

Editorial

Academic criminology in the United States prior to the 1970s was characterized by the unchallenged domination of liberalism and the total absence of left-oriented schools of thought. A number of the chief reasons for this condition have become blatantly obvious in the face of the continuing repression of radical scholars. For three quarters of a century, political repression has successfully restricted the most highly developed radical perspective, Marxism, in virtually every discipline and professional school. One can hardly expect the scope of academic criminology to have been any less restrictive, considering its direct organic connections with the most coercive political institutions in our society. Indeed, in light of these connections, it is remarkable that the recent emergence of a radical criminology has occurred at all.

Because of these organic connections, it is not surprising that radical developments emerged later in criminology than in other disciplines and professional schools. Radical criminology actually appeared on the crest of the final surges of social protest by women, blacks, the poor, students and many others whose rage had scourged American institutions throughout the previous decade. To this day, moreover, only a small number of outspoken students and a smaller number of determined faculty have risked engaging in this unique form of radical practice. The numbers involved, however, should not minimize the qualitative significance of the development of a radical criminology; nor should it be allowed to obscure the absence, at any time in the past, of even rudimentary academic counterparts.

Radical criminology is by no means confined to students and faculty: prisoners, social reformers, community organizers and representatives of left political parties have also contributed to its development. It draws sustenance from *all* the social movements that are conscious of the endemic contradictions of capitalist society. It is particularly sustained by those who struggle against the incipient fascist conditions being generated by the massive expenditures for the criminal justice apparatus in the United States.

The nature of radical criminology is suggested in part by the research and writings of its exponents. The types of research conducted by left-oriented criminologists include, among others, historical studies of the convict lease system, the effect of organized labor on the utilization of convict labor, the origins of the police system, the changes in the juvenile justice system, and the rapid expansion of criminal justice institutions and their supportive programs in colleges and universities throughout the country.

Radical criminologists are also writing about such subjects as abortion laws, sexism and the present institutional practices for dealing with victims of rape. They are researching and analyzing the export of counter-insurgent police technologies, and the new technologies for the control of prisoners and parolees through the use of drugs, telemonitoring systems, cortical implantations of electronic devices and behavior modification techniques.

Moreover, their work includes polemical and analytic writings which counter the ideological foundations of bourgeois criminology. Thus, they have been writing about the definitions of crime and the standards of professionalism which justify the role of the technocratic criminologist and the technocratic domain of the field. Recently, a number of criminologists have been incorporating the study of crime, the law, and the technologies of legal coercion into Marxist theories of State relations. In this process, they are describing and analyzing the full panoply of crimes against the working classes of many nations, including corporate crimes, imperialist crimes, racist and sexist crimes and crimes of exploitation.

In addition, radical criminology courses are being taught for the first time at a handful of universities and people's liberation schools. In the Spring of 1974, four sessions on radical criminology (Racism and Crime, Socialist Feminism and Criminology, Marxist Foundations of Criminology, and Praxis of Radical Criminology) are being sponsored by the Union of Radical Criminologists at the West Coast Socialist Sociology Conference. Plans for a national conference of radical criminologists will be launched during the coming year.

Thus significant insights, materials, proposals and programs are being generated by persons who are struggling against crime and repression. Their struggle for social justice is yielding a radical criminology, but no single periodical now exists to give voice to this development. Upon that premise, CRIME AND SOCIAL JUSTICE will make every effort to collect and distribute the ideas, materials and other information from all who are in broad agreement with its goals. We welcome your subscriptions and written contributions. Join our endeavor to establish a radical journal for a people's criminology.

Herman Schwendinger