



MODERN ACTIVISM CONFERENCE REPORT

Strand B, 27-30 June 2012, Liverpool

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Introduction

This SOLON conference brought together scholars specialising in law, crime and history from the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia to address a range of issues relating broadly to modern activism. The interdisciplinary conference was a joint initiative between SOLON at Liverpool John Moores University, the Centre for Contemporary British History at Kings College London, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies and the universities of Liverpool and Hull. The conference consisted of two strands; Activism, Rights, Conflict and Its Impact and Criminal Justice's History and Activism. Throughout the conference, activism was defined as follows:

Individuals or groups believing action pertaining to a cause is necessary, and voluntarily, with no expectation of personal reward, peacefully or non-peacefully and independently from the state seeking a resolution or a change.

Prior to the Modern Activism conference, there has not been a conference in the United Kingdom which endeavours to investigate activism as a phenomenon. The conference sought to encourage collaboration between activism and academia to further our knowledge of the impact of activism and to facilitate scholars engaging with activism in order to develop an outward perspective.

Opening Plenary: Lesley Abdela, Global Women's Activism: from the 300 Group to UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Parliament to Peace Talks

The cross-conference opening plenary was presented by Lesley Abdela, an international human rights advocate and expert on the advancement of women in public and political spheres due to her numerous international campaigns for female empowerment. Abdela

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spoke passionately about the pioneering nature of the conference and the part it could play in a long-term transformation in the way academics approach activism. Within Britain, academics frequently research and observe the role of activists in academic papers. Abdela argued that it is imperative we come together as a movement and no longer work as separate entities but share our experiences and knowledge. By developing forums for discussion and debate we can share lessons identified, a relationship common between academics and activists in nations such as the United States of America.

An activist utilises their position to raise awareness, promote or impede change, combat lack of transparency and remind decision-makers of their obligations to fulfil local, national and international agreements. Often, activism is a passion and Abdela believes that academics can assist activists in their work by providing well-informed briefings to aforementioned decision-makers, and give accurate information on an issue to the media. Activism usually begins when a person feels that injustice is existent, yet often altering the perceptions of others is a lengthy process; particularly within a democracy, as persuasion is an activist's only tool. Therefore, academics would be especially useful were they to assist activists in amplifying their message through the media. Positive and regular news coverage is imperative to harnessing public support and culminating in change, and collaboration between the academic and the activist could increase such reportage. This is exemplified through the success of Abdela's 300 Group which campaigned to increase the number of women in Parliament, with 19 women seated in the House of Commons at the time of its conception. The 300 Group contributed to increasing this figure to 122 over four General Elections and believes its positive impact was achieved by asking awkward questions that ensure those in power are accountable for their actions.

Abdela discussed her activist work pertaining to gender in post-conflict situations, and shared the notion of enshrining women's rights in new democratic constitutions as being imperative to ensuring correct representation within newly-founded electoral systems. In these instances, in countries such as Iraq, petitions are a useful forum for activism. The Arabic peoples define a petition as 'affirming opinion to what we are entitled' an idea key to the objectives of individuals or groups campaigning for change. It is important that activists harness the opportunities presented within a post-conflict situation; Liberian women utilised the need for a strong legal system due to violent attacks and rapes to undertake police training and become human rights officers. In Sierra Leone, female activists involved in the peace movement established their own 300 Group, the 50 50 Group, to lobby for a 50 per cent quota of women within government. World Bank statistics demonstrate that currently 50 per cent of deadly conflicts break out again within ten years and academics are in a position

to support activism movements by providing further data. This could contribute to governments achieving the European Parliament recommendation that 40 per cent of parliamentary figures should be women.

As activists make recommendations and campaign for improvements in processes and conditions, researchers can engage in collaborative projects to provide supportive evidence in order to enhance developments. Modern technologies have created an innovative platform for activism in the shape of blogs, citizen journalists and the worldwide web, by utilising this technology and working together we can begin to overcome the apparent academic-activist divide. This will allow both academics and activists to be more impactful in their work. However, there are some roles which cannot be neatly labelled as 'academic' or 'activist'.

**Plenary: Richard Monkhouse and John Thornhill (Magistrates Association),
Campaigning for Local Justice**

Richard Monkhouse and John Thornhill discussed the figure of the magistrate and its academic and activist attributes. Monkhouse argued that as individuals who want to positively affect their communities, magistrates can use their position to influence reform, and engage with activism through the Magistrates Association. The Association allows magistrates to undertake academic research and for the last 12 months has been independently researching the future of the magistracy in order to amend targeting processes and ensure it is representative and reflective of the community it serves. Areas of development have been identified which facilitate the magistrate as an activist, advocating reforms believed to be necessary. Research indicates that only 10 per cent of the magistracy is Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, a figure which does not correlate nationally. Furthermore, the Magistrates Association argue that public perception focuses on the severity or leniency of a court decision rather than its effectiveness. Monkhouse conveyed the vitality of the media in addressing these issues, reinforcing messaging and gelling perceptions of local justice systems.

As did Abdela, Thornhill alluded to the benefits to be gained by activists employing concrete examples provided by academics in their work. However, with the impetus of the Magistrates Association's work being to move forward and develop at the level of justice which impacts every day citizens, he questioned the role of the historian, asking 'is it beneficial to look backwards in a conference of activism'? This provoked an interesting debate where it was argued that history is useful to the magistracy as it demonstrates that in the past there was a closer link between the magistrate and the community and consequently local criminal

justice systems were more successful as citizens were more informed with regards to the law. This suggests there is an issue today of the distance between the community and the magistracy (both physical and metaphorical, with a number of decisions being made in London which impact the magistracy of other locales such as Nottingham).

Strand B Session: Imagining the Prison

Chaired by Barry Godfrey, the first Criminal Justice's History and Activism panel, provided a forum for reflection upon the transition of the role of the penitentiary throughout the ages through three lenses: and Rogers the imperative role activists can play within prisons.

Alyson Brown and Alana Barton (Edge Hill University), 'Prison tourism and the search for authenticity'

Alyson Brown and Alana Barton investigated prison tourism and discussed the prison museum as a mechanism to connect the prison and the outside world by using decommissioned institute space to integrate the public and the private in. They argue that often our responses to prisons are shaped by a touristic representation, which in most instances are entertainment focussed and not a realistic representation of the penitentiary. In the nineteenth century, when the first prison tourism emerged, the public responded negatively and felt that the process was immoral. However, by the 1970s attitudes had altered and many wanted to integrate prisons within their local community and utilise the prison as a source of resources. Authenticity became prominent within this so-called 'dark tourism', and the prison museum enhanced visitor experience by using audio and video supplements. Thus, the prison museum becomes a multi-layered, contested concept. There is a desire for a backstage insight into the lives of others and good intentions cannot influence how individuals interpret these representations. The primary motivators underpinning such sites include for purposes of remembrance, often a dominant narrative within contemporary prison tourism. However, the 'turnstile agenda' of prison museums and fears that profits will be reduced if populist values are questioned can cause conflicting objectives. The reality of prison life can become decontextualised, with prison tourist attractions advertising themselves as a 'fun day out' and offering 'tales of murder and romance'. These often imagined and exaggerated representations can focus on prisoner wrongs, corporal punishment and the 'fetishisation' of punishment; for example some sites offer visitors the opportunity to place their feet on the former gallows. Consequently, state sanctioned punishment can become a source of amusement. Tellingly, the prison museum narrative does not appear to address grittier issues such as sexual violence, prison beatings and suicide. Rather, they sensationalise the mundane and it becomes difficult to reconcile the imagined and reality. Furthermore, it was suggested that there is an extensive focus on

the paranormal with museums offering exhibitions such as ghost tours. During these, the structure of the building and its history is implicitly linked to the supernatural thus Brown and Barton argued that the prison can be used as a backdrop for the production of broader narratives of political struggle. They proposed that authentic prison tourism should induce anxiety and discomfort, not thrills and amusement, and that there needs to be a shift away from the current voyeuristic culture.

Michael Fiddler (University of Greenwich), ‘Superstition will add to its horrors’: The reform movement and the early American Penitentiary’

Michael Fiddler studied the ways in which the rational and irrational came together in the creation of the modern penitentiary. Fiddler discussed the fundamental intertwining of the ‘place-myth’, which is made up of innumerable place images of the prison, taking a variety of forms such as narratives, newspapers and actual images. The focus of the paper was Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia. Following campaigns by societies advocating the alleviation of public prisoners, communication was allowed between cells making it no longer a penitentiary system, but a bad prison system. The idea of individual cells was to create a disciplinary unit, with cellular spaces effectively representing concrete coffins for the civilly dead in the hope that this would lead to reformation. Fiddler argues that this was a metaphor for being bound, and that the American penal imagination ideal and the Greek myth of ‘The Furies’ were coming together. Benjamin Rush has perpetuated the notion of the prison as a remote and gloomy place with iron doors, an abode of discipline and misery. It had been suggested that the prison should be a site of civic pride and collective terror, with throwbacks to the idea of civil burial. Fiddler facilitated the comparison of the novel ‘Moll Flanders’, which addresses the ability of the penal subject developing and improving, and the book ‘Bartleby.’ ‘Bartleby’ connotes that Foucault’s master narratives and spaces of cellular confinement are unsuccessful in isolating bad influences and preventing the spread of malignancy. Fiddler advocates the thought of the prison as a ‘carceral palimpsest’ and the idea that the effects of this radiate out into portrayals of prison in television and film. He believes that the modern penitentiary is a combination of that represented through Moll Flanders and Bartleby- with the speech of reason producing monsters.

Helen Rogers (Liverpool John Moore’s University), Reformer Activism and Prisoner Agency in the Early Nineteenth century

Shifting from movements to individuals, Helen Rogers undertook an enthralling case study of jail missionary Sarah Martin. Martin taught, read and gave sermons to the prisoners and made detailed notes, or as she described them ‘General Observations’, which discussed inmate intervention in discipline and order, for instance the encouragement of good

behaviour and following rules. The notes are a fascinating insight into an alternative system of discipline, which evolved from a personal engagement as opposed to ideology. Martin felt that learning, development and behavioural improvements had to be negotiated rather than imposed. Her regime relied on voluntary reformative measures which were based on Victorian philanthropy and the idea that labour was valued as it secured order and quiet. Reports on progress and backsliding indicated that as the prisoners desired privileges and rewards for their good behaviour, they began to monitor their own and each other's progress. It is interesting to consider whether this method of behaviour management could be extrapolated to the modern prison system.

Visiting prisoners up to five times a week, Sarah Martin advocated learning as an aspect of sociability and the reaction to this was neither entirely compliant nor entirely resistant. Prisoners were inconsistent in their attitudes towards improvement; some prisoners wished only to engage with the educational elements of Martin's work and were disinterested in the religious elements. Rogers believes that the social control thesis is unhelpful in understanding the relationship between Martin and her offenders. Despite understanding the notion of crimes requiring atonement, inmates were perceived as individuals with social abilities to contribute to and develop their fellow inmates' behaviours. Sarah Martin is frequently compared to Elizabeth Fry due to their capacity for sympathy and care. However, there is a tension between discipline and care and this raises an interesting question: do we emphasise discipline at the expense of care?

Strand B Session: Prison Related Activism

Continuing with the theme of prison and activism, this compelling panel comprising of employed the narratives of the history of prisons and penal institutions to underline ways in which the academic can support the activist.

Heather Shore (Leeds Metropolitan University), 'Reformatory School Horrors': Investigating the Akbar Scandal in 1910

Heather Shore's fascinating paper revealed how the exposal of ill treatment within industrial schools and training ships galvanised the Home Secretary into action, and led to watershed reform. Shore highlighted the ways in which the scandal complied with a model employed by many activists, and it is interesting to consider whether this model was a key component of the success of the campaign. Firstly, attention was drawn to the issue; an exposé was published in a magazine and lobbying of the Government commenced. To contextualise the scandal, Shore described how the Akbar training ship, moored on the Mersey, served primarily as an industrial reformatory where punishment and poor diet were perceived as

essential to the profile of the institution. However, reports emerged detailing incidence of violence so extreme that there were stabbings, fires, mutinies and excessive use of the cane. Although a Reformatory School Inspectorate was established, the new liberal outlook of the early twentieth century and legislation such as the 1908 Children's Act facilitated attempts to bring in independent inspectors. Numerous activists including women's movements and penal reformers lobbied for change following the exposal of bad practice by former employees. Although Winston Churchill ordered an enquiry, this was criticised. Within a section of a magazine entitled 'Exposure Bureau' further allegations of brutal mistreatment emerged and it was alleged that three boys died as the consequence of extreme punishment, although a later report claimed that the deaths were the result of natural causes. The conflicting reports were written by two political rivals and this may have tainted the authenticity of the accounts.

Thus, it is necessary to question the significance of the Departmental Committee founded to investigate the Akbar scandal. Was the committee the driving force in the ships coming under the authority of central office and later being replaced by online nautical schools? Or was it the activism of individuals and the press which were in fact crucial to bringing changes to industrial schools and reformatories? Throughout the conference, the role of the public and the press is consistently key to successful activism and therefore it is difficult to underestimate the pivotal role both may have played in this case.

Helen Johnston (University of Hull), Barry Godfrey (University of Liverpool) and David Cox (Wolverhampton University), The Costs of Imprisonment

In the opening plenary it was suggested that academics may positively influence the work of activists by providing research which can be utilised to demonstrate the need for change. The speakers demonstrated this through their paper and report of a detailed study of nineteenth century imprisonment and prison licences, where pardons and tickets of leave were used to reintegrate criminals back into society- a system which was partly a repatriation of devices used in the colonies. From 1857, criminal statistics influenced government policy and thus the government invested in the gathering of statistics and their analysis. These statistics connoted that there was a fall in crime rates, although there were some inaccuracies. This facilitated a general feeling of well being and security, and the impetus of the criminal justice system shifted to the need for greater systems of prevention. Criminals were swept into prison more frequently as policing became more effective, although the majority of the criminal classes were still at large and there were increasing numbers of recidivist convicts, denoting that reformation processes were inadequate. This culminated in an ever expanding prison estate.

In the nineteenth century, convict prisons were significantly more expensive than local prisons. However, custody was increasingly replaced with fines and soon the number of prisoners held in a local gaol had decreased dramatically. Between 1857 and 1891 the number of prisoners on licence remained steady, and the number of convicts decreased. Johnson et al acknowledged that the licensing system may help and work as a financial pressure valve, but questioned its effectiveness in an individual context. Were prison licenses employed to save financial costs rather than assist in rehabilitation? It is imperative that we study the history of prison licenses and their ability to desist crime in order to help shape current policy, as if non-custodial sentences are ineffective we must instead address the ways in which prisons are managed. This is indicative of the academics' ability to support activism by providing historical case studies and ways in which historical work can engage with topical debate. However, it raised questions around whether it corrupts historical debate to engage with present issues and the extent to which attempts to influence policy outside of funded projects would be acknowledged. Suggestions were made amongst the audience that whilst academic research disconcerts politicians, the Government is most likely to respond to knee-jerk reactions and journalism. Thus, the importance of the support of the media was reiterated, as if academics are able to provide the press with well-researched but populist headlines our audience would be broadened and interest in activist causes would be heightened.

Plenary: Frank McDonough (Liverpool John Moore's University): Sophie Scholl: A Lesson From History for Modern Activism

The first day finished with Frank McDonough's simultaneously emotive, tragic and informative plenary. McDonough emphasised Scholl's non-violent approach to activism and highlighted the rarity of female involvement in Nazi resistance movements. The story of Sophie Scholl underlines passion as a driver for activism and how being a conscientious objector can provide inspiration for others with similar moral objections.

Plenary: Hamish Maxwell-Stewart (University of Tasmania): Fluctuations in prosecutions and sentencing strategies in nineteenth century Tasmania

This study evaluated the effectiveness of Australian penal transportation at a number of sites across the globe and the impacts of convict labour. In the absence of free labour, growth of colonies was very slow. Convict labour, defined by Maxwell-Stuart as between indenture and slave labour, offered a huge wage saving and this injection of labour dramatically increased growth rates. However, demand for convict labour began to collapse as wage savings were

reduced and free labour became more expensive than paid labour as employers were required to pay for necessities such as clothing and food.

Maxwell-Stuart identified a correlation between demand for convict labour and the number of convicts being transported for this purpose. This is suggestive of convicts being punished according to how useful they are to colonial employers. This notion is supported by evidence which demonstrates that weavers were more likely to be flogged than agricultural labourers. Furthermore, in seasons where there was a high demand for labour, such as summer, punishments were short-term such as flogging or cells. However, in the winter months transported prisoners were sentenced to road parties or chain gangs. This illustrates that magistrates considered the requirements of the labour markets and the political climate; the number of transported convicts fell substantially during times when the strength of the Army was high as a number of prisoners were mobilised in war.

Gender was also a mitigating factor, with male prisoners assigned roles in the public sphere and women within the private sector. Once more a number of political considerations were made. As costs of feeding and clothing workers increased, transported labourers were increasingly sent to work in the private sphere regardless of gender as it was more profitable to the state to hire them out for labour. It was not solely the magistrates who were mindful of external factors when considering the management of transported criminals. Employers were more likely to charge their workers with criminal activity if the labour market was such that they were disposable. If they were not so easy to replace, employers were reluctant to send employees to the magistrates. Britain benefitted from transporting prisoners as Australia gave Britain 'ghost acres' overseas and exported Australian wool to these shores. As it is difficult to determine whether transportation resulted in lower offending rates it is difficult to pinpoint the motivations for transportation during the nineteenth century. However, it is evident that diminishing numbers of recidivists may not have been the primary motivators for this mode of punishment. Are contemporary criminal justice systems being influenced by financial or other gain? Are prisoners being sentenced solely on their crime or do other factors come into play?

Strand B Session: Serious Offenders and Penal Policy

Hamish Maxwell-Stuart chaired this panel which examined and questioned the ways in which the criminal justice system manages criminals who have committed one or more serious offences and the impact of activists who campaign for change in the management of such individuals.

David Wilson and Michael Brookes (Birmingham City University): Harold Jones and W Norwood East: Historical links to Contemporary Criminal Justice Risk Management practices

Wilson and Brookes explored records of inter-war assessments made by Dr W Norwood East, a prison commissioner who published widely on the psychological treatment of crime, with regards to his patient Harold Jones, a 'high risk' offender serving a life sentence. Despite Norwood East and fellow prison commissioner Alexander Paterson, a pivotal figure in penal and prison reform who transformed the prison system, recommending Howard Jones for release, Jones' detainment continued for a number of years until he was released to go to war. The methodology of Norwood East, who investigated Jones' family history, physical and mental personal history and sexual history, includes many aspects which are inherent in contemporary risk management approaches. Wilson and Brookes utilise the case to facilitate conversations around current practices and challenge proponents of a relaxation in procedures for criminals serving life sentences due to the complexity of the criminal personality. The authors promote caution with regards to the premature release of long term prisoners who have not undergone rigorous risk assessment, as there is speculation that Jones may have reoffended and that this type of prisoner may in some instances be recidivist; extensive evaluations are necessary before life-sentence convicts rejoin society.

Lizzie Seal (University of Durham): Violet van der Elst's Campaign against the Death Penalty in Britain

Lizzie Seal explored the activism of an intriguing campaign figure of the twentieth century. Violet van der Elst was an important influence in terms of both opposing the death penalty and women feeling confident in claiming the role of active citizen. She employed spectacular and dramatic tactics to ensure her message was heard; including aeroplanes trailing banners, parades of men with sandwich boards and on occasion showering crowds with leaflets. This paper considered the impact of such grandiose statements and unconventional campaign figurehead, as Van der Elst undertook a controversial approach to activism and used reformatory techniques to disrupt bureaucratic processes and practices. There was a sharp distinction between such approaches and the methods of groups such as the Howard League, also campaigning against the death penalty, who drew on scientific evidence and well supported arguments. The organisation was concerned that their own activist work would become associated with Van der Elst and what could be perceived as hysterical emotion. It is interesting to consider which of these approaches were most successful. Seal believes that the responses of the public were dependent on how sympathetic they felt towards the cases of individuals; the crowd tended to oppose the death penalty in circumstances such as the accused being of poor mental health. Indeed, impressionist

accounts suggest a mixed response which may have been due to the eccentricity of Violet van der Elst herself. The press frequently focussed on her wealth and jewels in reportage of her activist work. This facilitates questioning of the influence gender and class have upon attitudes towards activism, with Home Office files on Van der Elst being shaped by these attributes and her position as a self-made wealthy women. Can sex and societal position still impinge upon interpretation? Or is this no longer a factor as women have increased their presence in public space since the 1930s?

Strand B Session: Female Offenders in Victorian England

Thursday's afternoon session opened with an engaging panel which examined female offenders in Victorian England in three ways:

Joanne Turner (University of Liverpool): Returning Home: The reintegration of women released from local and convict prisons

Joanne Turner drew upon a sample of 176 habitual offenders from Stafford to explore the aftercare opportunities offered to Victorian women who had been released from local and convict prisons in the late nineteenth century. The paper observed women who used Prisoners Aid Societies and Refuges and considered the ways in which faith-based and state-run institutions offered help to female offenders and explored the factors which contributed to their recidivism and reform. Turner painted a complex picture of women's experiences of these institutions. Semi-carceral in nature, while some women went on to reoffend, many used the skills utilised in these centres to gain employment in domestic service. The paper concluded that these refuges offered better living conditions than the prison and the workhouse and, in some cases, aided women's reintegration into society. Conversely, it was often women who had no family support who found themselves returning to abject poverty and incarceration. Turner's research highlights the importance of looking at the aftermath of imprisonment and the impact incarceration and refuges have on offenders' lives.

Leah Bleakley (Nottingham Trent University): Outsiders outside of London: Fallen women and provincial towns, 1850-1890

Leah Bleakley examined sex work activism through the analysis of popular attitudes and campaign strategies in nineteenth century English provinces. Arguing against historians' assumptions that London was the seat of sexual vice and reform, Bleakley drew upon select case studies from Crewe and Nantwich, Birkenhead and Chester to suggest that these examples provide a novel interpretation of the representation and regulation of prostitution. The paper firstly discussed the ways in which the Contagious Diseases and Criminal

Amendment Acts were constructed through moral discourse and how the implications of state control served to isolate, rather than aid, female prostitutes. Utilising local case studies Bleakley argued that local activism efforts challenge historical interpretations of reform. The overwhelmingly positive response to Josephine Butler's address to a large crowd of male railway workers in a Crewe tavern was indicative of a local interest in reform, a petition was presented to Parliament in favour of women's suffrage and, following Walter McLaren's election as MP for Crewe in 1886, the campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts highlighted Crewe's role in activism and reform. Birkenhead and Chester also played a significant part in sex work activism and both towns were characterised by political and religious reformist endeavours. The success of the Birkenhead Women's Missionary Association in 1881 paved the way for the expansion of philanthropic organisations such as The Faithful Companions of Jesus Christ, which later founded a girls' boarding school and soup kitchen in the dock town and provided assistance to local prostitutes. In Chester, fears over the sexual morality of local working women led to the Church proposing a Diocesan House of Mercy and small refuge houses to aid women's reintegration into society. Passed by the Duke of Wellington, the Chester House of Mercy was praised by the Bishop of Chester for its efforts in 'reclaiming fallen women'. However, its transformation to a laundry meant that it gradually became a forced-labour institution. The paper concluded that historians should not overlook activism campaigns in smaller towns as they tended to view prostitution as less threatening than in London. Crucially, the organisation and mobilisation of activism in Northern towns highlights nuanced attitudes to prostitution and challenges the established portrayal of the Victorian prostitute as a symbol of social disorder and moral decay.

Lucy Williams (University of Liverpool): 'The Career of a Liverpool Thief': Adding life context to the female offenders of Victorian England

Lucy Williams considered the personal factors which impacted on women's offending in the nineteenth century. Part of a wider PhD project which examines the life histories and offending patterns of 100 female offenders in Liverpool and London, Williams highlighted the socio-cultural and biographical factors which influenced offending patterns through a singular case study, Catherine Gardiner, an Irish immigrant residing in nineteenth century Liverpool. The paper argued that, by examining just the criminal records, Gardiner was indistinguishable from many working women who committed crime in a nineteenth century city. However, the recent digitalisation of census returns, birth, marriage and death records, parish records and newspapers enables historians to look beyond offender's crimes and consider the personal factors which affect female criminality. Gardiner arrived in Liverpool to escape the Irish famine and experienced discrimination from both legal and social worlds.

Formal work was impossible due to the local economy and the prejudice she suffered as a result of her ethnic and gender identity. On receiving a sentence of deportation for burglary, Gardiner was unable to beg and began to commit petty theft, through which she met her partner, William Garner, and became involved with a wider network of thieves. Gardiner, along with her children and partner, committed a series of summary offences throughout her life and faced increasingly harsh sentences as a result of a zero tolerance policy from the Victorian state. Williams concluded that Gardiner was a career offender who used a variety of locations and aliases and was, therefore, a conscious offender who committed theft as a means of providing for her family. Crucially, the paper concluded that tracing Gardiner's life history enables us to see the context of committing crimes and raises important questions about the nature of female offending.

Strand B Session: Youth Justice in an Age of Austerity

This session was undertaken by prominent criminologists who considered the ways in which youth justice has been managed from the 1980s to the present day.

Roger Smith (Durham): Diversion as Radical Intervention? A brief history

Roger Smith opened the panel with a historical perspective of the diversionary tactics employed by the Conservative government in the 1980s

Janet Jamieson (LJMU), Bleak Times for Children? The anti-social behaviour agenda and the criminalisation of social policy

Janet Jamieson considered the implications of contemporary social policy for victims and offenders of anti-social behavioural orders. Drawing upon her analysis of current social policy and interviews with residents affected by anti-social behaviours, Jamieson argued that the Coalition government's tightening of welfare had negative consequences for those affected by ASBOs. The paper noted that Thatcher's election in 1979 marked a paradigmatic shift in the British political landscape in favour of a free-market project committed to non-monetary economics and a radical erosion of the welfare state. Subsequently, the election of New Labour in 1997 witnessed an emphasis on the ethics of self-responsibility which served to focus attention on the morality and lifestyle choices of the marginalised poor. In turn, this ethos facilitated an emerging conditionality within welfare provision and services which was increasingly premised on recipients' compliance with work, education and rehabilitative opportunities. The recent decade has witnessed increasing legislation directed towards the regulation and redefinition of anti-social behaviour. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Police Reform Act 2002 and the ASBO Act 2003 have all been located alongside wider policy agendas which have sought to revitalise disadvantaged neighbourhoods and

stimulate the process of civic renewal. The blurring of boundaries between the state's criminal and civil treatment of anti-social behaviour has led to a displacement of goals, in particular the loss of social welfare, in favour of a return to social order and crime control objectives. Interviews with victims of anti-social behaviour highlighted the negative impact of this policy for young people, police and residents. Jamieson concluded that the tightening of welfare provision by the Coalition government has led to a focus on policy preoccupations which indicate the usefulness of Loïc Wacquant's 'Punishing the Poor' thesis. Wacquant's concept of social panopticism is evident in contemporary operation of ASBOs whereby social policy and social service bureaucracy act as instruments of surveillance and control.

Joe Yates (LJMU), Feral Capitalism: Financial Gaming and the youth justice 'market'

Joe Yates explored the financial strategies employed by today's neo-liberal government in the treatment of youth crime and justice. In the context of austerity, economic crisis is a key driver in the ways in which youth justice is managed by authorities. Cuts in public spending leads to the increasing disenfranchisement of marginalised and socially-excluded groups, and youth offending teams are especially vulnerable. In the context of cuts in welfare, Yates argued that there is an amplification of vulnerability in youth justice. Indeed, the reduction of financial aid results in the shifting priorities of youth offending teams, but a lack of financial support also allows them to become more innovative. In today's economic crisis, a space is opening up where there is minimal provision for voluntary sectors and places are becoming increasingly privatised. In turn, the outcome is measured by profit and, as a result, a rationale emerges where the incentive to perform means youth offending teams must be creative with limited resources. Yates concluded that this financial gaming is an example of feral capital. Due to the pressures placed on performance and profitable outcomes, youth groups who are targeted are those who can hit easy targets and calibrate payment. As a result, there is a neglect of services directed to those who are in most need.

Cross-Strand Plenary: Frances Crook, Chief Executive, Howard League for Penal Reform): Campaigning for Change

As a leading figure in activism for the reform of prisons, Frances Crook described her idea of activism as being 'about getting people to do what you want to do to change things'. In order to achieve change, creating a climate of opinion and trying to change public discourse is essential. Crook conveyed that support is not about the number of those in agreement, but the strength of the support given by those in agreement. To campaign successfully, one must be smart. Crook has published a number of articles pertaining to penal reform and has been interviewed on various radio stations and television programmes. Thus, she is able to

access a wider audience and heighten their awareness of suicides in prison, the over-use of custody, poor conditions in prison, young people in trouble, and mothers in prison. The importance of the media to successful activism has emerged as a pertinent theme throughout the conference. In recent advocacy of empowering prisoners through work the Howard League has employed research assistants to provide firm evidence of why this would be successful and improve the behaviour of prisoners and their likelihood of recidivism. Therefore, it is clear that the collaboration of academics and activists can strengthen the activist argument and allow the academic to engage in work which may be more impactful within contemporary society.

Strand B Session: Activism in the Community and in the Courts

This panel raised interesting questions about the socio-cultural contexts from which examples - local and national – of specific and discrete activist activities emerged highlighting the tensions experienced both within the local community and the differences in national legislatures over time.

Nick Barnett (LJMU), 'No Defence Against the H-bomb': Coventry City Council and proto-nuclear activism

Nick Barnett focused on the anti-nuclear movement in post-war Coventry which anticipated the later Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which mobilised in 1957. A group of Coventry city councillors challenged the Conservative government over their policy on nuclear arms in the aftermath of the hydrogen bomb. Barnett utilised this case study to argue that there were a variety of attitudes directed towards the councillors' actions including a street protest led by the councillors where they demanded their abandonment of civil defence in Coventry. Barnett argued that this activism led to a public outcry in the local and national press. In adopting a range of protest tactics, in particular by enhancing their visibility in the streets, their message drew considerable support from the public for their anti-arms activism. Barnett drew upon a range of sources including the local press, cartoons and letters and editorials in the national newspapers. This research was underpinned by the quantitative study of contemporary Gallup opinion polls to consider how this episode paved the way for the anti-nuclear activism which was to characterise the 1960s and 70s.

Brian Doherty (Keele) and Graeme Hayes (Institut d'études politiques de Rennes), Activists on Trial: A comparison of France and the UK

Brian Doherty and Graeme Hayes brought an international focus to the strand by examining case studies of activism trials in France and Britain. Employing historical and contemporary cases, the speakers contributed to our understanding of activism and the criminal justice

system; chiefly, the effects of the court system on political movements in times of crisis. Doherty and Hayes were particularly interested in the ways in which the court can provide an opportunity for activists to debate their cause more publically and generate attention to their political beliefs. Within this focus, they considered the costs and implications of the court upon political movements, in particular, the individual and collective benefits of prosecutions and the tactical choices open to activists facing prosecution. Selected case studies from the UK and France highlighted the differences between both nations and the opportunities and limitations offered to activists as well as the differences between civil and common law. Moreover, the paper explored the differences in the campaign strategies of political groups and the various ways in which they used the courts.

Strand B Session: Sexualities, Indecency and Immorality in Victorian and Edwardian England

This panel debated popular and legal responses to sexuality, indecency and immorality in the Victorian and Edwardian periods as illustrated through three case studies.

Kim Stevenson (SOLON Plymouth), 'There is a strong consensus of public opinion...': Edwardian activism and the utilisation of criminal law to prohibit immorality and indecency

Kim Stevenson explored Edwardian activist groups who campaigned for a clamp down on indecency and the politico-legal responses it generated. The first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed a rise in the indecency agenda. The agenda, put forward by moral campaigners, moved beyond rhetoric and incited the law to regulate 'immoral' literature, theatre and sexual behaviour. Stevenson highlighted the diversity in the aims and strategies of these groups which included philanthropists, charities, religious bodies, feminists, social hygienists and vigilance associations. Particular groups which were discussed were the Union of Women Workers, the National Vigilance Association, the Church Army and the Ragged Schools Union. The period between 1890 and 1921 saw changes in legislative reform as an array of proposals such as the eight Criminal Law Amendment Acts and the Prevention of Immorality Bills sponsored by interested groups and exposed the contradictions in their definitions of indecency. Characterised by moralistic and protectionist discourse, campaign groups sent petitions and proposals to the Government with the aim of abolishing magazines, adverts, performances and various other cultural forms they considered 'improper'. However, the Home Office was initially reluctant to criminalise such material and the delaying tactics employed, particularly Sir Edward Troup's Division D, resulted in a pattern of intensified pressure from activist groups and increasing

resistance from government. A particularly interesting part of the paper which exposed the struggle between activists and government was the campaign to raise the age of sexual consent for girls. Following a 40 year campaign which was triggered by W.T. Stead's 'Maiden Tribute' in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1885), in 1921 it was finally agreed that the age of consent remain at 16. The paper concluded that activist groups were successful in getting the Government to at least consider changes despite a lengthy path to progress. Stevenson finally reflected on today's more consultative government and suggested that 'imposing' agendas on government is key in instigating socio-cultural change.

Zoë Alker (LJMU), Femininity and street robbery in mid-Victorian Liverpool

Zoë Alker drew upon her broader research to consider the sexual nature of street robberies. The paper examined the treatment of female victims and offenders of street robbery in mid-Victorian Liverpool. Despite an absence of historical inquiry into the attitudes directed towards female offenders, and women's experience of street robbery, Alker argued that women played a more significant role in the offences than has been previously assumed. Through the use of contemporary local newspapers, the interpretation relied upon two forms of analysis: firstly, the ways in which the narratives exposed multiple and complex femininities and secondly, the ways in which female offenders drew upon gender characterisations to establish their place in urban street life. Despite the prevalence of a duality between what Victorians viewed as masculine and feminine, the paper argued that a plurality of femininities were explored in the discourse surrounding street robbery. The women brought before the Liverpool courts came from a range of ages, backgrounds and occupations and employed various ways of committing street robbery; as such, heterogeneous gender identities were expressed in the local press: the violent 'rough', the naïve 'girl', the urban prostitute who signified disease and cultural decay, the sexual temptress and the respectable working woman. Alker highlighted the importance of spatial, temporal and interactional dynamics in the construction of femininities and the ways in which gender is performed on the street. That street robbery was a group crime meant that cases in which women drew upon violence and sexual scripts in front of their peers hints towards the possibility of divergent norms of femininity amongst urban working women and reveals the tensions between them.

Mark Connor (University of Leicester), Sheep in Wolf's Clothing? Reassessing Victorian responses to the male cross-dresser

Mark Connor sought to revisit the infamous Boulton and Park case within the context of wider legal responses to male cross-dressing. Connor challenged existing historiographical interpretations of homosexuality and cross-dressing as subject to harsh reprobation by the

press and courts. He argued that cross-dressing was an almost regular feature of urban social life through its presence in plays and music hall. Through the examination of a select number of cases tried at London's magistrates courts 1800-1870, Connor discovered that many cross-dressing cases were not charged as 'unnatural', nor as sodomy, but often as vagrancy offences. The broadening scope of the Vagrancy Act 1855 ensured that many cases of 'misdemeanour' could be charged under the Act. Those prosecuted offered a variety of defence narratives including drunkenness or as part of a bet. Moreover, these cases demonstrate that cross-dressing was not seen by magistrates as gender distortion and sexual deviance, but as an amusing cultural practice of young working men. Cross-dressing, then, was seen by magistrates as 'playful deviance', a bending of roles that did not threaten the establishment. Significantly, this evidence reveals that Victorian England did not automatically connect gender distortion and homosexuality until later in the nineteenth century.

Strand B Session: Histories of Policing

Day three closed with two papers which considered under-researched areas of policing, in particular, the Cathedral constabularies and the development of union representation in the modern police force.

Joseph Hobson and Les McKenna (Liverpool Cathedral Constabulary), Cathedral Bobbies: the history and activities of Cathedral Constabularies from the Middle Ages to 2012

Cathedral Constabularies have a long and complex history which stretches over 700 years. Joseph Hobson and Les McKenna retold this history by focusing on the activities and experiences of 'Cathedral Bobbies' from the thirteenth century to the present day. The speakers argued that the Cathedral constabularies paved the way for the structure and duties of the Metropolitan Police Force. The paper highlighted particular case studies from the Cathedral constabulary's history to shed light on an often unseen area of policing. Interestingly, the speakers considered the role and activities of contemporary Cathedral policemen and presented anecdotal evidence of the often challenging conditions they face in protecting Liverpool's Cathedral.

Michael Pearson (Police Federation), Representation in the Police- nineteenth and twentieth century

Michael Pearson, from the Police Federation of England and Wales, discussed its development from the nineteenth century to the present day. Pearson highlighted the

unusual position of the police union; they are not a trade union, nor a professional organisation, and are prevented by law from committing strike action due to being servants of the Crown. In the nineteenth century, police officers were subject to meagre wages and harsh working conditions from which they had very little protection. As a result, police officers would not stay in the force for longer than a few weeks or months. Following mass strikes in 1919 by transport, railway and dock workers, there were fears in the establishment that the police force would strike, leading to a national crisis. As a result, the Desborough Committee was set up in the interwar period to provide union support for police workers and revise the pay structure of the force. The Police Act 1919 established the modern day Police Federation and continues to offer representation both in the workplace and at national level.