

State to tackle prison overcrowding

Editor's note: This is the first in a three-part series on N.C. prisons that will appear on consecutive Mondays.

By HELENE COOPER
Staff Writer

Murderers, rapists and arsonists get first priority in prison space, but North Carolina doesn't have enough facilities to house its large number of convicted criminals.

Corrections Department officials say this imbalance between crime and punishment has led to serious overcrowding of prisons, which are now housing 1,000 inmates over capacity, and more than 4,500 inmates over federal court-mandated standards.

There are 17,674 inmates in North Carolina's 85 prisons, which have a total capacity of 16,700 (35 square feet per inmate), according to state officials. Federal guidelines say that there should be 50 square feet per person.

Triple bunking is also a problem. Last year, a federal lawsuit forced the state to eliminate triple bunking in prisons in the Southern Piedmont area, said Renee McCoy, Corrections Department public information officer. But there are still triple bunks in other regions, she added.

Gov. Jim Martin is expected to release a plan to help relieve the prison overcrowding. State officials say part of the plan will include prison construction. Many believe there are other ways to ease overcrowding

rather than building more prisons. Alternative punishments include placing some misdemeanants in community-based programs rather than prison, or instituting longer, more strict probation sentences.

"We are looking at expanding into more intensive probation sentences and community service as an alternative to incarceration," McCoy said.

These alternatives to incarceration would mostly serve misdemeanants, who comprised 20 percent of the prison population and 57 percent of annual admissions in 1984.

North Carolina is one of a few states that sends misdemeanants to state prisons, and has one of the highest incarceration rates in the country.

The incarceration rate in North Carolina is 251 per 100,000 residents. The national average is 184 per 100,000 residents.

While alternative sentencing would help ease the overcrowding problem, it would prove ineffective when used against repeat offenders, said Orange and Chatham counties District Attorney Carl Fox.

"These people can't just keep stealing," Fox said. He added that in order for the threat of a prison sentence to be a crime deterrent for misdemeanants, there must be a real threat.

"They (first and second offenders) don't know that you won't send them to jail," Fox said. "But more prison space would go to repeat offenders."

But that does not mean that some first and second offenders will not find themselves behind bars, however crowded the prisons might be. "Who knows when the exception will be made?" he said.

Although North Carolina has a lower crime rate than the national average, crime in the state is increasing, McCoy said.

"There has been an increase in prison admissions, caused by an increase in crime," she said.

McCoy added that when prisons are this overcrowded, security becomes a definite factor. "Correction officers will have that many more people to guard," she said. "It's a more intense situation."

State officials are looking at other means of releasing some inmates earlier. An electronic surveillance system is being used in some states to monitor the location of offenders. The monitoring system consists of a small transmitter put on a band which is strapped around the ankle. The transmitter tells where the person is.

"It's tamper-proof. If the offender tries to remove it, the transmitter sends a warning that it has been tampered with," said Chris Langer, marketing representative for B.I. Incorporated, a Minnesota company which manufactures the C.S.D. (Corrections Systems Divisions) escort.

While North Carolina has not adopted the use of the CSD escort yet, it is one of several alternatives to incarceration being considered.

Palestinian groups take credit for killing of West Bank mayor

From Associated Press reports

NABLUS, Occupied West Bank — A moderate Palestinian recently appointed by Israel as mayor of Nablus, the West Bank's largest city, was fatally shot 30 yards from City Hall on Sunday as he walked to work, authorities said.

The Israelis said the assassin escaped into a crowded market.

The killing of Mayor Zafer al-Masri was condemned by both moderate Arabs and Israelis as a setback to Middle East peace efforts.

Two Syrian-backed Palestinian factions, which reject a negotiated settlement with Israel, claimed responsibility.

Al-Masri, 44, known for his pro-Jordanian views, was the only Arab so far to accept Israeli appointment as a mayor in the West Bank, which Israel captured from Jordan during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Gorbachev, Castro reaffirm ties

MOSCOW — Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev met with Cuban

State & National

President Fidel Castro on Sunday and pledged continued support for Cuba's fight against "the threats of and acts of provocation of U.S. imperialism," the official news agency Tass said.

"The leaders of the two fraternal parties strongly denounced the imperialist concept of 'new globalism,' which amounted to nothing short of open intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign countries and an attempt to deny the peoples the right freely to decide their destinies," Tass said.

Castro, who had not been in Moscow since the funeral of Yuri Andropov in February 1984, was given the honor of being the first foreigner to address the 27th Communist Party Congress. There was no session of the Congress Sunday, which was also Gorbachev's 55th birthday.

Swedish police release details of assassination

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP)—The man who killed Prime Minister Olof Palme apparently had him under surveillance for some time before he shot him with a powerful American-made revolver, police said Sunday.

Police Commissioner Hans Holmer told reporters that two bullets recovered at the downtown sidewalk scene of the late Friday night shooting were fashioned from an unusual combination of metals and may have been handmade.

Police said this could make it harder to track down the source of the bullets. Sweden's two-day-old caretaker government meanwhile held its first session and discussed arrangements for

the funeral of Social Democratic leader Palme, set for March 15.

Foreign Ministry representative Lars Loennback said the funeral would be closed to the public, but "many foreign guests" would be invited. Palme, 59, was serving his fourth term as prime minister and was regarded as a top Western European spokesman on disarmament and socialist causes.

Social minister Gertrud Sigurdson said there would be no official declaration of national mourning, for which Sweden has no national precedent.

Sigurdson, speaking with Swedish television after the two-hour govern-

ment session, said there was no need for an official declaration.

"The spontaneous reaction of mourning, how people reacted, was correct," she said.

Palme was shot once in the back while walking with his wife, Lisbeth, after they attended a movie. He was pronounced dead at 12:06 a.m. Saturday, less than an hour later, on a hospital operating table. His wife was grazed by a bullet and slightly wounded.

Police had said Saturday they believed the assassin fired only one bullet, but on Sunday they reported finding a second bullet. They said one grazed Mrs. Palme and the other may have been the one that killed the prime minister.

Holmer told a news conference the couple decided on the spur of the moment to attend the movie, leading police to believe the assassin must have been keeping the prime minister under

surveillance.

"Everything indicates that the perpetrator shadowed the (Palme) to the movie theater, all the way from their home," Holmer said.

The police commissioner said the Palmes traveled to the cinema by subway. He asked anyone who may have seen a man trailing the couple to come forward.

Police superintendent Rolf Fredriksson said police had taken three men into custody for questioning by Sunday morning, but had released all three as having nothing to do with the shooting.

Holmer said the two lead bullets police found did not match any of the 500 comparison bullets investigators kept on file.

Remark on the first bullet, before the second was found, he said, "What makes this bullet rare is the combination of metals and the proportion between the metals."

Seniors information day to be held March 25

Graduating seniors who are clueless as to what needs to be done to prepare for the commencement exercises in

May need wait no further than March 25.

From 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. tables will be set up in the Great Hall where seniors can turn for information on caps and gowns, the General Alumni Association, senior class pledges, placement services, handicapped services, how to clear your student account and how to escape your present lease, among other information valuable for seniors.

For the Record

Dr. Bert Todd, translator for Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, was incorrectly identified in Friday's story as "Dr. Bert Scott." The DTH regrets the reporting error.

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Campus Calendar

The DTH Campus Calendar will appear daily. Announcements to be run must be placed in the box outside the Daily Tar Heel office, Room 104 of the Student Union, by noon one day before the event — weekend announcements by noon Wednesday. Only announcements from University-recognized and campus organizations will be printed.

Monday

5:00 p.m. Black Student Movement general body meeting, Upendo Lounge.
Student Television's Campus Profile, staff meeting, 226 Union.
6:00 p.m. Student Television's This Is It!, staff meeting, 226 Union.
7:00 p.m. University Career Planning and Placement Services hosting a presentation by US Insurance, 209 Hanes.
Sports Club Council meeting for all treasurers and presidents, to begin the budget process, Union. Check desk for room

number. To receive funds for next year, attendance is mandatory.

7:30 p.m. Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies debating "Rock Music Is As Noble an Art Form as Classical Music," and "Congress Should Pass a Law Limiting Federal Spending Instead of a Law Reducing the Deficit," Dialectic Society Hall, top floor New West.

Items of Interest

1986 Yackety Yack portrait appointments for students other than Seniors — March 3-6. Call 962-3912 or 962-1259, or come by 106 Union for information.
Applications for co-Chairs of the Campus Y committees are available in 102, Campus Y.
Registration deadline for the 1986 Leadership Development Workshop is March 6. Interested students can get more information from the Union desk.
MCAT and DAT applications for April 19 testing are now available in 201D Steele and Nash Hall. Application photo required.

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