CRIME AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Edited by Tony Platt and Paul Takagi
Critical Criminology

Editorial Group
John Clarke, Mike Fitzgerald, Victoria Greenwood, Jock Young

Contributing Editors: Rosa del Olmo (University of Caracas), Tamar Pitch (University of Perugia), Herman Schwendinger (State University of New York), Annika Snare (University of Oslo), Boaventura de Sousa Santos (University of Coimbra, Portugal), Ian Taylor (University of Sheffield), Anthony Platt (Institute for the Study of Labour and Economic Crisis, San Francisco).

This new series aims to publish work within the radical criminology perspective. It is international in its scope, providing a rallying point for work in this rapidly growing field. The substantive areas covered are the sociology of crime, deviance, social problems, law and sexual deviance. It includes work in ethnography, historical criminology and the practice of social work and law as it relates to radical criminology. The series is two-tiered, publishing both monographs of interest to scholars in the field and more popular books suitable for students and practitioners. One of its aims is to publish the work of radical organisations in the area, particularly that of the National Deviancy Conference, the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control, the Crime and Social Justice Collective and La Questione Criminale.
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The journal *Crime and Social Justice* has been a major focus of debate for both American and European scholars. At a time when the majority of official criminology journals are largely left unread by students of criminology, this radical magazine is notable for its panache and relevance. There is scarcely a significant debate in the recent period to which *Crime and Social Justice* has not offered a substantial contribution, if not indeed initiated. But it has been difficult to obtain and the Critical Criminology series is issuing this reader, which is to be published simultaneously in North America and in Britain. The final decision on the selection was made jointly by ourselves and the Crime and Social Justice Collective.

*John Clarke  
Mike Fitzgerald  
Victoria Greenwood  
Jock Young*
Introduction

Several students and two faculty members of Berkeley's School of Criminology were responsible for publishing in 1974 the first issue of *Crime and Social Justice (CSJ)*, 'a radical journal for a people's criminology'. The format for the earliest issues included articles by academic criminologists, reports on popular struggles for justice, course outlines, and review essays of books. The political roots of *CSJ* are to be found generally in the experiences of the New Left – especially the student, anti-war and women's movements – and particularly in the academic and state repression of progressive students and intellectuals at Berkeley and other universities.

Out of the School of Criminology came radical activists and theorists who participated in local anti-repression organizations, supported the prisoners' movement, turned the classroom into a place of debate and controversy (an unusual occurrence!), and challenged the hegemony of bourgeois criminology. Given the long history of systematic repression and exclusion of Marxism and critical thought in North American universities (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1974) it is not surprising that a price had to be paid for this rebellious insubordination. By the time the first issue of *CSJ* was published, Herman Schwendinger and Tony Platt had been denied tenure and the demise of the School of Criminology was imminent. Many progressive individuals have experienced academic repression in the United States but this was the first time that a criminology program was totally dismantled because a minority of its faculty and a majority of its students tested the *bourgeois* doctrine of 'freedom of speech'. After a protracted struggle led by thousands of students, in which thousands of individuals were politicized and many people's commitments were strengthened, the School of Criminology was closed in 1976. A detailed account of this experience has been
chronicled and summed up elsewhere (Schauffler, 1974; Schauffler and Hannigan, 1974; CSJ Collective, 1976).

There were personal casualties as a result of our radical praxis: several students were harassed and intimidated by Berkeley's administration, and some had difficulty finding jobs; Herman Schwendinger was unable to get an academic job until his appointment in 1977 at the State University of New York, New Paltz campus; Tony Platt could not get a job in a criminology program; and Paul Takagi, who could not be fired because he had tenure, was academically ostracized on the Berkeley campus for over a year.

But overall the repression did not break us. Rather it confirmed our experience and analysis, as well as solidified our political commitments. In 1976 we wrote:

While we suffered a set-back in Berkeley, we definitely scored a number of important victories and for the first time are building a progressive alternative to what is perhaps the most reactionary field in the social sciences. It is important that we learn from our struggle at Berkeley and use that experience to deepen our political consciousness and tactical capacity. (CSJ Collective, 1976)

Since 1976, the constituency of CSJ has grown to over 2000, primarily intellectuals, students, and libraries, but also community organizations and prisoners. Despite a resurgence in recent years of a decidedly rightward movement among intellectuals, our experience at professional conferences indicates a great deal of interest in Marxism among students and younger faculty and state functionaries. As Herman Schwendinger noted in the editorial to the first issue of CSJ:

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.

It is a testimony to the power of Marxism that radical criminology is growing despite the loss of an important base at Berkeley. Many
individuals who were first politicized in the academy continue to be politically active in their new jobs and workplaces. Some of us who were active at Berkeley created the independent Center for Research on Criminal Justice (publisher of The Iron Fist and The Velvet Glove), later to become the Center for the Study of Crime and Social Justice, a component of the Institute for the Study of Labor and Economic Crisis in San Francisco.

In this book, we have selected a limited number of articles which have appeared in *CSJ* between 1974 and 1978. Admittedly, they reflect, in our judgment, the more mature theoretical materials that have appeared in the journal. They are by no means limited to the Berkeley 'school', they are not representative of *CSJ* in general, and they do not in any way discuss the practice of radical criminologists in the United States. A thorough critique of the Berkeley 'school' and a political evaluation of academic collectives remains an urgent task, though a modest self-criticism has been attempted in the journal *Synthesis* (Platt, 1977).

We will limit ourselves in this introduction to providing some background and textual comments to the selections in this anthology. For a deeper understanding, we suggest that you consult the journal in its entirety (see the back of this volume for information about subscriptions).

Perhaps the most important development in radical criminology in the United States was the publication of Herman and Julia Schwendinger’s ‘Defenders of Order or Guardians of Human Rights?’ in *Issues in Criminology* in 1970. When the Schwendingers re-opened the debate on the definition of crime in this article, it was either misunderstood or deliberately misinterpreted by some criminologists. For example, Gilbert Geis, past president of the American Society of Criminology, viewed it as an indication of moralism—a ‘tendency of critical criminologists to create their own categories of crime’ (1978).

To develop a scientific definition of crime is a complex and difficult enterprise. It has a long history among Western criminologists, going back even further than the 30-year controversy initiated by Thorsten Sellin in 1938. In an earlier monograph, published in 1937, Sellin reviewed the literature on the relationship between economic conditions and crime, and recommended the construction of a more sensitive crime index as an alternative to measures which relied on official police statistics. As Sellin noted, this was not a new proposal: in 1895, Tarde had called for the study of unpunished crimes; in 1910,