interests of those people who are excluded from meaningful participation in society. Left realism insists on holding the individual responsible, but argues that the phenomena of crime must be viewed from an interdisciplinary perspective, one capable of dealing with and understanding reality, rather than the idealism that underlies traditional criminal law.

Crime & Social Exclusion indicates that the causes of crime, and those who suffer most by it, are better understood by examining the nature of social exclusion and the existence of the underclass. Left realism argues that informed criminological debate can only be properly examined holistically, because crime and social exclusion stem, not only from poverty and unemployment, but from other important factors: social and personal insecurity, a lack of access to the benefits of education and training, and a lack of proper housing and health care. To do this, crime and social exclusion are better understood by the creation of a synergy between criminologists and the makers of social policy. It is hoped that this will encourage a more constructive and creative debate on the causes and possible solutions to crime, rather than the reactive response found in conservative reasoning.

This critique of the after-effects of right wing social policies ridicules the way they have demonised the individual with the use of 'get tough on crime' policies that became prominent during the Thatcher era, and that have become more prominent still in the United States. The book constantly casts a warning that the road the Americans have taken is particularly undesirable, where 'the prison boom' has made

prison a familiar part of life for the poor, and has changed the very meaning of 'government'. In examining the 'American Disaster Area', where a 500% increase in incarceration has occurred over the last 25 years, left realism uses statistics and empirical studies to back up its observations and argument on social injustice. Left realists argue that too many people have placed their faith and credibility on measures such as, 'waving the big stick' and 'getting tough on crime'. The results of punitive policies that send growing numbers of people to prison for very long periods, is inevitably destroying people, and is an inherently destructive and internecine path for social policy to follow.

The strength of *Crime & Social Exclusion* is that it creates a counteractive force to the limitations and inadequacies of conservative social policies on crime, and heralds the opportunity for the further development of debate, hopefully to rectify the glaring social inequality and unfairness that plagues less fortunate communities. Ultimately the book distils the proposition that the social policies of contemporary right wing governments in the late or post modern world are doomed to failure in dealing effectively with the causes of crime. This book is timely and well suited to adaptation for Australian criminologists and those involved in the development of criminal justice policy, research and public discussion.

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all of the documents included on the disk. Also included is the full text of the first 58 issues of the AIC series *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice.*

The second disk in the series, *The Australian Institute of Criminology on CD-ROM,* features scanned images and the full text of a range of Australian criminal justice publications and documents with an emphasis on statistical information. The CD-ROM includes, firstly, the 1997 edition of *Crime and Justice in Australia,* which charts changes in crime and justice in Australia in recent years. A *statistical profile of crime in Australia* incorporates four components: statistics on the level of crime in all Australian jurisdictions; the place of occurrence of crime by type of crime; offenders, charges and arrests; and responses to crime-cost, personnel, case loads and international perspectives. The CD-ROM also includes papers presented at both the First and Second AIC National Outlook Symposiums. The Second Symposium *Violent Crime, Property Crime and Public Policy* was held in Canberra on 3-4 March 1997. Other titles in the series available to date are *Crime and Violence Prevention, Corporate and White Collar Crime* and *Crime and Justice in Australia 1997.*

I found the CD-ROMs to be very user-friendly, incorporating easy search facilities and a comprehensive help facility. Each disk includes an instruction booklet explaining, for example, how to conduct a general query, search the database and view documents using Adobe Acrobat PDF. They provide an excellent research tool for criminal justice researchers and practitioners, and would be a valuable addition to any law library. The abstract information provided is particularly useful, and the inclusion of full-text documents enables quick location of relevant information. These features render the information more accessible than the same information in hard copy. The provision of current criminal justice information and statistics together with historical issues of journals and conference papers is of particular interest.

Overall it is an innovative collection which would be particularly useful for researchers, criminal justice practitioners, teachers, students, libraries and media organisations as a research and reference tool. A yearly update to the *Crime and Justice in Australia* series would be invaluable.

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Australian Crime and Justice on CD-Rom

RMIT Publishing. The series can be obtained for $625 for a single user or $1250 for the network version or as a single disk for $150 for a single user, $300 for the network version.

Australian Crime and Justice on CD-ROM is an exciting new series of CD-ROMs containing the full text of various Australian criminal justice publications and documents. The series is published by the Australian Institute of Criminology in association with RMIT Publishing for both a national and international audience.

The first CD-ROM in the series, *Crime and Justice in Australia 1996,* contains 760 documents covering a broad range of criminal justice issues such as domestic violence, aboriginal

deaths in custody, AIDS and prisons, capital punishment and legalisation of marijuana. It includes statistics, issues papers, reports, journal articles and conference proceedings. Information is presented as scanned images of original documents or as searchable full-text. All information on the disk can be accessed by searching the Australian Criminology Database (CINCH), an index of Australian subject matter relating to crime, crime prevention and criminal justice. This provides subject indexing and abstract information for