

Prison Education in France

Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro
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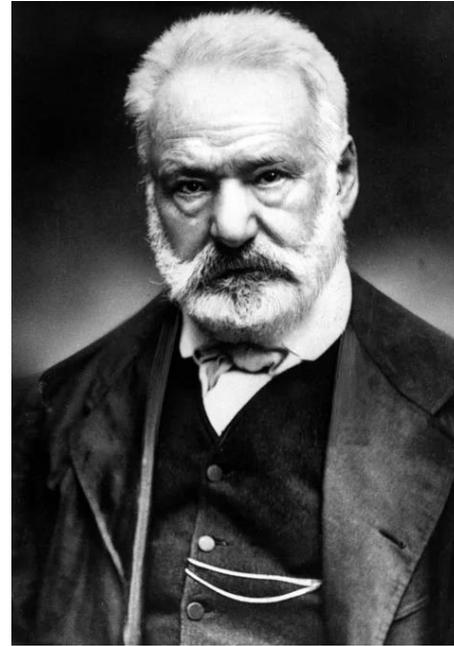
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université
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“ When you open a school, you avoid, twenty years later, opening a prison ”

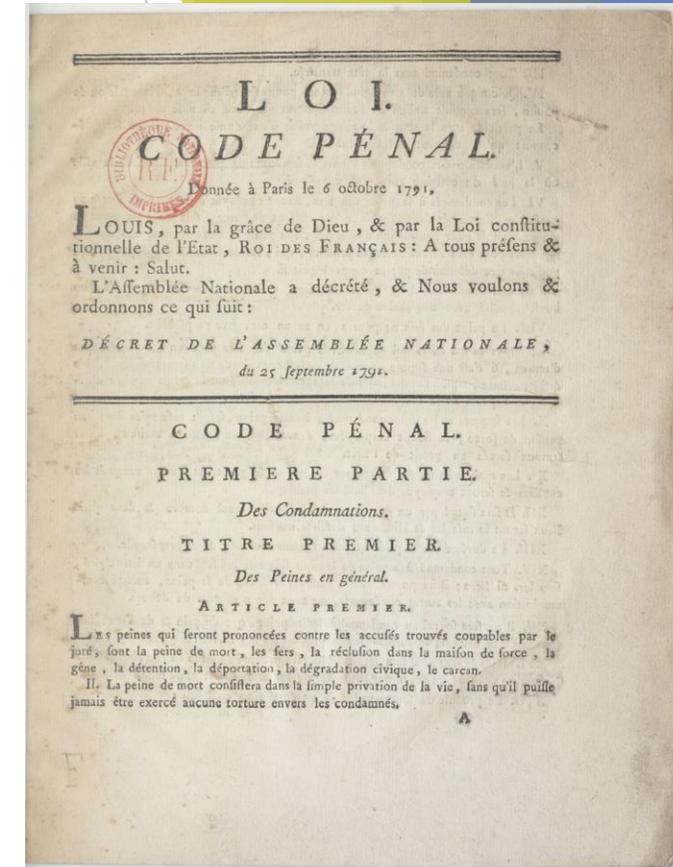
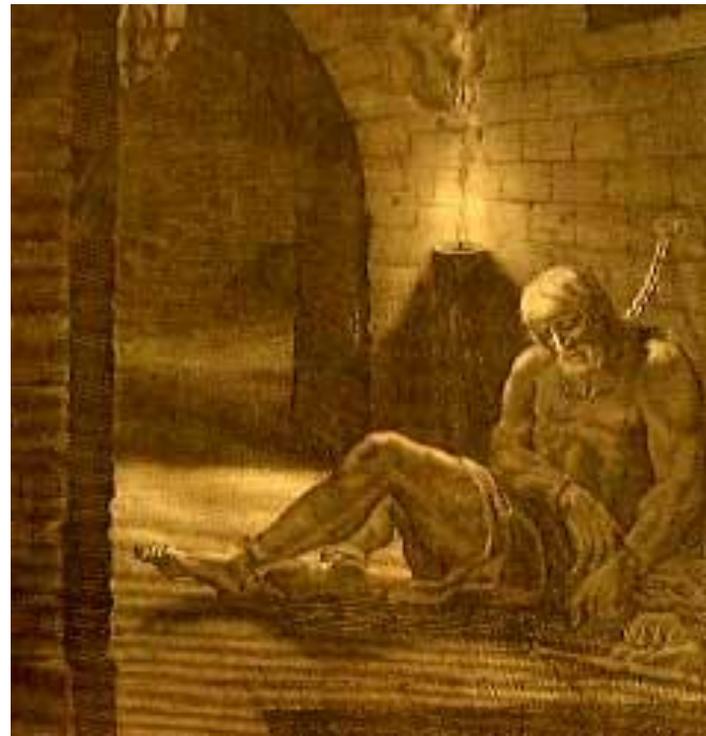
Victor HUGO



- ▶ Issue of access to education and culture for each prisoner
- ▶ The evolution of policies for the reintegration of prisoners through culture and education is particularly recent

I. The History of Education and Culture in the French Prison System

- ▶ Until the 18th century there was no real French prison system
- ▶ The penalties are gradually as follows:
 - **a pecuniary fine,**
 - **exile,**
 - **the galley,**
 - **corporal punishment,**
 - **the death penalty,**
- ▶ Thus confinement is simply consubstantial with poverty insofar as the people who are inflicted with confinement in a jail are those who cannot, for lack of means, pay the pecuniary fine to which they have been condemned.
- ▶ 1791: the prison became, through the consecration of the first Penal Code, a central element of the French repressive system



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1891	The question of the training of prisoners was the subject of concrete measures by the establishment of a prison inspectorate, the objective of which was based on the improvement of conditions of imprisonment
1945	The impact on the collective consciousness of the atrocities of the Second World War and the oppression of the Vichy regime led to a rethinking of the function of the prison in order to no longer see it simply as a punishment.
1960	Dissemination of literature in prisons
1963	Intervention of teachers in prisons
1970	Introduction of cultural activities in prisons through the organization of workshops
1981	Agreement to develop cultural activities in prison
1986	First official partnership between the Ministries of Culture and Justice
1987	Prison becomes a public service
1990	Second protocol signed between the Ministries of Culture and Justice in order to reinforce the achievements of the first protocol
1999	Creation of prison services for integration and probation (SPIP)
2009	Third protocol signed between the Ministries of Culture and Justice which places culture and education on the same level of priority as health



II. The legal framework of education and culture in French prisons



International law

▶ Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 26:

“Everyone has the right to education...

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace”.

Article 27:

“ Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”.

▶ 2004 : Human Rights Training Manual for prison staff

“Education and cultural activities shall be provided and encouraged, including access to an adequate library.

Education in prisons should be aimed at developing the whole person, taking account of prisoners' social, economic and cultural background.”

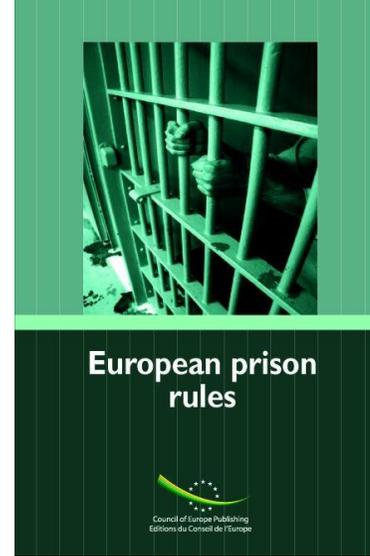
- Principle 6, *Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners*, 1990.
- Paragraph 3, *Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/20*, 1990 : education in prisons.
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile, General Assembly, resolution 40/33, 1985

European law

- ▶ *European Prison Rules, 1973, 1987 and 2006*

28.4

“Education shall have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners shall not be disadvantaged financially or otherwise by taking part in education.”.



French law

- ▶ 1999 : creation of prison integration and probation services (SPIP)
- ▶ implementation of various programs, they promote culture and education with a view to reintegration.
- ▶ Their missions are governed by articles D.573 and D.574 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Article D.573 :

“ The penitentiary integration and probation service, with the participation, where appropriate, of other State services, local authorities and all public or private bodies, promotes access to the rights and mechanisms for the integration of common law of detainees and persons entrusted to him by the judicial authorities ”.



III. Concrete examples of educational and cultural projects in French prisons

Prison education

- ▶ The illiteracy rate of the prison population is approximately 10.9%
- ▶ 2011: partnership agreement signed between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of National Education : in order to standardize reintegration through education
 - conditions of access to training and education for prisoners
 - objectives and means made available in order to ensure constant education and the preparation of diplomas.

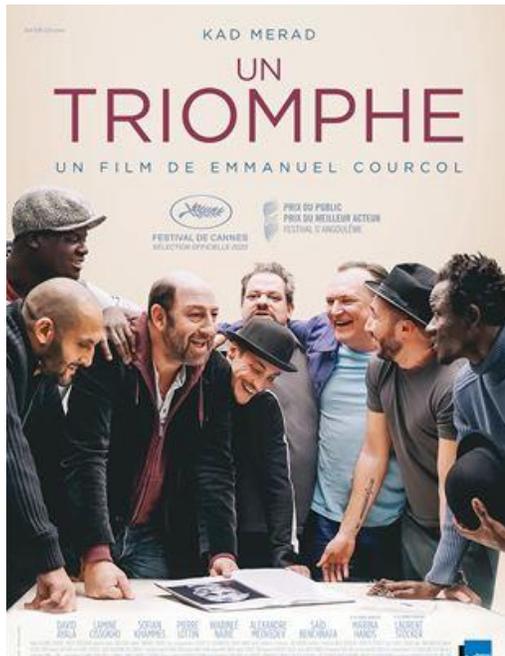
In 2019-2020 :

- Number of teaching hours offered to prisoners, per week: 14 622 hours
- Management ratio : about 22 hours per 100 prisoners.
- Average number of hours of teaching for people in the scholar system per week: about 6 hours.

Prison culture

SPIP, by maintaining privileged links with the cultural structures of cities and departments as well as decentralized services of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, implement a large series of activities adapted to prisoners: plastic arts, music, art workshops, writing, theatre....

- ▶ **Visual arts:** Since 2009, the prisons have organized a comic strip competition for prisoners, called *Transmurailles* (ie Through the walls) In Angouleme festival of comics
- ▶ **Music and choreography :** the Interregional Directorate of Penitentiary Services (DISP) of Rennes allows a summer tour in several prisons every year, in partnership with the symphonic Orchester of Bretagne
- ▶ **Creation of libraries :** Now, each prison has a library accessible to all prisoners.
- ▶ **Production of shows :** Many activities are offered by the national stages, theaters or even choreographic centers in order to offer prisoners the possibility of approaching the world of alive shows.



Movies



Trans-murailles

Concours national de bandes dessinées

Participation individuelle ou collective. Date limite de participation : 30 septembre 2013

Thème du concours : "un jour..."



Les planches assemblées seront exposées au prochain festival international de la BD d'Angoulême en janvier 2014

Pour participer, demandez le bulletin d'inscription à l'antenne SFIP ou au service de l'enseignement de votre établissement

Conclusions and Perspectives

It is also interesting to explore the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) in prison settings.

In conclusion I give only two French examples:

- SPOC (Small Private Offline Courses)

This joins another Erasmus project, SPOC, which has organized online courses.

- Contribution of digital technology in detention - NED (numérique en détention = digital in prisons)

It is in fact a limited use of ICT in prison: the prisoners are given tablets but the use is limited because they are not allowed to use internet with it.

It is really very important to consider today what is the possible role of the use of ICT for the reintegration of prisoners.



Thank you for your attention

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