

Preface

STATE AND CRIME was the theme of the 40th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology held at the Marriott Hotel in Chicago, November 9–12, 1988. As a member of the Program Committee, I was responsible for the topical sessions on “Crimes By and Against the State.” About two-thirds of the papers submitted to me addressed the topic of crimes by the state. The fact that at least twenty-five criminologists in attendance at these meetings were already engaged in the study of state criminality suggested to me that criminology had finally evolved to the point where the field was ready to devote attention to the very serious problem of crimes by the state. Moreover, criminology had reached that critical point where it was ripe for the scholarly production of texts on this subject. This anthology is the result of an attempt to produce the first scholarly book on the subject of state criminality.

With the possible exception of *The Lawless State: The Crimes of the U. S. Intelligence Agencies* (1976), written some fifteen years ago, this reader becomes the first book to exclusively focus on the subject of state criminality. While there is some overlap in these two works, the differences are quite obvious. *The Lawless State* was basically the first documented report on the crimes of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, the National Security Agency, and other U. S. intelligence agencies. *Crimes by the Capitalist State* is basically the first analytically developed overview of the broad range of state criminality. More important, perhaps, this collection includes states from North America, Latin America, Europe, and Australia. My intention initially was to produce a book of readings on crimes by the state. As it turned out, the book became more specific because all of the contributions revolved around crimes committed or omitted by capitalist states. Therefore, I decided to name the anthology *Crimes by the Capitalist State*.

This is not to suggest that only capitalist states and Western democracies have some kind of monopoly over or inside track on state criminality. On the contrary, it appears that state criminality (or its pre-state equivalent) knows no economic, ideological, or geographical boundaries. State criminality has existed under other modes of production (e.g., feudal, socialist), both in the past and the present. And it can

be found in the Eastern and Southern as well as the Western and Northern Hemispheres.

However, the nature, patterns, or seriousness of state crime will not necessarily be the same for all types of state formation. In fact, a structural and dialectical analysis of state criminality, such as the one presented here, would predict that crimes by the state would vary according to the changing interaction between a particular state formation and the developing worldwide political economy. It is assumed that a fully developed criminology of state criminality would have to incorporate the full array of state crimes committed by the varying kinds of state formations; hence the subtitle of this anthology, *An Introduction to State Criminality* — which recognizes that this work is fundamentally only a prerequisite for the study of state criminality.

Crimes by the Capitalist State is not meant to be comprehensive, but it does attempt to provide a broad overview of state criminality. In the process, it provides not only rich and detailed case studies of the various forms of crimes by the state, but also highly developed analyses of state crimes grounded in politically, economically, and ideologically informed discussions. I hope the reader finds these essays as interesting and as valuable as I have, but more importantly, I hope the book will move criminologists and others to participate in the demanding study and reduction of state criminality.

Gregg Barak