In a recent issue of 'The Criminologist', the American Society of Criminology’s official newsletter, John Hagan (2015) asserted that criminological attention had been found ‘sleeping’ in attempting to understand the 2003 war in Iraq as a ‘war of aggression’. Whilst this assumption may be legitimately levelled at what he describes as ‘American criminology’ this should not be assumed to be representative of the wider critical concerns of the discipline. There is however a more pervasive supposition within Hagan’s observation that criminology has paid little if any attention to the study of war at all. This seminar will present an illustration of how criminologists past and present have engaged with the study of ‘war’, from the ‘evil of militarism’ espoused by Willem Bonger (1916) to the more nuanced observations of Jock Young (2011) that war is one of the ‘ten ironies’ of a critical criminology. In doing so this seminar will illustrate a contemporary rationale for a ‘criminology of war’ (qua Jamieson, 1998), advocating it as a meaningful undertaking for the discipline that has previously had an intermittent, rather than narcoleptic engagement. In doing so, and following Jamieson (2003: 263), this seminar will aver that in the pursuit of a more thoroughgoing criminological analysis of war there is much left to be said and ‘much remains to be done’.

References


