

# ABSTRACTS

## **Eddie Ellis, Credible Messengers and the Neo-Liberal Imagination of Anti-Violence**

David C. Brotherton

I trace the socio-historical pathway of the concept of the credible messenger and related youth anti-violence interventions from the 1930s to a more radically imagined iteration by Eddie Ellis in the 1980s. The focus shifts to its present-day iterations as I review two widely adopted anti-violence programs. I conclude that today credible messengers and anti-violence interventions are: (i) primarily imagined within a framework of neo-liberal possibility; (ii) valued for their contributions on individual and/or group behavioral change; and (iii) conceived in programs outside of any discourse on the structural roots of crime, collective agency, or the historical struggle for social change and empowerment.

## **Police Abolitionism: A Marxist Critique**

Howard Ryan

US police violence and high-profile cases such as the killing of George Floyd have triggered a grassroots movement that calls for defunding and abolishing police, abolishing prisons, and more. This movement, in turn, is guided by a broad-scope ideology known simply as abolition, which draws on the black radical tradition, feminism, and Marxism. Without minimizing the many achievements of the abolition movement, the article brings a Marxist scrutiny to the ideology and to its posture on policing. It raises analytic questions of materialism and idealism and of how social change is imagined by abolitionists and suggests the need for a broad rethinking of policing and public safety issues by the left.

## **Abolitionist Entanglements with Guards: Engagements to Deepen Analysis and Organizing**

Erica R. Meiners

In the United States the punishment industry is always hiring. Yet—despite a few exposes and memoirs—we know little about the intimacy of this labor, particularly as people of color are increasingly pulled into working in prisons

near urban contexts. Abolition means dismantling or removing the institutions and systems—such as prisons and policing—that perpetuate violence and mask our ability to address root issues such as poverty, white supremacy, and transphobia. But abolitionist praxis is also opening up flourishing life pathways for all. Rooted in interviews with people who work in corrections in Illinois, and my own work inside a prison, this essay offers snapshots of intimate entanglements with guard labor with the goal of opening up more sites for abolitionist praxis.

### **Uncomfortable Kinship: An Ethnography of the Professional World of Gang Experts and Street Outreach Workers in South Los Angeles**

Daniel Gascón

This study sheds light on the professional world of gang experts and street outreach workers and raises questions about the future of urban governance. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork primarily in one South Los Angeles neighborhood that I call Lakeside and interviews conducted between 2009 and 2010, my findings show that gang experts demonize street workers, shun professional contacts, and instead aggressively enforce them. Confrontational police encounters provoke resistance from street workers. The findings also highlight the limited opportunities for integrated governance. To conclude, I discuss the broader implications of these findings for public policy and qualitative research in gang-inhabited and heavily policed urban environments.

### **The “Keys to the Kingdom”: Interest Groups, Ideologues, and Immigration Policy**

Amy Risley

This article seeks to explain why the Trump administration enacted its punitive family separation policy. I argue that restrictionist interest groups bear some responsibility. For years, anti-immigration hardliners had argued that unauthorized immigrants from Central America were “invading” the country, exploiting “loopholes” in asylum law, and “disappearing” into the interior of the country thanks to “catch-and-release” and child-protection policies. Racist nativist and classist ideas permeated these discourses. The ideologues behind Trump’s immigration policies deployed similar discourses and translated them into dangerous policies that effectively ended asylum at the southern border.

### **Social Protest as a Liberating Pedagogy of Praxis: Insights from Latina Youth Critical Action Toward Anti-Immigrant Politics**

Carlos Casanova, Julia Silver & Ashley Dominguez

Grounded in liberating pedagogy of praxis, this study foregrounds the voices of five undocumented and first-generation Latina youth in Iowa to illuminate social protests as liberating pedagogy of praxis. Results reveal the pedagogical potential of social protest as an educational approach in which 1) Latina youth speak up and share their ideas, which dismantles the silence that restricts their voices and rights to promote social change, 2) Latina youth co-construct knowledge that promotes collective action by their family and community, and (3) Latina youth develop critical consciousness through praxis.

### **Historical State Crime and Public Criminology as a Catalyst in the Campaign for Indigenous Recognition and Representation in Australia**

Paul Bleakley

It is a common maxim in historical criminology that engaging with the past can be utilized to cultivate greater understanding of current issues and, ultimately, to bring about social or cultural change. Drawing on the ongoing struggle for social and cultural recognition undertaken by Indigenous Australians, this paper argues for a public historical criminology that develops (and communicates) narratives of past injustice to shape contemporary human rights campaigns. Such a public facing historical criminology can offer context to the social justice challenges facing underserved populations, as many can trace their contemporary experience to lengthy (yet often hidden) histories of sociocultural disenfranchisement.

### **To Refuse the Mark: Racial Criminalization and Twenty Years of Struggle to Ban the Box**

Melissa Burch

In 2003, formerly incarcerated organizers convened in Oakland, California, to develop a political strategy to challenge the discrimination associated with having a criminal record. The emerging Ban the Box campaign swept the nation, removing the question, "have you ever been convicted" from applications for employment in more than 150 cities and counties and 37 states. However, employers still regularly exclude people with convictions and the underlying ideological struggle over the legitimacy of criminal records within a fundamentally unjust criminal legal system is far from

resolved. This essay revisits the contested struggle to Ban the Box in Los Angeles County from 2004–2006 in order to redraw attention to the stakes for formerly incarcerated organizers, who, in asking for a foot in the door, were demanding redress for decades of targeted criminalization. By revisiting the deep contestations at the heart of the struggle, the essay invites reflection on the gap that often exists between what people want and what can be achieved through policy reform.