



Mannheim Matters

No 1 January 2011

Meet ... Robert Reiner

This electronic Mannheim newsletter is the brainchild of Professor Jennifer Brown, who has become our Deputy Director. Mike Shiner from the Department of Social Policy has agreed to be the third member of the Management Team as Assistant Director. The Newsletter is intended to give an account of our various recent and forthcoming activities and will be issued monthly. The plan is to also offer in each issue a profile of one Mannheim member. And as current Director I have been asked to kick this off.



This is my last year as a full-time member of staff at LSE, as I am retiring next September, some three weeks before the legislation abolishing a prescribed retirement age kicks in (as my formal notification from the School took delight in stressing). I hope to continue some teaching and involvement in Mannheim, so this is not intended as a farewell note. But my thoughts (in the rare moments I have to think, as my last year is turning out to be just about my heaviest ever in terms of teaching and admin) are occupied with plans for future writing, and it is these I want to share.

In recent years I have been returning to my roots in my writing, in a number of ways. My first degree was in Economics, in Cambridge in 1967. Within it I concentrated increasingly on sociology

and politics, and that is where my graduate work took me. But the Cambridge Economics Faculty was (and largely remains) a bastion of Keynesian and Marxian political economy, rather than the mathematised neo-liberal formalism that has become the dominant paradigm (rightly castigated by internal critics as autistic).

Political economy recognises the *embeddedness* of the 'economic' in wider networks of political, social and cultural processes, and its ethical sources and implications. This has always been an implicit perspective in my work. For example, the analysis of police legitimacy in my book *The Politics of the Police* stresses the wider economic, cultural and social context that makes policing tactics more or less successful in securing consent. But, for all their virtues, the realist and cultural turns in criminology after the 1970s changed the subject, diverting attention from the large-scale social and cultural forces that were restructuring crime and criminal justice.

Along with this went an evisceration of critique. Nearly a quarter of a century ago, Zygmunt Bauman suggested that the role of intellectuals shifted from 'legislators' to 'interpreters' as modernity segued into postmodernity. They no longer enjoyed the respect or self-confidence to lay down laws from on high, mandating new values and directions, but could at best explain existing perspectives. Reflecting this horror of judgmentalism, with rare exceptions criminologists became either policy wonks or interpreters of the florid

cultures of deviance. But there is an excluded middle in this dichotomy: the intellectual (or criminologist) as prophet (in the meaning that prophesy has in the Old Testament, not as Mystic Megs foreseeing the future). In Michael Walzer's words, the Old Testament prophets' message 'is not something radically new; the prophet is not the first to find, nor does he make, the morality he expounds.... The prophet need only show the people their own hearts'. Max Weber suggested the prophets were pioneering political pamphleteers. But their admonishments were compatible with Weber's strictures about value neutrality in the scientific, as distinct from political, vocation, criticising practices by invoking existing communal values not advocating new ones. In this sense, prophesy is a paradoxical form of value-free preaching.

Many criminologists (like other social scientists) used to presume that a major source of crime and disorder was social injustice. For much of the twentieth century a social democratic perspective at least implicitly informed most sociological criminology, implying limited potential for criminal justice to control crime levels. Although intelligent policing and penal policy could more effectively relieve the symptoms of criminogenic political economic structures and cultures, this was an ultimately futile struggle to hold the lid down on the smouldering sources of crime. Social peace required getting tough on these causes. Whilst this perspective has for the time being lost the political battle it has not (as is often said) lost the argument.

My future writing plans involve taking further these points. My first aim is to write a short book on the concept of crime, which has largely been unexamined in the recent years of pragmatic 'realism' (with a few exceptions, such as David Nelken's exploration of the ambiguities of white-collar crime, and the 'zemiological'

deconstruction of criminology, which I am largely in sympathy with). This would expand 'An Inspector Calls: Putting Crime in its Place', Chapter Two of my book on *Law and Order*.

My longer term ambition is to attempt a thorough excavation of the sources of the eclipse of social democratic criminology since the 1970s. There are still mysteries in the sudden rise of neoliberalism to dominance in the 1970s, sweeping away so rapidly the post-World War II social democratic consensus that had delivered so much in terms of widely shared growth in material prosperity and security, as well as relatively low crime and benign control strategies by historical standards.

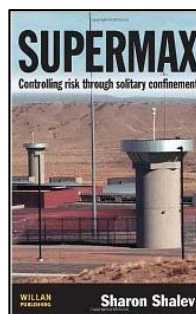
Even more important, and at least as mysterious: where are we going now? It is remarkable that so soon after the economic and financial crunch in late 2007 had seemed to discredit the neoliberal model, its savagely deflationary prescriptions for dealing with the sovereign debt crisis (resulting from governmental support for banking) are the new orthodoxy in this country. How can this zombie neoliberalism be explained? And what will it mean for criminal justice in Britain, in the hands of the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition?

Many liberals have been impressed and surprised by early signs of coalition willingness to reverse some of the trends to harsher punitiveness and the erosion of civil liberties under New Labour (and of course the Michael Howard regime at the Home Office before that). For the first time in nearly twenty years, there is government questioning of Howard's mantra that prison works. This apparent conversion is very welcome, even if it is largely prompted by economic considerations. But it is sadly predictable that these liberal ambitions will be frustrated in practice by increasing crime

and disorder flowing from the financial cuts and downturn. As before, the 'freeing' of the economy will engender a strong state penal and policing response to the social dislocation it produces, and the recent student protests are harbingers of this. An alternative narrative to neoliberal instrumentalism and egoistic aspiration is needed, evoking the mutualism of Buber's ideal of 'I-thou' and the ethics of the Golden Rule that underpinned social democracy. A core criminological responsibility, I believe, is to chart a way forward to reviving the conditions for social security and peace, which social democracy began gradually to deliver and most people deeply desire.

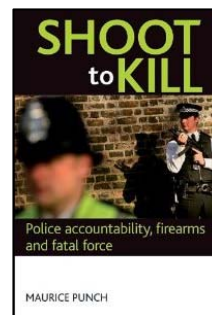
News

Dr Sharon Shalev, a fellow at the Mannheim has been awarded the British Society of Criminology's Book Prize for 2010 for her book *Supermax: controlling risk through solitary confinement*.



Sharon said: " Supermax prisons are extreme places which brutalise both prisoners and prison staff. They are excessive, expensive, ineffective, and they drive people mad. Rather than building more supermax prisons, it is time to acknowledge the failures of solitary confinement and the damage it inflicts, and reject its use as a legitimate prison practice in all but the most exceptional circumstances. I hope that the book will contribute to this end."

Sharon also appeared on Laurie Taylor's programme thinking aloud on BBC Radio 4.



Maurice Punch also has a new book out about the Stockwell killing of Charles de Menezes in 2005. The publisher's blurb states that this book raises "acute issues about operational practice, legitimacy, accountability and policy making regarding police use of fatal force. It dramatically exposed a new policy, referred to popularly as "shoot to kill", which came not from Parliament but from the non-statutory ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers). This vital and timely book unravels these often misunderstood matters with a fresh look at firearms practice and policy in a traditionally "unarmed" police service. It is essential reading for all those interested in the state's role in defining coercion and in policing a democracy."

Recent events

Neyroud Seminar 9th Nov

Chief Constable Peter Neyroud the head of the disbanding National Policing Improvement agency gave a seminar on the future of police leadership provision in the police service. He was asked by the Home Secretary Teresa May to rethink police leadership and provide a costed implementation plan by the end of the year. His starting point was the establishing of principles, agreed by the Home Secretary, which are: accountability, legitimacy, evidenced based, nationally coherent and building capacity i.e. competence, capability and cost effective. He noted that there is no formal educational qualification eligibility to become a police officer. His idea is the

professionalization of the whole police service. As a starting point he envisions a chartered body, independent of Government, run by the police service in the public interest. It would have a Board drawing its membership from the exiting police staff associations and comprise professional committees to manage activities such as leadership and standards. A new professional model will expect : pre-qualification; professional registration; continuous professional development; personal ownership of development; supported by the officer's force.

Mannheim Wednesday Seminars

Mike Shiner gave a fascinating account at the November seminar discussing the Metropolitan Police's reaction to the charge of institutional racism made by Lord MacPherson in his inquiry into their investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Mike agrees with Steve Savage's position that the British police service are especially adept at undermining, withstanding and inverting externally imposed change. Mike argued that police officers were affronted by the racism charge which they took very personally. As a consequence they engaged in a series of denial or displacement strategies to avoid serious critical analysis of what Macpherson meant or how to remedy the problem of racism. Mike proposed that the police's institutional response to Macpherson's recommendations were to adapt, subvert or re-brand in order to try and offset the telling off they received. The full text of his talk is available in a published paper:

Shiner, M. (2010) Post Lawrence policing in England and Wales. *British Journal of Criminology* 50, 935-953.

Paul Johnson of Surrey's Department of Sociology gave the December seminar. His talk was an insightful account of the

parliamentary debates concerning the new criminal offence covering hate crime on grounds of sexual orientation. Three distinct discourses were discernable: police being over constrained and needing stronger powers; police being over zealous and heavy handed such that weaker law was needed; police having an incoherent and incompetent response to homophobia such that clearer law was required. These positions were aligned to parliamentarian's support or opposition to the proposed new offence. A full account can be read in Paul's paper

Johnson, P. and Vanderbeck, R.M. "'Hit them on the nose": representations of policing in Parliamentary debates about incitement to hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation'. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*. Published online in Advanced Access, and forthcoming in print in 2011.

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday Seminar

19 January 2011

'THE JACK BAUER CULTURE: IMBALANCE BETWEEN PUBLICITY, PRIVACY AND SECRECY'

Speaker: Professor Bob Hoogenboom (VU University, Amsterdam and Nyenrode Business University)

Time and Location: 6.30-8.00 London School of Economics, NAB (New Academic Building), Room 1.07

Speciality seminars

27 January 2011

REFORMING THE RESPONSE TO YOUTH JUSTICE: FROM EVIDENCE TO IMPLEMENTATION

Speakers: David Utting (Secretary to the Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour); David J. Smith (Visiting Professor, Mannheim Centre, Hon.

Professor of Criminology, University of Edinburgh, Commission member)
Discussants: Professor Michael Little (Director of the Social Research Unit, Dartington); Lizzie Nelson (Director of the Restorative Justice Consortium)

The seminar will discuss the proposals of the Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour, the evidential backing for these proposals, the coalition government's plans set out in the recent Green Paper, and how best to build on these plans so as to reform the youth justice system.

For the Commission's proposals and their evidential background, see: *Time for a Fresh Start: The report of the Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour* (available at www.youthcrimecommission.org.uk) and David J. Smith (ed.) *A New Response to Youth Crime* (Willan, 2000).

Time and Location: 5.00 to 7.30pm Moot Court Room 7th Floor New Academic Building LSE.