Penal Policy and Social Justice

Also by Barbara A. Hudson and published by Macmillan

Justice through Punishment

Penal Policy and Social Justice

Barbara A. Hudson

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For Harry and Adam

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	ix
Introduction	1
1 Developments in Penal Policy during the 1980s	17
2 Penal Policy and Social Structure	55
3 Penal Policy and Social Policy	89
4 Penal Policy and Criminal Justice	122
5 Some Ideas Whose Time Has Come	149
6 Punishment, Justice and the Problem of Law	178
<i>Bibliography</i>	201
<i>Index</i>	219

Preface

This book started life as a research project with Middlesex Area Probation Service, and I am grateful to the management and staff there for encouragement to undertake the original sentencing survey, and for agreement that the questions it seemed to generate were interesting to people other than myself, as well as for practical help with data collection. The latter stages of the book's development have been enriched by a new partnership with Northumbria Probation Service, and again I am grateful to colleagues at all levels of the service for sharing with me some of their hopes and their concerns about the way penal policy is affecting criminal justice practice.

A grant from the Leverhulme Trust enabled me to have some time between leaving Middlesex and commencing my duties with the University of Northumbria, and this was crucial in allowing me some space to further analyse the original data and develop the theoretical ideas which enabled me to see what was happening in the Middlesex courts as part of a much more general trend. In turning a collection of data into a book with wider themes, I have been much assisted by comments by Maureen Cain and Carol Smart on my first proposals, and by the patience and timely advice of Steven Kennedy and Frances Arnold at Macmillan. For help with bringing it some way down to earth again, I am indebted to the anonymous reviewer used by the publisher. In providing evidence to support my central contention that whatever the differences in penal policy with respect to crimes, the same groups of people are penalised everywhere, I am grateful to Dick Whitfield for his list of contacts, and to Inkeri Antilla, David Biles, Else Holm, Jacqueline de Plaen and Knut Sveri for the helpful material they so generously sent to me.

For encouraging me to believe that I had something worth saying and had better get on and say it, thanks to Andrew Ashworth, Dee Cook, Tony Jefferson, Roger Matthews and, especially, Pat Carlen. Between carrying out the original research which prompted the book and finally getting down to writing it, I have moved from being a researcher, employed by the probation service, back into teaching. Colleagues at Newcastle have been supportive, students have been challenging; Heather Scott and Mat Curran in particular have managed not to look too bored when hearing for the umpteenth time about problems with this or that chapter, and their convivial friendship has been sustaining throughout.

This book has had an embarrassingly long gestation period. Changing jobs, moving from one end of the country to another, as well as the often bewildering speed of developments in the penal policy field, made it difficult to settle down to the task of writing. New people to get to know, new courses to write, the beauty of the Northumbrian countryside and the acquisition of a large garden have all proved unchallengeable excuses or irresistible temptations not to work on the book, but I can only hope that the final result is the better for having a longer than envisaged time for reflection between the original idea and its realisation.

Above all, and as ever, I am grateful to Adam and Harry for love and patience. They have both assisted in countless ways: thanks Adam for doing the ironing and helping with tedious chores like checking references; thanks Harry for always listening (or at least convincingly pretending to) and for keeping the sherry flowing.

Barbara A. Hudson