



Punishment and Prisons: Power and the Carceral State

Joe Sim

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'**Punishment and Prisons** is a scholarly, powerful and inspirational critique. With passion and humanity, Joe Sim strips neo-liberal penal policies of their reformist pretensions and demonstrates that prisons will continue to be brutal enforcers of gross economic inequalities until such time as the abolitionist alternative is realised' - *Pat Carlen*

Joe Sim has long occupied a key position in British and European criminology. This book is a genuinely important addition to the literature; it is controversial and will stimulate debate. **Punishment and Prisons** shows that critical criminology is alive, that it has a voice and that it needs to be read. - *Peter Young, Professor of Criminology, University of Hull*

'A satisfyingly uncompromising critique that has no fear of coming to clear conclusions and provides little succour to those satisfied with short term change in the current system. Sim provides the kind of concise, articulate and powerful critique of apparent criminological realities, which is necessary to motivate genuine reform and can help to ensure that practitioners and others do not forget the big picture.' - *Probation Journal*

Joe Sim offers a rich and persuasive analysis of imprisonment, providing a wealth of political and policy detail. He makes his reader confront the cruelties of imprisonment as well as its ineffectiveness in reducing crime, and it would surely be impossible to read this book without feeling profound disquiet about the deployment of the power to punish in contemporary Britain. **Punishment and Prisons** has a breadth and depth of scholarship, arguing powerfully for a more critical criminology and an abolitionist stance towards imprisonment. I urge all those interested in penal policy - whether as students, teachers, researchers, reformers, politicians or penal professionals - to read this important and disturbing book. - *Professor Barbara Hudson, Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies, University of Central Lancashire*

With prisons overflowing and penal policy the topic of hot debate, **Punishment and Prisons: Power and the Carceral State** presents a lively and accessible discussion of possible solutions to the current crisis, by one of the foremost scholars in the field.

Joe Sim traces the development of penal strategy over the past three decades, through a critical analysis of the relationship between penal policy and state power. Exploring the contested histories of punishment that are prominent in criminology, and its development in penal policy, the book analyses four key dimensions of modern penal trends:

- " continuity and discontinuity in penal policy and practice

- " reform and rehabilitation

- " contesting penal power

- " abolitionism.

Articulate, innovative and theoretically informed, **Punishment and Prisons: Power and the Carceral State** offers a critical overview of contemporary penal politics that will prove a compelling addition to the criminological library.

The book is written for not only for students and academics but also for those involved in the debates on penal policy - including prison reform groups, politicians and the media. It offers a series of suggestions for alleviating the current crisis, setting out a policy agenda for transforming the role and place of the prison in the criminal justice system.

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