

# THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CRIME

READINGS FOR A CRITICAL CRIMINOLOGY

BRIAN D. MACLEAN

# THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CRIME

READINGS FOR A CRITICAL CRIMINOLOGY

Edited by

**BRIAN D. MacLEAN**

*Department of Sociology  
University of Saskatchewan*

Prentice-Hall Canada, Inc., Scarborough, Ontario

*To all those persons  
less fortunate than myself  
who have met their  
deaths in prison*

**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Main entry under title:

The Political economy of crime

Includes bibliographies and index.

ISBN 0-13-684283-6

1. Criminal justice, Administration of — Political aspects — Addresses, essays, lectures. 2. Criminal justice, Administration of — Canada — Political aspects — Addresses, essays, lectures. 3. Crime and criminals — Political aspects — Addresses, essays, lectures. 4. Crime and criminals — Political aspects — Canada — Addresses, essays, lectures. I. MacLean, Brian D. (Brian Douglas), 1950 —

HV7405.P64 1986 364 C85-099096-3

© 1986 Prentice-Hall Canada Inc.  
Scarborough, Ontario

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this book may be reprinted in any form without permission in writing from the publisher.

Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey  
Prentice-Hall International, Inc., London  
Prentice-Hall of Australia, Pty., Ltd., Sydney  
Prentice-Hall of India, Pvt., Ltd., New Delhi  
Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., Tokyo  
Prentice-Hall of Southeast Asia (Pte.) Ltd., Singapore  
Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil Ltda., Rio de Janeiro  
Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A., Mexico

ISBN 0-13-684283-6

Production Editor: David Jolliffe  
Designer: Steven Boyle  
Manufacturing Buyer: Sheldon Fischer  
Typesetting by Algotext Inc.

1 2 3 4 5 AG 90 89 88 87 86

Printed and bound in Canada by Alger Press.

---

Sources are listed at the back of the book and constitute an extension of the copyright page. Every reasonable effort has been made to find copyright holders. The publishers would be pleased to have any errors or omissions brought to their attention.

---

# ***Foreword***

Anyone vaguely familiar with the discipline of sociology is aware of the theoretical diversity which characterizes the field. Within each of the numerous subdisciplines this theoretical antagonism is apparent as proponents of the various schools of thought seek sovereignty over the interpretations of observed social reality. In general terms, the most severe theoretical demarcations are drawn between various Marxist schools of thought and a host of non-Marxist theories. Since the sixties, Marxist-inspired social analysis has made substantial headway in establishing theoretical points of departure within the social sciences. Traditional sociologists, however, continue to demand greater levels of theoretical verifications from Marxist scholars than from their own schools of thought. Yet this methodological rubber ruler has begun to diminish in use as Marxist social analysis has gone from the defensive to the offensive in an increasing number of areas of study.

One of these — criminology — has shown far more resistance and intolerance to the employment of the critical approach encouraged by Marxist theoretical assumptions. This area continues to be dominated by scholars who, through an unfamiliarity with the richness and diversity of Marxist analytical forms, perpetuate the notion that such criminologists are a homogeneous group of theoretically confused scholars engaged in the extreme over-simplification of issues and problems.

A broad range of issues which only a nuanced Marxist approach can address is absent from most standard introductory textbooks. When the Marxist approach is referred to it most often is in the form of two paragraphs at the end of each chapter. Yet students and researchers alike would benefit greatly from a better understanding of the historical and structural analysis of crime pursued by Marxist scholars. Rooted in an appreciation of the relationship between political economy and general social development, these analyses tend to perceive crime as a process rather than an event — a process which is closely related to the more general process of social development or underdevelopment. This more holistic approach delves into what C.W. Mills referred to as the connection between “public issues

and personal problems.’’ An adequate understanding of these relationships in the area of crime will go far to providing a more informed basis for the development of social policy in this domain. The dismal failure of most efforts to deal with the ‘‘crime issue’’ reflects both the inadequacy of traditional theoretical analysis and the urgent need for a better, holistic analysis and corresponding social praxis.

These readings are valuable contributions in this direction. Of interest to both students and advanced scholars, they will help fill a vacuum in Canadian criminological literature. By pointing out the conceptual shortcomings of traditional criminological theory and offering a more critical alternative, they will contribute to the awakening of critical analytical faculties. The writers are from a number of reputable Marxist disciplines. The fact that experiences are drawn from different countries offers a degree of comparative analysis invaluable to an appreciation of the crime process. The articles have been selected to offer the students a multi-dimensional analysis of the issues. This reader will go far in dispelling the myth that critical criminology is simplistic and theoretically shallow. It will illuminate the conceptual and theoretical poverty of traditional theories.

John Fry  
Stockholm  
1986

# *Preface*

My transformation from the object to the subject of criminological inquiry was sometimes painful and always indirect, but may be seen to underlie the gestation of this book. It was not until I began teaching undergraduates, however, that I fully realized the difficulty of making the increasing body of progressive criminological literature available to students, in a form which was readily intelligible to them. Alternatives to correctionalism were presented either in a too advanced manner or within idealistic and deterministic frameworks. They showed the need for a book along the critical lines of the following pages.

The emergence of the new right and the law and order lobby has had many curious effects in criminological circles. Some criminologists have returned to the philosophy of right; some have retreated from debate altogether; on some the effect has been retrograde; yet others have taken to writing preambles to their textbooks which are becoming increasingly more interesting than the contents. Although patiently observing the decline of Reaganism and Thatcherism I could hardly be accused to be one of those who have moved to conservatism; nevertheless, I hope that *The Political Economy of Crime* does not fall into one of the other emerging trends and that the articles not the preface generate discussion among readers.

Bringing this book to light was a long and difficult task in which many people shared indirectly as well as directly and to whom I should like to express my appreciation. A number of people provided me with friendship and assistance in dealing with the obstacles and setbacks which predated my serious academic efforts. While too numerous to mention all of them here, there are some who cannot remain unmentioned. Linda Wilcox and Linda Zbitnew were two loyal friends, and Penny and P.J. Fitch were with me every step of the way through my personal crises, as was John Fry whom I have come to accept as my mentor. Ed Anderson was also generous in his time and efforts to assist me in time of difficulty.

I should like also to thank Richard Noble, David Dyzenhaus, Robert Fincham, Karim Murgi, five anonymous reviewers and, especially, Dawn Currie for their

critical comments and helpful suggestions for improving various sections of the manuscript as it took shape. The University of Saskatchewan, too, provided assistance in a number of areas. The Department of Graduate Studies and Research made monies available from the President's Publication Fund to assist in the preparation of the manuscript. Professor Bolaria, Chair of the Department of Sociology, was as always generous with his time and in his support of the project. At Prentice-Hall many thanks go to Terry Woo, Elynor Kagan, and David Jolliffe, my production editor whose kind comments and professional approach made this book a reality. Cathy Tunnicliffe and Helen Abbott typed the manuscript quickly and efficiently, allowing me to meet my deadlines, while Herb Wiesenberg ensured that the manuscript was delivered promptly.

My warmest appreciation goes to Dawn whose patience and assistance at all stages of the project allowed for its completion.

Finally, I should like to express my gratitude to each of the contributors without whom this book would not be possible. From them I have learned much.

Brian MacLean  
London  
1986

# Notes on Contributors

**Davinder Pal Singh Ahluwalia** pursued his Ph.D. at Flinders University of South Australia. He has researched political succession in Kenya and has a special interest in Kenyan politics.

**B. Singh Bolaria** received his B.A. from Punjab University, his M.A. from Kansas State University, and his Ph.D. from Washington State University. Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan, Professor Bolaria has published numerous articles on race relations and migrant labour. He also is interested in the study of health care.

**M.G. Collison**, who has a B.Sc. from the University of London and a Ph.D. from Sheffield University, is a lecturer in Criminology at the University of Keele. Among his research interests are politics and after-care for ex-prisoners, and the politics of punishment. His publications include *Radical Issues in Criminology* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1980) which he co-edited with Pat Carlen.

**Mark Colvin** attended North Texas University for his B.A. and M.A.. His publications include "The 1980 New Mexico Prison Riot," *Social Problems* 29, No. 5 (June 1982), and "Contradictions of Control: Prisons in Class Society," *The Insurgent Sociologist* 10, No. 4-11, No. 1 (1981), a combined special issue on Radical Criminology. He is currently a graduate instructor at the University of Colorado.

**Claire Culhane**, born in 1918, has an impressive and lengthy history of participation in political issues. She almost succeeded in adopting the famous Rosenbergs' children after their parents were executed, and was the administrator of a Canadian hospital in South Vietnam where she was able to secure enough information about Canada's involvement in Vietnam to testify at three international conferences. She has numerous publications on this subject, including *Why is Canada in Vietnam: The Truth about our Foreign Aid* (Toronto: NC Press, 1982). She is a member of the Prisoners' Rights Group (PRG) in British Columbia where her interests in Prisoner Support led to her publication of *Barred From Prison: A Personal Account* (Vancouver: Pulp Press, 1979), which has been republished as *Still Barred From Prison: Social Injustice in Canada* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1985).

**Dawn Currie** received her B.A. and M.A. in Sociology from the University of Saskatchewan where she has also been a lecturer. She has been actively involved in research on women and has presented a number of papers at professional conferences, and been a lecturer in feminist theory at Middlesex Polytechnic. Dawn Currie has also done postgraduate research into the family and into the history of women in society at the London School of Economics.

**Bob Fine** has a degree in Sociology from the University of Oxford and has taught at the City University of New York. His many publications include "Law and Class" in *Capitalism and The Rule of Law* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), which he co-edited; "Law, Order and Police Powers" in D. Coates and G. Johnston's collection, *Socialist Arguments* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983); *Democracy and The Rule of Law* (London: Pluto, 1984); and *Policing the Miners' Strike* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985), which he edited with Robert Millar. Presently a lecturer at Warwick University, Bob Fine has research interests in South Africa and the capitalist state.

**Colin H. Goff** took his B.A. at Eastern Washington University, his M.A. at the University of Calgary, and his Ph.D. at the University of California, Irvine. Interested in the study of corporate and white-collar crime, he has co-authored, with Charles Reasons, *Corporate Crime in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1978). He has been a visiting professor at Simon Fraser University.

**Jeanne Gregory** obtained her B.A. and M.Sc. in Sociology from London University, and her Ph.D. from the London School of Economics. Her publications include "Discrimination, Work and the Law" in Bob Fine et al. (eds.), *Capitalism and the Rule of Law* (London: Hutchinson, 1979) and "Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination: Why Women are Giving up the Fight," *Feminist Review*, No. 10 (Spring 1982). Currently senior lecturer in sociology at Middlesex Polytechnic, she has research interests in feminist criminology and anti-discrimination legislation.

**Sidney L. Harring** is an associate professor at the City University of New York Law School. Having a special interest in the sociology of the law and legal history, he has written, among other articles, "Policing a Class Society," which appears in David F. Greenberg (ed.), *Crime and Capitalism* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing, 1981).

**Frank Henry**, who earned his Ph.D. at the Catholic University of America, is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology at McMaster University, and his research interests include multivariate analysis and corporate crime. Among his publications are "Multivariate Analysis and Original Data," *American Sociological Review* (April 1982) and "Capitalist Motivations," *Canadian Dimension* (July/August 1982).

**John Lea** holds an M. Sc. from the London School of Economics. He has written numerous articles on crime and the police, and co-authored with Jock Young *What is to be done about Law and Order* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984). A senior lecturer in Sociology at Middlesex Polytechnic, he has conducted research into race relations, police and social policy.

**Leif Lenke** has a law degree from the University of Stockholm where he works as an assistant researcher in the Department of Criminology. His research interests include criminal violence and policy as well as drug and alcohol research, areas in which he has a number of articles published.

**Brian D. MacLean** earned his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Saskatchewan. He has published "Contradictions in Canadian Prisons: Some Aspects of Social Control Mechanisms" in T. Fleming and L. Visano (eds.), *Deviant Designations: Crime, Law and Deviance in Canada* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1983). Brian MacLean has also done postgraduate work at the London School of Economics, lectured at Middlesex Polytechnic, and been Senior Research Officer for the London Borough of Islington on Crime and Policing. Presently he is an assistant professor

at the University of Saskatchewan. His research interests include classical political economy, the politics of policing in contemporary Britain, and victimization.

**Richard Quinney**, since receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, has served on the faculty of a number of American universities and has made extensive contributions to the field of critical criminology over the last decades. He has published numerous books and articles, among them *The Social Reality of Crime* (New York: Little Brown, 1970); *Critique of Legal Order* (Boston: Little Brown, 1974); *Providence: the Development of Social and Moral Order* (New York: Longmans, 1980); *Criminology* (Boston: Little Brown, 1979, 1975, 1970); *Social Existence: Metaphysics, Marxism and the Social Sciences* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982). Currently professor of Sociology at Northern Illinois University, Dr. Quinney has special interests in criminology and the philosophy of the social sciences.

**R.S. Ratner** holds a B.A. from Columbia University (N.Y.C.) and a Ph.D. from Yale University. Among his many publications are "Social Control and the Rise of the 'Exceptional State' in Great Britain, the United States and Canada," *Crime and Social Justice*, No. 19 (Summer 1983); "Marxism and the Study of Crime," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 17, No. 2; and "Radical versus Technocratic Analyses in the Study of Crime," *Canadian Journal of Criminology* 24, No. 12, all of which were co-authored with John McMullen. An assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Ratner has done research in the areas of criminology, the sociology of deviance, and the sociology of the state.

**Charles E. Reasons** completed his B.A. at Central Washington University, his M.A. at Ohio University, and his Ph.D. at Washington State University. He has made numerous contributions to Sociology, having written many articles and books in a number of areas. His publications include *Assault on the Worker* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1981) which he co-authored with Lois Ross and Craig Paterson, and *Corporate Crime in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1978) which he co-authored with Colin Goff. A professor of Sociology at the University of Calgary, he has conducted research into both the sociology of law and organizational crime.

**Julia R. Schwendinger** has been an assistant professor of Criminal Justice at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and is now an adjunct assistant professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at New Paltz. She received her doctorate in criminology from the University of California, Berkeley and her Masters in social work from Columbia University. In the San Francisco's Sheriff Department she was a Deputy Parole Commissioner and the Director of the Women's Resource Program. She was also a founder of Bay Area Women Against Rape in Berkeley (BAWAR), the first rape crisis centre in the world.

**Herman Schwendinger** is an associate professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at New Paltz. He received his doctorate in sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles and a Masters degree in social work at Columbia University. He previously taught at the School of Criminology, University of California, Berkeley.

Together Julia and Herman Schwendinger were founders of the journal *Crime and Social Justice*. They also co-authored *The Sociologists of the Chair* (1974) and have published widely in journals of criminology and sociology and in anthologies in the United States and England. They are on the editorial advisory boards of such journals as *Crime and Social Justice* and the *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*.

**Jeffrey S. Steeves** received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Toronto and has numerous publications, including "Class Analysis and Rural Africa: the Kenyan Tea Development Authority," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 16, No. 1 (March 1978) and "Current Developments in the Solomon Islands: First Elections after Independence," *Journal of Pacific History* 16, No. 4 (October 1981), which he co-authored. He is the head of the Department of Economics and Political Science at the University of Saskatchewan, where he is involved in a research study on decentralization in the South Pacific.

**Richard W. Thatcher** is the Research Coordinator at the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research. He has a M.A. from the University of Saskatchewan and Ph.D. from the University of Alberta. His publications include "The Political Economy of Canada's War on Poverty" which appears in John Fry (ed.), *Contradictions in Canadian Society* (Toronto: John Wiley, 1984).

**Terry Wotherspoon** completed his B.A., B.Ed. and M.A. degrees at the University Saskatchewan where he has lectured in the Department of Sociology. He has recently begun doctoral studies at the University of British Columbia. His most recent publication, "Ideals and Sausage Factories: Schools in Capitalist Society," appears in *Contradictions in Canadian Society* edited by John Fry. His research interests include the sociology of education and Canadian Native Studies.

**Jock Young** obtained his B.Sc., M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees from the London School of Economics. A founding member of the National Deviancy Conference, he has written numerous articles and published several books. His contributions to the field of criminology include *The New Criminology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) and *Critical Criminology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), both with Ian Taylor and Paul Walton; *Policing the Riots* (London: Junction Books, 1982) with Dave Cowell and Trevor Jones; and *What is to be done about Law and Order* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984) with John Lea. He is a reader at Middlesex Polytechnic and is interested in crime and the mass media.

# *Contents*

Foreword IX

Preface XI

Notes on Contributors XIII

- 1. Critical Criminology and Some Limitations of Traditional Inquiry 1**  
Brian D. MacLean  
Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 16

## **I. ACCUMULATION, LAW AND THE STATE 21**

Introduction 22

- 2. Capital, State and Criminal Justice 26**  
R.S. Ratner  
Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 38
- 3. Young Marx's Critique of Law and the State: The Limits of Liberalism 42**  
Bob Fine  
Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 54
- 4. The Transformation of Juvenile Justice in Canada: A Study of Bill C-61 56**  
Dawn Currie  
Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 69
- 5. Criminal Policy and Repression in Capitalist Societies: The Scandinavian Case 73**  
Leif Lenke  
Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 87
- 6. Political Power, Political Opposition and State Coercion: The Kenyan Case 93**  
Davinder Pal Singh Ahluwalia and Jeffrey S. Steeves  
Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 103

7. **State Expenditures on Canadian Criminal Justice 106**  
 Brian D. MacLean  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 128
8. **Police in the 1980's : The Contradiction between Professionalization and Taylorization in the Modern American Police Institution 134**  
 Sidney L. Harring  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 140
9. **Specious Extensions of Social Control in the Canadian Penal System 142**  
 R.S. Ratner  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 151
10. **Controlling the Surplus Population: The Latent Functions of Imprisonment and Welfare in Late U.S. Capitalism 154**  
 Mark Colvin  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 162
11. **Prison Education and Fiscal Crisis 166**  
 Terry Wotherspoon  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 174

## II. **CRIMINALS, VICTIMS AND IDEOLOGICAL BIAS 177**

Introduction 178

12. **Crime — A Profitable Approach 182**  
 Frank Henry  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 201
13. **Organizational Crimes Against Employees, Consumers and the Public 204**  
 Colin H. Goff and Charles E. Reasons  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 228
14. **Female Criminality: A Crisis in Feminist Theory 232**  
 Dawn Currie  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 242
15. **Youth in Custody: Punishing Juveniles in England 247**  
 M.G. Collison  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 257
16. **Adolescent Entrepreneurs and Illegal Markets 260**  
 Herman and Julia R. Schwendinger  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 269

- 17. The Functions of Minority Group Disrepute: The Case of Native Peoples in Canada 272**  
 Richard W. Thatcher  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 289
- 18. Capital, Labour and Criminalized Workers 295**  
 B. Singh Bolaria  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 310

### **III. THEORY AND PRAXIS**

Introduction 314

- 19. Sex, Class and Crime: Towards a Non-Sexist Criminology 317**  
 Jeanne Gregory  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 328
- 20. The Struggle for Social Justice 336**  
 Richard Quinney  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 343
- 21. Civil Disobedience at the Prison Gates: The Movement for the Abolition of the Prison System in Canada 345**  
 Claire Culhane  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 356
- 22. A Realistic Approach to Law and Order 358**  
 John Lea and Jock Young  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 364
- 23. Alienation, Reification and Beyond: The Political Economy of Crime 365**  
 Brian D. MacLean  
 Study Questions • Recommended Reading • Notes • References 373

Sources 377

Index 379

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

# *Critical Criminology and Some Limitations of Traditional Inquiry*

**Brian D. MacLean**

On the evening of January 14, 1983 a yellow Mini pulled into Pembroke Road, Earls Court, on London's west side. The three occupants of the vehicle, two men and one woman, had no reason to suspect that anything was out of the ordinary. The little automobile, trapped in a queue of traffic, was being driven by Stephen Waldorf who was in his mid-twenties and worked in the video film industry. He probably never noticed the tradesman's van pull in behind him. Waldorf had driven into an ambush. Two men, Peter Finch and John Deane, armed with hand guns opened fire on the vehicle, shooting Waldorf four times. The wounded man, who fell into the street, was lying in a pool of his own blood when a third assailant, John Jardine, walked up to him and shot him point blank in the chest. Finally, after being shot a total of five times, Waldorf was again violated by Finch who pistol-whipped his already wounded head. Finch and Jardine were later to claim that the excessive force they used on a victim who had already sustained serious injury was necessary because they felt he still posed a threat. Fortunately for Waldorf a nurse who was in the area heard the shots, ran to the scene, and applied first aid before he was taken to

a hospital in an ambulance. She probably saved his life.

The unusual aspect of this shooting incident was that Finch, Jardine, and Deane were all police officers acting on what Scotland Yard had called a "special operation." The plan for the operation had been to ambush David Martin, who had earlier escaped from the Marlborough Street Magistrate's Court cells and had previously wounded a police officer in another shooting incident. As events were later to prove, the detectives, acting in error, shot the wrong man.

Finch was subsequently charged with two counts of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm and one charge of attempted murder. Jardine was charged with attempted murder and wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm. During the trial, Finch's charge of attempted murder was withdrawn because the prosecutor failed to show intent. The two men were cleared of all other charges by a jury at the Central Criminal Court. Although the detectives were suspended from duty pending possible disciplinary action, we might conclude from the jurors' decision that this behaviour is considered to be standard police procedure regarding a suspect-

ed dangerous person, despite the fact that the stereotype of the London police officer is the unarmed bobby. At least the jury did not consider their behaviour to be criminal in nature. Perhaps this incident is not so unusual.<sup>1</sup>

• • •

On May 1, 1970 President Nixon told the nation that he had deployed 5,000 American troops into Cambodia, a country with which the Americans were not at war, in order to destroy North Vietnamese military sanctuaries. This act was not to be considered an invasion but rather

“a test of our will and character” so that America would not seem “a pitiful helpless giant” or “accept the first defeat in its proud 190 year history.”<sup>2</sup>

Three days later a group of students was protesting Nixon’s invasion under the watchful eye of the National Guardsmen at Kent State University Campus. The guardsmen claimed they feared sniper fire, although no reason for their suspicion could be later found. Kneeling and pointing their firearms, they shot into the crowd of students, killing four and wounding seventeen. While the guardsmen were later cleared of all charges because they, like the London detectives, felt endangered, 25 persons from the campus were indicted by the grand jury.<sup>3</sup> The president justified the guardsmen by claiming, “When dissent turns to violence it invites tragedy,”<sup>4</sup> even though the protest had been a peaceful demonstration by unarmed persons.

• • •

In January 1980, inside the Archaubeault maximum-security prison in Quebec, a man was stabbed to death by other prisoners armed with spears fashioned from home-made knives and broom poles. The victim was Samuel Wood. Originally a meek and mild young man, he began his years in prison in Western Canada where a conviction for illicit drug activity in the early 1970’s, when the penalties were harsh, brought him to Drumheller Penitentiary. After serving his four-year sentence Wood had been released into society a desperate, labelled, ex-convict capable of violence. Shortly after his release, he participated in an armed robbery. Armed detectives pursued him; he

shot and wounded one of them. Wood perhaps felt he was in mortal danger and had reason to fear for his life at the time he fired. He was subsequently charged with attempted murder, convicted, and sentenced to fifteen years. The Crown Attorney’s office felt this sentence was not harsh enough and appealed; Wood was given life imprisonment in July, 1976.

Because of the notoriety of the case, an earlier escape, and a reputation of being dangerous, Wood was subjected to extremely long periods of solitary confinement. Finally, prison authorities instituted his transfer to Quebec where he knew no one and where the language was foreign to him.<sup>5</sup> After many months of solitary confinement, Wood was released into the main population of Archaubeault — a volatile, hostile and violent environment. He soon found himself in a conflict with prisoners of French-Canadian origin. The conflict was over a few pieces of bacon.<sup>6</sup> In the final analysis, it seemed that the prison authorities had turned Wood’s life sentence into a death penalty.

• • •

What the above three incidents share is social antagonism. Society is structured in such a way as to place groups of people in conflicting positions and sometimes the antagonism is acted out in the form of conflict. In the Waldorf case the police are out to capture someone who is unwilling to be captured. In the Kent State incident, Guardsmen are pitted against students who do not agree with the actions of their government. Both groups felt threatened by each other’s actions. Wood’s conflicts were similarly structured with people from groups with opposing viewpoints. The examples also show us that sometimes similar behaviours are treated differently. In each case people wound or kill others out of a fear for their own safety. Finch and Jardine shoot Waldorf because, so they claim, they fear Waldorf poses a threat to themselves while the National Guardsmen shoot into a crowd of people because they also feel endangered. Similarly, Wood fires at a police officer out of a fear for his life. Yet, only Wood is severely punished; the National Guardsmen are exonerated and the London detectives are freed of all criminal charges. The outcomes

of the cases are contradictory: what is accepted in the case of the detectives and National Guard is deemed unacceptable in Wood's situation. The usual notions of "good" and "bad" will not bring us any closer to understanding this contradiction. The cases illustrate that violence in our society is characterized by three kinds of contradictions: 1) the contradiction of social antagonism; 2) the contradictions within society in which antagonisms are rooted; and 3) the contradiction in the way society views and treats the behaviour of different actors.

The events exemplify the dynamics of crime in our society, and as such are the starting point of criminological inquiry. Within criminology, investigators use different theoretical frameworks to explicate such acts. Some treat criminal incidents as isolated events which can be explained by some simple notion of cause and effect. The criminologist searches for the immediate, apparent conditions which precipitate each event in order to assert that the causes of crime have been isolated. He or she isolates responsibility for an incident in particular attributes of an individual person or circumstance. Thus he may conclude that citizens who are out of control, such as those in the first two opening examples, cause the unfortunate carnage inflicted upon them by agents of formal social control. Such a strategy is indicative of traditional criminological inquiry.<sup>7</sup> Yet it ignores many of the elements that play a role in crime. A more fruitful approach would include an examination of the dynamics which underlie these events and may not be readily apparent by casual observation. The method would involve a detailed investigation of social antagonism and the contradictions upon which it is based. It would also seek to explain why similar actions are defined and treated differently and contradictorily.

In the 1960's, a growing dissatisfaction with the limitations of traditional criminology led to a radical re-evaluation of the social character of crime and produced a school of thinking that rejected the narrow explanations then characteristic of criminology. Howard Becker, Edwin Lemert, and others who contributed to the **labelling tradition** made a significant historical advance upon the individualized explanations of crime which previously dominated

the discipline of criminology.<sup>8</sup> These writers argued that it was social reaction to behaviour, not the quality of the act itself, that determined whether behaviour was deviant or not. For example, Becker argues:

The act of injecting heroin into a vein is not inherently deviant. If a nurse gives a patient drugs under a doctor's orders, it is perfectly proper. It is when it is done in a way that it is not publicly defined as proper that it becomes deviant. The act's deviant character lies in the way it is defined in the public mind. (1971: 341)

How social reactions contribute to an actor's further deviant behaviour became the primary question addressed by this school. (Taylor et al, 1973: 171). While making an important contribution to our understanding of the social nature of crime and deviance, these writers avoided an analysis of power (the ability of people to impose their will upon others) which is distributed unevenly among the various levels of society. They acknowledged the importance of power within the context of social reaction, but they failed to analyze the way in which power and authority are structured and the relationship such a structure has with crime.<sup>9</sup>

An awareness of the need for a political analysis led to a further advance in criminology. The development coincided with a resurgence of interest in Marxism among many social scientists during the 1970's (Cain and Hunt, 1979). While Marx may not have analyzed law, crime, the family, women in society, or a number of other social groups and processes, his detailed critique of the political economy of his time provided a method of inquiry which the Marxists of the 1970's applied to increasingly more aspects of social life and social inquiry. This framework became central to the emerging field of **critical criminology**.

Critical criminology addresses problems that others do not. As we noted earlier, an adequate account of crime would provide:

- 1) an analysis of the apparent social antagonisms which characterize criminal incidents;
- 2) an examination of the underlying social contradiction upon which these antagonisms are