An international network working towards social justice, state accountability and decarceration

NEWSLETTER No 6, 2017
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. (p. 3) Editorial

II. (p. 4) Irwin: My Life Began at Forty

III. (p. 8) EG Press Publications

IV. (p. 10) Justice, Power and Resistance: The Journal of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control

V. (p. 13) Call for Papers EG Journal: Special Edition: Minorities, Crime and (In)justice

VI. (p. 14) News from Europe and Around the World

Front page photo: Detail of Oslo prison. Photo by Jonathan Hobber Winter (2011)
I. Editorial

Last month the newsletter was dedicated to calls for prison building moratoriums in Northern Europe – this month, Michael Irwin tells us about the inside experiences of imprisonment. Michael has now a BA (Hons) in Criminology and Psychological Studies from the Open University and an MSc in Criminology at Queens University Belfast. Next, he wants to pursue a PhD. We are happy to publish here parts of his autobiography My Life Began at 40.

Speaking of autobiographies, we are happy to announce that EG Press will this fall publish in English long-time EG member, Thomas Mathiesen’s new book entitled: Cadence: A Professional Autobiography. We will publish in a later newsletter an extract of this work.

The European Group has published the second edition of our Journal Justice, Power and Resistance. However, still there are too few people subscribing to this new journal. We have no membership fee so subscribing to the Journal is a way you can support the Group financial as well as getting a brilliant critical publication delivered to your door three times a year. Please subscribe today. We also would like to urge you to get your University and/or local library to subscribe.

Justice, Power and Resistance, Volume 1, No 1, is out. As you will see from the table of content for this issue to be found on page 12, this issue promises highly interesting and important readings. Next year the journal will present a special edition on Minorities, crime and (in)justice. Please find the call for papers for this edition at page 13.

We are looking forward to seeing you at European Group annual conference in Lesbos in late August. All information about the conference can be found here.

In solidarity,
Ida and Per
II. My Life Began At Forty

By: Michael Irwin

On the 29th August 2007, prison officers in England and Wales went on strike. I only knew this when it was shown on BBC News as there were no staff on the wing. At the time I was on remand on HMP Lewes and decided there and then that the world had gone mad and that the general public should know what goes on in the institution of prison. I started to write with pen and paper and record the events that were unfolding on a daily basis. This has now been turned into a book called My Life Began At Forty.

I was arrested at Gatwick Airport on the 19th June 2007 with 1.1 kilograms of cocaine hidden in the lining of a bag I’d collected in the Caribbean. At the time I was addicted to cocaine, and the alcohol intake was just as bad. After a few months of detox I got my half sensible head back on and started to write. I ended up receiving a twelve year sentence for drug trafficking, six in prison and six on licence and decided to put my ‘Time’ to good use.

I served my sentence in six different prisons starting at HMP Lewes then moving on to HMP’s Brixton, Rye Hill and Highdown in England and then transferred back home to Northern Ireland and HMPs Maghaberry and finally Magilligan. There are many prison books out there and one of the unique features of my story is that I served in two different jurisdictions and was able to compare and contrast as I progressed through the system.

It was Erwin James who once said ‘no one will fully understand the strength it takes to get through a day in prison.’ My story not only captures these struggles it also captures the battle that goes on within one’s self. It explores the mind numbing
boredom of lock ups, the chaos of the wings, isolation and vulnerability compared to the endless illogical bureaucracy of a dysfunctional prison and criminal justice system.

My book also tells of the struggle to gain an Open University Degree in prison. As a man in his forties (soon to be fifty), the education system in prison was not really set up for me. The education system is more to do with the tick box culture of getting half of the population to level one or two in basic maths and English. As far as the system goes in England and Wales, a prisoner must be serving a sentence of four years or more to even be considered for an OU degree. So, in a way I was lucky that I got a lengthy sentence.

I completed my OU openings course in HMP Rye Hill in 2008 and, due to a plethora of administration errors by the prison service (not the OU), it was only when I arrived in Northern Ireland in 2009 that I was able to start my first module, K101 (An Introduction to Health and Social Care). My book describes how on the one hand I got the most amazing support from the education department at Magilligan to the loathing of prison staff who saw me as a threat as I had half a brain.
This of course was true in a way as the more knowledge I attained via my OU coursework the worse I got. The more I understood the angrier I got. I started to challenge and question policies and decisions designed to protect me under the alleged duty of care provided by the prison system. I became a mentor and a prison Listener which allowed me to see that my problems were not that great when compared to others. Considering the level of suicides in our prison system today my book gives a unique insight into how this develops, how it festers in the psyche and how unequipped the criminal justice system is to deal with social inadequacies in our society.

Before I went to prison I was living in Cape Town and living a hedonistic life of sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll. My addiction spiralled out of control and my money dried up and ultimately led to my trip to the Caribbean. What my book also delves into is the fact that I had lost everything. It explores how a person has to deal with these harsh facts of life in a closed environment and how one lives a parallel life. Without the support of family and friends would I have made it?

These questions are asked and answered throughout the book, the goal posts continually shift over time, place and circumstance and illuminates how family ties and peer support are crucial when serving a prison sentence. I continually speak of family throughout the book and this brings the reader back into reality and perhaps thinking, could I do this, could I survive it?

It’s been ten years since I first put pen to paper. I scribbled on court benches, police cells and hospital beds. I typed it up when I had time and out of sheer tenacity I now have a finished product. My story is one of hope and how as human beings, even at the lowest of low, when there is no way out we can find the strength to dig deep, put one foot in front of the other, survive the day and get to the end. Several of the world’s top criminologists have already read the unedited version and suggested ‘for anyone studying criminology this is a must read. Get it out there Michael.’
I now have a BA (Hons) in Criminology and Psychological Studies from the Open University and an MSc in Criminology at Queens University Belfast. Next stop PhD. My message is simple ‘never, ever give up.’

As Friedrich Nietzsche stated “Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there is a mighty lord, an unknown sage – it is called Self; it dwells in your body, it is your body.”

My Life Began at Forty was published in April 2017.

Michael can be contacted at micsirwin@gmail.com

This Blog was originally published by The Open University’s Harm & Evidence Research Collaborative (HERC) at https://oucriminology.wordpress.com/2017/03/19/my-life-began-at-forty-by-michael-irwin/

III. EG Press Publications

Available from

EG Press

Women Crime and Criminology: A Celebration
Edited by: Helen Monk and Joe Sim
Includes contributions from Frances Heidensohn, Richard Collier and Carol Smart as well as an introduction by Helen Monk and Joe Sim.

Beyond Criminal Justice
Edited by: J.M. Moore, Bill Rolston, David Scott and Mike Tomlinson
An Anthology of Abolitionist Papers presented to conferences of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control.

Emancipatory Politics and Praxis
David Scott (with Emma Bell, Joanna Gilmore, Helen Gosling, J M Moore and Faith Spear)
An anthology of essays written for the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control, 2013-16

Penal Abolitionism
Edited by: Andrea Beckman, J.M. Moore and Azrini Wahidin
Papers from the Penal Law, Abolition and Anarchism Conference Volume I

For further details please visit:
http://www.egpress.org/
Coming Soon from

EG
Press

Cadenza: A Professional Autobiography

Thomas Mathiesen (with the assistance of Snorre Snari Mathiesen)

The English translation of Mathiesen’s important account of his career as a public intellectual and activist

Emerging Voices

Critical Social Research by European Group Postgraduate and Early Career Researchers

Co-ordinated and Edited by Samantha Fletcher and Holly White
Associate Editing by the Emerging Voices Collective
Preface by Steve Tombs

This collection of twenty-six short chapters introduces the scholarly and activist work currently being undertaken by emerging voices in the European Group.

Voices of Resistance

Subjugated knowledge and the challenge to the criminal justice system

Edited by Kym Atkinson, Antoinette Raffaela Huber and Katie Tucker

A collection of papers presented at the Liverpool John Moore’s Centre for the Study of Crime, Criminalisation and Social Exclusion’s postgraduate conference held in 2016

Anarchism, Penal Law and Popular Resistance

Edited by: Andrea Beckman, J.M. Moore and Azrini Wahidin

Papers from the Penal Law, Abolition and Anarchism Conference Volume 2

For further details please visit:
http://www.egpress.org/
IV. Justice, Power and Resistance: The Journal of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control

The European Group has published the second edition of our Journal *Justice, Power and Resistance*. However, subscriptions have been very disappointing. We have no membership fee so subscribing to the Journal is a way you can support the Group financially as well as getting a brilliant critical publication delivered to your door three times a year. Please subscribe today.

**Subscription Rates**

(including the cost of postage and packaging)

**Europe (excluding UK)**

- **53€** Volume 1 (2017) All three Issues
- **100€** Volume 1 (2017) and Volume 2 (2018) - A total of six issues
- **120€** Foundation Volume (2016) [one issue]; Volume 1 (2017) [three issues]; and Volume 2 [three issues] - All of the first seven issues.
UK
- £45 Volume 1 (2017) All three Issues
- £84 Volume 1 (2017) and Volume 2 (2018) - A total of six issues
- £100 Foundation Volume (2016) [one issue]; Volume 1 (2017) [three issues]; and Volume 2 [three issues] - All of the first seven issues.

Africa, Asia and Latin America
- US$37.50 Volume 1 (2017) All three Issues
- US$75 Volume 1 (2017) and Volume 2 (2018) - A total of six issues
- US$87.50 Foundation Volume (2016) [one issue]; Volume 1 (2017) [three issues]; and Volume 2 [three issues] - All of the first seven issues.

USA & Canada
- US$60 Volume 1 (2017) All three Issues
- US$113 Volume 1 (2017) and Volume 2 (2018) - A total of six issues
- US$130 Foundation Volume (2016) [one issue]; Volume 1 (2017) [three issues]; and Volume 2 [three issues] - All of the first seven issues.

Rest of the World
- US$75 Volume 1 (2017) All three Issues
- US$150 Volume 1 (2017) and Volume 2 (2018) - A total of six issues
- US$175 Foundation Volume (2016) [one issue]; Volume 1 (2017) [three issues]; and Volume 2 [three issues] - All of the first seven issues.

To subscribe to Justice, Power, and Resistance please e-mail JPRsubs@outlook.com with the following details:

- Your name and the address you want your copies sent to.
- If you wish your subscription to cover Foundation Volume & Volume 1 (1 issue in 2016 & 3 issues in 2017); or Volume 1 (3 issues in 2017); or Volume 1 and 2 (3 issues in 2017 and 3 issues in 2018); or Foundation and Volumes 1 & 2 (all of the first 7 issues)
- European Group Members who wish to take out a solidarity subscription should please specify the donation they wish to make to the Group.

We will issue an invoice via PAYPAL which will allow you to pay by bank transfer, debit or credit card.
Justice, Power and Resistance: Critical Criminology
Volume 1, No 1 (April, 2017)

Editorial
‘Critical Criminology’

Articles
1. Vincenzo Ruggiero ‘Networks of greed’
2. Herman Bianchi ‘Abolition: Assensus and sanctuary’
3. Anne Alvesalo-Kussi and Liisa Lahteenmaki
   ‘Corporate criminal liability and abolitionism – An unholy alliance of corporate power and critical criminology?’
4. Massimo Pavarini ‘Strategy for combat: Prisoner’s rights and abolitionism’
5. Rosa Del Olmo ‘Limitations for the prevention of violence: The Latin American reality and its criminological theory’
6. Claudia Mantovan ‘Contested areas. Coexistence, conflict and governance in the districts near the railway stations of Padua and Mestre’

Activist Contributions
1. Tammy Castle and Danielle McDonald
   ‘Intellectual activism and public engagement: Strategies for academic resistance’
2. Natacha Filippi
   The Birth of a Red Alarm Button: Against Institutional Violence in Barcelona – the SIRECOVI system’

Reflections
Justice, Power and Resistance ‘Thinking about justice’

Book Reviews
V. CALL FOR PAPERS: Special Edition: Minorities, Crime and (In)justice

Justice, Power & Resistance
The Journal of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control

Within the contemporary moment, we detect the (re)emergence of official narratives that serve to situate social problems within a logic of pathological, maladjusted and/or culturally unassimilable minority groups to legitimise state-enabled (and sanctioned) violence.

Simultaneously, across the globe, the oft-communicated advance of right-wing populism necessitates political reactions, often exerted through penal apparatus, which disproportionately affect, yet paradoxically legitimise, the state’s harmful incursion into the lives of minorities. Emergent processes of criminalisation are deliberately concealed, hidden away and perennially denied. Moreover, the recent intensification of systemic state-enabled violence against LGBTQ, racialised and religiously defined bodies are now met with an academic ‘strategic silence’ (Matheisen, 2004) or are empirically argued away (Harris 2009, Cohen 2001). This silence is now giving way to ‘dangerous criminologies’ located within the criminogenic and pathologising tendencies of realist(s) interpretations which uncritically serve to reaffirm the cultural and societal incompatibility of minority groups as (an)other.

Despite the advances of critical counter-narratives to assuage such tendencies, we are again in the midst of State orchestrated and hegemonic narratives which serve to attribute contemporary social problems to the non-citizen and failed-citizen (Anderson 2013). This issue of the European Group journal welcomes papers and articles that reposition and centralise the ‘crime’ and criminal justice concerns of minority individuals, groups and ‘communities’ back onto the political and activist agenda. Furthermore, we also welcome contributions which appraise and challenge contemporary theoretical and conceptual thinking which simplistically serves to ‘other’ and impede minority perspectives (Phillips and Bowling, 2003).

Completed contributions, in English, should be submitted to one of the editors: Monish Bhatia (m.bhatia@abertay.ac.uk) or Patrick Williams (p.williams@mmu.ac.uk) by the deadline which is 15 November 2017. In the meantime, potential contributors are welcome to contact the editors to discuss potential papers.
VI. News from Europe and Around the World

UK

Borders, Racisms and Resistance

Abertay University, 7th-8th September 2017

In the past year, both sides of the Atlantic have seen a rehabilitation of ethno-nationalism and the ratcheting up of violent immigration controls. Most recently, the election of Donald Trump has shifted the issue of borders to the fore of political debate in the West. But by the end of 2016 European nations had enforced their own ‘travel bans’ and built a wall in Calais, continuing to wreak death and destitution in the shadows of ‘fortress Europe’; facts now often obscured by the spectacle of the Trump administration.

Importantly, the racism that has been rendered (in)visible by such events is part of a much longer struggle around multiculturalism, citizenship and belonging. In the UK, immigration now occupies prime position in debates on both the left and the right, and practices of ‘everyday’ bordering have seeped into schools, universities, hospitals and housing.

At the same time, new modes of resistance have emerged in response to contemporary state racisms: Black Lives Matter, anti-raids networks, and mass demonstrations in response to Trump’s ‘Muslim ban’ have sought to challenge not only the violence of the state but, at times, the very notion of the border itself.

Confirmed Speakers
- Amina (Muslim Women’s Resource Centre) Scottish Detainee Visitor
- Professor Colin Clark (University of the West of Scotland)
- Dr Gareth Mulvey (University of Glasgow)
- Dr Gina Netto (Heriot-Watt University)
• Dr Teresa Piacentini (University of Glasgow)
• Dr Dalene Swanson (University of Stirling)
• Dr Waqas Tufail (Leeds Beckett University)
• Dr Aaron Winter (University of East London)

Call for papers
We welcome submissions from researchers, students and activists from across disciplines. Please send abstracts of up to 250 words to Scarlet Harris: s.harris.2@research.gla.ac.uk by 15th August 2017.

Topics might include, but are not limited to:
• Everyday borders/bordering practices
• Detention and deportation
• Securitisation, criminalisation and surveillance
• Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism
• Racialisation
• Nationalism
• Empire and colonialism
• Resisting state racisms

Conference fee: £30.00 (includes lunch and refreshments on both days)


For all other enquiries please contact Monish Bhatia: m.bhatia@abertay.ac.uk

This conference seeks to bring together activists and researchers from across disciplines to discuss the changing landscape of racism and its relationship to borders, as well as the many expressions of resistance within which we find hope. This conference also aims to re-assert Scotland’s place in these global shifts, challenging assumptions of Scottish exceptionalism, and taking seriously Scotland’s role in historical and contemporary racisms.
Centre for Crime and Justice Studies: Research fellowship

Want to investigate state and corporate power?

This is a great opportunity for someone looking to develop their critical thinking and wanting to take their first career steps with a policy and research charity.

The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies in partnership with The Barry Amiel and Norman Melburn Trust, is recruiting for a Research Fellow to investigate state and corporate power in criminal justice in England and Wales. Specifically:

1. Undercover policing of political groups and social movements.
2. Organisations and companies profiting from prisons and punishment.

This is a one year full time post with a tax free support grant of £16,553.

You’ll be someone who has an enquiring mind and critical perspective. Perhaps acquired through relevant experience or University study. We are looking for someone who likes digging around in challenging, contemporary subjects and who works well under their own initiative.

The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies is an independent educational charity that advances public understanding of crime, criminal justice and social harm. Through partnership and coalition-building, advocacy and research, we work to inspire social justice solutions to the problems society faces, so that many responses that criminalise and punish are no longer required.


Download:

- [Application Pack.pdf](#)
- [Recruitment - application form January 2016.docx](#)
Please feel free to contribute to this newsletter by sending any information that you think might be of interest to the Group to Ida/Per at: europeangroupcoordinator@gmail.com

Also feel free to contribute with discussions or comments on the published material in the newsletter

Please submit before the 25th of each month if you wish to have it included in the following month’s newsletter, and provide a web link (wherever possible).

If you want to subscribe to the newsletter, do not hesitate to send an email to europeangroupcoordinator@gmail.com