

BEYOND THE DEATH PENALTY

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Reflections on Punishment

Edited by

Hans NELEN
Jacques CLAESSEN



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This book contains a selection of papers that were presented during the multidisciplinary conference ‘Beyond the Death Penalty; Reflections on Punishment’, organised by the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights on 28 and 29 October 2010. The event marked the 150th anniversary of the *de facto* abolition of the death penalty in the Netherlands.

The original idea to organise the conference (and a parallel cultural programme) came from our colleague (and freelance journalist) Paul van der Steen. Due to personal circumstances, he had to withdraw from the organising committee himself. However we managed to enthuse some of our colleagues and succeeded in turning our original ideas into a programme that covered a wide range of topics in relation to punishment. Special references, in this respect, have to be made to David Roef, Gerard de Jonge, Louis Berkvens, Luc Bien and Peter Bal. The latter passed away suddenly on 26 March 2010. This book is dedicated to him. Our dear colleague and friend Peter Bal was really looking forward to a stimulating multidisciplinary conference, and we still feel deep regret that he was not there to attend the conference.

Based on the positive feedback the organisers received from many participants, the conference turned out to be a success. The participants enjoyed the pleasant academic atmosphere, the debates, and the high quality of the presentations. We want to thank all speakers and participants at the conference for their input.

The conference could not have been organised without the financial support of a number of institutions. We are indebted to the Province of Limburg, the Research and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Safety and Justice (WODC), the Limburg University Fund/SWOL, and the Maastricht Faculty of Law, for their donations. The ancient Maastricht City Hall was kindly placed at our disposal by the local authorities for the re-enactment of the last criminal case in the Netherlands that led to a public execution.

The organisational support of Chantal Kuypers and Yleen Simonis during the conference was invaluable. Yleen was also a great help to us throughout the whole preparation period. We also want to thank Stephan van Uden and, in particular, Evelyn Bell, for their assistance in providing the layout for this book. For a long time, Ben van Wersch belonged to the team of editors of this book. We are very grateful for his input and have good memories of our fruitful and pleasant meetings.

What we hoped to achieve with the conference was a reflection on punishment from a variety of angles, and, additionally, to give some food for thought to the contemporary debate on crime and punishment. Without doubt, the conference served these purposes. We hope this book will have the same impact on its readers.

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