

Convict Criminology:An Afrikan-Centered Critique

By

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A people already invisible can be easily made to disappear as this is the primary function of ghettos and prisons in Amerika.

INTRODUCTION:

The United States is predicated upon permanent disparities and inequities in life expectancy, mortality rates, education gaps, incarceration, economic solvency, and counter development burdened upon Afrikans domestically and internationally. Founded in enslavement, these disparities were facilitated by military conquest, and perpetuated through economic, legal, and social stratification with Afrikans occupying the lowest echelons of the Amerikan caste system. Afrikans have forcefully served as the cash crop of the United States and the so-called "New World", a permanent source of free and cheap labor in the plantation and prison systems; a varying source of free and enslaved soldiers for all major wars fought in North Amerika and the European wars; and an endless source of flesh for medical experimentation in prison, plantation, and military sites. Entire industries were created to dehumanize and master the control of the Afrikan population in the United States for profit and superiority. Put simply, the suppression of Afrikan culture and life provides the lifeblood of the United States and their allies. This suppression, violent and repressive, permeates the space in which Afrikans exist and is experienced as power disparities.

CRIMOGENIC AMERIKAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY:

When we focus on seasoned individual adult serial killers and juvenile "trench coat" mafias ignoring questions about a culture that could continuously produce so many, so often, so masterfully, we become distracted by symptoms and lose sight of the disease. Even though the culture and individuals indigenous to it (those who created it and sustain it and it them) are trying to profoundly qualify this fact by trying to make the individual appear abnormally or uniquely neurotic or psychotic, it is not the individual where fault lies. It is the culture that is problematic. European culture is "crimogenic". It is a society which breeds unusual numbers and types of criminals and a relatively high level of crime and violence. Cultures can be psychologically diagnosed and classified just as the individuals within them can. European culture is as psychopathically criminal as are the vast majority of individuals it produces.

We need only look to the work of early European criminologists who studied their own people's internal and global (i.e., historical) patterns to see there gross abnormality relative to virtually everyone else. Through the eyes of their own scientists, we can see that even in the early stages of their play at moral civilization that they outdistance all other nations and cultures in criminal (and penal) behavior. Essentially, even though the rate of increase in criminal acts in different European nations was different (a fact not changed by a preference by disproportionate numbers of individuals in different European countries for different types of violent and/or property crimes), each of these individual rates consistently increased. Without exception, they were all excessive when compared to other nations. It is not unrelated that the same applies to their undercounted, even though still comparatively extremely excessive, cases of psychosis and other serious, and not so serious, mental disorders.

Even though many of us have been brought into the grip of their innate psychosis, this European-nonEuropean disparity still holds strong. It is only their use of the media to portray themselves as sane and innocent which makes many of us believe otherwise. They have not changed simply because we have been outfitted with blinders. A serial killer or child molester or drug addict don't exactly stop being what they are between crimes. They just aren't doing their thing at particular moments. Clearly, to understand or treat such serious problems our focus must be enlarged far beyond moments of dramatic explosion to identify patterns, anticipate eruptions, seek root causes and means of prevention.

It is also this self-serving portrayal that projects the illusion that there is a workable solution within the Western cultural context that would not call for the total dismantling of European culture. But, knowing this is a biologically and culturally infused genetic trait, we need to take the next logical step and ask if it is even possible for Europeans to exist outside of the European culture and the global reality they have imposed on everyone else. In other words, the White man dares to think himself civilized. His "legitimate" theft of the wealth and resources of others now "exempts" him from the need to commit "crimes in the street", to look the people he robs, rapes and kills directly in their eyes as did his "pioneering" and colonizing fathers. With one stroke of the pen, he mugs millions and desecrates the whole of the earth. It is a pen he wields (rather than a pistol held to the temple or a knife to the throat), he deludes himself by thinking himself "good", "decent", and "law-abiding". Their good and decency are but psychopathic illusions created by a repressive denial of the truth

Be that as it may, the European nation as a whole, as well as the individual societies which comprise it, has higher incarceration, arrest and violent and nonviolent crime rates than any nations of comparable size. Such comparisons tell us much about the moral and ethical substance of cultural priorities. When non-European countries, that are working with all their might to become the cultural shadows of Europe have crime and imprisonment rates higher than non-European societies that are unable or refusing to culturally become European, but still have rates lower than that of both new and old European countries, we see a clear connection between culture and crime. Individually and collectively, the closer we move toward Western culture the more we become prone to adopting and defending criminal behavior as innately human. Likewise, the further we exist beyond the pale of it the less likely we are to find crime natural.

Western culture is crimogenic culture. Like any other culture, it inevitably and naturally reproduces itself in whatever that flows from it. When its afflicted hand is forced into the non-European public because of a contradiction brought about because it is caught being immoral and unethical while playing the moral and ethical judge of others, it only need explain away its abnormality as a problem of a few troubled "individuals". But the need to hide behind this lie will only last a short time more. Because if nothing changes, it is only a matter of time until an explanation of their criminality will become irrelevant. For once it successfully turns the world into itself, it will have both made the world inherently crimogenic and further moved itself into the position of being humanity's savior because of its greater experience in managing its own historically chronic criminality, i.e., criminals and criminality, however they may be measured or described, are socio-cultural products. They carry and express the sociogenic inheritance of their societal progenitor. Crime and society are blood relatives. They are intimately and extricably related. Criminal personalities, like all personalities, are to a significant degree socially created and defined. Their behavioral characters can only be manifested within a social context. They therefore cannot stand outside social time, place, and circumstance—neither criminality nor criminal personalities can exist in the absence of a social milieu.

The White American and the worldwide European ruling classes in general, refuse to accept and repent of their historical and contemporary theft of the lands, resources, and taking of the lives of their own and other peoples; their enslavement, serfdom and peonage of their own and African peoples; their colonization and rapacious exploitation of virtually all non-white peoples; their eradication of whole ethnocultural groups; their mass murder of millions of persons; their scandalization and assassination of the character of African peoples; their destruction of many of the Earth's streams, rivers, lakes, seas and oceans (ecocide); the raping and wasting of its natural treasures; their loosening of incurable diseases on vulnerable populations; their development and use of weapons of mass destruction; their assassination of national leaders, overthrow of duly elected governments and other intrigues against legitimate organizations, their warmongering and dissemination of murderous

arms among nations for profit and political advantage; their addicting of whole populations to self-destructive habits, appetites and drugs; their falsification of the consciousness of the Earths' people, and numerous other heinous crimes against Man and Nature.

Because of their need to deny their long criminal history and contemporaneous criminality, their refusal to recognize that they pose the gravest danger to every type of life on Earth, and their need to divert theirs and the worlds' attention away from the facts listed above, the White Amerikan and European communities must compulsively project the alleged criminal activities in the New Afrikan community as representing the greatest danger to Amerikan society and European civilization.

European society systematically manufactures the very acts it purports to detest while projecting these psychopathic behaviors on others. By its very nature, it systematically produces greater numbers of more sophisticated and amoral criminal mentalities. By or assimilation into them we increasingly do the same. In other words, individual criminal behavior tends to be based on proximity, meaning in a hypersegregated society that Europeans disproportionately commit criminal acts against Europeans, Afrikans disproportionately commit criminal acts against Afrikans. But, even given this social fact, European-on-Afrikan criminal behavior has become increasingly more prevalent, sophisticated and amoral in the institutions which uphold white supremacy. So I ask, who has a more criminal propensity of all the worlds' people? History (his-story) clearly reveals the obvious answer.

INDIVIDUALISM SELF-BLAME AND CRIMINALITY:

One of the ideologies (there are a number, but we will look at just one in this paper) projected to maintain European dominance, is the ideology of individualism. We hear a great deal today of the "do-your-own-thing" and "I-do-mine" kind of situation; the so-called individualization of success and failure. That is, where individual failure is seen as the result of what we call personal ineptness or misbehavior; as a sign of moral inferiority. That is, those peoples and individuals who fail in society fail as a result of problems within themselves, some individual shortcoming or ineptness: ultimately, failing as a result of some moral problem within their personalities.

William Graham Sumner, a pioneering and influential Amerikan sociologist, indicated that the poor are shiftless and impudent. They are negligent, impractical, and inefficient. That they are idle and the intemperate, the extravagant and the vicious. Even those people who founded social work and the so-called helping-professions, and who saw themselves as liberals, often saw the behavior and the failure of the victims of Eurocentric domination as a result of their personal misbehavior or the result of their moral weakness. We call this kind of approach the individual moral sensibility, which is used to justify the culture of inequality.

That is, this individualism, this individual moral sensibility tries to persuade us that this society is equal, and that this society makes available to all individuals equal the opportunities to advance in it, and if they fail, it is the result of their own personal problems. Of course, it becomes obvious that this kind of approach is a rationale and a rationalization by means of which the society itself ignores its own input as far as the failure of a person or people, such as Afrikan Americans are concerned. It helps to ignore the impact of the social structure upon individual achievement and mobility. It tends almost literally to try and eradicate the idea that the individual succeeds or fails within a social structure.

Since the individual does not succeed or fail in a vacuum but succeeds or fails in a social system, the social system must be taken into consideration when we evaluate individual success and failure. This implies the possibility that the social structure itself may be principally responsible for the success of some and the failure of others. However, a society developed by the imperialistic European, who arrogates to himself the dominance and rule over the vast majority of people, cannot afford to truthfully and honestly look at the possibility that it is the structure of the Eurocentric society itself which greatly influences the individual and group fates of all people of color.

While many of our liberal friends may not see the so-called success or failure, or the condition of Afrikan American people or people of color in general as a result of a moral problem, and they would possibly argue that the poor are no more morally decrepit than are the middle-class or are the upper-class, they still tend to maintain the social status quo in a modified form by projecting a kind of scientific ideology, one that appears at first to be neutral in its orientation.

This ideology speaks of such apparently neutral things such as the psycho-dynamic make-up of the individual; it speaks of weak egos; lack of personal integration; conflicts between id, ego, and super ego; the dark side of the personality overtaking the light side of the personality. All kinds of systems, names and intra-psychic mechanisms are invoked to explain the subjugation of some people and the domination of others, the so-called success of some and the failure of others.

We hear sociologists and criminologists talk about cultural commitments, i.e., those who are committed to mainstream values and the mainstream behavior as against those who belong to an ostensible culture of poverty, who have absorbed a different system of values. They offer us family background, and they offer us various types of child-rearing approaches that presumably do or do not prepare the individual to deal with the middle-class White society; family backgrounds and approaches which do or do not provide the individual with the ability to solve his or her social problems. Educationists go deeply into the cognitive structures of the victims and indicate the means by which they are deficient in academic or other abilities

Social psychologists offer us explanations in terms of interpersonal competence and behavior, and the failure of communications to occur between family members and other people. We get a host of definitions and a host of "explanations". However, we rarely, if ever, get an approach that looks at the political system and the political aims of the imperialistic European, and in what ways those aims contribute to the critical situation that we see ourselves in today. From this Eurocentric reference point, normality is established on a model of the "middle-class", Caucasian male of European descent. The more one approximates this model in appearance, values and behavior, the more "normal" a person is considered to be. But in reality, the most insane people on earth today are used as models for sanity. The sanity of the racist European is not questioned. The possibility that what we call normal is itself insane is not questioned; that the organization of this society, the nature of its human relations, the structure of its economic systems, the values (or lackthereof) that motivate it, are the result of the madness of a people.

THE POLITICS OF CRIMINOLOGY AND DIAGNOSIS:

When we talk about the so-called "diagnosing" of Afrikan Amerikan people, along with people of color in general, it involves an analysis not only of the behavior of Afrikan people, but of the behavior of the society as a whole; we must recognize this fact and face up to it as a people. Diagnosis then is not merely procedural or neutral. It is political to the core: It is a political act.

Through diagnosis, the ruling society applies its ideological measures to the recalcitrant members of that society. It maintains through diagnosis the status quo, and most of all, through diagnosis, the society- where that society is unjust- justifies its repressions. Thus, when an individual is labeled in an unjust and unequal society, and is labeled by the very people who maintain its injustice and inequality, then the very diagnostic process itself, and the very labels attached the victims/survivors of that society are the very means by which repression is carried out in that system. Consequently, those folks who are in the so-called helping-professions and in the "business" of diagnosing other peoples' behavior must recognize the degree to which they are a part of the repressive mechanism of that system.

I find it somewhat amusing that after raping and robbing the world, after killing and destroying, after building weapons of mass destruction that will kill each individual in the world ten times over, after permitting individuals such as Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Ted Turner, Oprah Winfrey and 1,200 others through out the world to be worth hundreds of billions of dollars while others starve to death, after robbing people day in and day out- the European thinks he has a

right to walk down the street and feel safe; and has a right to be treated civilly! What kind of fools does he think the people of the world are? What kind of world does he think this is that he can get away with rape, robbery and mass murder, then expect the victims not to protest in some fashion, form or the other, be that protest self-destructive or otherwise?

But we have a system that ask the so-called helping professions to keep them away from us; make them invisible; convert their behavior; make them adjust to the system in one way or the other. Use your diagnostic and treatment powers as a means of giving us peace at night! Thus, "diagnosis" in this context becomes part of the problem. It becomes the means by which the establishment denies its own culpability. It becomes a defense mechanism by which the establishment denies its guilt and defends its self-image and prerogatives. Diagnosis becomes the means by which the establishment projects its criminality and its own insanity onto its victims. Diagnosis is in this instance a mechanism of denial, projection, and repression—both psychical and political.

Through diagnosis the establishment finds what it is looking for. In its "criminals" it finds evidence of a criminal nature: broken homes; uncaring, rejecting or permissive parents; alcoholic, criminal, or absent fathers; disorganized or ghetto neighborhoods; moral laxities; skewed values. That is to say, in its infinite wisdom and scientific reflection the system finds a criminal type and says; The criminal-type that we find on public transportation generally is one that comes from a broken home, between thirteen and twenty-five, male, comes from a disorganized community, smokes, and drinks intoxicating liquors. This so-called "criminal type" is aggressive, has a weak ego, is hostile, prone to injure his victims for no reason; he is poorly educated, can hardly read, has identity problems; he resists authority, has no respect for the property of others—he is totally hedonistic! Hence the psychological/criminal profile is born. Yes, this may be the kind of criminals that you find using public transportation. These may be the kinds of people you find mugging, but does that say that there is a criminal nature existent? Or does it say a criminal nature has been created by the system? So then, what the psychologist and criminologist do (ignoring the political social circumstances) is to test the individual, and measure the individual, and find exactly what the society has created in the name of so-called diagnoses.

Diagnosis then becomes individual, just as the ideology which rationalizes the repression of people of color is individualistic in nature. Through diagnosis, a preventive program is promulgated. And how do we promulgate the preventive program? We have a program now that says that we want to identify "career criminals". We are going to arrest the career-criminals, those who have just robbed, and stolen quite often, and when we get them again we are going to lock them up, because, "its 25 percent of the criminals that produce 75 percent of the crime". Isn't that nice, scientific and neat? Since we are able to diagnose, and looking at our computers determine

who is a career-criminal, all we have to do now is go out and arrest them, put them in jails, and then we can sleep at night. Oh, our great criminologists, aren't they wonderful? That may be true. Who's fighting that kind of diagnosis/profile, except that the root of the problem is not dealt with. So the system creates the career-criminal, then finds a means of identifying the career-criminal, and then punishes the career-criminal and thereby commits a crime in the name of law- and we wonder why the prisons create criminals: Because they are a part of the criminal assault against the people to begin with.

Through diagnosis/profiling then, what do we get as a preventive program? More policemen, more retaining of people in the ghettos (barrios and reservations), stricter and swifter sentences. We say, "Bring them in today and string them up tomorrow!" Build more prisons, inject more potent psychotropic drugs, carry weapons to defend yourself (i.e. "stand your Ground"), more birth control, more positive images, hold up the Black tokens so that they can learn to mute their behavior while they are striving to make it! More token job training, more government project-housing, more welfare, more summer camps, more fresh-air funds, more P.A.L.s (Police Athletic Leagues). More of every kind of band-aid solution rather than a fundamental restructuring of the society itself!

So the identity-program, i.e., the program for identifying so-called career-criminals, that is supposedly based upon diagnostic/profiling techniques is a program that involves everything but a societal self-examination; everything but fundamental social reconstruction; everything but a radical reorganization of social relations. We have more criminologists, more psychologists, various and sundry helping-professions. Yet we dare not say the society is sick! How can we say that a society is sick? Only people can be sick. People are society, of course. But I ask you, if the society is not sick- why is it that we have so many psychologists, criminologists, social-workers, and all of the other helping-professions? They must be attending to someone. And we can't get enough of them. We hear again and again- more! more! more! More social workers, more psychologists, criminologists, psychiatrists, special educators... more! more! This indicates then that society is having some kind of problem. Constantly it demands more people and more professionals who in their very therapeutic relationships with their so-called clients symbolize and maintain the power relations of the society as a whole; who maintain the ethnic relations and the values that are responsible for a good deal of their clients' illnesses (criminality) in the first place.

It is indeed no accident that in this society the subjects of criminological, psychological and sociological studies are in some capacity the powerless. It is, in fact, the powerful who study the powerless. Social scientists of all disciplines have traditionally occupied positions of economic, political and psychological superiority over the people they select to study. In a very real sense, the position of the social scientist is similar to that of the colonial master and his subject people.

In this regard, it should be noted that there is a direct relationship between colonialism and psychology, sociology, criminology and anthropology; and we should also clearly recognize the parallels between the exploitation by social scientists in terms of data and the creation of information and the political and economical exploitation in terms of natural resources and wealth. To exploit data taken from a country or community for processing into manufactured goods such as books and articles, is no different than exporting raw materials and wealth from a colony for the purpose of "processing" into manufactured goods.

In the academic arena this process is no less than "scientific colonialism", whereby the center of gravity for the acquisition of knowledge about a nation is located outside the nation itself. We note, in this analogy, that just as the colonial power felt it had the right to claim and use for its benefit any product of commercial value in the colonies, so too the major aspect of scientific colonialism is the "idea" of unlimited right of access to data and the creation of information.

No where has social science been more guilty of scientific colonialism than in the disciplines of psychology, sociology, criminology and anthropology. Psychology especially has contributed most clearly to the domination and continued oppression of peoples of color. It has become the single most powerful tool of oppression and its single most effective technique has been to place itself, its conceptions, and formulations as the standard by which all peoples of the world are to be understood.

Most criminologists are European which is quite ironic in itself and would seem to suggest some long overdue re-self-analysis is required to truly understand criminality and its deep historical roots.

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