

BOOK REVIEW/COMPTE RENDU

Anne Logan, *Feminism and Criminal Justice: A Historical Perspective*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 256 pp. \$US 74.95 hardcover (978-0-230-57254-6)

Most accounts of feminist criminal justice reform, both popular and academic, tend to ignore the efforts of activists prior to the 1970s. With the exception of the first wave feminist reform of laws governing sex work, historical narratives of the movement's impact on the criminal justice system are rare. As an instructor of a course on this subject, my scope has been just as myopic. By the end of my class, students acquire extensive knowledge of the Battered Women's Movement, theoretical debates around the possibility of a feminist jurisprudence, and the infighting within feminism on the effectiveness of systemic reform. Yet, they are left with the impression that feminism had very little impact on the criminal justice system and the discipline of criminology prior to the hotbed of activity that was the second wave.

Ann Logan's *Feminism and Criminal Justice: A Historical Perspective* aims to challenge this misconception. Focusing on the work of pressure groups between the years 1920-1970, a period long thought to be an "intermission" between first and second wave feminisms, she offers an account of feminist criminal justice reform in these supposedly quiescent years. Logan meticulously charts the evolution and impact of the "feminist-criminal-justice-reform-network," a term she devises to refer to the coalition of women's organizations, penal reform groups, suffrage societies, and individual reformers who spearheaded systemic reform. To construct her narrative, she relies on a diverse array of sources, including historical records of pressure groups, biographies of reformers and some of Britain's first female JPs, newspaper articles and public debates on such issues as penal reform and victims rights.

Logan provides detailed accounts of the specific individuals, suffragette societies, penal reform organizations and local women's organizations that coalesced to form the feminist-criminal-justice-reform network. Early on, the reader acquires a sense of the reforms initiated by a variety of groups in operation at the time such as The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), which launched the first training schools for women magistrates in Britain and proved to be pivotal in expanding the number of women involved in the administration of

justice. Logan also outlines the overlapping agendas of women's and penal reform organizations, challenging, as she points out, the traditional characterization of the latter as "masculine." For instance, The National Council of Women (NCW), NUSEC and the Howard League for Penal Reform (HLPR) fought jointly for separate facilities for incarcerated women, as well as progressive penal policies for all offenders. Logan's detailed account of the network's campaigns to abolish the death penalty, remove barriers to women's participation on juries, humanize prisons and decriminalize sex work do much to challenge assumptions that feminism lay dormant between the first and second waves of the movement.

As both a scholar and a violence against women activist, Logan's chapter detailing the evolution of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board made the most significant impression on me. Her account relays the activism of Margaret Fry, who remained a dedicated penal reformer and victim's rights advocate throughout her life. According to Logan, Fry embraced a "holistic conception of the interests of the community and of justice," and had "little time for retribution or vengeance," which she viewed as "ultimately unproductive" (p. 149). The women's organizations that joined Fry in her campaigns also shared her pursuit of justice without vengeance. The uncovering of an early vision of feminism in which the interests and rights of victims and offenders were not considered to be in opposition adds nuance to our understanding of feminist criminal justice reform today, which for many understandable reasons has come to be associated with punitiveness and law and order. These findings might also be of interest to feminist scholars currently involved in efforts to extricate discourses of vengeance from victims' rights and feminism more generally. Logan's work is thus an important contribution to the literature on feminist criminal justice reform, which has so far been overshadowed by the campaigns of second wave feminists, particularly those who pushed for tough sentences and retribution.

One area where Logan's argument could benefit from more detail is in her discussion of the context of feminist criminal justice reform. Doing so would involve a shift in focus from the ideas and activities of individual reformers to an analysis of the wider structured space in which these actors generate meaning, interact and compete to achieve their objectives. While the former is undoubtedly important, especially given Logan's intent to correct misperceptions about the death of feminism in the early to mid twentieth centuries, at times the author tends to lean too far in the direction of romanticizing the subjects of her research as subversive pioneers whose ideas, dedication and hard work alone instigated the reform of the system. A more comprehensive look at the context in which the campaigns of reformers were received could balance Logan's

narrative and provide insight into why the feminist-criminal-justice-reform-network achieved so many gains at this particular time. At times, Logan does provide us with a glimpse into the field. For instance, readers learn that feminists involved in juvenile justice campaigns often employed discourses of progressivism as forms of capital to enhance their own credibility and to ensure their demands resonated with the wider, welfare oriented trends occurring at the time. However, the author tends to refer to these dimensions of the context only in passing.

Logan's narrative of feminist criminal justice reform in the early to mid twentieth century is an important contribution to feminism and criminology, as well as to the literature on social movements. Her work challenges prevailing assumptions that feminism remained inactive between the movement's first and second incarnations and sheds new light on the campaigns of reformers involved in struggles to end the death penalty, enhance the rights and treatment of offenders and victims involved in the system, ensure the participation of women in the administration of criminal justice and improve juvenile justice. Unlike their first wave counterparts, the feminists Logan writes about worked within, as well as outside, the system to create change. Their stories alert us to the fact that the "femocrat" existed long before the mainstreaming and professionalization of second wave feminism. Perhaps Logan's future work could elaborate on the structural processes that enabled the early twentieth century femocrat and the resonance of feminism with state agendas at this time.

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