo, Norway

Thursday, May 25, 2023

The cohort spent the first half of the day at the University College of Norwegian Correctional Studies. The college provides a 2-year program with 1 year of practical experience inside a prison for all Norwegian correctional officers – focusing on many areas – one of which is the principle of normality – "We want life inside to reflect life on the outside" as much as possible to prepare for "normal social life."





Day 5- International Prison Tour – Part 2

Ostfold Prison

Mysen, Norway

Friday, May 26, 2023

After leaving the Red Cross Re-Entry center, the cohort traveled over an hour to visit Indre Ostfold Prison in Mysen, Norway.



Ostfold Prison is the 2nd largest prison in Norway housing 192 inmates. The cohort visited with the Youth Team correctional officers and inmates. There are 5 correctional officers for every 10 youth (18-25 y/o) inmates.

This facility was amazing! The inmates here (18-25 y/o) are permitted to cook their own meals, they have access to knives inside the kitchen area that are attached to the counters with a wire cord. In the recreated area, there were traditional board games, a library, a play station game system, and lastly a commissary that rivals most grocery stores. As a father who has mediated many disagreements over video games, I asked one of the correctional officers about how time was allotted for the use of the video game system. He told me that the inmates have to work it out amongst themselves.

Interestingly, the gift shop that sells crafts made by the inmates is called "The Thief, The Thief."

Day 5- International Prison Tour – Part 3

Farewell Dinner

“The Thief” Restaurant

Friday, May 26, 2023

As this would be the last night in Oslo for many of the cohort members, we celebrated a farewell dinner at The Thief restaurant.



Day 6 - International Prison Tour

“Cultural Day”

Oslo, Norway

Saturday, May 27, 2023

The last full day in Oslo, Norway, was a “Cultural Day.” The day included a guided bus tour of Oslo and surrounding areas. Additionally, we visited a park and a museum.



The first stop was at Holmenkollbakken, a large ski jumping hill located at Holmenkollen in Oslo, Norway. This site was used during the 1952 Winter Olympics.

Next stop - Frogner Park (Norwegian: Frognerparken) / Vigeland Park, located in the central West End borough of Frogner in Oslo, Norway.

THE MONOLITH - "The Monolith stands at the highest point in Vigeland Park, and measures 17 meters above ground. The sculpture is carved out of one stone block, hence the name. The stone was originally shot out of the quarry in Iddefjord, Norway, and transported to the park during the late 1920s.

The sculpture depicts 121 human figures clinging and floating together. There's women and men of different ages, and the top of the Monolith is crowned with children. The sculpture has been interpreted as a kind of vision of resurrection, and our longing and striving for



We visited the Open-Air Museum at the Norwegian Folk Museum. There are over 160 buildings from the Middle Ages to the present day located on the grounds of the museum.



The stave church (pictured above) from Gol in Hallingdal was built in the 13th century and is one of 28 remaining stave churches in Norway.



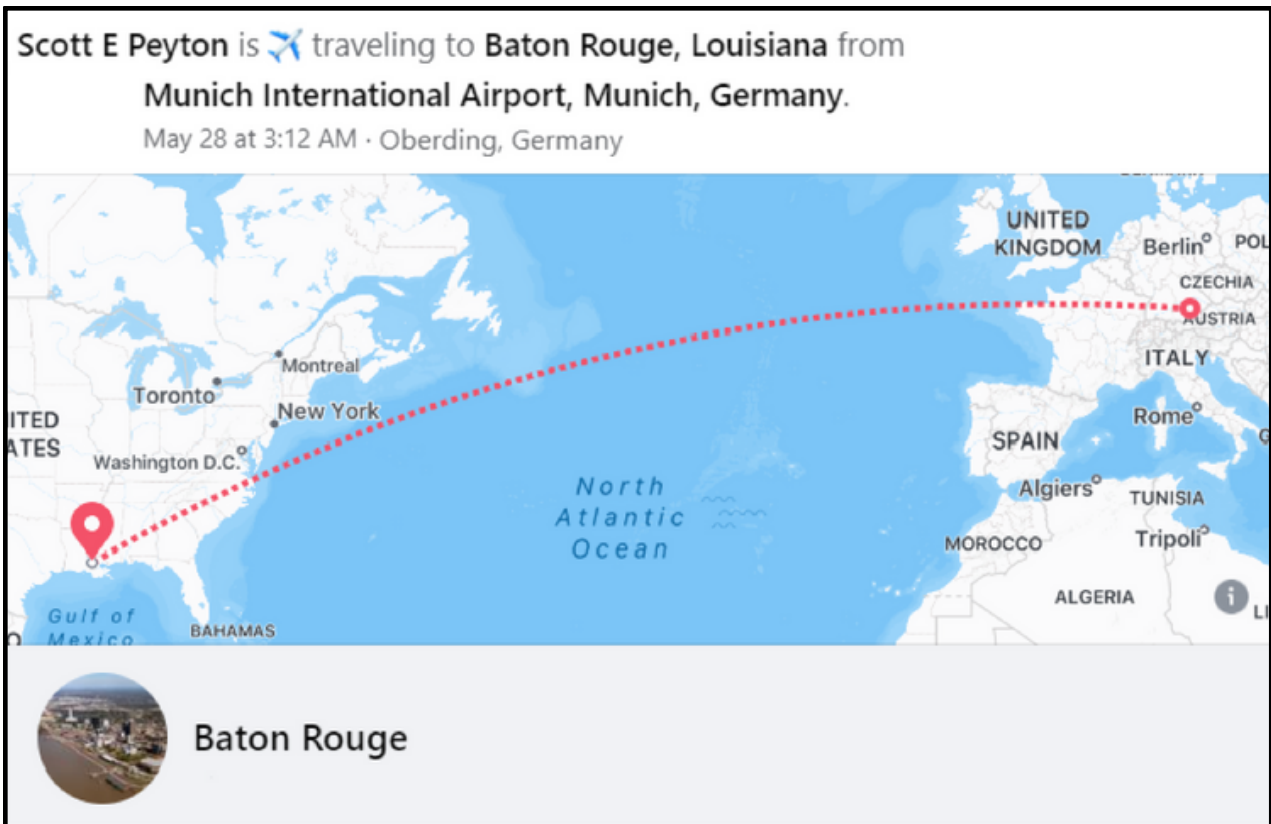
The Royal Palace – The Royal Palace guard takes time to pose for a photograph with me!



Parliament Building in Oslo, Norway

Day 7 - Travel Day

Sunday, May 28, 2023



A 2:00 am wake-up call and then a taxi ride to Oslo Airport. A quick flight to Munich, Germany and then a 12-hour flight from Munich to Houston, TX, with a destination of Baton Rouge, Louisiana!

Next Stop: Brazil 2024

About Right On Crime

Right On Crime is a national campaign of the Texas Public Policy Foundation that supports conservative solutions for reducing crime, restoring victims, reforming offenders, and lowering taxpayer costs. The movement was born in Texas in 2007 and has led the way in implementing conservative criminal justice reforms.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation is a nonprofit, non-partisan research institute promoting and defending liberty, personal responsibility, and free enterprise in Texas and the nation.



**Scott E. Peyton, Right On Crime's
Director of Correctional Leadership
Network and State Director of
Louisiana and Mississippi**

Peyton has over 12 years of work experience with the State of Louisiana: first as a child welfare specialist, then as a juvenile probation and parole officer. Prior to joining Right On Crime, he worked in adult probation and parole as a specialist supervising violent offender caseloads.