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## **The Russian Criminal-Anthropological School in the Light of Soviet Historiography (1920s–1960s)**

*Abstract.* The creation of a Russian historiographical model of political and legal knowledge requires systematic reference to creative individuals who were underappreciated in their time, even forgotten for long periods or erased from scientific and cultural discourse – along with their biographies, works, ideas and concepts. Such work also requires the study of their later images and interpretations, which, one way or another, developed and functioned in Russian socio-legal thought and played a role in the fact that some names constantly remained in sight and on everyone's lips, while others were swallowed up by the darkness of oblivion. The Russian criminal anthropology school of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in which the ideas of the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso were developed by figures including Dmitry Dril and Vladimir Chizh, along with lesser-known authors, became the object less of impartial research during the Soviet era than of distorted, ideologically biased interpretations or simple silence. In the present article, two interpretative approaches to criminal anthropology are considered as corresponding to two significantly different stages of Soviet history. During the 1920s, when a relatively tolerant academic atmosphere prevailed and the ideas of criminal anthropology were still in vogue, the epistemological content of the latter exerted considerable influence on discussions related to explaining the causes of crime and selecting guidelines for penal policy. Conversely, during the 1930s–1960s, “Lombrosianism” became an ideological and political stigma, the possibility of developing its scientific potential was completely repudiated, and an objective study of the roots of crime was replaced by aggressive and empty rhetoric, which became the norm in criminological discourse, legal education and official propaganda. Thus, the aims of the present article are, firstly, to restore an increment of historical justice in relation to one of the significant scientific directions of pre-revolutionary

Russian criminology, and, secondly, to contribute to the development of promising means for countering those forces that aimed at preventing Russia's return to the path of sovereign civilisational development.

*Keywords:* criminal anthropology; Russian criminal anthropological school, Cesare Lombroso; Lombrosianism; Dmitry Dril; Vladimir Chizh; Soviet legal historiography

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Consideration of the current state of a given scientific problem necessarily presupposes periodic reference to the concepts, methods, and approaches with which it was considered in the past – of course, taking account of the fact that it was previously understood and formulated at a different level, using different concepts, and, quite possibly, in different academic and cultural contexts. A historiographical analysis of relevant sources not only allows for a more detailed and adequate outline of the main trajectory along with a consideration of divergent, sometimes dead-end paths to solving a given problem, but also highlights those aspects that were either not fully understood or appreciated in their time, or which later receded into the background for various reasons, even to the extent of being forgotten by subsequent generations of researchers. This also applies to the history of Russian social thought: the better we know our predecessors, their ideas, motivations and debates, the more clearly we will understand where we have arrived today – and consequently the easier it will be to decide where to go tomorrow.

In this connection, the analysis of the perception and interpretation of a particular doctrine by authors who worked in approximately the same subject area somewhat later appears to represent a very promising undertaking. The critical assessments that were given to this doctrine (whether positive or negative) inevitably bore the imprint not only of purely epistemological innovations, but also of the spirit of the era that gave rise to these assessments. Therefore, a historiographical examination of the sources containing these assessments seems important at least in two respects: (1) as a way of more deeply penetrating into the authentic meaning of the specific

doctrine to which they were dedicated; (2) as a tool for understanding the cultural and historical time at which the authors of these texts worked.

The Russian criminal anthropological school, represented by the names of Dmitry Dril (1846–1910) (Vasechko 2024), Vladimir Chizh (1855–1922?) (Vasechko 2025) and lesser-known personalities, which actively functioned in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and until 1917, arose under the powerful influence of the teachings of the Italian psychiatrist Cesare Lombroso concerning the supposed existence of a hereditary and anthropological predisposition to criminal behaviour and mentation<sup>1</sup>. Inspired, like their Western colleagues, by the broad prospects that many of the then young sciences (anthropology, psychology, physiology, mathematical and social statistics, etc.) were opening up for the study of the phenomenon of crime, Russian criminal anthropologists came up with a detailed and compelling critique of the so-called classical school of criminal law and its traditional ideas about the causes of crime, guilt and sanity, as well as about the need for repressive measures against subjects who committed criminal acts. Although in Russia (as, indeed, in the West) the proponents of criminal anthropology failed to achieve a radical restructuring of the criminal law, criminal procedure, and penitentiary systems, their activities had a certain influence on the work of law enforcement agencies, and also – to an even greater extent – on the heated debates that took place among Russian jurists and in Russian educated society in general.

**1920s: Criminal anthropology as a “fellow traveller” in the formation of a new man.** The role assigned to the old, pre-revolutionary intelligentsia by the new communist government in Russia was generally described both in the pre- and post-revolutionary works of Vladimir Lenin; in this matter, the first leader of the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the most famous figure who gave the name to the entire movement (“Lombrosianism”), certain French psychiatrists of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century are commonly named as its representatives. These included Bénédict Morel and Prosper Despine, from whose works Lombroso borrowed heavily, as well as his younger compatriots, Raffaele Garofalo and Enrico Ferri. In 1880, Lombroso and his associates initiated the publication of a special printed organ – the journal “Archive of Criminal Psychiatry and Criminal Anthropology”. From that time on, international congresses on criminal anthropology began to be held at which Russian criminologists were increasingly in attendance.

state was quite consistent. On the one hand, it was obvious that the Communist Party and government could not do without such people as possessed the necessary specific knowledge, whether in economics, technology, military affairs, medicine, natural sciences, or law, etc. As Lenin wrote in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1909): "...you cannot take a single step in studying new economic phenomena, for example, without utilising the works of these clerks" (Lenin 1968: 364), implying by the latter term the contemporary professors of political economy. And where the party and (after 1917) the Soviet government needed it, they never hesitated to resort to the services of these "learned clerks" – these, as Lenin, following Joseph Dietzgen, called them, "certified lackeys" of the old regime. In this case, the discussion was about natural scientists, engineers, military specialists, cultural figures – or, as in our case, jurists.

On the other hand, this entire public was made to understand from the very beginning that their assistance was needed only for the time being: the only part of it that could count on a worthy place in the new society was the part that could be "reforged" – that is, that would reject the prejudices instilled by life in the former exploitative society and accept the "all-conquering teaching of Marx and Engels" in its entirety, including both their philosophy and socio-political doctrine, and in general everything that would be proposed at the moment by their official interpreters. For that part of the population that was unable – and especially unwilling – to betray its former ideals, the prospects were rather bleak: the "revolutionary workers and peasants", whose will was personified by the repressive organs, would quickly make it clear to such backward individuals that society was no longer interested in their professional talents, knowledge and skills, with all that this entailed.

As is well known, not all intellectuals who grew up and formed their worldview before the revolution accepted these strict rules of the game. Millions of them refused any cooperation with the new authorities, instead choosing the uncertainty, suffering and hardships of life in exile. However, others – and there were quite a few of them – made a different choice; this category includes many prominent jurists of the old school. At the same time, a significant portion of them, having entered the service of the Soviet regime, giving lectures at Soviet universities, publishing one new book after another, and even sometimes conscientiously working in various

law enforcement agencies, continued to adhere to their customary views, including where it concerned the causes of crime and the fight against it.

Lenin's contemporary, legal scholar and psychologist **Sergey Poznyshev** (1870–1943), who long before the revolution received a doctorate in criminal law and a professorship and in 1915–1917 even served as vice-rector of Moscow University developed his own classification of criminal types while openly relying on Lombroso, Ferri and Garofalo (Poznyshev 1923; Poznyshev 1926)<sup>2</sup>. Admittedly, he stipulates that there is no “anthropological type of criminal” – one that could be identified by external features such as the shape of the skull, facial asymmetry, or the structure of the ears. For him, however, there was no doubt that the criminal type as such is an objective phenomenon; one simply needs to understand that it is determined not by the physical, but by the mental constitution of the individual, and is manifested in his practical actions: “The content of the criminal type forms that combination of constant properties, by virtue of which the individual reacted to the impressions he received with criminal behaviour of a certain nature” (Poznyshev 1926: 31). And in this matter, there can be no talk of any break between Poznyshev and the principles of Lombroso's teaching: even during his lifetime, some of the closest followers of the author of *Criminal Man* acknowledged the problematic nature of detecting a criminal type using anthropometric methods. Although the Russian “Lombrosians” – in particular, Dril<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Recently, in 2023, almost a hundred years after it was first published, Poznyshev's *Criminal Psychology* was reissued by the Yurait publishing house. The annotation defines the value of this book for today's Russian reader as being based on material taken from the author's contemporary reality (as stated on the publisher's website. – V.V.).

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the various anthropometric, physiognomic and physiological characteristics on which Lombroso focused, Dril notes that there are insufficient grounds for singling them out as the stigmata of a “criminal type”: “...The described signs were observed in various quantities and combinations in various criminals and are united in their entirety into one general whole, into a type, only by description... In order to have grounds for singling out a special ‘criminal type’, it was first necessary to prove that the given signs, or at least some of them, are specific signs, inherent only to criminals and not found in non-criminal people. Nothing like this has been proven – and it cannot be proven...” (Dril 2010: 475).

and Chizh<sup>4</sup> – often wrote about this, it must be emphasised that they never questioned the fundamental theses of criminal anthropology.

It is quite characteristic that, in drawing empirical material from contemporary realities – namely, from criminal materials and court cases of Soviet Russia in the first half of the 1920s – Poznyshev bases his theoretical constructions on the same authorities as his pre-revolutionary predecessors in criminal anthropology. The names of Esquirol, Morel, Lombroso, Despina, Garofalo, Ribot and others constantly appear in his books and are almost exclusively cited in a positive context as scientists who discovered certain important, fundamental truths, against which their successors essentially have nothing to object. One of such basic texts for Poznyshev was Theodor Ziegen's *Physiological Psychology* (Poznyshev 1926: 64), the first translation of which in Russia (as is clear from its imprint) was published under the editorship of Vladimir Chizh, who was at that time a professor at Yuryev University (Ziegen 1896). Poznyshev also repeatedly mentioned various works by Dril (Poznyshev 1923: 85, 98, 199, 231). He also cites the monograph *Murderers* written by the former Sakhalin doctor N.S. Lobas (Lobas 1913), a personal acquaintance and follower of Dril (Poznyshev 1923: 231–232). It is quite possible that Lobas' work influenced Poznyshev's rich illustration of *Criminal Psychology* with photographs of defendants in criminal cases, which was intended to support the thesis that the criminal type is an objective – one might even say “medical” – fact, and not an idle fiction of armchair theorists.

An innovation in the criminal anthropological discourse of the 1920s consisted in the active appeal to the works of Freud. With his open atheism and declarations of commitment to a scientific-materialistic worldview, Sigmund Freud was rightly viewed by many Bolshevik leaders (in particular, Trotsky) as an ideological ally who could and should be used for the benefit of communism; for this reason, the Viennese psychologist's works were repeatedly translated

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<sup>4</sup> Chizh points out, for example, that having independently conducted research on the asymmetry of human faces for three years, he came to the conclusion that complete facial symmetry is extremely rare, as a result of which, according to the logic of the first Lombrosians, the absolute majority of people should be classified as mentally degenerate and representatives of the “criminal type” (Chizh 1890: 209).

and published to become the subject of lively discussions. Freud fits perfectly into Lenin's template of those "representatives of modern natural science who are inclined toward materialism and are not afraid to defend and preach it against the fashionable philosophical genuflection toward idealism and scepticism that prevail in the so-called 'educated society'" (Lenin 1970: 29). As a contemporary researcher notes, Freud and Chizh (the latter being only one year older) were moving along parallel paths in their research into the problem of the unconscious until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; as such, the fact that the name of the first was so "promoted" while the second was rather quickly forgotten should be attributed to certain personal character traits that prevented Chizh from doing what Freud did – creating a complete theory of personality and developing a psychoanalytic method on its basis (Slabinsky 2015: 10-12). It is quite likely that Chizh's relatively early death also played a role here: if he, like Freud, had been able to continue his work during the 1920s and 1930s, his contribution to science, including the science of criminal anthropology, might have been much more significant.

Be that as it may, Freudian psychoanalysis turned out to be interesting not only to the younger generation of Russian (now Soviet) scientists, such as the famous psychologists **Alexander Luria** (1902–1977) and **Filipp Bassin** (1905–1992)<sup>5</sup>, but also to intellectuals of the old school, including criminologists. The same Poznyshev refers to the recently published translations of *Lectures on Introduction to Psychoanalysis* and the book *Psychoanalysis and the Doctrine of Characters* (Poznyshev 1926: 67). **Lev Orshansky** (1866–1937), having given a detailed retelling of Freud's teachings and having noted that not every one of his ideas should be accepted unconditionally, makes the following significant conclusion: "All of Freud's teachings... still await a serious examination in application to criminology. Among us, Freud has found several ardent adherents among doctors and teachers who interpret him in a crooked and oblique

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<sup>5</sup>See: (Graham 1991: 168-171, 189). However, some young philosophers also spoke of Freud quite enthusiastically. In 1923, Bernard Bykhovsky, in the journal "Under the Banner of Marxism" (then the main theoretical organ of the party and the country), asserted that "psychoanalysis is, at its core, a teaching imbued with monism, materialism... and dialectics, that is, the methodological principles of dialectical materialism" (Quoted from: (Graham 1991: 171)).

manner; Russian criminologists have so far passed him over in silence” (Orshansky 1927: 50).

In general, then, the attitude towards criminal anthropology on the part of authors of the first Soviet decade should be assessed as quite favourable<sup>6</sup>. Even where the image of Western “Lombrosianism” is painted in very negative terms, this cannot be equated with the attitude of its domestic supporters. **Mikhail Isaev** (1880–1950), another jurist with a solid pre-revolutionary background, having mentioned (for example, in his university textbook) Dril as a follower of the anthropological school, points out that “...his views, in contrast to Western European anthropologists, were distinguished by a surprisingly humane attitude towards the criminal” (Isaev 1927: 41). In general, such leniency and such liberalism in relation to a teaching that would soon be saddled with the most severe accusations may seem quite unexpected. However, when the broader social and cultural context is taken into account, much becomes clear.

The twenties in the USSR were a time of active scientific research and energetic social and technical experimentation. Inspired by their recent victory, the Bolshevik leaders were confident that they could do anything, that they could “make a fairy tale come true”, and that it was in their hands to radically transform not only the external, material world, but also man himself, including his biological nature. This sublime enthusiasm is transmitted not only to thousands of young people who do not yet know or think about what Russia has lost, but also to the middle generation, already quite wise in life. For example, it was Nikolai Koltsov, already in his 50s in 1923, who published the pamphlet *Improving the Human Race*, in which he describes the tasks and possibilities of the new biological science of *eugenics*, “the science of human nobility” (Koltsov 1923). And from 1922 to 1930, seven volumes of the “Russian Eugenics Journal” were published under his editorship (Shnol 1997: 73-75). Here Koltsov is not merely reasoning, but also, by virtue of his position the head of the Institute of Experimental Biology

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<sup>6</sup>As a contemporary author emphasises, “...criminology in the first years of Soviet power was distinguished by tradition, i.e., continuity in views with its pre-revolutionary predecessors, especially since many of them continued their research under the new regime” (Bakharev 2023: 37).

(which enjoys the patronage of the authorities and large material and technical resources, attracting, when necessary, the best foreign personnel), launching a broad research programme to nurture “Homo creator”, i.e., the creative person of the future. At the same time, it is assumed a priori that in people of such a wonderful and in principle perfected type, no antisocial – or especially criminal – inclinations can exist.

Naturally, against this backdrop, concepts that interpreted the hereditary and anthropological roots of crime seemed appropriate and even quite respectable. There was no talk of any pessimism or misanthropy on their part; on the contrary, there was confidence that if it were possible to ascertain the genetic root of the evil of crime and determine its nature, then it would be possible to find the means to, if not eradicate it completely, then at least reduce its harm to a minimum. After all, if we are capable of artificial selection that improves the natural properties of plants and animals, then why can't we also correct our own natural inclinations – where they are self-evidently defective and negative? From this perspective, criminal anthropology served as one of the scientific disciplines for providing knowledge about the ways of forming a new human being – knowledge that was both practically valuable and socially in demand, and which could therefore justifiably count on a relatively comfortable existence under the Soviet regime.

**1930–1960s: “Lombrosianism as an ideology of reaction and obscurantism”.** The end of the 1920s was marked in the USSR by the rise to power of Stalin's clique, which single-handedly concentrated in its hands all the levers of control not only of the state and society, but also of intellectual culture. For science generally, and particularly those sciences that deal with society and man, this meant that the time of more or less broad pluralism and relatively free expression of views had passed. As it turned out, this tendency was to be quite marked and would continue for a long time. By the mid-1930s, the situation for continuing research in human genetics had become unbearable. In 1936, Hermann Muller, an American geneticist and future Nobel laureate who had worked for several years at the Institute of Genetics headed by Nikolai Vavilov, made a desperate attempt to support his Soviet colleagues by writing a personal letter to Stalin. However, the only response was a tightening of repression against scientists, an official ban on medical genetic

research, and the designation of genetics and eugenics as pseudo-sciences in the service of imperialism, fascism and racism (Soyfer 2016: 153-159, 179-186, 203-218).

This change in the official course also had a decidedly chilling effect on the disciplinary status of criminal anthropology: for several decades, “Lombrosianism” was transformed into a scurrilous epithet, declared to be not just an *unscientific* concept like quackery or popular superstition, but a system of *anti-scientific*, *anti-humanitarian* views, deliberately developed by pseudo-scientists and financed by the bigwigs of the capitalist world<sup>7</sup>. Any expression of sympathy for Lombroso’s ideas, even a modest mention of some of his scientific merits, thus became a pretext for the most derogatory criticism, bordering on political accusations of preaching bourgeois ideology and betraying the cause of socialism. As a result, not only Western “Lombrosians”, but also domestic ones, including those long gone, were methodically vilified at all levels, from the periodical press and mass propaganda to university lecture courses and scholarly monographs.

The theoretical basis of Soviet criminology consists in the theses about the *social nature of crime* and the *all-powerful role of education*, which are proclaimed as the only correct ones and are placed in an inextricable connection with Marxist theory. These theses, which were transformed into unquestionable dogmas during the Stalin era, are being given not only a philosophical but also a natural scientific justification: it was believed that the primacy of education over any individual predisposition is fully proven by Ivan Pavlov’s teaching on conditioned reflexes (Graham 1991: 223). Accordingly, any attempt to somehow explain the existence of crime in some other way is seen not simply as an honest mistake (considered excusable only

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<sup>7</sup> Here is a typical example of the manner in which views that were inconsistent with Marxist-Leninist dogmas were presented to the Soviet reader of that time: “From all that has been stated, it is clear that the philosophical, sociological and general legal basis of the teachings of the ‘anthropological’ and ‘sociological’ schools is an eclectic mixture of reactionary anti-scientific theories, which in many ways predetermines the reactionary and anti-scientific character of the anthropological-sociological direction in bourgeois criminal law” (Reshetnikov 1966: 69). Not only is the argumentation poor and primitive, but there is also a scarcity of vocabulary that is striking for a university professor (as in this case), for all its sharpness, incisiveness, and belligerence.

for thinkers who had worked in the pre-Marxist era), but as a deliberate and malicious distortion of the truth.

Thus, **Sergey Sergeevich Ostroumov** (1909–1979), while making a number of exceptions for representatives of the so-called Russian sociological school in criminal law, is unambiguous and irreconcilable in relation to the anthropological direction: it, in his words, “has always been purely reactionary”, “it was from the very beginning of its emergence purely reactionary, fully corresponding to the political views and interests of the most conservative part of the ruling classes” (Ostroumov 1960: 275, 320). From Ostroumov’s point of view, if Lombrosianism in Russia was sometimes criticised, it was only by liberals, but it allegedly always found support among obvious conservatives such as monarchists and Black Hundreds (Ostroumov 1960: 309).

**Fedor Reshetnikov** (1930–1998), arbitrarily conflating “anthropologists” with “sociologists”, states that after the Paris Commune the bourgeoisie used both “to justify the most reactionary measures of criminal repression, to destroy the formal democratic principles of bourgeois justice and legality” (Reshetnikov 1965: 4). Reshetnikov contrasts the creator of the theory of the “criminal man” Lombroso (this “apologist for reaction” and “disseminator of anti-scientific views”) with another Italian, Cesare Beccaria, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century enlightener, who was described as “a true scientist who strove for a scientific understanding of the causes of crime” (Reshetnikov 1965: 36)<sup>8</sup>. Mikhail Rogovin in the *Philosophical Encyclopaedia* (in general, a fairly advanced and tolerant publication for the 1960s) is equally categorical: “The interest in L[ombroso]’s concepts on the part of bourgeois criminology is undoubtedly determined to a significant extent by their objectively reactionary social orientation” (Rogovin 1964: 251). It is clear that such a characterisation also applied to everyone who, in one way or another,

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<sup>8</sup> Reshetnikov finds it outrageous to draw parallels between Beccaria and Lombroso as rebels against the inertia and prejudices of the contemporary criminal legal system, a popular practice in the West. One of the objects of his virulent attacks in this regard is the prominent French lawyer Marc Ancel (1902–1990), a leading theorist of the “new social protection” (Reshetnikov 1965: 35). It is ironic that the Soviet author in 1965 does not know that in 1982 he will be elected as a foreign member to the... USSR Academy of Sciences.

expressed solidarity with Lombrosianism, whether in the West or in Russia.

Even among those representatives of the classical school and the sociological school who sharply (and often essentially) criticised the “anthropologists”, statements are found that bring them closer to the latter and thus, in addition to the subjective desires of the “classics” and “sociologists”, reveal their true goals and motives. When, for example, Ivan Fojnickij or Nikolai Tagantsev assert that the main cause of crime lies in the personal qualities of the criminal, who often cannot be corrected even by the most favourable environment, then this is, of course, an obvious concession to the “Lombrosians” (Ostroumov 1960: 322). If Fojnickij admits that, in addition to a “perverted upbringing” the reasons why someone “falls into crime” may include “an excess of impulsive force over restraint” or “passivity and flabbiness of character”, then, according to Ostroumov, “any anthropologist would probably subscribe to these words...” (Ostroumov 1960: 270). Reshetnikov, having quoted Friedrich List, the head of German legal sociologists (“Crime – is eternal, like death and illness”), notes with satisfaction that “this statement by List almost verbatim repeats the statement of the head of the ‘anthropologists’– Lombroso” (Reshetnikov 1966: 80)<sup>9</sup>. Here, the “sociologist” List is related to the “anthropologists” (of course, without doing him any credit) according to the concept of a “permanent criminal in a state of chronic criminality”<sup>10</sup>; that is, in terms of the demand for a rejection of the principle of the individual guilt of the offender, albeit substantiated according to different principles than those used by the “anthropologists” (Reshetnikov 1966: 85-87).

As for the “Russian Lombrosians” specifically, some authors try to downplay their role in pre-revolutionary legal thought, or even remain silent about their existence. **Mikhail Shargorodsky**

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<sup>9</sup> This refers to the following passage from “The Criminal Man”: “Crime... is a natural phenomenon, a necessary phenomenon, like conception, like birth, like death, like mental illness” (Quoted from: Reshetnikov 1966: 71)..

<sup>10</sup> Chronic criminality, according to List, is a condition in which “the crime stems from the very organisation of the criminal, from the deeply rooted properties of his nature, whose true essence this crime reveals” (Quoted from: Reshetnikov 1966: 85).

(1904–1973) in his 1957 work speaks only of the classical and sociological directions, adding to them the “third school” represented by Emmanuel Nemirovsky and Pavel Lublinsky, but does not single out “anthropologists” as a special school (Shargorodsky 2004: 271). However, when it comes to specific individuals, there are sometimes disagreements about whether a particular author belongs to this camp and how his views should be assessed.

This is especially true of Dril, who, as is well known, positioned himself primarily as a supporter of criminal anthropology, but at the same time did not at all deny the legitimacy of the sociological approach to crime.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that **Boris Utevsy** (1887–1970), for example, is classified as belonging to the anthropological direction (Utevsy 1950: 231), while Reshetnikov is stated to belong to the sociological direction (Reshetnikov 1966: 78). Ostroumov dwells on this point in the greatest detail, leaving Dril in the anthropological camp, but at the same time, taking into account his clearly expressed sympathies not only for the “sociologists”, but also for Marx, Engels, and socialists in general, qualifying him as an “honest scientist” who conscientiously analyses the “antagonisms of capitalism” and, even if it comes into conflict with his own liberal views, “comes to the idea of the inevitability of revolution” (Ostroumov 1960: 295). The obvious interest of the “humane Dril” in the “teachings of the reactionary Lombroso” is explained by the Soviet professor, firstly, in terms of the former’s dissatisfaction with the speculative doctrines of the classical school of criminal law and, secondly, by his fascination with the “ideas of vulgar materialism, which at that time were still quite widespread in natural science and medicine, which Dril avidly studied” (Ostroumov 1960: 293).

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<sup>11</sup> The opposition of the criminal-anthropological school to the sociological school seemed to Dril completely unjustified, appearing as “a strange misunderstanding and some kind of scientific oversight”, a kind of “vivisection of science”: “If a scientific worker is necessarily one-sided, then science, on the contrary, must be comprehensive... The behaviour and actions of a person are the resultant of the efforts of factors of two categories: the characteristics of the psychophysical nature of the actor and those of the external influences to which he is exposed. It is impossible to determine these two categories of factors with any precision in order to weigh the proportionate influence of each. Therefore, in studying human crime we must not follow either the social or the organic theory one-sidedly” (Dril 2010: 340–341). Cf. also: (Dril 1890: VI–VII).

However, regarding “anthropologist-doctors” (especially such “ardent Lombrosians” as Vladimir Chizh and Praskovya Tarnovskaya), Ostroumov’s opinion is quite clear and categorical. Chizh, who reasonably doubts (as indeed any sober scientist and simply sane person would) that “if social conditions change, a person will change too”, and who is trying to establish the characteristics of an “innate or habitual” criminal, is portrayed as a cunning and politically engaged manipulator of statistical and anthropometric data. Ostroumov sees demagogic juggling with numbers even where, it would seem, Chizh speaks out against the bourgeois system – he notes, for example, the immorality and corruption of the powerful of this world, pointing out that “in all countries the number of criminals among the upper classes of society is relatively greater than among the lower” (Chizh 1894: 13). But in order to show that Chizh is wrong here too, his Soviet critic is forced, also citing statistics, to admit that “more than 90% of the total number of criminals are people from the ‘lower strata of the population’, former unemployed, beggars, vagrants, prostitutes, etc.” (Ostroumov 1960: 300-301). And the critic seems not to notice that this argument does not work in favour of the high morality of the “lower classes”.

Praskovya Tarnovskaya also comes in for criticism from Ostroumov (Ostroumov 1960: 302-308, 322); on the basis of a vast body of empirical material she personally collected and processed, she sought to prove the existence, in the majority of criminal women, of characteristics indicating their deviation from the normal type in both physical and psychological respects. He also does not forget about such a “disseminator of vicious views” as the Sakhalin doctor-ascetic Nikolai Lobas, who in his book “Murderers” shows that it is not only in “life conditions” that one must seek the causes of crime, but also in the criminal personality itself, in the imperfection of its psychophysical organisation (Ostroumov 1960: 322-323). By constantly misrepresenting the facts and failing to engage with the substance of the criminological problems and the criminal-procedural and penitentiary reforms proposed by the ‘anthropologists’ (or by dismissing them as ‘utopian projects’), Ostroumov portrays his long-dead opponents as limited and malicious philistines, whose intellect is little better than that of an average, semi-educated monarchist from the early twentieth century. Thus, for example,

Ostromov writes: “The harsh measures against criminals proposed by the anthropologists found the most fervent support among reactionaries, who demanded from the government not only the retention, but also the even wider application of the death penalty, the introduction of corporal punishment, and the like”. He then gives a couple of quotations from petitions by the Black Hundreds, accompanying them with the classic phrase, “Comments are superfluous” (Ostromov 1960: 323-324).

Even the legal scholars of the post-Stalin 1960s demonstrate the required good intentions and vigilance in relation to “fellow traveller” jurists, revealing, whenever possible, the unscientific nature of their views or the ideological underpinnings and contradictions with Marxist postulates. For example, **Boris Volzhenkin** (1937–2008) in his candidate’s dissertation of 1965, having praised in passing Poznyshev’s above-mentioned “Criminal Psychology”, does not miss the opportunity to chide the venerable old school jurist with his theory of criminal types for ideological inconsistency and passion for psychoanalysis: “Poznyshev’s mistake was that he saw the basis of social danger in the mental constitution, which is largely predetermined hereditarily. In the doctrine of the criminogenic and criminal-repulsive parts of the mental constitution and their relationship, the influence of Freudian concepts is felt.” And he adds below once again, just to be sure: “However, his [Poznyshev’s. – V.V.] teaching about the criminal type is erroneous” (Volzhenkin 2008: 99, 103). That same Ostromov, citing a brief quotation from the book *Crime and its Factors* (Moscow, 1922) by **Alexander Zhizhilenko** (1873–1930?), lets the reader know that its author, just as in the pre-revolutionary period when he was a professor at St Petersburg University, continues with his flawed, Lombrosian-style explanations to do the same as before – “to distort the real causes of crime in bourgeois countries” (Ostromov 1960: 324-325).

In general, it is clear that crude and pompous rhetoric, coupled with a clear reluctance (and perhaps even an inability) to delve into the essence of any given real criminological problem, had become the norm in the historiographical digressions of legal scholars of the Stalinist and post-Stalinist periods. At the same time that in the West one discovery after another was being made in the field of human genetics and open, free discussion was underway concerning the highly probable hereditary basis of deviant behaviour

(at least among a significant portion of the criminal contingent), scientists in the USSR were deprived of the opportunity to conduct any experimental research in this area or, at least theoretically – at an academic level – to consider the results of similar research in other countries. Only social scientists were allowed to speak out publicly, but even they were forced either to repeatedly chew over the same official dogmas at the level (at most) of 19<sup>th</sup>-century science, or to engage in unfounded criticism and defamation of those foreign criminal-legal concepts that seriously sought to understand the consequences of the latest discoveries in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, anthropogenetics and other human sciences.

**Conclusion.** Our historiographical review has shown that the criminological problems that concerned scientists of various specialities at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were by no means narrowly academic in nature, but in one way or another affected the interests of many social strata – and, by and large, society as a whole. The emergence of a Russian school of criminal anthropology was by no means a coincidence: Dmitry Dril, Vladimir Chizh, Praskovya Tarnovskaya, and others sought to provide answers to the pressing questions that had already been posed both by science and by life itself. While it is obvious that, despite the immeasurably increased volume of scientific knowledge, there are still no definitive answers to these questions today (if they are even possible in principle), we must always remember the merits of those who took the first steps in this area, examine the difficulties they had to go through, and try to uncover the reasons that prevented them from achieving their noble goals.

The examination of Soviet legal historiography from the 1920s to the 1960s, in the sense that it chose criminal anthropology (both domestic and foreign) as its subject, confirms that no significant discoveries were made in this direction. And the main reason for this is the objective situation, the external circumstances in which Soviet science – both experimental and theoretical – found itself. Whereas in the first Soviet decade some traditions of pre-revolutionary criminology and certain opportunities for scientific inquiry were still preserved, for the subsequent 40 years Soviet scholars found themselves under intense ideological and administrative pressure, which deprived empirical researchers of the ability to engage in work at the forefront of science, and prevented

theorists from freely and impartially constructing fundamental, generalising concepts. Everyone suffered from this pressure: scientists (doctors, biologists, lawyers, sociologists, etc.), those who are called practical workers, the law enforcement system – and, indeed, society as a whole.

Like any serious historiological investigation, the work with the legacy of Soviet criminological historiography also extends to the present day. As a result of this work, complex problems that currently face criminal law science, both domestic and international, are illuminated more clearly, deeply and concretely. For criminology, even when it solves its disciplinary problems, always has to experience, in one way or another, the influence of various social forces and corporations – an influence that is sometimes benevolent, partner-like and supportive, but can also be inhibiting, hostile and destructive.

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