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DEVIANT BEHAVIOR IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY—THE SOVIET IMAGE

WALTER D. CONNOR*

Soviet writers in recent years have devoted a large volume of discussion to deviant behavior in "capitalist" societies, notably the United States. These discussions, which focus primarily on the presumed causes which induce deviance under capitalism and on the nature and functions of criminology as a policy science in the West, reveal not only Soviet attitudes toward Western social life, but also may cast light on the presuppositions which underlie the Soviet Union's approach to its own problems of social deviance. Recent Soviet writings in this area are discussed in an attempt to discern persistent themes in such literature, and to detect the functions and significance it possesses for various categories of its domestic readership.

In recent years, in addition to their growing concern with domestic problems, Soviet sociologists, criminologists and publicists have concentrated considerable attention on parallel problems in the "capitalist world"—notably such aspects of deviance as crime and delinquency. Their writings demonstrate an acceptance of the premise that high rates of the sorts of behavior held in virtually all modern societies to be antisocial (crimes against property and the person, juvenile delinquency) indicate that a society is somehow "unhealthy." Whatever the merits of such a premise, this sort of reasoning is an important element in the ongoing "war of ideologies," where the demonstration of the superiority of one *type* of social system over another is at issue. This paper attempts to explore the Soviet use of deviant behavior in the capitalist world as a criterion of that world's social "health" (or lack thereof).

Exploration of this topic involves (1) outlining the Soviet image of deviance in capitalist societies, including the conclusions drawn by Soviet writers from this image; and (2) a review of Soviet criticisms of "bourgeois" criminologists and the science they have developed to cope with crime and delinquency. Finally, some tentative answers are made to the question: What are the *functions* served by the communication of information

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about antisocial behavior in the West to various types of Soviet readers?

Soviet writings on deviance in "capitalist" societies are extremely interesting in that they mobilize factual material from the West and present it to the domestic reader in the USSR in order to strengthen his negative impressions of the capitalist world. That this is at least part of the motivation for much contemporary Soviet writing is clearly shown in the following passage:

The rapid growth of juvenile delinquency in the USA and England is one of the accusatory factors which show these countries from the other side. In the struggle against bourgeois ideology we cannot pass by this factor, we cannot fail to take advantage of this serious crack in social relations, in order to show the true face of the "free world."¹

DEVIANCE UNDER CAPITALISM

Both the general approach and the rhetoric of Soviet authors are judgmental. The introduction to a recent book establishes the ground rules for the interpretations to be given to the evidence the bourgeoisie provides:

The Soviet reader [concerned with] the problem of juvenile delinquency in the capitalist world is interested in an accurate picture of that delinquency, and, equally, in a scientific explanation of its causes. Such an appraisal is only possible from the position of Marxist-Leninist learning concerning the class-antagonistic society and state, the contradictions to which they give birth, and the social conditioning in such a society of con-

¹F. MAKHOV, *PRESTUPNOST' NESOVERSHENNOLET-NIKH v SSH i ANGLII (JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN THE USA AND ENGLAND)* 151 (1964) [MAKHOV]. While many of the works cited herein are concerned with the "capitalist world" as a whole, the preponderant emphasis is on the United States, both in this paper and in most Soviet writing of this sort.

licts between them and the personality. It is from these very positions that juvenile delinquency in contemporary capitalist society is analyzed by Soviet scholars.²

There is a tendency in recent works to make use of the large quantities of information on crime rates provided by the F.B.I.'s *Uniform Crime Reports* for the United States, and by similar publications in other countries. Whatever the inaccuracies of crime reporting in these societies, the negative implications of the figures on growth of crime rates are readily accepted by Soviet writers.

From the growth of crime and delinquency, (as well as from the classic Marxian analysis) broad conclusions are drawn concerning the general "health" of American society. Twentieth-century "bourgeois" economists, who argue that the capitalism of the 1950's and 1960's is an immeasurably more humane system, extending its rewards to previously-excluded classes, are taken to task as "apologists" for the system.³ If, they are asked, capitalism has become so "humane," why does crime, especially property crime, show such persistence?⁴

Capitalist systems, then, stand condemned. At mid-twentieth century, they cast much the same reflection in the Soviet mirror as they did in the writings of Marx and Engels. Two aspects of capitalist society provide focal points for Soviet criticism: the economic system itself (the *base*) and "bourgeois culture" (a "superstructural" expression of the base).

The Soviet insistence on getting to the most "basic" causes of social phenomena, evident in criticisms of "superficial" bourgeois empirical sociology, is most emphatic when crime and delinquency are at issue. Capitalism, pictured as crisis-ridden, placing unbearable burdens on all but the most highly-placed, is the culprit. The system itself, which permits and indeed encourages the "exploitation of man by man," inevitably generates poverty, unemployment, and an ever-widening gap between the haves and have-nots. Crime and delinquency, flowing from the latter conditions, are in this view capitalism's "inevitable companions."

² E. MEL'NIKOVA, *PRESTUPNOST' NESOVERSHENNOLETNIKH V KAPITALISTICHESKIKH STRANAKH* (JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES) *chast' 1*, at 9 (1967) [MEL'NIKOVA].

³ Denisov & Guliev, *Prestupnost' v 'obshchestve vseobshchego blagodenstva'*, (*Crime in the Society of Universal Prosperity*), *SOVETSKOE GOSUDARSTVO I PRAVO* (SOVIET STATE AND LAW), No. 7, 1960, at 98.

⁴ *Id.* at 99-100.

The economic determinism underlying this position is striking. As will be seen, there is a refusal to grant that anything *but* capitalism itself is, in the last analysis, responsible for the crime problem (although intermediate causes, shaped by capitalism, are accorded some significance). But the same system which generates the poverty and unemployment which burden the lower classes corrupts as well the persons who profit from it. They, too, commit specifically criminal acts. The Soviet reader is told:

It would be incorrect, however, to consider that all criminals in capitalist countries were yesterday jobless, poor and vagrants, whom hopeless need forced to become thieves and robbers. A certain segment of criminals belongs to the well-to-do strata of the population. Not need, not lack of work, but deep moral degradation pushes the representatives of the ruling classes onto the criminal path. And this is one of the evidences of the decay of capitalist social structure.⁵

The deep, persistent rapacity of the "ruling classes" also gives rise to behavior whose legality, by capitalist standards, further demonstrates the corruption of the system to its Soviet critics.

The general view of American society still includes "robber barons," or their functional equivalents,—not free-booting entrepreneurs à la Jay Gould or J. P. Morgan, but the executives of large corporations, the controllers of the mass media, and other members of the contemporary ruling classes, including the important figures in organized crime. Still robbers, still plunderers, they have acquired respectability, and control over major national institutions. Thus, one Soviet writer, exploring the problems which vex young Americans, traces the cynicism, alienation and hopelessness of contemporary youth to their realization of the truly mythical quality of the "Horatio Alger"-type success story.⁶

The Depression provided the first incontrovertible proof of capitalism's weaknesses—it became less "believable" as a system which fostered individual economic success. Today, while "individualism" and the "acquisitive spirit" are instilled into children at early ages, the limits an exploitative capitalism places on their chances of

⁵ Ostroumov & Panchenko, *Prestupnost'—ten' kapitalizma*, (*Crime—the Shadow of Capitalism*), *KOMMUNIST*, No. 12, 1962, at 107 [Ostroumov].

⁶ See Mitrokhin, *Chto skovyvaet um molodogo amerikantsa* (*What Binds the Mind of the Young American*), *VOPROSY FILOSOFII* (PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY), No. 1, 1961, at 137-149 [Mitrokhin].

satisfying such desires become the source of great frustration and disaffection. The image of the individual helpless before the hierarchically organized society which surrounds him is even carried over to the "independent" criminal, whose lack of contact with organized crime limits him to petty and unprofitable incursions on the property of others.⁷

Thus, while the "more unstable" elements of the population, especially of the lower classes, commit crimes, the conditions which evoke criminal acting-out of this instability are laid directly at capitalism's door.

CULTURAL ASPECTS OF CAPITALISM

"Bourgeois" culture, as a target of Soviet criticism, means two things: first, the system of values propagated by the ruling classes through the various agencies of socialization which they control; and second, the content and style of the arts and the mass media.

The sphere of values of reflects what, in the Soviet view, are the corrupting effects of the economic relations of capitalism—"well-being, the joy of life, happiness—all are calculated in money."⁸ "Bourgeois" values, and the behavior patterns they encourage, are seen as destructive of human happiness.

A relatively subtle analysis, by Soviet standards, is that of the sociologist Zamoshkin, a frequent writer on contemporary American life. The basic values, or "norm-ends" (*normy-tseli*) of American culture, as he sees them, are crass individualism, personal enrichment, and success at any price. From such values, criminal and "non-criminal" behavior may follow with equal logic.

Thus, within the limits of bourgeois culture, amoral behavior and even crime turn out to be, in a certain sense, fully moral behavior, and morality naturally and logically turns into amorality and crime.⁹

The problem this situation presents, according to Zamoshkin, cannot be resolved within the sphere of values ("norm-ends") itself. He finds the operative boundary between amorality and morality in the "norm-limits" (*normy-ramki*)—the

⁷ Zamoshkin, *Problema amoralizma i prestupnosti v sovremennoi amerikanskoj sotsiologii*, (*The Problem of Amoralism and Crime in Contemporary American Sociology*), *VOPROSY FILOSOFII* (PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY), No. 7, 1963, at 35 (Zamoshkin).

⁸ MEL'NIKOVA at 97.

⁹ Zamoshkin at 29.

laws, rules and regulations which characterize the actual patterns of social organization and control in the United States. However, such limits, and the attempts to enforce them, are felt by the person who has fully internalized the "norm-ends" only as external, "foreign" limitations on his behavior. They in no way reflect his own ensemble of values, which contains no logical or moral limits on the sorts of behavior he may engage in in pursuit of wealth and status. Thus, Zamoshkin concludes, the capitalist state tries, in the interests of preserving its own order, to limit at least the choices of *means* people may make. But this effort is rendered unsuccessful because the values themselves, a much more powerful determinant of individual behavior than the laws, emphasize the *ends* almost exclusively, and leave the individual to choose his means on the basis of their instrumental effectiveness alone.

Zamoshkin thus has extended the Mertonian means-ends schema beyond its original scope to arrive at a picture of American society similar to the Hobbesian state of nature—the *bellum omnium contra omnes*. He connects this with capitalism, and though he acknowledges that he is discussing the same issue as Merton, criticizes the latter for "clouding" the question of why conflict exists between norm-ends and norm-limits in America. Accusing Merton of seeing it as "... some kind of 'universal' and 'eternal' conflict, supposedly typical for any developed society with a complex organization,"¹⁰ he declares Merton's analysis "false," since not *complexity*, but *capitalism*, is at the root of the conflict.

These "basic aspects" of bourgeois culture, while perhaps most clearly evident in the United States, are attributed to all the societies characterized as "capitalist."

Finally, the inevitable companions of bourgeois society—individualism, the moral isolation of the personality from society, the primacy of personal interests over the interests of society—likewise create fertile soil for the development of antisocial purposes.¹¹

The arts and the mass media both reflect the corrupt values of bourgeois life, and, by their assault on the consciousness, especially that of the youth population, also play a large role in communicating such values. The view of the

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ MEL'NIKOVA at 97-98.

whole cultural scene is one of a "conspiratorial" enterprise.

Bourgeois culture, propagated in the interests of the proprietors of the vast monopolies, is called upon to satisfy the most vile, the most primitive tastes. Literature, painting, music often are directed toward the stupefaction of people's consciousness, the deadening of the most humane feelings, to inducing [one] to seek out in life only fleeting enjoyments, the poisoning of the world-view by the venom of nationalism, chauvinism, and militarism. The culture of bourgeois society aids the ruling classes in socializing the growing generation in a spirit of worship before brute physical force, not halting at unbridled propaganda of violence and brutality.¹²

It is interesting to note that one recurrent theme in Soviet criticism of bourgeois culture is the emphasis on its duality—the existence of some "high-culture" achievements, greatly overwhelmed by the commercialized "mass" or "lower" culture consumed by those who are at the mercy of capitalist entrepreneurs.¹³ Presumably, recent years have given the Soviet citizen, either directly or vicariously, sufficient exposure to the "heights" (e.g., Van Cliburn and other touring concert artists) to necessitate a more complex description of bourgeois culture. Hence, a picture of crass exploitation and corruption *via* "mass culture" is constructed: American television is little more than a "bacchanalia of homicides," thrusting impressionable youth toward violent crime. While parents "agree" that such content is harmful to their children, "bourgeois" freedom of broadcasting renders them helpless to curb such influences.¹⁴ Simple connections are made: violence in the media, "crime comics" and the like, begets violence on the part of both adults and juveniles, but especially the latter. Exploitation of sexual themes in films and magazines increases immorality and leads to sex crimes. The emphasis is always on the cheap, the shoddy, the sensational.

Bourgeois culture tries with all its forces to palm off, on the most backward segment of youth, sensations instead of ideas and criminals in place of heroes. Is it possible, then, to be surprised at

¹² G. ALEKSANDROVICH & F. MAKHOV, *SKVOZ' ZAVESU LZHI (THROUGH A CURTAIN OF LIES)* 313 (1965).

¹³ See L. MITROKHIN, *AMERIKANSKIE MIRAZHI (AMERICAN MIRRAGES)* 194-95 (1965); MEL'NIKOVA at 102.

¹⁴ Mitrokhin at 144.

the moral degradation of young Englishmen and Americans?¹⁵

Sometimes, the portrait of exploitation of the consumer by those who profit from the "output" of culture approaches a *reductio ad absurdum*.

Concerning the sort of tastes this whole mass of entrepreneurs counts upon, it is possible to judge by this fact: in Chicago there is a whole street, on which are situated tattooing parlors. The advertisement reads: "Tattooing makes you manly."¹⁶

Other views on the impact of violence in the mass media are summarily rejected. One writer, commenting on an encounter with an American graduate student in psychology, finds absurd the latter's idea that television violence may allow the vicarious release of hostilities and aggression by the young, providing a safety valve for their tensions.¹⁷

It would be a mistake, however, to overemphasize the importance attributed to "culture" as a criminogenic factor in bourgeois society. Always, the derived, secondary nature of culture is asserted—culture is only a reflection of the system of economic relations (and values) subsumed under the general rubric "capitalism."

Among bourgeois criminologists there are even those who state that, for successful crime prevention, "radical" transformations are needed in American society. But upon examination it turns out that by these transformations they mean change in the culture of American society, and above all the replacement of such dominant "social values" as competition [and] chasing after profit with other, more noble "social values."

These criminologists do not understand, or more truthfully, do not want to understand, that it is impossible to change the notions of a society without a change of its economic structure, and so long as capitalism will exist, the dominant ideas, the "social values" will be ideas of gain, competition, the chase after profits and so forth.¹⁸

DOMESTIC PERSPECTIVES

This survey of Soviet views on crime and delinquency in capitalist society is not complete without some indication of how Soviet writers

¹⁵ MAKHOV at 106.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 107.

¹⁷ *AMERIKANSKIE MIRAZHI*, *supra* note 13, at 190.

¹⁸ F. RESHETNIKOV, *SOVREMENNAYA AMERIKANSKAYA KRIMINOLOGIA (CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CRIMINOLOGY)* 95 (1965) [RESHETNIKOV].

see the same phenomena in their own and other socialist societies. The significance they attribute to criminal and delinquent behavior in the two types of society is completely different. Crime is the "constant companion" of capitalism, something inevitable and rooted in the nature of the system. But, in a socialist society, though it is present, it represents something entirely different—a "survival of the (capitalist) past." "Alien" to the socialist present, it is an "inheritance" from the presocialist period.

What is typical of the capitalist world, where the principle of "dog eat dog" is in force, cannot be carried over to socialist society, which consists of friendly classes and is based on the principles of mutual aid, cooperation and mutual respect among people. . . .

Under socialism crime is not engendered by the social system itself. It "invades" socialism from exploitative socio-economic formations and in this sense can be regarded as a survival of the past in the minds and behavior of people.

The still-persisting views, customs and habits inherent in the ideology and mentality of an exploitative society lie at the root of the majority of antisocial phenomena. Hooligans, parasites, swindlers, thieves, bribetakers, speculators, and other violators of Soviet laws are vessels of a mentality and morality alien to us.¹⁹

The notion that antisocial behavior represents a survival of capitalistic influences derives from the Marxian thesis of the "lag" of human consciousness behind social change. While the establishment of socialism in the USSR has allegedly eradicated poverty, exploitation, unemployment and the other "capitalist" causes of crime, man's consciousness has not changed so rapidly. Even though most Soviet citizens never knew capitalism, the bourgeois world's propaganda and some operating difficulties in contemporary Soviet life provide "fertile soil" for the persistence of survivals. Working from these basic premises, Soviet criminologists assert that, while it is the capitalist system itself which is responsible for antisocial behavior in capitalist society, "socialism" in the USSR is blameless. Soviet empirical studies of crime on the domestic scene concentrate on middle-range factors, the "shortcomings" and "insuf-

¹⁹ *Antiobshchestvennye yavleniia, ikh prichiny i sredstva bor'by s nim*, (*Antisocial Phenomena, Their Causes and the Means of Combatting Them*), *Kommunist*, No. 12, 1966. (Translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, September 28, 1966, at 9).

iciencies" of the moment, which have "nothing to do" with socialism.²⁰

BOURGEOIS CRIMINOLOGY

Labelling a division of social science "bourgeois" is not so much, in Soviet writing, a statement of its national origins, as a rendering of a political and intellectual judgment.²¹ Bourgeois criminology is held to be "unscientific" on a number of counts.

Bourgeois jurists and criminologists, as one must expect, do not uncover the true causes of crime in general or of juvenile delinquency in particular. They say not a single word about the exploitation of the broad toiling masses, about their poverty, about the corrupting influence of decadent bourgeois culture on youth, of decadent moral and esthetic ideals. But these very causes lead inevitably to the growth of crime, particularly to the moral degradation of a large segment of youth, who constantly fill the army of criminals.²²

The amount of attention devoted to "biological" theories of criminality would lead an uninformed reader to believe that Lombrosianism was still a major theoretical orientation in "bourgeois" criminology. Nowhere is the Soviet response so vehement as in the rejection of such theories (which are, of course, unlikely to be defended strongly by any Western response). One author spends ten pages refuting Hooton, concluding that

Hooton's conception serves, on the one hand, as concealment of the genuine, basic causes of crime, which consist in the very fact of the existence of an exploitative social structure, and on the other, as a justification of the most savage measures of repression.²³

Later approaches, such as Sheldon's work on "somato types" and the Glueck's researches involving physique and delinquency, are criticized not only because of the fundamental error evident in their failure to treat crime as a social,

²⁰ For a discussion of the "deflection" of criminological criticism from the "basic" characteristics of Soviet society, see Walter D. Connor, *Deviance, Control, and Social Policy in the USSR*, 1968 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation in Princeton University Library).

²¹ Soviet critiques of "bourgeois" sociology provide an instructive example. See, e.g., GEORGE FISCHER, *SCIENCE AND POLITICS: THE NEW SOCIOLOGY IN THE SOVIET UNION* ch. 1 (1964); Kassof, *American Sociology Through Soviet Eyes*, *AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW* 114-21 (1965); Hollander, *The Dilemmas of Soviet Sociology*, *14 PROBLEMS OF COMMUNISM* 37-38 (1965).

²² Ostroumov at 106.

²³ RESHETNIKOV at 108.

rather than biological phenomenon, but also because, contrary to Pavlov, they assign to the physical constitution itself, rather than to the central nervous system, the role of "mediator" in the process whereby the outside environment influences the formation of the personality.²⁴

"Freudian" criminologists in the bourgeois world (Abrahamsen and others) are also found seriously wanting when held up to the measuring rod of Pavlovian psychology. They devote insufficient attention to the central nervous system, and radically overestimate the importance of "unconscious instincts." Indeed "Freudism" is seen as a direct challenge to the notion that existence determines consciousness, and that it is man's *consciousness* (and not his unconscious) which guides his activity. Freudian criminologists are accused of viewing social life as a "mechanical sum" of individual behavior, and ignoring the decisive "mover" of history—the class struggle.²⁵

"Endocrine theories" of criminality are viewed as a variant of contemporary "Lombrosianism." Failing to take account of the "governing role" of the central nervous system in controlling glandular secretions, they are found inadequate in much the same way as Hooton's and Sheldon's approaches—only they are more "pseudoscientific, and therefore more dangerous."²⁶

Of course, in dismissing many of the formulations just discussed, Soviet writers are joining many Western criminologists who reject biological or physiological explanations of anti-social behavior. While they admit that "bourgeois" scholars have criticized these theories, they view many of the criticisms as "inadequate," basically because, in the Soviet view, the criticisms themselves are not squarely aimed at the central point—that crime is a *social*, rather than biological or purely psychological, phenomenon.²⁷

This insistence that crime be treated, in effect, as a purely social phenomenon is readily understandable in terms of the ideological underpinnings of Soviet social science, as well as the insufficiencies of the theories themselves. In the Soviet view, man is elastic; "human nature" can be transformed. This belief is essential to the whole idea of the creation of the "new Soviet man" through social change, and to the position that individual criminals can be wholly "rehabilitated" by social

means, until changes in society have completely extirpated the social causes which make men criminals. Views which counterpose biological or relatively inaccessible psychological "causes" of antisocial behavior endanger this belief, and are thus rejected.

Less clear is any "scientific" basis for the consistent refusal to turn a sympathetic ear to Western theories which cite the consequences of urbanization and industrialization as influencing the growth of antisocial and criminal behavior. The point at issue here is the allegedly improper generalization of Western writers that *all* urbanization and industrialization, "capitalist" and "socialist," has the potential for increasing rates of antisocial behavior.

Urbanization as a "factor" in criminal behavior came, writes one Soviet critic, into American criminology from American sociology, where the concept developed on the basis of the thought of Sorokin and the "reactionary" Durkheim.²⁸ American criminologists, in his view, conceive of urbanization as "a purely technical process of the growth of cities, lacking any class content, [which leads] to the underlining of cultural, even emotional aspects to the detriment of economic, social problems, linked with the sharpening of capitalist contradictions in large cities."²⁹ For Soviet writers, urbanization is not a "purely technical" process, but one whose results and significance differ in accordance with whether it is "capitalist" or "socialist." It is the "anarchic" and unregulated growth of cities which makes capitalist urbanization a problem, which creates slums, poor working conditions, and gives a "push" to antisocial tendencies. "Socialist" urbanization, as a planned and regulated process, avoids these consequences.

Social disorganization, viewed broadly as a consequence of rapid socio-economic transformation, would seem as likely to characterize the USSR (due to the extraordinary rapidity of its urbanization and industrialization) as the advanced nations of the West. Soviet writers recognize no such likelihood.

Bourgeois sociologists and criminologists do not simply admit the fact of the ravaging of the social structure of society in the bourgeois state (where it is, in itself, true) but also extend the thesis of "social disorganization" to all mankind,

²⁴ *Id.* at 116-117.

²⁵ *Id.* at 144.

²⁶ *Id.* at 123.

²⁷ *Id.* at 107.

²⁸ *Id.* at 48.

²⁹ *Id.*

including even socialist society (where it is not true).³⁰

Industrialization is treated in much the same way. Under socialism, all conditions are present to make it an orderly, beneficial and progressive process. Quite the reverse is the case under capitalism.

Industrialization brings about changes in the lives of people, but in socialist society it is a positive social factor. The possibility of planned regulation of the phenomena accompanying industrialization, such as urbanization, and migration of population, makes it possible to neutralize the effect on people's life of possibly negative factors, linked with urbanization and migration (changes in the habitual life surroundings, displacement of large masses of the population, over-population, etc.).

A different situation arises in capitalist society. In it, in connection with the impossibility of planning production, and, correspondingly, regulating the process of urban growth, mobility of population, etc., unfavorable changes in the social conditions of the life of the population are created. It is precisely this, and not at all economic progress itself, that can create conditions, facilitating the growth of crime among youth.³¹

The central complaint, then, is that bourgeois criminologists treat industrialization as a process with its own implications, its own ramifications—which will be similar whether the process is carried out under the aegis of capitalism or socialism. Such a notion is related to the “convergence” hypothesis—that of the growing similarity of Soviet and Western industrial societies. This hypothesis, predictably, is received with hostility among Soviet ideologists, who see in it a diminution of the relevance of “economic structure”—the differing capitalist and socialist modes of production.

Insistence on the “positive” significance of socialist industrialization leads Soviet writers, in dealing with such social phenomena as juvenile delinquency in their own country, to place the blame not on processes of social change, but on the failure of certain youths to “acclimate” themselves to the positive changes which have been wrought.

³⁰ Mel'nikova, *Burzhuaznaia kriminologiya o vlianii ekonomicheskogo progressa na prestupnost molodezhi*, (*Bourgeois Criminology on the Influence of Economic Progress on Juvenile Delinquency*), SOVETSKOE GOSUDARSTVO I PRAVO (SOVIET STATE AND LAW), No. 5, 1967, at 142.

³¹ MEL'NIKOVA at 145.

Significant is the fact that crimes are generally committed by those juveniles who are just not “concerned” with the successes of economic development, who possess low spiritual and cultural interests, are indifferent to technology, and who are not interested by the new achievements of science. They are people “lagging behind” their own generation and the contemporary level of society's development.³²

The Soviet stand represented here goes beyond some other “socialist” positions on evaluating and interpreting the ramifications of industrialization and urbanization. Most notably, Polish sociologists in recent years have confronted, in a relatively straightforward manner, the implications of their country's industrialization experience. In discussing increases in delinquency in the industrial city of Konin, one Polish scholar refers to such factors as “rapid industrialization and urbanization, economic reorganization in the countryside, migration (displacement) of the population caused by the war and postwar period, and by the industrial development of the country,” which shattered social relations and led to the growth of antisocial behavior.³³

Such a position, which comes close to many “Western” views, meets a cool reception from Soviet writers, who criticize another Polish colleague who sees changes in the “economic environment” (industrial noise, air and water pollution) as having a negative effect on youthful “nervous systems” and precipitating antisocial behavior. “Such an explanation,” they write, “. . . ignores, in its essence, the positive ecological significance of industrialization (the improvement of housing and sanitary conditions) and does not take into account the possibility, given the proper intervention of state and society, of successfully eliminating undesirable changes in the physical conditions of life.”³⁴

A final element of the rejection of industrialization as a factor in the causation of antisocial behavior in socialist society is the attribution of a conspiratorial intent to bourgeois criminologists.

The very statement and study of the question of dependence between industrialization and

³² Kudriavtsev & Mel'nikova, *Prestupnost' nesovershennoletnikh i ekonomicheskoe sostoianie sovremennoi Evropy*, (*Juvenile Delinquency and the Economic Condition of Contemporary Europe*), SOVETSKOE GOSUDARSTVO I PRAVO (SOVIET STATE AND LAW), No. 3, 1965, at 119.

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ *Id.* at 121.

juvenile delinquency in developing countries plays a special role in bourgeois criminology. In many works an obvious warning is sounded against rapid economic development in such countries, [against] rapid advance of an extremely backward economy, the growth of large economic complexes, fortified by reference to those "expenses" with regard to juvenile delinquency, which allegedly inevitably accompany this process. Such an appraisal of the effects of economic progress in developing countries is already directly aimed against the economic development of those countries, and consequently, also against their liberation from their former mother countries.³⁵

What of the critiques of contemporary capitalist society and culture, which in effect "blame" deviance on "inherent qualities" of the general culture, which produce, as Taft expresses it, "the criminals we deserve?"³⁶ In the very generality of the "flaws" they discuss, one might assume they would find some favor with Soviet writers. However, the persistent dichotomy between base and superstructure enters again here. Taft, Kvaraceus and others who take such a view are criticized because despite the "seeming radicalness" of their approaches, they have transferred blame from the exploitative system of capitalist economic relations to the culture, which is its product.³⁷ Cultural, rather than fundamental economic change, is their implied program. It is held to be "characteristic" of American "bourgeois" criminology to look only at "surface" factors and not analyze the deeper (i.e., economic) causes of crime.³⁸

With regard to class, Soviet writers have no difficulty in accepting bourgeois statistics which show the lower classes to be most deviance-prone; noting the heavy concentration of police attention on these segments of society, they also see confirmation of their image of exploitative capitalism in those "unstable" members of the working class who "... express their dissatisfaction with economic and political conditions in homicides, violence and other forms of showing disrespect for social order."³⁹ However, claims that there are specifically deviance-prone elements in "lower-class culture," or that a "delinquent subculture," rather than economic and political oppression, is at the root of much antisocial behavior, are re-

jected. Cohen's views, as expressed in *Delinquent Boys*, are condemned as a "slander" on the working class, which is seen, in general, as the most "morally healthy" segment of the American population.⁴⁰

Soviet writers duly recognize that bourgeois criminology has taken up the issues of "white-collar" crime, and the growth of delinquency among middle-class youth. While they consider it all to the good that Western criminologists have come to notice the considerable legal violations perpetuated in the course of business by those who are "pillars of society," they nevertheless judge the attention given the latter to be inadequate—because it only takes account of the actions they commit which are considered to be offenses against bourgeois law.

Sutherland considers as criminal only that activity of the representatives of the "upper" classes, which breaks the laws of bourgeois society. Meanwhile, the capitalist system itself is criminal, built on the "law" of the exploitation of man by man.⁴¹

Since bourgeois criminologists have their social origins in the "ruling" classes, broadly conceived, and since they are held to serve the interests of those classes, their concern with delinquency among the relatively affluent sectors of the youth population also comes under suspicion. Far from being concerned with "unmasking" the moral corruption which pervades the upper classes, they see in middle-class delinquency a threat to the interests they serve.

Their own crime, the crime of children from their own class, troubles the representatives of the bourgeois, be they state officials or scholars. When the matter is one of crimes of children from the slums, from hovels, there is no subject of true class concern. Moreover, there they use varied means for concealing the causes of crime. But when "their own criminals" are concerned, there is no concealment. It is obvious that the activity of the bourgeois state in crime prevention, including [prevention of] youths' crimes, is explained most of all by the desire to protect its own class from it, its own class interests (property, the family, etc.).⁴²

Does the *existence* of middle-class delinquency pose any problems for the "class-based" Soviet view of criminogenic qualities in capitalist society?

³⁵ *Supra* note 30, at 143–144.

³⁶ D. TAFT, *CRIMINOLOGY* 342 (3rd ed. 1956).

³⁷ RESHETNIKOV at 73.

³⁸ *Id.* at 75–76.

³⁹ *Id.* at 84.

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 82–83.

⁴¹ *Id.* at 88.

⁴² MEL'NIKOVA at 136–137.

Apparently not, since Marxism-Leninism teaches that in capitalist society every social problem carries a clearly expressed class character. The fact of ever-wider penetration of juvenile delinquency into families with middle and high incomes testifies not to the dissolution of class differences, but to the demoralization of youth from a number of the most well-to-do strata of the population.⁴³

On balance, the Soviet reaction to the various theoretical perspectives of "bourgeois" criminology is overwhelmingly negative. While criminology in the West is undeniably in need of further theoretical and methodological development, it is not its clear scientific insufficiencies to which Soviet critics direct the volume of their attention, but rather, the intentions of criminologists themselves, and the general assumptions underlying their researches. The critics themselves, however, work from a number of assumptions which they leave unexamined.

Bourgeois criminologists are seen as working at the orders of, and in the interests of, "ruling classes" whose main concern lies in the preservation of their own power and material advantages. Such "employees" are incapable of drawing the conclusion which seems so evident to Soviet writers—that capitalism itself lies at the root of antisocial behavior in bourgeois society. Having a "stake" in things as they are, criminologists themselves "fear even to think" of an alternative system to replace capitalism. Thus, it is in their interests and that of their "bosses" to mask the true causes of crime and delinquency, and instead to draw attention to "surface" factors, which are not at the root of the problem but are in fact caused, as is crime, by the economic system itself.

Aside from imputations of a conscious lack of objectivity, the work of Western criminologists is, in the Soviet view, flawed because "correct" analysis of such social phenomena is possible *only* from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism. Lacking this perspective, bourgeois criminology presents a confusing multiplicity of theories, some of which see crime as a partially biologically or psychologically determined phenomenon, whereas in its essence it is *social*. (With this, most contemporary American criminologists would be unlikely to take issue. However, the Soviet rejection of much social-psychological thought leaves Soviet criminology without anything like an adequate model of the criminal actor.) But even

sociological criminologists are scored for the "superficiality" of their analyses—their tendency to view phenomena through "the prism of culture," rather than from the standpoint of economic structure,⁴⁴ their one-sided treatment of antisocial behavior which ignores the central "class" element and the "contradictions" in capitalist society,⁴⁵ and their failure, even when giving "correct" analyses of particular social causes, to demonstrate how they are interconnected with one another and with the capitalist "base" itself.⁴⁶

FUNCTIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

Such is the picture of crime and delinquency in capitalist society, and of "bourgeois" criminologists' attempts to explain them, as it is presented to the Soviet reader. Obviously, there is no question of leaving him to form his own judgments—the picture is a monotonous one, a long succession of negative judgments provided for his consumption. One may, then, ask: Why are the negative judgments, both on the social conditions which "inevitably" produce crime, and on "bourgeois" criminology itself, so universal?

The answer depends upon the functions and significance the Soviet writing discussed here has; both in fact, and in the intentions of its writers and sponsors. This article will conclude with some suggestions about the purposes and impact of such critiques.

The purpose of Soviet mass-circulation, "popular" writing on crime and delinquency under capitalism seems quite clear—the propagation and dissemination of "lessons" the regime wants the masses to learn. The picture of poverty, exploitation, hunger and unemployment is one of the ways through which those responsible for the maintenance of ideological watchfulness in the USSR seek to create mass aversion toward the capitalist West and the seductions of "bourgeois" propaganda. In determining whether such crude formulations are likely to be effective, it is well to remember that though Soviet citizens are not quite so isolated or naive concerning the outside world as they once were, their opportunities for independent verification of these negative projections of life in the United States and other "bourgeois" countries are still severely limited. Their vision of this world is largely dependent on those

⁴⁴ RESHETNIKOV at 77.

⁴⁵ MEL'NIKOVA at 8-9.

⁴⁶ MAKHOV at 87-88.

⁴³ MAKHOV at 65.

facts about the West which pass through the Soviet "filtering" process. The filtering is such that the American "travelogues" published by many Soviet writers and journalists after trips in the United States (which appear to have a large readership) concentrate great volumes of attention on "crime in the streets" and other aspects of the dark side of American life.⁴⁷

The assertion of the "natural and inevitable" character, under capitalism, of antisocial behavior, which remains in socialist society only as a "survival," may be seen as an effort to persuade readers of the fundamental superiority of socialism as a type of social order. Persistent Soviet condemnations of the "convergence" hypothesis⁴⁸ indicate that ideologists fear the growth of an emphasis on common characteristics of industrial societies, seeing it as a means to "mask" the differences between socialism and capitalism. Any popularization of the "convergence" thesis is regarded as a challenge to the vigilant, uncompromising attitude of disdain with which the Soviet citizen should view the "bourgeois" world. It is fought, as we have seen here, by "exposing" life in the West as a consistent pattern of cruelty, injustice and exploitation.

The view of the American working classes presents some problems of interpretation. They are pictured as poor, oppressed, suffering from monumental injustice, committing crimes in large numbers through their desperation. Yet despite this grim portrait, those sociologists who discover a lower-class "culture" and try to relate it to such offenses are denounced as slanderers, and the toilers themselves are held up as the most "morally healthy" group in bourgeois society. These portrayals may be little more than reflex actions

⁴⁷ A notable case in point is that of the Soviet novelist Viktor Nekrasov's travelogue, *Both Sides of the Ocean* (1964), which was sharply attacked after its Soviet publication (see *Izvestiia*, Jan. 20, 1963) for such shortcomings as "bourgeois objectivism" and superficiality. Nekrasov, who had not produced his travelogue according to the typical Soviet model, gave little attention to such evidences of "disorganization" and "corruption" under capitalism as crime and delinquency. The accusations may serve to demonstrate what the regime expects of authors in this area. Aleksandrovich and Makhov's *Skvoz' zavesu lzhi*, *supra* note 12, is much closer to the standard "formula."

⁴⁸ See e.g., I. ZAMOSHKIN, *Teoriia 'edinogo industrial'nogo obshchestva' na sluzhbe antikommunizmu* (*The Theory of a Single Industrial Society in the Service of Anticommunism*), in AKADEMIIA NAUK SSSR, INSTITUT FILOSOPII, MARKSISTSKAIA I BURZHUAZNAIA SOTSIOLOGIIA SEGODNIA (MARXIST AND BOURGEOIS SOCIOLOGY TODAY) (Moscow 1964).

on the part of writers long engaged in producing such material. Or, they may be an attempt to present a "positive" picture of long-term prospects to the Soviet mass readership—a picture of American workers as potentially responsive to socialism, envying (yet friendly to) their Soviet "brothers", and so forth. Such beliefs would, if generated, be in line with the optimism about long-term issues of the balance of world power which the regime seeks to create among the masses.

Two points, however, should be emphasized here. First, more scholarly writings on American life from Soviet sources show greater realism, viewing the proletariat as effectively "seduced" by the bourgeoisie, and not at all so "progressive" in political consciousness as they might be. The picture is not, thus, distorted in every area of Soviet writing. Secondly, impressionistic evidence leads one to believe that Soviet urban workers, at least, are aware of the relative affluence of their American blue-collar counterparts, envy *their* living standards if not all aspects of the society they inhabit, and hardly look to them as a revolutionary proletariat of the future.

All in all, the impact of such material on the Soviet reading public is difficult to gauge. High rates of crime and delinquency are a reality in the West, especially in the United States. They are undoubtedly accepted as such by the Soviet citizen. Whether, on the other hand, he draws from these realities general conclusions relating to social disorganization and massive discontent, as the regime appears to desire, is not so clear. The capitalism-socialism dichotomy, as it relates to the "inevitable" or "accidental" status of crime, is probably a bit too theoretical to play any large role in most readers' conclusions. Writers' statements about the effects of televised violence and immorality on youth may be more readily accepted. Operating under what is regarded as the "hypocritical" principle of "freedom of expression," American media may seem to the Soviet reader to exemplify the problem of a society which, while it grants more "freedoms" than his own, grants them to the wrong people and ideas. At the very least, popular acceptance of this idea is likely to be far more widespread than beliefs that poverty and oppression are the general lot of American workers.

Writings on Western criminology such as those reviewed here may have a much less obvious