

**Andrew Silke (Ed.)**, *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014. 312 pages, US\$ 150 .00 [Hardcover], US\$ 45.95 [Paperback], ISBN-13: 978-0415810371.

**Reviewed by Jacqueline Bates-Gaston**

This edited volume is a timely and much needed response to the interests of policy makers, government officials, academics and research students in building knowledge and understanding of current international developments in the management and treatment of those convicted and imprisoned for offences that relate to violence in a nationalist, ideological or religious context. The focus of the contributors to this volume is on those who advocate the use of violence to promote extreme political/religious views against specific victims in order to influence future political directions or intentions. It critically examines the importance of the meanings and definitions of words that we now use every day—like terrorism, extremism, radicalisation, de-radicalisation and disengagement. Andrew Silke, the volume's editor, makes the point that, although most of those who are convicted of politically motivated offences are incarcerated, our current understanding of terrorists and extremists in prisons is limited while general research into terrorist-related activities after 9/11 has greatly increased. This book helps address the deficits in our knowledge on developments that occur during their incarceration.

While the book has five parts, the themes interlink and comparisons and learning across the international spectrum and different cultural contexts are evident. The scene is set with a discussion by Colin Murray on critical issues regarding prisons and a perspective on the imprisonment strategy taken within the UK. The potential processes of prison radicalisation in the United States are examined in Joshua Sinai's chapter's innovative research into the development of a seven phase model which outlines the elements involved. This model has connections with extremist risk assessment factors discussed later in the book. Another chapter, by Liran Goldman, reviews experiences of US prison radicalisation with perspectives on the process, the relevance of violent gang culture and reference to "Prislam" or jailhouse Islam, religion and the potential impact of leadership role models, in particular, with insecure and needy prisoners. The author suggests that prison may only set the foundation for radicalisation and that post prison experiences of unmet reintegration support needs are equally important. This point is taken up again later in the book.

The chapter by Marisa Porges analyses the underlying psychological processes and implications of the counselling/communicative aspects and possible consequences, of state led de-radicalisation tactics in the Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The fine, psychological balance between persuasion and resistance to change are explored. The successes and challenges of these communicative approaches to de-radicalisation in similar and other cultural prison contexts are revisited in later chapters in the volume including the chapter by Christopher Dean on individual and group work in the UK, National Offender Management, and Healthy Identity Intervention. Within the de-radicalisation debate a further chapter by John F. Morrison explains the importance of IRA prisoners in the evolution and politicisation of the movement in Ireland towards the ballot box rather than the bullet, with the emphasis on the long journey towards a peace process.

The point is made that even in countries where there have been no formal de-radicalisation approaches, re-offending rates for terrorist offenders have been remarkably low compared to other types of offending. The controversial and contested area of risk assessment of violent extremist prisoners is thoroughly addressed in two chapters with comprehensive explorations of the factors which contribute to risk in this context. Silke observes that, following extensive literature reviews relating to terrorism, there is agreement and some

overlap of risk factors in two recent developments, the NOMS, Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG22+, 22 factors +where relevant) and the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment protocol (VERA 2, with 31 items) including beliefs and attitudes, context and intent, history and capability, commitment and motivation in both the tools with additional protective factors in the latter. The chapter by D. Elaine Pressman and John Flockton on VERA 2 provides extensive detail about the development, research, theoretical underpinning and applications of the tool. The authors have addressed the need for an offence-specific, utilitarian and relevant risk assessment tool which is now being trialled in various jurisdictions. As further research is required, neither of these risk assessment protocols claims to predict future risk of re-offending in a terrorist context but do offer a well researched, structured, clinical judgement approach to assessment. These assessments have developed a comprehensive and systematic approach to considering a range of dynamic factors known through research, to be associated with violent terrorist behaviours. Such an approach is extremely valuable to law enforcement and risk management agencies that require defensible and practical mechanisms.

Using interviews with eighteen leaders of the most active and audacious terrorist groups in Israel – Hamas, Fatah and Islamic Jihad – the unique “security prisoner” experiences in Israeli prisons is provided in the chapter by Sagit Yehoshua. The management of prisoners in this jurisdiction is influenced by the size of the population and collective resistance demonstrated by Palestinians who “construct a whole new community inside the prisons, under a new social space, through the concepts of identity and collectivism, into fully formalised institutions” which influences “the life and identity of the prisoners as well as Palestinian society.” (p. 145) Potential radicalisation and de-radicalisation pathways are discussed through examination of the roles of education, leadership opportunities and length of time spent in prison. Parallels are drawn with paramilitary prisoners in Northern Ireland as described in other chapters in the book.

Using key case studies, the volume also draws on expert research and experiences of radicalisation and de-radicalisation from different contexts across the world (England, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Indonesia, Germany and Spain) to explore critical issues which are important to professional practice and to the individual offender’s human rights, to prison management policies and interventions, rehabilitation and impact on recidivism.

Finally, the chapter by Neil Ferguson looks at the post release experiences and influence of those convicted of terrorist related offences in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The messages underline the importance of increasing the attention and investment in rehabilitation programmes at post release stages while not ignoring the lessons learned in Northern Ireland on the impact that prisoners can have on future peace processes. The strength of the edited volume is that it draws on current research, experiences and practice across international boundaries using different approaches and sources. It highlights the variety of different, experimental and sometimes contradictory approaches that have been tried to manage and intervene with violent terrorist offenders from a wide spectrum of cultures and contexts.

It is recognised that further evaluations and research into the various rehabilitative and assessment approaches are needed. However, given the dire situations in Israel and Palestine and other countries today, the book offers current, expert research and experience into what might work in some contexts which can inform all those interested in a safer global society.

***About the Reviewer: Dr. Jacqueline Bates-Gaston, a Chartered and Registered Forensic Psychologist, is Chief Psychologist, The Northern Ireland Prison Service.***