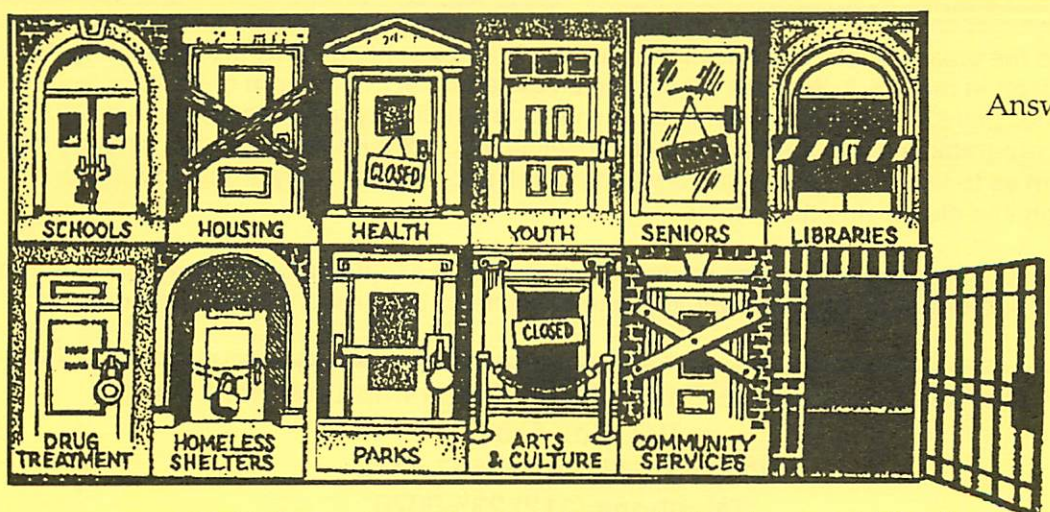


THE PRISON QUIZ

1. Over the past 25 years (1970-95), violent crime in the U.S. has:
 - a. increased by 15%
 - b. increased by almost half
 - c. more than doubled
 - d. remained approximately the same.
2. During the past 25 years, the rate at which people have been incarcerated in the U.S. has:
 - a. slightly increased
 - b. slightly decreased
 - c. almost doubled
 - d. almost quadrupled
 - e. remained approximately the same
3. Studies have shown that higher imprisonment rates will lower the crime rate.
 - a. true
 - b. false
4. The incarceration rate for black people in the U.S. is approximately ____ that of white people.
 - a. the same as
 - b. 8 times
 - c. 2 1/2 times
 - d. 5 times
5. Black people are 4 times as likely to be arrested on drug charges as white people, even though the two groups use drugs at almost the same rate.
 - a. true
 - b. false
6. Although the incarceration rate for black people in the U.S. is high, it is significantly less than the incarceration rate for black people in South Africa.
 - a. true
 - b. false
7. There are more black men in prison today than are attending college.
 - a. true
 - b. false
8. It costs more to send a person to prison for a year than to Harvard for a year.
 - a. true
 - b. false
9. U.S. inmates are serving shorter prison terms today than in the past.
 - a. true
 - b. false
10. Approximately _____ percent of inmates in prison today have been convicted of a violent crime.
 - a. 50%
 - b. 72%
 - c. 25%
 - d. 36%
11. Politicians have proposed tough crime legislation because the public almost uniformly favors "lock-em-up" solutions to crime.
 - a. true
 - b. false
12. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have criticized and condemned U.S. prisons for violations of the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners.
 - a. true
 - b. false
13. By the late 1980's, the U.S. far and away led the world in the rate of incarceration of its own citizens.
 - a. true
 - b. false



Answers on back...

ANSWERS

1. d. remained about the same.

Although we have witnessed some new phenomena, such as drive by shootings, for example, there has been no significant change between the rate of violent crime in 1970 and that in 1994.

2. d. almost quadrupled.

Despite little or no change in the crime rate we are putting people in prison at an altogether unprecedented rate.

3. b. false.

Studies have shown that crime stems from societal causes and that higher imprisonment rates do not affect the crime rate. Similarly, it has been repeatedly shown that the death penalty does not deter murder.

4. b. 8 times.

In addition, the rate for Latinos is approximately 4 times that of whites. In Illinois, the rate for black people is 14 times that of whites.

5. a. true

It is also true that the penalties are much higher for use of crack cocaine, a drug often used in poorer communities, than for cocaine, a drug preferred in wealthier communities.

6. b. false

In 1992, the incarceration rate for black people in the U.S. was 4 1/2 times as great as that for black people in South Africa.

7. a. true

In 1992 there were 583,000 black men in prison compared to 537,000 in college. Since that date the margin has widened.

8. a. true

The extremely high cost of keeping a person in prison, it should be noted, is almost entirely due to the physical plant and to the security measures involved, not for the needs of prisoners. (beyond basic needs)

9. b. false

Since 1923, the average length of stay for prisoners has always been about 2 years. However, because of harsher sentencing policies implemented in the 1980's and 90's, the average length of stay is increasing.

10. c. 25 percent.

Most prisoners have committed crimes that involve no violence and little financial loss to the victim.

11. b. false

Nationally, four out of five Americans favor community corrections programs for offenders who are not dangerous.

12. a. true

Many of the new control unit prisons in the U.S. have been cited by groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch for practicing psychological torture. These prisons, ostensibly, were created to hold violent and disruptive inmates but have also been used to hold political prisoners and to curb dissent.

13. a. true

By the late 80's, the U.S. had a much higher incarceration rate than any other country in the world. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia's incarceration rate has increased and, at times, surpassed even that of the U.S. Today, the U.S. and Russia continue to, far and away, lead the world in imprisoning their own citizens.

You may find the answers to these questions surprising and troubling. Why are we putting so many people in prison in the U.S.? Why are we putting an extraordinary number of black people and other people of color there? Why are we willing to spend so much money for prisons, when it would cost less to fund programs like job training, drug counseling, etc.? Why have some U.S. prisons taken a turn, so mean as to use methods of sensory deprivation and torture? Why aren't politicians acknowledging and discussing these facts?

We have been considering all of these issues. If you would like to find out where we got our information, gain more information or if you would like to be a part of our group, please contact us at :

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