

# PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

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*Special Edition*  
**Working with people  
with personality disorder**

# Reviews

## Book Reviews

*Globalisation, crime and imprisonment*

***Prison Realities: Views from around the world (Special edition of The South Atlantic Quarterly)***

Edited by Leonidas Cheliotis  
Publisher: Duke University Press (2014)  
ISBN: 0038-2876 (paperback)  
Price: \$16.00 (paperback)

***Globalisation and the challenge to criminology***

Edited by Francis Pakes  
Publisher: Routledge (2014)  
ISBN: 978-0-415-68607-5 (hardback) 978-0-415-64352-8 (paperback)  
Price: £80.00 (hardback) £24.99 (paperback)

***Re-imagining imprisonment in Europe: Effects, failures and the future***

Edited by Eoin Carroll and Kevin Warner  
Publisher: The Liffey Press (2014)  
ISBN: 978-1-908-30856-6 (paperback)  
Price: £23.95 (paperback)

Transformations in communications and transportation have enabled more rapid and accessible connections across the globe. However, globalisation does not solely refer to these technical changes. It also refers to the political dimension, in which trade and capitalist modes of exchange have been enabled and accelerated through these developments. There has also been a cultural dimension, in which neo-liberal ideas, rooted in capitalism are spread around the world through media,

governmental action and the pressure of commercial organisations. Globalisation is therefore often used to describe a not only greater connectedness and movement, but also greater homogenisation across the world and the domination of Western capitalist ideas and practices. The three books discussed here all explore the nature, limits and potential of globalisation in relation to criminal justice and imprisonment, albeit they adopt different methods and speak to different audiences.

Francis Pakes, Director of the Research Centre for Comparative and International Criminology at the University of Portsmouth, offers the most straightforward academic overview of the issues. His collection includes contributions from leading scholars covering a diverse range of criminological issues including organised crime, international finance, terrorism, migration and genocide. The collection draws out some of the contradictions and conflicts inherent in globalisation. In particular, the collection is premised upon the basis that globalised practices have not swept aside all that has gone before but instead they co-exist alongside and intersect with deeply held local practices and cultures. The book is squarely aimed at an academic audience and provides a useful overview of some key areas.

In contrast, the dazzling collection produced by Leonidas Cheliotis, now at London School of Economics, offers a range of detailed ethnographic accounts of prisons around the world. These accounts offer a rich picture of everyday life in prisons, whilst also linking this to wider issues and

using these to illuminate big theoretical ideas. The studies include temporary release in Greece, the interrogation of Palestinians, a mass hunger strike in California and gangs in Honduras. Each article evokes a powerful sense of place, bringing the reality of imprisonment to life. These articles also cast light upon the broader issues of the tensions between globalisation and local cultures, and between power and resistance. This book is profoundly rewarding but also leaves a sense of unease about the dynamics of domination and inequality that it so expertly reveals. This collection is at the leading edge of international critical criminology.

The final book by Eoin Carroll, of the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice in Dublin, and Kevin Warner, a former prison educationalist, has a more narrow focus and also draws more heavily upon contributions by practitioners. It therefore has a particular view of prison reform, largely drawing upon liberal approaches which aim to ameliorate the pains of imprisonment and humanise the prison environment, rather than situating this within a deeper critique of power and inequality. There are exceptions; it is always fascinating to read contributions by Professor Andrew Coyle, distinguished prison governor and one of the founders of the International Centre of Prison Studies, and Baroness Jean Corston, author of an impressive and radical blueprint for the future of women's imprisonment. These are examples of people who have worked within the system in order to achieve change, despite the frustrations and compromises that this inevitably entails.

Together, these three books offer differing perspectives on globalisation, crime and imprisonment. They all reveal the tensions between dominant ideas, such as commercial competition and popular punitiveness, and more deeply-seated local cultures and practices. Although globalisation affects everyone to a greater or lesser extent, people are not the passive victims of this, but instead engage collectively and individually. At times they accept and perpetuate global ideas and practices, but they also resist and adapt. Understanding globalisation requires a close reading of the various tensions that shape our world and also attention to the potential for individuals to act with agency.

**Dr Jamie Bennett** is Governor of MP Grendon and Springhill.

#### Book Review

##### ***Pain and Retribution: A Short History of British Prisons 1066 to the Present***

By David Wilson

Publisher: Reaktion Books (2014)

ISBN: 978-1-78023-283-6

Price: £20

The ambitious publication by a well-known criminologist provides, as the title suggests, a concise history of a large topic. About half of the content of the book is devoted to examining pre-1945 with most of that concentrating on the modern prison from the late eighteenth century onwards. The latter half of the book concerns the post-1945 period which has been researched more thoroughly by criminologists than historians. It is commendable that the writer is endeavouring to contribute to academic efforts underway to bridge the divide between historical and criminological investigation of

the prison in Britain. I'm sure such interdisciplinary work will bring forth new insights and perspectives. In this publication that endeavour has in part been undertaken through the use of theories of moral panics and legitimacy and in part through concentration upon the experience of the prisoner. This is effective but the writer underestimates the extent to which historians as well as criminologists have made use of these theories in their examinations of the operation and impact of this institution. Also, significant research has already been conducted to uncover the experience of the prison using autobiographical material. Nevertheless, this book includes interesting and very readable examinations of autobiographical sources, including where possible multiple accounts giving differing perspectives on the same period which works well. Therefore, this publication has contributed to further establishing the efficacy of this subjective approach.

It has to be said that the exploration of the period since 1945 is more questioning and more confidently written, largely because of the wealth of secondary material drawn upon. That half of the book includes consideration of the introduction of security categorisations, the occurrence of major prison disturbances, the development of therapeutic endeavours at Barlinnie and Grendon Underwood, the toughening of regimes from 1992 and prison privatisation. Importantly, the value of media representations of the prison are also recognised and discussed. This is a subject on which the author has published widely and he asserts convincingly that even fictional prison television programmes can have an influential role in raising public understanding.

This publication is worthwhile purchasing as an initial introduction to the history of the prison and gives a very useful starting point

regarding particular sources and theories. Efforts are made to genuinely reflect the 'British' in the title with limited but interesting case studies concerning events in Scotland and Ireland. Some of the broad interpretations of historical change are debatable, such as the extent and velocity of the shift towards reform following the Gladstone Committee Report of 1895, but this text does cover many of the most crucial issues affecting prisons in Britain in the past and present.

**Alyson Brown** is a History Professor at Edge Hill University.

#### Book Reviews

##### *Inside perspectives*

##### ***The good prison: Conscience, crime and punishment***

by Gerard Lemos

Publisher: Lemos & Crane

(2014)

ISBN: 978-1-898001-75-1

(paperback)

Price: £8.99 (paperback)

##### ***The last asylum: A memoir of madness in our times***

by Barbara Taylor

Publisher: Hamish Hamilton (2014)

ISBN: 978-0-241-14509-8

(hardback)

Price: £18.99 (hardback)

##### ***Servant of the Crown: A Civil Servant's story of criminal justice and public sector reform***

by David Faulkner

Publisher: Waterside Press (2014)

ISBN: 978-1-909976-02-3

(paperback)

Price: £19.95 (paperback)

Insider accounts of prisons and other forms of detention have a long history. These works have come from a variety of perspectives,

including those subjected to detention, such as Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, those working in prisons, such as Alexander Maconochie's accounts of Norfolk Island and his famous 'mark system', to reformers visiting prisons and agitating for change, such as John Howard and Elizabeth Fry. As can be deduced from these distinguished names, historically such offerings have been influential and respected. However, more recently there has been a proliferation of insider accounts including a host of ex-prisoner biographies ranging from celebrity prisoners such as Jeffrey Archer and Vicky Price, to glamourizations of career criminals. A few of these contributions have stood out, in particular Erwin James' insightful and poignant columns published in *The Guardian*. Prison staff have also published their views and experiences, ranging from academic works to more personal pieces, again with significant variations in quality. The three books reviewed here offer examples of more serious-minded and credible insider accounts, illustrating the diversity of the field, its strengths and weaknesses.

Gerard Lemos, a distinguished figure who has held a vast array of public appointments, now heads up Lemos & Crane, a private company working in the field of social reform. The book sets out to offer a blueprint for 'The good prison', based on constructive regimes that develop a sense of 'conscience' in prisoners and offer financial incentives for them to change their ways and avoid offending. Such a view sits squarely within the neo-liberal orthodoxy. In particular, the book does not question the social structures that underpin and shape the use of imprisonment. Prison populations are largely drawn from the poorer sections of society, yet the harms and moral wrongdoing of powerful groups do not result in the wide use of imprisonment. This

is ignored in this book and instead those in prison are painted as lacking in conscience and moral fibre, which can then be injected into them by 'the good prison' and through their entanglement in capitalist society (ironically the very society which has created and sustained their marginality). Whilst organisations such as Lemos & Crane do creditable work, this book illustrates the limitations of their approach, with a narrow perspective that overlooks wider social structures and at times constructs a patronising view of prisoners.

In contrast, Barbara Taylor offers a poignant and novel account of the decline of the large asylum system for those suffering mental ill-health. Taylor is a distinguished historian, whose career and life was interrupted in the 1980s and she experienced devastating ill-health, which led her into alcoholism, self-destructive behaviour and periodic incarceration in hospitals. Her book brings together a frank account of her time in and out of hospitals, extracts from her psychoanalysis sessions and also a history of the end of the asylum system, which she was participating in as she underwent treatment on the cusp between the closing of the hospitals and the creation of 'care in the community'. The range of resources and material she draws upon brings a new dimension to the work and opens up a range of perspectives, both personal and social. Taylor is alert to the issues of power and inequality, both within the mental health system, where again those at the margins of society disproportionately end up, and within the enclosed social world of the hospital where she, as a middle class and successful woman, must negotiate her identity and place. The book closes with some reflections upon the asylum system and the decommissioning of the hospitals, interestingly, Taylor argues that whilst the institution

was in need of reform, there should be a place for residential care for those, like her, who need help and support as part of a journey back to health. This is an innovative and poignant book that offers a profound insight into psychotherapy and mental health.

The final of these three books is by David Faulkner, a senior civil servant who played a significant role in criminal justice policy between the 1960s and 1990s. He has published a number of scholarly books and articles on governance and criminal justice since his retirement, but this book is a more personal account of his time as a civil servant. The period of his service saw a shift from the liberal-humane post-War consensus to the more politicised and punitive approaches of later years, as well as the transformation of the civil servant from moral and intellectual mandarin to the business-like managerialist of the contemporary world. The incremental changes of these decades are neatly captured. Although this book is written in the objective, detached and measured tones of a life-long civil servant, there is a personal story that cannot be contained and seeps through every page. Towards the end of the book, Faulkner describes his role:

*I became used to situations where I had to do things I would prefer not to do or where things I would like to do were unaffordable, impracticable or politically unrealistic, but there was always some space for officials to take initiatives of our own and act on them (p.158).*

This captures the essence of the critical insider. It is a position in which one must accept a constrained and compromised position, but there is the opportunity to search out niches, and occasional vistas, in which personal values can be expressed. Throughout the book, Faulkner's personal values come through, just as they did in his practice. Rather

than a faceless bureaucrat, Faulkner shows that there is a space for the humane practitioner to have an impact.

Although these three books are written by authors with vastly different experiences and perspectives, they all offer insider

accounts of those with close personal experience of imprisonment and detention. These books show the limitations and potentials of such accounts. At their weakest they can be myopic and narrow, unable to see beyond the system as it exists, but at their best,

they offer a poignant insight into the messy battle of ideas that takes place within each individual and at the heart of society.

**Dr Jamie Bennett** is Governor of Grendon & Springhill.

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# PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLICATIONS



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