

television show⁴ featuring high profile stars, marking the final transition of real deaths into a commercial, entertainment product. This is only the most high profile example of the relevance of cultural criminology and the entangled relationship between representation and reality.

Critical Criminology is an outstanding book that is essential reading to anyone concerned with issues of culture, whether that be the behaviour of groups, popular representation, or the construction of social values.

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Book Review

The Justice Women: The Female Presence in the Criminal Justice System 1800–1970

By Stephen Wade

Publisher: Pen & Sword History (2015)

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(paperback)

Price: £12.99 (paperback)

In *The Justice Women: The Female Presence in the Criminal Justice System 1800–1970*, Stephen Wade explores the challenges faced by women, in gaining professional status in the criminal justice system. He traces the introduction of women to a number of professional roles within the British criminal justice process; from voluntary, unpaid work through to professional status, whilst highlighting the struggle these women faced against gender inequality and discrimination. As professional roles within the criminal justice system, like many other professions had simply not been accessible to women until the First World War, and then the

implementation of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919, this book reflects not only the rise of women within this field but arguably the rise of women more broadly within British society.

Stephen Wade is a historian of crime and law, and author of predominantly non-fiction books; he has spent time ‘writing as a worker in prisons,’ and is a part time lecturer at the University of Hull. He begins this book by exploring how through women working in voluntary and unpaid roles within the criminal justice system, women’s interest in this type of work was highlighted (Chapter One), before continuing with an insight into the gender related battles women faced as law students and lawyers (Chapter Two). The book is structured in such a way that each chapter is devoted to a profession; professions which include policewomen, jurors and magistrates and prison officers and the lesser known roles of the probation officers, lady detectives and sheriffs, Lord Lieutenants and coroners.

By drawing on a diverse spectrum of roles, this book encapsulates the social history of the Criminal Justice System, through the biographies of women who contributed in part to its reform; describing both the challenges and the battles women faced as they entered the legal and law related professions within a male dominated institution. In doing so, Wade brings the social history of the criminal justice system to life, when he describes the women who experienced the battles of discrimination and inequality. By drawing on the biography of Sybil Campbell for example the, ‘first woman judge in a full time capacity, being appointed and serving as a magistrate at Tower Bridge in 1945;’ (p34) Wade describes the objections she faced and in particular the

‘questions that were asked regarding whether a woman was a fit person to do such work,’ (p35). By interweaving the biographies of women, throughout the book, who experienced the battle to enter the legal profession, with developments within the social history of the legal system, Wade depicts the on-going struggle confronting these women through their own eyes, relating to first-hand accounts and experiences. Crucially whilst Wade acknowledges that a tremendous amount of progress has been made during the period on which this book covers, he also acknowledges that he is, ‘astonished that more progress has not been made’ (p147).

This book is well researched, as Wade draws on a broad range of biographies from both the Old Bailey and provincial sources. For example, the matron’s journal at Lincoln Castle Prison dated October 1868, describes the care given to a particular prisoner with a baby whilst awaiting execution, (p75) however as Wade acknowledges, such sources are fundamental to the insight of fact, but fail to provide a crucial insight into the emotional struggles such women working within the criminal justice system undoubtedly encountered.

During his introduction, Wade describes that a woman’s place in the ‘legal system up to the turn of the nineteenth century had been limited to prison matrons and wardresses,’ (pviii) and in doing so, disappointingly fails to acknowledge the crucial role of the jury of matrons. The jury of matrons were called upon by the court in a number of instances, but primarily in cases to establish whether a woman was, ‘quick with child’ in women who had pleaded their belly, whilst facing a capital punishment. However, this does not detract from the fact that the book presents a thorough representation of women’s experiences within the criminal

4. *American crime story: The People V OJ Simpson* (US, 2016).

justice system in gaining professional status.

This book provides a refreshing perspective on the developments of the criminal justice process from the viewpoint of women, who experienced the challenges and battles of entering a male dominated profession. Overall this book demonstrates a thorough insight into these issues through the diverse spectrum of professions, and the personal challenges the women faced in gaining professional status within the British criminal justice system. The style of this book allows an inter-connectedness between events in social history and the biographies of women, bringing history to life, making it an ideal read for students.

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Book Review

The Monster of Myra Hindley

By Nina Wilde

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(paperback)

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The subject of this book, Myra Hindley, needs no introduction. Even though she has been dead for 14 years she is still, aside from perhaps Rosemary West, one of the best known female offenders in England and Wales. Charged and convicted with Ian Brady for the murder of five children, she served 36 years in custody. The fact that she did serve such a long period in custody and is still characterised as one of 'the UK's most notorious serial killers' (p.17) is the focus of this book. The author, Nina Wilde, describes herself as 'a very close friend' (p.17). They first met in Cookham Wood Prison when Wilde was conducting research

there in 1993 and their friendship continued until Hindley's death through subsequent visits and letters. Over this time Wilde got to know Hindley well and the book is an attempt, I think, to show the reader perhaps a different side to Hindley than has previously been expressed. This is also done through the publication of letter extracts which over the years Hindley had sent to Wilde.

The crux of the book is to show the unfairness which Hindley suffered at the hands of the state. Hindley was the first female to be convicted of murder following the abolition of the death penalty in England and Wales. Despite this, the mood and temper of the country was still punitive, especially when it came to a child killer, which is why the media throughout her lifetime painted her as the 'most hated woman in Britain' (p.100). At the time that Hindley was sentenced to life, the period of time which she had to serve was imposed by the Home Secretary and it was not until 1982 that a minimum sentence of 25 years was suggested for her. By this stage she had already served 16 years and had been refused parole once. In 1985 the Local Prison Review Committee recommended that Hindley was suitable for release, but her parole was knocked back by the then Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, who imposed a provisional tariff of 30 years. This was further extended to a whole life tariff in 1990 by the then Home Secretary David Waddington. Throughout her time in prison and up until her death she tried to challenge this whole life tariff, taking her case to the Court of Appeal in 1997 and the House of Lords in 2000. Ten days after Hindley died, on 25 November 2002, the House of Lords ruled that the Home Secretary could no longer set the tariff for life sentenced prisoners and that it should be a matter which rests with the judiciary.

The book has two main arguments. Hindley was treated as she was first because she was a woman and consequently what she did was worse because she was a woman. Second the unfairness she experienced was because the press would not leave her alone and continually brought up the story and the evil nature of her character. In most press articles the same photograph of her was used—platinum blond—when in actual fact Hindley spent most of her life as a brunette. The author claims that in the 1990s 'any tabloid editor could have told you that he could guarantee sales by putting one of two women on the front page: the other was Her Royal Highness Diana, Princess of Wales' (p. 101). This is therefore a good example of how much influence the media and the press can have on political decisions.

In terms of these arguments I think Wilde is right on both counts. Interestingly she cites examples of other female killers who were not given the same notoriety as Hindley and who frankly I had not heard of. Again this shows how it was the press which was the largest contributor in this story. Despite agreeing with the main arguments in the book I felt that the author wanted me to feel some level of pity for Hindley. She continually reminds the reader that Hindley did not actually kill any of the children and that she was convicted for being an accomplice of Brady. I didn't feel this pity, but nor did I react to the arguments with dismay (p. 17). Overall the book is written well and makes the above arguments well. It thus serves as a reminder that tariff decisions on life imprisonment should be decided upon by the judiciary and that they should be carried out without political bias or influence.

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