Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

DAVID DOWNES, PAUL ROCK, CHRISTINE CHINKIN and CONOR GEARTY (Eds.) Crime, Social Control and Human Rights: From Moral Panics to States of Denial. Essays in Honour of Stanley Cohen. Cullompton, UK: William Publishing, 2007, 452 p., index.

This edited collection of essays draws together the work of many prominent scholars in criminology, sociology and other social sciences. This compilation of thirty-three authors honours the life work of Stanley Cohen, who was devoted to understanding the social suffering of others and the actions – and particularly inaction – of individuals towards this suffering. Cohen was interested in our passive indifference about human rights violations, and especially with the way "moral panics" have led to these abuses. He also looked at the problematic nature of social control. In his seminal book, States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering (2001), Cohen wrote about how nations, individuals, victims, predators and bystanders understand but yet deny the commission of atrocities. Moreover, individuals have a tendency to underplay atrocities and suffering and perceive merely the social reality that they desire. The contributors to this book have written essays that follow the line of Stanley Cohen's work, dealing with human rights violations, the commission of atrocities, the promotion of suffering, as well as moral panics and the denial surrounding these actions at both the individual and state levels.

The first part of this volume (written by Adam Kuper, Richard Sennett, Laurie Taylor and Howard S. Becker) examines Cohen's life and the impact it had upon his work. Growing up in South Africa, Cohen saw numerous human rights infringements and many states of denial of these violations. He wrote that failure to respond creates passive indifference to human suffering. This section sets the tone for the remainder of the book, as each section deals with an issue that Cohen thought critical to criminology – social control. In fact, this book is organized around some important aspects of social control which Cohen originally outlined: (a) the state's increasing involvement in social control, (b) the classification of deviant groups into highly stigmatized categories (i.e., the new criminal as a psychopath who must be institutionalized, lobotomized, etc.), and (c) the shift in punishment to an increasing focus on the offender's mental state. Generally, this book attempts to link together human rights, moral panics, and denial in order to examine how different social institutions, such as the penal system, courts, and the military around the world, have intensified social control and a tendency to under-react to human rights violations thus increasing the suffering of many individuals and groups. In Cohen's

opinion, understanding why this occurs is the most fundamental problem in criminology and sociology today.

The second part of this book is written by several academics who have followed in Cohen's footsteps: Malcolm M. Feeley and Jonathan Simon, Jock Young, Andrew Rutherford, Harvey Molotch, and Michael Welch. These authors discuss gradations of social control in keeping with themes presented in one of Cohen's most influential books, Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of Mods and Rockers (1972). The authors consider how moral panics became institutionalized at the state level (e.g., the amber alert system in the United States) and how many laws systematically create moral panics about crime and justice, such as laws named after murdered or abused children. According to Michael Welch, moral panics represent a direct threat to core values and it is this, whether founded or unfounded, which arouses fear in the public. This leads to overreaction and a predisposition to punitive solutions to social problems. Apparently, contemporary society is characterized by an emerging "culture of control" in which institutions govern through crime and fear. This section also introduces Cohen's concept of denial to understand the willingness of society to perpetuate long-term social problems, especially those surrounding human rights. Furthering this theme is a discussion about the extremes of social control. Sharon Shalev investigates the human rights violations of super-max prisons, David Garland writes about the discourses and functions of capital punishment, and David Kretzmer studies torture in Israel. The three chapters are a contribution to the overall purpose of this edited volume, which is to inform readers about the mechanisms by which some types of social control violate human rights.

Section four delves into the subject matter of Cohen's book Visions of Social Control: Crime, Punishment, and Classification (1985) by discussing the evolution of dominant ideologies of social control through the past, present, and future. Thomas G. Blomberg and Carter Hay examine the evolution of social control in Florida's use of electronic monitoring for non-violent criminals. Tim Newburn and Robin Cohen analyse the privatization of the military, and the security controls before and after 9/11. This section thus provides readers with a sense of the variety of avenues for the application of social control. For instance, a chapter by Steven Lukes deals with the harms created by the global economic market. By outlining the inequalities brought on by the global economy and its effect on the populace in terms of gender, race and class, this chapter makes a persuasive argument that the global marketplace is not organized to ensure equality, as many are led to believe. It is designed as a platform to systematically exploit the poor for the benefit of the wealthy, despite the denial of this advantage by wealthy states.

In section five the contributions made by Nicola Lacey, Daphna Golan-Agnon, Peter Townsend, Claire Moon, Margo Picken and Ron Dudai are related to the subject matter of Cohen's book States of Denial (2001). In this book, Cohen states that: "Denial may be neither a matter of telling the truth nor intentionally telling a lie. The statement is not wholly deliberate,

and the status of 'knowledge' about the truth is not wholly clear. There seems to be states of mind, or even whole cultures, in which we know and don't know at the same time" (255). This section deals with how people avoid responsibility either consciously or unconsciously. The authors in this section research human rights movements in Israel, Cambodia, and South Africa and, in particular, how human rights are denied by the high courts of these nations.

The contributors to the closing section of this volume ponder the "ways ahead." The contributors outline some of the compounded results of floundering human rights, and what criminology as a discipline can do to lead the way towards the reparation of these effects. An example of this is the chapter by Albie Sachs, who discusses the experience of being falsely arrested and imprisoned as a terrorist in South Africa and how he was denied basic human rights throughout his terrifying ordeal. Furthering this theme, Nils Christie, Ken Plummer, Fred Halliday, Robert Reiner, and Ruth Jamieson and Kieran McEvoy provide a thesis on how criminology can/should evolve towards facilitating true restorative justice, and effectively deal with human rights atrocities at state and institutional levels that are continuously denied in favour of examining the criminal individual. Collectively, this section operates effectively as a plea to change the face of criminology by following Stanley Cohen's footsteps in making the examination of human rights and suffering a priority.

I recommend this book as essential reading for any student or professional in sociology or criminology, as well as others who may be interested in human rights issues. The book is especially successful in sensitizing non-experts to human rights violations which occur without any recognition by most Western nations. Even for the expert, however, this work provides a fertile arena for fostering new ideas and inspiration – with the facts plainly disseminated, one can no longer deny the extent of human rights violations worldwide and its place as a fundamental and global social problem. In turn, this realization has the potential to shape research and convey to investigators the critical need for understanding social control. Throughout this volume a pervasive message is woven which is a fitting tribute to what Stanley Cohen has brought to the field of criminology – a new mode of thinking. It offers a framework for knowledge built not around individual crimes and victims, but rather on the systematic and institutional exercise of social control and moral panic in an attempt to provide a richer understanding of the underpinnings of human rights atrocities and the denial of these offences by the general population. This showcases the power and diversity of Stanley Cohen's work. In short, this book is a well-crafted tribute to a true innovator in the field of criminology, and has the potential to further propagate his legacy by inspiring other criminologists to bring to light human rights violations and help deliver on the promise of human equality for all.

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