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Race in Prisons

Reviews

Book Review

The Excellent Mrs Fry

By Anne Isba

Publisher: Continuum (2010)

ISBN: 978-1847-25039-1

(hardback)

Price: £25.00 (hardback)

In her foreword the author reports that 'There are many biographies of Elizabeth Fry and at times I wondered whether the world needed another'. There are indeed nine such listed in her footnotes, but there is no harm in another when the subject offers so many paradoxes. Someone born into great wealth who became a 'plain Quaker'; a woman in a fiercely patriarchal age who shamed and shook powerful men into action to reform prisons; a parent who bore eleven children and spent a good deal of time away from home doing good; a self-doubting and often frail person who was a genius at delegation and persuading people into sacrificial commitments.

Isba's stated aim is to focus on Mrs Fry's career in prison reform, and so to distance herself from previous biographers who have endeavoured to construct a story of the whole life of the whole woman. This makes the book useful to readers of PSJ: the author sets Fry as a campaigner for reform of imprisonment (especially of women) in a context that reaches from Elizabeth Hooten, a Quaker pioneer of the latter 17th century, through to the Corston report of 2007. Religious intensity burned strongly in Fry throughout her life, but it led to a broad concern for dispossessed humanity rather than to a narrow confessional enthusiasm.

Her serene and positive but forceful personality, expressed

through the instrument of a 'magical' voice which charmed perhaps birds out of trees but certainly large sums of money out of pocket-books, made a double impact. The first impact was on the brutalised women incarcerated in conditions whose evil squalor she was eloquently describing well before Dickens conjured his lurid images of the same. Isba describes imprisoned women falling silent under her reading and simple explanations of the Bible, and then enthusiastically consenting to be organised into something resembling structured monastic communities, complete with rules and roles and uniforms. The second impact was on her peers and on the great and the good, from royalty downwards, to whom she increasingly had privileged access as her fame and her travels reached across Europe. By the end of three decades of work, hers was itself a kind of royal progress. The author claims for Fry a formative role in prison reform (without detracting from the extraordinary achievements, within a far shorter period, of John Howard before her) and also in nursing; she might also have added that Elizabeth Fry was in there at the beginning of the cult of celebrity, as the early 19th century opened up swift travel routes across Britain and Europe.

Mention of nursing leads to the chief reservation about this book. Without quite wishing to dethrone Florence Nightingale as the mother of modern nursing and substitute Fry (who was indeed responsible for the first truly professional approach to nurse training), the author produces with an air of triumph a British Medical Journal article of 1897 hailing Fry as 'the founder of modern nursing'. And in the field of prison reform, to

which the nursing business is a very small footnote in the author's tale, she will hear very little ill of the woman whom the book's subtitle calls an 'unlikely heroine' and whose title itself uses the word 'excellent' without irony. It is disconcertingly near to hagiography; and its style not infrequently recalls the tone of those improving and inspirational lives of heroic figures, missionaries and the like, which were so popular for a century from 1850. At the beginning, in fact, in her account of Betsy's childhood and youth, with emotional and religious tides running strong and simple, Isba almost takes up residence amidst the clichés of that genre. It feels as if the academic historian is striving to achieve a popular tone, and ends up sounding something like Malory Towers. Readers should not be put off by this; the book becomes perhaps not less uncritical, but certainly less coy as it charts the achievements of the adult.

Elizabeth Fry was no one's fool. She understood the complexity of her own motivations, she knew her limitations (including, perhaps, her limitations in the domestic roles expected of her); she knew the ambivalences of 'doing good' and she understood the ways in which more devious people made use of her. She was an extraordinarily quick and reliable judge of people's ability and aptitudes, and with her quiet steady look and voice she could command any room or hall. She achieved much, and her range of reforms look no less strategic today: the importance of constructive work (for which she established an evidence base, that reoffending was cut by a third among prisoners given employment at Newgate) and learning in prisons, diet and sanitation, the

'ladies' committees' which she established for a great number of prisons and which were the direct forerunners of today's Independent Monitoring Boards, classification of prisoners, a consistent national system of discipline, that those with mental health problems should not be in prison but in asylums, that independent inspectors should be appointed. Though the motivations, the language and the pervasive acceptance of a rigid class structure make the early 19th century seem a long way from the early 21st, the core of this book offers a useful historical perspective to anyone interested in the reform of prisons.

Martin Kettle works for HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

Book Review

Fifty year stretch: Prisons and imprisonment 1980-2020

By Stephen Shaw

Publisher: Waterside Press (2010)
ISBN: 978-1904380573 (hardback)
Price: £17.95 (hardback)

Stephen Shaw has an impressive pedigree. He was Director of the Prison Reform Trust for 18 years and then Prisons and Probation Ombudsman for over a decade, where he was responsible for investigating not only complaints but also deaths in custody. He therefore has an intimate knowledge of prisons over the last 30 years and is well qualified to act as a commentator. This short but lively book attempts to provide a history of changes in prisons over those three decades and offers some predictions for the future.

In the first chapter, Shaw sets out the purpose of his book. He

starts by applying Francis Fukuyama's¹ theory of the 'end of history' to prisons. Fukuyama argued that capitalist liberal democracy has reached its apogee, with the structure of society established and broadly accepted. Shaw suggests that the aims of prison reformers have now been achieved and that the role and purpose of prisons is generally agreed, with only minor disagreement about the degree to which it is used.

The second and third chapters contrast the low use of imprisonment during the first half of the 20th century with its much greater use in the second. He highlights how the ageing prison estate came under increasing strain, and how the loss of faith in rehabilitation undermined the established purpose of prisons. Shaw characterises the period prior to the last 30 years as a time in which the prison population was less diverse. Prisoners were more likely to have been sentenced for property offences and staff would manage through a mixture of brutality and indulgence.

Shaw goes on to argue that the contemporary prison system was forged in the fire of three crises: the crises of order, security and industrial relations. The crisis of order was defined by the riots and disturbances that plagued prisons from the late 1960s to the early 1990s. The crisis of security was a running sore throughout much the period demarcated by the escapes of spies and train robbers in the 1960s to the those from Whitemoor and Parkhurst in 1994 and 1995 respectively. The crisis of industrial relations saw frequent strikes and conflicts marring relationships until a more settled

period came during the 1990s as legal controls and then partnership working smoothed the waters to a degree. Shaw argues that these crises required to become more closely concerned with prisons. He also describes that there has been increasing public concern about safety and crime, although he resolutely refuses to try to analyse why this has happened.

Shaw asserts that there is political consensus around 'law and order'. He sees no credible alternative to accepting the fact that crime has fallen for the last fifteen years but prison populations have risen. However, this ignores the experience of European neighbours and even neighbours in Scotland who have devised policies to reduce the use of imprisonment². It also ignores that even in America, where rates of imprisonment are much higher, states such as California and New York are planning to reduce the use of imprisonment³. Rather than being inevitable as Shaw appears to suggest, these policies reflect a particular time, place and culture.

This is followed by the fifth chapter, which is a paean to the contemporary UK prison system, describing it a not only improved in terms of physical conditions, but also more decent, more diverse and better able to reform and resettle prisoners. He describes the prison system as 'both kinder and gentler' than what has gone before (p.64). There is certainly a case to be made for this and the material conditions of prisons are much improved compared with the early 1990s. However, Shaw does not sufficiently consider the more problematic aspects of imprisonment including continuing race issues⁴, the persistence of a traditional staff

1. Fukuyama, F. (1993) *The end of history and the last man* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

2. See Prison Service Journal (2009) *The Interview: Kenny MacAskill* in *Prison Service Journal* No.182 p.56-62.

3. See Howard League for Penal Reform (2009) *Do Better Do Less: The Report of the Commission on English Prisons Today* London: Howard League for Penal Reform.

4. See National Offender Management Service (2008) *Race Review 2008: Implementing race equality in prisons five years on* London: Ministry of Justice.

culture⁵ and the sometimes poor services available in prisons, particularly larger ones⁶. The experience of prisoners is also important in this respect. Ben Crewe's recent study⁷ highlights that although material conditions have improved, other aspects of imprisonment have come to be experienced as painful by prisoners including the uncertainty of early release and the discretionary nature of power through means such as incentives and earned privileges. As one prisoner in that study described, prisons had become 'softer but shitter'⁸. There is therefore a more complex discussion to be had about how prisons have changed.

The book is particularly strong in the sixth chapter, which describes some broader social trends and how these have been played out in prison. These include the development of managerialism, a movement to larger organisations and units as economies of scale are sought, and the development of information technology. Shaw draws on his experience to present a balanced view of both the problems and benefits that have been derived from these trends.

In the final two chapters, Shaw looks towards the next two decades. What he predicts is more of the same: a growing prison population albeit held in reasonably decent conditions. In other words, Shaw senses that we have come to the end of history. However, one feels that this misses major challenges facing the world including climatic change and the passing of peak oil production, as well as shifting global power. These changes may have more

dramatic impacts on the world economy and individual nation states than this book recognises and may lead to changes that penetrate deep into society including the issue of crime and punishment.

This book is engaging, well written and is produced with a detailed knowledge of both the practicalities and the academic analysis of prisons. It will certainly serve as a good introduction for those new to prisons and will be of interest to those currently working in the area. However, it does feel like a book that has played safe. There is much more to be said about the problematic issues about prisons, including the relationship between crime and poverty and how criminal justice maintains and entrenches power and inequality. The Whiggish contemporary history presented in this book seems to be aimed at supporting and reinforce consensus and the status quo rather than exposing division and fragmentation or making a case for change.

Jamie Bennett is Governor of HMP Morton Hall.

Book Review

The lost British serial killer: Closing the case on Peter Tobin and Bible John

By David Wilson and Paul Harrison
Publisher: Sphere (2010)
ISBN: 978-0-7515-4232-5
(paperback)
Price: £6.99 (paperback)

Over recent years, David Wilson has made the step from the academic community into wider

public attention. This has come about largely through his work covering serial killing in British newspapers, television and true crime books. This is the third popular book that Wilson has produced on this subject and the second he has authored with journalist Paul Harrison, the first being a book on the murder of five young women in Ipswich in 2006¹. As with these previous books, Wilson uses this popular medium in order to engage a wider audience with more sophisticated criminological thinking.

This book looks at two cases. The first, which has become known as the 'Bible John' case, concerns the unsolved murders of three young women in Glasgow in the late 1960s. The second is the case of Peter Tobin who was convicted in 2006 and 2007 of the murder of three women over a 15 year period. The book examines each of the murders in detail as well as other crimes committed by Tobin and makes the case that he is the Bible John killer.

What makes this book different is that it does not simply retell the story of the murders with their grisly detail but uses this as a starting point for examining a number of crucial issues. In particular, the book discusses police investigation techniques and uses these to expose the reasons for the failure of the investigation in the late 1960s and the success of the later investigations. The analysis shows that rather than the systematic and logical process of inquiry that is presented in the popular media, such as the successful *CSI* series, investigations are often improvised, tentative, and they rely upon the discretion

5. See Sim, J. (2009) *Punishment and prisons: Power and the carceral state* London: Sage.

6. See HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales (2008) *Annual report 2007-08* London: The Stationary Officer and HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales (2009) *Annual report 2008-09* London: The Stationary Officer.

7. See Crewe, B (2009) *The Prisoner Society: Power, adaptation and social life in an English Prison* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

8. Ibid p. 110.

1. Wilson, D. and Harrison, P. (2008) *Hunting Evil: Inside the Ipswich Serial Murders* London: Sphere, Wilson, D. (2009) *A History of British Serial Killing* London: Sphere.

of senior investigators. It also discussed the development of the process and 'science' of investigation including DNA evidence.

The book is particularly strong in exploring offender profiling techniques. There are lengthy discussions of analyses of the behaviour of serial killers and discussion of the foundation of profiling, pragmatically mixing psychology, sociology and detective work. Some books about profiling, such as Paul Britton's *Jigsaw Man*², have glamorised this and presented profilers as heroic individualists. This book is more open, discussing some of the research on which profiling is based, examining its strengths and limitations and exposing its vagaries. These techniques are applied to Peter Tobin as a case study in order to test the credibility of some of the cold murder cases that Tobin has been linked to, dating back to the Bible John case.

This book will no doubt attract some attention for its conclusion that Tobin is Bible John. That may be true and readers will have their own view about the evidence presented. However, what is perhaps more important about this book is the fact that it shows how the true crime genre can be used as a means of discussing broader criminological issues and providing a space for better understanding the police, criminals and the victims of crime. Once again, Wilson has shown that popular culture does not have to be dumbed down but instead can be a place for intelligent ideas and debate.

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Book Review

Criminal Justice: Local and Global

Edited by Deborah Drake, John Muncie, Louise Westmarland
Publisher: Open University and Willan Publishing (2009)
ISBN: 1-843925-14-1 (paperback)
1-843925-13-3 (hardback)
Price: £22.99 (paperback)
£58.00 (hardback)

Book Review

Crime: Local and Global

Edited by John Muncie, Deborah Talbot, Reece Walters
Publisher: Open University and Willan Publishing (2009)
ISBN: 1-843925-16-8 (paperback)
1-843925-15-X (hardback)
Price: £22.99 (paperback)
£58.00 (hardback)

Criminal Justice: Local and Global and its sister textbook *Crime: Local and Global* are two new teaching texts by the Open University that aim to give the reader a critical understanding of the globally contested nature of 'crime' and 'justice'. *Criminal Justice* is perhaps best described as a definitive text book: it is broad based, covering just about every aspect of criminal justice systems both nationally and internationally, with short easily digestible sections of discussion followed by analysis and follow up questions for students. *Crime: Local and Global* challenges our conceptions about the nature of crime, not in a philosophical sense but by looking at the nature of the harm that 'crime' causes. It is particularly topical in light of the recent global financial scandals that have brought greater media exposure of these sorts of issues.

Through an examination of key concepts and criminological approaches, the books skillfully provide a mosaic of the different ways in which crime is constructed,

conceived and controlled. International case studies are used to demonstrate how 'crime' and 'justice' are historically and geographically located in terms of the global/local context, and how processes of 'criminalisation' and punishment are measured and moderated in today's world.

It is more than a text book though: equally useful to students and practitioners. I found myself loaning out the book to colleagues who wanted a quick summary of a recent issue or idea over a cup of coffee. Sections are deliberately brief but do manage to comprehensively cover what is an amazingly wide and varied collection of subjects.

Criminal Justice: Local and Global covers the way the 'local' can be widened out to look at international, transnational and supranational aspects of justice. This allows the authors to discuss issues such as corporate crime and human rights in a comparative and critical way, examining the possibility, for example of an International Criminal Court, cross-national jurisdictions of regulation and control (such as Interpol) amongst other ideas. Each chapter covers a different area of regulation, punishment and process. The book takes an innovative approach to widen 'justice' to encompass considerations beyond simple, local jurisdictions; taking instances of 'justice' in one jurisdiction and using global examples to illustrate how ambiguous the concept of 'justice' can be. It is both critical and challenging, asking the reader to reflect on current trends that are impacting across the world whilst at the same time identifying contradictions and exceptions. One example which is of particular relevance to PSJ readers is the recent policy u-turn in California toward the imprisonment of young

2. Britton, P. (1997) *Jigsaw Man* London: HarperCollins.

people, reducing incarceration rates by 75 per cent over a ten year period and bucking the national trend —leading to a debate about the increasingly punitive nature of governments in response to crime.

Crime: Local and Global encourages us to re-visit the way local events (such as prostitution) impact on society. It picks up links with other areas of crime such as people traffickers, international organized crime and violence and challenges current responses to this virtually ignored area until recently. Each crime or area of activity selected within this text has a global reach, and is made ever more possible due to the way globalization has opened up markets, both legitimate and illegitimate. The book's approach and scope emphasizes that we can no longer view 'crime' as something which occurs within certain jurisdictions, at certain times and in particular places. For example, the chapter on cybercrime highlights the 'illegal' acts that can be perpetrated by anywhere in the world, and provides a focus for recent emerging themes around intellectual property and the limits of crime.

The book takes an interesting approach to source material, combining academic writing and articles with media reports and even television drama (including at one point a reference to *Monty Python's The Holy Grail*) as a means of stimulating thought and debate. I enjoyed moving backwards and forwards through the chapter index picking out sections of interest but found myself increasingly going back to read whole sections of the two books as themes were cleverly cross-referenced and linked together.

Overall an interesting read, that was thought provoking, introduced new ideas and re-visited old ones and left me feeling thoroughly updated and well informed. For students on a budget

(both books sell for just over twenty pounds) this is an easy quick win for those who want to get a quick grasp of the complexities of the Criminal Justice system and our understanding of Crime yet still meets the requirements of academic rigor with good use of referencing throughout.

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Book Review

**Thinking about Punishment:
Penal policy across space, time
and discipline**

By Michael Tonry.

Publisher: Ashgate (2009)

ISBN: 978-0-7546-2905-4

(hardback)

Price: £85.00 (hardback)

Thinking about Punishment by Michael Tonry, is the fifth title in a new series from Ashgate which focuses on Pioneers in Contemporary Criminology. Edited by David Nelken, the series endeavours to draw together the best published and unpublished work by leading authorities in the area of contemporary criminological theory. Joining the criminological 'greats' of David Downes, David Greenberg, Paul Rock and James Sheptycki; Tonry draws together articles from a wide range of journals and books on his specific theme of punishment. Described by the author as a 'Greatest Hits' book, the collected articles and book chapters complement one other to provide a retrospective view of his work and show the development of his contribution to criminology as a whole.

The book begins with a 12 page introduction, written by Tonry, which whilst a significant piece of scholarship in its own right, frames the subsequent chapters and writings. This opening is very

interesting: not just because the author explains why he has written what he has over his academic lifetime to date, but also because he sums up what he has learnt along the way. For example, he explains that his interest in racial disparities came about because he came of age at a time in the US when the Civil Rights movement was at its peak; American politics became more right-winged; and 'wars' were initiated against crime and illegal drug taking. Categorising the majority of his work into three themes (race and ethnicity, crime control policy and circumstances in countries other than the US), Tonry explains how he has been significantly influenced in his writings and thinking by his late mentor Norval Morris, who he worked with on and off from 1971 until his death in 2004. With these themes in mind the remainder of the book is divided into five parts: race and ethnicity; comparative penal policy; American penal policy; sentencing policy; and, punishment theory.

Race and ethnicity, Part I of the book, is a collection of three book extracts which together make a number of important points. One such point is that racial disparity in prison in the US is largely due to legislation which targets those offences which black Americans are disproportionately more likely to be convicted of than their white counterparts. This therefore suggests that it is not the fact that blacks commit more crime, but that the law is biased in the crimes which it targets and thus focuses upon. For example, Tonry (in chapter 1) found that crime control policies adopted in the 1990s punished crack offences (which blacks are more likely to be convicted of) as severely as powder cocaine offences (which whites are more likely to be convicted of) which were 100 times larger in size; with such a conclusion also valid as recently as 2008 (chapter 3).

Complementing this work is also an extract (chapter 2) dealing with comparative research looking at the existence of racial disparities in England and Wales, Canada and Australia; with perhaps the surprising conclusion that the least marked discrepancies were those found in the US.

Race, Tonry argues, is therefore 'at the beginning and the end of the search for what causes American punishment policies to be so severe', although is unlikely to be the only influence in forming penal policy. Part II therefore begins to evaluate the determinants of penal policy in Westernised countries quickly dispelling the oft cited reasons of rising crimes rates, cynical electoral policies and public punitiveness. Instead, Tonry considers the factors of 'late modernity' as summed up by David Garland, although concludes that changing penal policies are often due to local rather than global phenomena (chapter 4). Using this work to inform American penal policy, Part III further explains how explanations of US developments in penal policy focus on 'a combination of the history of American race relations, constitutional arrangements that make policy decisions highly vulnerable to short-term public emotion, long-term cycles of intolerance of crime and criminals, and a series of moral panics about violent and sexual offences' (chapters 7 and 8). This argument is further explored by a 2009 extract found in chapter 9.

Part IV of the book then moves on to sentencing policy and opens (chapter 10) with one of the earliest overviews of the American sentencing reform movement, which was written with Norval Morris in 1978. Building on experience and research with, and for, a number of sentencing commissions, Tonry went on to become perhaps the most influential sentencing policy

commentator of his time, with other extracts in this Part focusing on mandatory penalties (chapter 11) and the purposes and functions of sentencing (chapter 13). Much of this work was later summarised in his 1996 book 'Sentencing Matters', of which the introductory chapter is attentively included (chapter 12). This is then further explored and commented upon in the final part of the book which explores the theory of punishment. Tonry claims that sentencing policy encompasses both normative and practical issues and these factors are discussed and fully explored in chapters 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16. From such exploration, he concludes that it is possible to create a sentencing framework, whereby the least severe punishment within an allowable range (justified on deserts theory) should be imposed upon an offender. How this would work in a practical sense is explored in chapter 16.

As the author describes himself and as previously mentioned, this is a 'Greatest Hits' book and is reminiscent of how I would envisage an academic version of a 'This is your life' 'red book' on Michael Tonry to be. There is no doubt that Tonry is recognised as being amongst one of the greatest contemporary criminologists, and it is through such a collection that we are reminded of why this is the case. Unlike other books in the series, this does not include previously unpublished contributions, (although of course the introduction is an original contribution), but nevertheless is an easy to access collection of some of Tonry's most influential writings dating from 1978 to 2009. The price tag of £85 may, however, put some practitioners off, especially when much of what is written is focused on theory rather than practice; but the book would nonetheless make a valuable contribution to any public library

shelf and be of value to anyone who is interested in the development of contemporary penal thinking.

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The Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics and the Making of the American Penal State, 1776-1941

By Rebecca McLennan
Publisher: Cambridge University Press (2008)
ISBN: 978-0-521-53783-4
(paperwork) 978-0-521-83096-6
(hardback)
Price: £19.99 (paperback)
£40.00 (hardback)

This book is a scholarly and detailed study of the origins of the American penal state and the relationship between contractual penal labour and imprisonment from the end of the American War of Independence, through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. The text focuses on the relationship between contractual penal labour and imprisonment over this period, but contributes a much broader theoretical dimension to understand the 'crisis' of imprisonment and the contested nature of the boundaries of punishment, particularly imprisonment, in a society which holds freedom as 'official religion' (p.470). The text is divided into three parts; from the early years of the Republic to 1895, demonstrating the rise of the use of penal servitude, its origins and its downfall, after a series of crises; from 1895 to 1913, when new solutions were offered to the problem of productive labour in the aftermath of these crises and the curtailment of contracted penal labour in many states. The final period is from 1913 to 1940s, the Progressive Era, during which a new

penology developed and recast some of the central questions regarding labour and prison discipline more broadly.

This is an excellent account which contributes an interesting and important dimension to the study of American penal history in particular, but penal history in Western societies more broadly. As McLennan notes it is surprising that some of the key historical texts such as David Rothman's (1971) *The Discovery of the Asylum*, have had little to say on prison labour. However, to say that this book charts the development of legal punishment and contracted prison labour in the US is doing a disservice to this exhaustive study, but it is probably not for the casual reader, who is just dipping their toe into the history of the modern prison. McLennan traces the origins of contractual penal labour to the 'reform' period of early nineteenth century and the separate (Pennsylvania) and silent (Auburn, New York) systems of imprisonment and the importance of these penal philosophies in influencing penal strategies of this period, in the US and in Europe. McLennan argues that the silent system was important not merely for the reformatory potential it was thought to offer, but instead for the focus on labour which was crucial to the regime. The use of contracted prison labour rose throughout the nineteenth century, becoming the dominant mode of punishment in almost all Northern

and later all Southern states of America, enforced by the lash and the paddle. At the height of the use of contracted penal labour in prisons in the 1860s it contributed over 30 million dollars from contracted work. This proved problematic in the later decades of the nineteenth century as contracted prison labour was abolished and the prison system faced a fiscal and ideological crisis.

The book examines the ways in which contracted penal labour was viewed by a number of different interested parties; politicians, the public, prisoners, labour organisations and workers, and the different and often competing discourses on the contested nature of labour in prison. The final section of the book examines the development of a new penology in the first half of the twentieth century, predominantly focussing on the state of New York and providing detailed analysis of Auburn and Sing Sing prisons. This section illuminates the prison crisis in this state and the various interested parties contributions to the reformatory endeavour. It is a fascinating discussion of the competing voices on reform and the highly politicised debates within state governance. Through a discussion of the creation of the Mutual Welfare League (aimed for self-government by prisoners, promoted by reformer Thomas Mott Osborne) at Auburn and Sing Sing prisons, and the various prisoner publications such as the

Star of Hope, it also possible to hear the often missing voices of prisoners and the ways in which they utilised the reformers own discourses to achieve their own goals (e.g reduce times in cells, better quality food); this I found particularly interesting.

In analysing these discourses on contracted penal labour and the boundaries of legal punishment, this study provides a historical dimension to questions that persist today in relation to employment and industries in prison, perhaps in different ways or with different levels of intensity; what type of employment should prisoners undertake? Should it be productive? Should the aim of penal labour be reformatory or deterrent? Should prison industries be able to compete with manufacturers or industries in the external marketplace? Can or should this occur in communities where certain industries or manufactures have declined and the unemployed outside prison are competing with cheap labour inside? More importantly, this text is skilful in providing for a much broader analysis of punishment, in examining the meaning and boundaries of punishment, imprisonment, reform, prison discipline, and the treatment of prisoners in the development of the America prison system.

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