

# editorial

## millennium justice

The aim of this turn-of-century issue of Criminal Justice Matters is twofold. First, the intention of the issue is to offer insight, analysis and review of New Labour's record around crime and its control over the last two and a half years in office. The second intention of the issue is to offer some insight into the future. Our request to contributors has been to provide an equal measure of critical reflection and future prediction concerning the state of crime, criminal and social justice in the nation as we enter the new millennium. Hence the cover title - Millennium Justice.

Obviously, given the size of the task set, and the nature of Criminal Justice Matters, our review is selective. In compiling the issue, care has been taken to ensure that: key areas of legislation, policy and procedures are addressed; continuities and changes are documented; the range of institutions of criminal justice and their processes and practices are scrutinised; and particularly sensitive and/or critical issues and themes are analysed. Thus, the content of this issue casts its net beyond merely a discussion of how New Labour has practised being tough on crime in an attempt to reassure middle England of its ability to compete with the Conservatives on law and order, although this is discussed. The operation and practice of criminal justice institutions, the youth justice system, the Crime and Disorder Act and developments around 'community safety' are all reviewed, alongside articles which address New Labour's management of marginalization, exclusion and poverty and the impact on social divisions of class, age, race and gender.

One central question which arises concerns the extent to which recent developments mark a change in direction to those practised by the previous Conservative administration. In reflecting upon this, **David Faulkner** argues that 'The Labour government has brought a change of political direction in some respects and has continued the Conservative Government's

approach in others'. Indeed, reference to both the continuation of the 'old' and the development of the 'new' in terms of responses to crime and crime control is a focal point of many articles within the issue. Thus, for example, various contributors highlight how New Labour's commercially orientated approach to public sector management and emphasis on individual enterprise along with its approach to penal policy, has for the most part continued that adhered to previously by the Conservative administration.

Unlike the previous Conservative government, however, the New Labour administration has also been marked by an overt willingness to acknowledge the very real links between social conditions and crime. As **David Faulkner** goes on to argue, New Labour has 'been much more concerned to reduce poverty; to recognise cultural diversity; to support people in difficulty; to promote opportunities, especially for work; and to reduce social exclusion'. This can be seen not only in the development of strategies to address juvenile crime and reduce drug-misuse, but also in the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit although as **David Walker's** article emphasises, there remains a serious doubt over the capacity of the Unit to achieve its goal and influence inter-departmental policy making.

Yet, as **Nigel South** contends, these approaches to crime and crime control 'reflect both compromise and tension between old style Labour welfarism and New Labour's embrace of a "tough but compassionate stance on crime"'. Thus while emphasis is directed towards regeneration, welfare to work, education, employment and training, and the creation of an inclusive agenda, these are set alongside various zero-tolerance and punitive policies whose effect will be the further exclusion of certain already marginalised members of local communities. These tensions are evident in the discussion of youth justice by **John Pitts**, in the discussion of travellers by **Colin**

**Clark** and **Alan Dearing**, and in the discussion of community safety and responses to crime and disorder by **Sandra Walklate**. Moreover, the central point which arises from each of these articles is the absence of voices from below, from the young people, from the travellers and from the community members in the formation and implementation of policies that affect them.

Two areas which are set to continue to dominate the agenda of social justice in the next century are human rights and race. **Sir Henry Brooke** outlines the ways in which the Human Rights Act of 1998 will affect all aspects of the delivery of services by public authorities including all criminal justice agencies and how the European Convention on Human Rights which underpins the Act will work to secure the rights and freedoms of individual citizens in member states. **Kevin Wong** assesses the key messages within the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report and the response to the recommendations by the police and other public bodies in the sphere of race and criminal justice.

The crime prevention agenda over the last two and a half years has been dominated by the mission to find 'what works' to reduce a wide range of offending behaviours, and whether crime prevention can pay for itself through savings made by reductions in crime - for many people a contentious goal to aim for and one likely to lead to compromises in terms of community safety and social justice. **Paul Wiles**, Head of the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate, outlines the vision for the Government's Crime Reduction Programme and comments on the capacity of existing structures to respond to the ambitious challenge that the Programme has set for civil servants, local government officers, police and also the academic community as evaluators of the Programme. **Ruth Cane** and **Penny Fraser** comment on progress that is being made with one strand of the Programme - the burglary reduction initiative.

Another key focus of a number of articles within this issue of Criminal Justice Matters is the nature of and changes to key aspects of the criminal justice system overseen by New Labour. **Colin Cramphorn** comments on shifts in police and policing in the wake of the Patten Report arising

from the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland and **Ian Loader** charts some broader shifts in the nature and governance of policing, notably the shift to a plethora of alternative security 'suppliers' including but not exclusively controlled by, the Police. **Peter Squires** charts the debates within ACPO and the Police Federation around the arming of police officers in Britain and raises concerns regarding the aggressive marketing of firearms to the UK police by weapons manufacturers. **Peter Seago**, **Clive Walker** and **David Wall** discuss the professionalisation of local courts' justice; **John Harding** reflects upon the rationale behind proposed changes to the probation service and the likely impact on service ethos and delivery. In the 'Comment' slot, probation officer **Jeremy Cameron** offers a personal view from the frontline of probation service work at the turn of the century. **Pat Carlen**, **Chris Tchaikovsky** and **Sir David Ramsbotham** separately address various aspects of the nature, experience and future of imprisonment for both men and women. Throughout these articles the sense of change is overwhelming, although differing views are offered as to the extent to which such change is deemed necessary, effective or goes far enough.

Overall, throughout the articles in this issue, one overriding theme recurs: that whilst progress has been made by the New Labour administration in the field of crime and its control, more can and must be done. Certainly, as the various contributors in this issue concur, being tough on the causes of crime is as necessary as being tough on crime. Thus although recent policy has addressed the causative factors, a number of commentators continue to argue that more should be done to alleviate the daily suffering and victimisation of the many individuals living within local communities across the country. And as for being tough on crime, New Labour must continue to work towards ensuring probity and fairness in criminal justice and in promoting equality and social justice for all. The task of Criminal Justice Matters will be to continue to chart the extent to which these are achieved.

*Peter Francis, Penny Fraser and Una Padel*