

*Contemporary Justice Review* – Issues in Criminal, Social and Restorative Justice

## **SPECIAL ISSUE**

# **Call for Papers – Penal Abolition**

### **Guest Editors**

Michael J. Coyle, California State University, Chico.  
Judah Schept, Eastern Kentucky University.

### **Theme of the Special Issue**

*Contemporary Justice Review* is an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal for scholars, activists, and practitioners who seek to design and implement models of justice that take into account the needs of all. This call for papers for a special issue on “Penal Abolition” invites submissions from across disciplines of work engaging and furthering abolitionist study, politics and theory. We invite articles that examine abolition empirically, theoretically, historically, culturally, spatially, or rhetorically, and that are situated within or at the interstices of critiques of ableism, capitalism, heteronormativity, militarism, patriarchy, police power, racism, settler colonialism, and xenophobia.

Penal Abolition is situated in radical and interdisciplinary study. Abolition draws its critiques of the so-called criminal justice system from critical and close readings of history, culture, social theory, and social science. Abolition is foundationally about both dismantling and creating worlds. In the broadest conception, dismantling takes many forms, from insurrection to direct action to more technocratic, although no less important, non-reformist strategies that shrink existing institutions and logics predicated on the violence of unfreedom—cages, coercion, confinement—toward oblivion. Creation is also broad, including work that pushes alternative projects, programs, organizations, and relationships that can alternately harness or operate outside of state power and offer transformative ways to address the conflicts and harms that ubiquitously occur in human relationships and communities. Abolitionist scholars have suggested numerous alternatives, especially ones addressing structural issues of justice in the family, school, and workplace; visions of a just society; and nonviolent, needs-meeting solutions to needs-denying, power-based social arrangements. Creation includes the use of new vocabularies and vantages, or the expropriation of old ones, toward the beginning of thinking, speaking, and seeing outside of the language and visibility that reproduce police and penal power. Abolition is imaginative and bold as well as practical and even mundane.

Penal Abolition is not based on naïve or romantic perceptions of human beings, disregard for human preferences for safety and community-building work, or a pretense that human beings in community are not accountable to each other. Instead, penal abolitionists are in search of solutions for the very real conflicts of human relationships and have no “magic bullet” solutions for the unimaginably complex matters that penalty and the so-called criminal justice system attempt to address. Committed abolitionist analysis historicizes, theorizes, and empirically studies the present moment, in part to better understand the potential, and potentially devastating, capacities of current reform efforts. Penal abolitionists want to begin by being honest about the penal project’s immense inhumanity, racism, and violence, which advise us to leave it in the dustbin of historicity. Departing from there, the real work begins.

We invite submissions from those with an abolitionist perspective and/or research agenda to reflect on developing work, new directions, or the arc of the abolitionist project. We also invite those for whom abolitionism represents a newer dimension to contribute by considering how abolition of the penal project is becoming part and parcel of their work.

### **Details**

A 500-word abstract is due **February 1, 2016**. Early submissions are welcome. We encourage submissions from people in prison, graduate students, and activist-scholars as well as junior and senior scholars. Invitations to contribute to the special issue will be based on a review of the abstracts received by the due date.

Accepted papers will be due **June 1, 2016**, and should contain original and unpublished work. Papers should be in the range of 6,000-7,000 words. All submitted papers will undergo the journal’s regular peer review process. Papers must be prepared in full accord with the journal’s guidelines for authors and be submitted through the online submission portal at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/gcjr20/current>.

Questions about the special issue may be sent to the guest editors directly at [mjcoyle@csuchico.edu](mailto:mjcoyle@csuchico.edu) and [Judah.Schept@eku.edu](mailto:Judah.Schept@eku.edu). General questions about the journal may be sent to: [contemporaryjusticereview@gmail.com](mailto:contemporaryjusticereview@gmail.com).