



**HAL**  
open science

# Psychopaths as the 'New Danger' to Socialist Society: Forensic Psychiatry, Criminology, and Crime in the Czechoslovakia of the 1960s

Jakub Střelec

► **To cite this version:**

Jakub Střelec. Psychopaths as the 'New Danger' to Socialist Society: Forensic Psychiatry, Criminology, and Crime in the Czechoslovakia of the 1960s. *Shaping the Socialist Self? The Role of Psy-Sciences in Socialist States of the Eastern Bloc*, Nov 2020, Prague, Czech Republic. halshs-03286299

**HAL Id: halshs-03286299**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03286299>**

Submitted on 14 Jul 2021

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# **Psychopaths as the ‘New Danger’ to Socialist Society: Forensic Psychiatry, Criminology, and Crime in the Czechoslovakia of the 1960s<sup>1</sup>**

**Jakub Střelec<sup>2</sup>**

Institute of International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague /  
Associated CEFRES PhD Fellow

## **Abstract**

In 1971, the annual Czechoslovak forensic psychiatric conference took place in the mountain town of Špindlerův Mlýn. Psychiatrists from all around the country met to discuss current issues in the field. One major topic emerged from the discussions: psychopathy and recidivism as the ‘new danger’ to Czechoslovakia’s socialist society. Whereas before, the interpretation of crime and mental illness was based on biological explanations, the conference highlighted a new approach towards ‘insane’ crimes. Psychiatrists and forensic experts began to apply psychological and sociological concepts such as ‘dysfunctional family background’ to describe the roots of ‘deviant’ criminal behaviour. This paper examines the ‘rise of psychopathy’ as an object of forensic psychiatry and its relation to changes in the perception of crime in post-Stalinist Czechoslovakia. The article is divided into three main parts: first, it deals with the development of the concept of ‘criminal psychopathy’ in the field of forensic psychiatry; second, it focuses on the role of forensic psychiatrists in criminal trials, using the example of the case of Jaroslav Papež, a notorious sex offender and recidivist; and third, it examines the different ways psychopathy was approached and treated by forensic psychiatrists and criminologists.

## **Key words:**

forensic psychiatry – psychopathy – crime and criminality – Czechoslovakia

---

<sup>1</sup> This article represents an extended version of a paper presented at an international workshop in Prague, ‘Shaping the Socialist Self? The Role of Psy-Sciences in Socialist States of the Eastern Bloc’, organized by CEFRES, the Institute of Contemporary History (Czech Academy of Sciences) and the Collegium Carolinum. Prague, CEFRES, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> This article was supported by the CEFRES PhD Fellowship (CEFRES USR 3138, CNRS-MEAE) in 2019-2020.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Czechoslovak forensic psychiatry did not give much attention to psychopaths and psychopathy. The cause of insane crime was seen to lie in different types of psychosis, especially schizophrenia, but also in depression or melancholy. After the communist coup in 1948 and as Pavlovian medicine was being propagated in Czechoslovakia under Stalinism, the professional perception of insane crime was based on biological models of mental health. In the 1960s, however, the situation changed; psychiatrists began to use new concepts such as ‘dysfunctional family background’ in describing insane crimes. Diagnoses of psychopathy appeared more often in psychiatric assessments introduced at criminal trials. Furthermore, after several violent crimes were committed by psychopaths in Czechoslovakia in the second half of the 1960s and were extensively covered by the media, criminal psychopaths began to receive public attention.

The main objective of this paper is to examine the ‘rise of psychopathy’ in forensic psychiatry and criminology and analyse it in relation to changing perceptions of crime in the communist Czechoslovakia of the 1960s. This paper will address the following questions: How was the concept of ‘criminal psychopathic’ behaviour constructed in forensic psychiatric science? What ideas did forensic psychiatrists develop to manage the issue of psychopathy? To what extent did knowledge of psychopathy influence the way the communist state approached crime in post-Stalinist Czechoslovakia? Based on analysis of textbooks, journals and articles written by psychiatrists and criminologists, I will argue that the growing influence of the concept of criminal psychopathy was related to the increasing authority of forensic experts in the socialist criminal justice system. The greater importance of psychopathy as a cause for crime was part of a broader change in how crime was perceived in post-Stalinist Czechoslovakia. On the one hand, the socialist state began to focus on criminalising different kinds of ‘asocial’, ‘deviant’ and ‘socially parasitic’ behaviours,<sup>3</sup> while on the other hand, it needed to find a new explanation for crime because of the rising number of offenders who had grown up under socialism.

---

<sup>3</sup> See ZIMMERMANN, Volker, PULLMANN, Michal. *Ordnung und Sicherheit, Devianz und Kriminalität im Staatssozialismus: Tschechoslowakei und DDR 1948/49-1989*,. Vorträge der Tagung des Collegium Carolinum in Bad Wiessee vom 3. bis 6. November 2011. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014; MILLINGTON, R. “Crime Has No Chance”: The Discourse of Everyday Criminality in the East German Press, 1961–1989. *Central European History*, 50(1), 2017, 59-85.

## The History of Psy-sciences in Communist Europe: A Brief Overview

In recent years, historians have become increasingly interested in the role played by expert knowledge in the socialist states of the Eastern Bloc.<sup>4</sup> A central issue of their research has been the analysis of the influence of experts, their knowledge, and their practices on socialist governance. The history of the psy-sciences in communist Europe is an evolving field of research, with new perspectives and topics that range from the comparative and transnational history of psychiatry to the history of social control and social norms.<sup>5</sup> Applying post-Foucauldian ideas, many historians and other scholars have started to turn their attention to the role of the psy-sciences in the distinctive communist art of governing. The psy-sciences in communist dictatorships began to be perceived within a broader framework of biopolitics and technologies of the 'self'.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, drawing inspiration from science and technology studies, some scholars' work aimed at analysing the knowledge and practices of the psy-sciences in relation to complex networks of agents and objects.<sup>7</sup>

One of the main topics of research is the relationship of the psy-sciences to crime-fighting policy. For example, historian Greg Eghigian has examined the different ways in which forensic

---

<sup>4</sup> OLŠÁKOVÁ, Doubravka, JANÁČ, Jiří. *Kult jednoty. Stalinský plán na přetvoření přírody v Československu, 1948-1968*. Praha: Academia 2018; KOPEČEK, Michal (ed.). *Architekti dlouhé změny. Expertní kořeny postsocialismu (1980–1995)*. Praha: Argo, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, FF UK. 2019; REID, Susan. 'The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution'. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40(2), 2005, 289-316; SOMMER, Vítězslav et al. *Řídit socialismus jako stát. Technokratické vládnutí v Československu 1956-1989*. Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2019, SPURNÝ, Matěj. *Most do budoucnosti. Laboratoř socialistické modernity na severu Čech*, Praha: Karolinum, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> ANTIĆ, Ana. 'The Pedagogy of Workers' Self-Management: Terror, Therapy, and Reform Communism in Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin Split', *Journal of Social History* 50/2016: 179–203; ANTIC, Ana. 'Raising a True Socialist Individual: Yugoslav Psychoanalysis and the Creation of Democratic Marxist Citizens', *Social History* 44/2019: 86–111; GJURIČOVÁ, Adéla. 'Proměna socialistického člověka v liberální individuum? Psychoterapie v Československu po roce 1968'. In: KOPEČEK, Michal (ed.): *Architekti dlouhé změny. Expertní kořeny postsocialismu v Československu*. Praha, Argo – Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Univerzita Karlova, Filozofická fakulta 2019, 185–221; MARKS, Sarah, SAVELLI, Mat. *Psychiatry in Communist Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016; MARKS, Sarah. 'Suggestion, Persuasion and Work: Psychotherapies in Communist Europe'. *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling*, 20(1), 10–24; SAVELLI, Mat. 'Diseased, Depraved or Just Drunk? The Psychiatric Panic over Alcoholism in Communist Yugoslavia'. *Social History of Medicine*. 25(2), 2012: 462–480; ZAJICEK, Benjamin. 'The Psychopharmacological Revolution in the USSR: Schizophrenia Treatment and the Thaw in Soviet Psychiatry, 1954–64'. *Medical History* 63(3), 2019: 249–269; ZAJICEK, Benjamin. 'Soviet Madness: Mild Schizophrenia, Mental Hygiene, and the Professional Jurisdiction of Psychiatry', 1918-1936. *Ab Imperio* no. 4 (2014): 167c194.

<sup>6</sup> EGHIGIAN, Greg. 'The Psychologization of the Socialist Self: East German Forensic Psychology and its Deviants, 1945-1975', *German History* 22/2004, pp. 181–204, EGHIGIAN, Greg, Andreas KILLEN, Christine LUENBERGER (ed.), *The Self as Project: Politics and the Human Sciences in the Twentieth Century*, Osiris 22, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> EGHIGIAN, Greg. 'Deinstitutionalizing the History of Contemporary Psychiatry'. *History of Psychiatry* 22(2), 2011: 201–214; SAVELLI, Mat. 'Peace and Happiness Await Us': Psychotherapy in Yugoslavia, 1945-85. *History of the Human Sciences*, 31(4), 2018: 38–54.

psychologists were involved in creating policies for combatting ‘anti-social’ and ‘deviant’ criminal behaviour in East Germany between 1950 and 1975.<sup>8</sup> He points out that psychologists and criminologists began to use new concepts like ‘socialist personality’ in analysing ‘anti-social’ and ‘deviant’ crime. Eghigian argues that East Germany underwent a similar process of psychologization of the ‘self’ as did liberal-democratic countries; however, in the communist states it was an ‘extension of the socialist utopian project’.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Eghigian studied the role of psychopaths in modern European history and how psychopathy shifted from being a marginal diagnosis to being a serious social problem.<sup>10</sup> Referring to social therapy for sex offenders in West Germany in the 1960s, he pointed out that the issue of psychopathy became a topic of public interest, which was influenced by a variety of actors (psychiatrists, lobby groups, politicians, the mass media etc.).<sup>11</sup> Continuing in that vein of research, this paper will examine how the concept of criminal psychopathy developed in forensic psychiatry in post-Stalinist Czechoslovakia and how it influenced the socialist criminal justice system.

### **Psychopathy, Recidivism, and Crime in Czechoslovak Forensic Psychiatry**

In 1965, the Third International Criminalistics Conference took place in Prague. Delegations from the socialist countries of the Eastern Bloc were among the main guests. In the opening speech, Josef Kudrna, Czechoslovakia’s Interior Minister, stated that the main task of forensic experts was to ‘analyse the conditions and roots of crime committed by those who have been born in the new socialist society.’ He continued: ‘From this point of view, we consider criminal recidivism to be a profoundly serious problem, one which is certainly of interest to all socialist countries.’<sup>12</sup> Kudrna emphasised that recidivists were the biggest challenge to socialist criminal systems. On the other hand, the psychiatrists who contributed to the discussion about recidivism pointed out that in order to fully understand the issue, it was necessary to study the role of psychopaths in modern societies. As Jaroslav Duba, a Czechoslovak psychiatrist, stressed in a paper he presented to the annual conference of Czechoslovak forensic psychiatry in 1971: ‘Only

---

<sup>8</sup> EGHIGIAN, Greg. ‘The Psychologization of the Socialist Self: East German Forensic Psychology and its Deviants, 1945-1975’, *German History* 22/2004, pp. 181–204; EGHIGIAN, Greg. *The Corrigible and the Incurable: Science, Medicine, and the Convict in Twentieth-Century Germany*, Michigan 2015.

<sup>9</sup> EGHIGIAN, Greg. ‘The Psychologization of the Socialist Self: East German Forensic Psychology and its Deviants, 1945-1975’, *German History* 22/2004, p. 184.

<sup>10</sup> EGHIGIAN, Greg. ‘A Drifting Concept for an Unruly Menace: A History of Psychopathy in Germany’. *Isis*. 2015 (106): 283–309.

<sup>11</sup> EGHIGIAN, Greg. ‘Deinstitutionalizing the History of Contemporary Psychiatry’. *History of Psychiatry* 22(2), 2011, p. 209.

<sup>12</sup> III. Mezinárodní Kriminologické Symposium, Praha 1965. *Kriminologický sborník* IX/14, s. 707. [translated by JS]

some psychopaths are recidivist, however, all recidivists are psychopaths.<sup>13</sup> Psychopathy and recidivism began to be perceived as interconnected issues, which had to be dealt with not only by criminologists, but also psychiatrists.

In psychiatric science, psychopathy was defined in relation to the concept of personality. Personality was seen as a unit, with different layers and structures. Therefore, psychiatrists defined psychopathy as the ‘disharmony’ of a personality, in which the biological and social aspects of the human mind were out of balance. In a Czechoslovak textbook on psychiatry from 1968, psychopaths were described as personalities having specific behavioural traits that:

a) are not conditioned upon another psychopathological state, b) start in youth and regularly recur on the occasion of certain frustrating events, c) manifest themselves in a disharmony of the personality represented by quantitative or qualitative discord of its layers, leading to a change in the value system . . . .<sup>14</sup>

The stress on ‘disharmony’ of the personality in the above definition can be understood as an influence of the Pavlovian principle of the relevance of both biological and social factors in the aetiology of mental disorders. Depending on the type of psychopathy, experts saw either biological or social preconditions as more decisive in the onset of disease.<sup>15</sup> Psychopathy was also viewed as a diagnosis that bordered on other mental health issues such as neurosis or psychosis. Forensic psychiatry distinguished several types of criminal psychopaths: paranoid psychopaths, aggressive psychopaths, manic psychopaths, hysterical psychopaths, and even chronic complainers.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, Czechoslovak psychiatrists and criminologists conducted surveys and studies in order to analyse the roots of recidivism and psychopathy in socialist society. Forensic experts were especially interested in predicting and preventing crimes by recidivists and criminal psychopaths. For instance, the Czechoslovak police headquarters conducted extensive research on a sample of 990 recidivists in an attempt to understand the causes of recidivism in socialist society.<sup>17</sup> The survey focused on several criteria such as the age, education, occupation, and family background of the recidivists. Three hundred policemen, forty psychiatrists and

---

<sup>13</sup> DUBA, J. ‘Příspěvek k problematice osobnosti recidivistů’. In: *Aktuální problémy soudní psychiatrie*. Sborník prací přednesených na III. celostátní soudně psychiatrické konferenci v r. 1971, p. 70.

<sup>14</sup> HORVAI, Ivan. *Psychopatie*. Praha: SZN, 1968, p. 234. [translated by JS]

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup> KNOBLOCH, Ferdinand, KNOBLOCHOVÁ, Jiřina. *Základy soudní psychiatrie pro právníky*. Praha: SPN, 1965, p. 25-29.

<sup>17</sup> PODLESKÝ, Jiří. ‘První poznatky z výzkumu kriminální recidivy’. *Kriminalistický sborník*. IX: 14, 1965, p. 324.

dozens of support staff were involved in the project. The sample of recidivists was divided into three age brackets: in the first category were recidivists who grew up under the First Czechoslovak Republic, in the second category were those who grew up during the Nazi occupation, and in the third category were those who had come of age under socialism. The main aim of the survey was to ‘define recidivism as a social phenomenon’, ‘assess the differences between age cohorts’ and ‘develop the most effective strategies for combating recidivism’.<sup>18</sup> The researchers put an emphasis on the family background of the criminals. For instance, they examined how fathers raised their children and the kind of educational methods they used. They concluded that the so-called ‘cultural transfer’ of habits and behaviour traits within families played a vital role in causing recidivism.<sup>19</sup> The authors also stressed the social status of recidivists because they often came from low-skilled working groups. In a similar study conducted by psychiatrists rather than police, a sample of 244 criminal psychopaths was analysed in a three-year study.<sup>20</sup> Based on mathematical and statistical analysis, the authors studied thirty different characteristics (heredity, family, personal interests, education, etc.) of the accused persons. They concluded that there were four factors which were typical of criminal psychopaths: alcoholism, a disturbed family background, position in the family hierarchy, and spending part of childhood in an orphanage.<sup>21</sup> Simply explained, each of the above-mentioned characteristics was assigned a point value (either 1 or 2, depending on the weight of the characteristic). Those criminals who had the greatest number of points were considered to be the most likely to become recidivists.<sup>22</sup> As we can see from these studies, the picture of the ‘criminal psychopath’ was coming into clearer focus.

At the beginning of the 1950s, criminologists explained the causes of crime with reference to the Marxist theory of class struggle. According to that theory, Czechoslovakia was in a ‘transition’ period from the capitalist to the socialist system following the communist coup. Not surprisingly, this ‘transition’ period was associated with an increase in crime, either in the form of resistance by former members of the ‘bourgeois’ class, who sought to destroy the new socialist regime, or the persistence of ‘capitalist’ habits and class consciousness among ordinary people.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, forensic experts often distinguished between the ‘old’ and ‘new’

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 323.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 333.

<sup>20</sup> DUFEK, Miroslav. ‘Problematika predikce trestné činnosti’. In: STUHLÍK, Svatopluk. *Aktuální problémy soudní psychiatrie*. Sborník prací přednesených na III. celostátní soudněpsychiatrické konferenci v r. 1971. p.66-70.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>22</sup> DUFEK, Miroslav. ‘K problematice prognózy kriminality’. *Československá kriminalistika: časopis pro kriminalistickou teorii a praxi*. 1/1968, p. 113

<sup>23</sup> *Základy kriminalistiky*. Praha: Ministerstvo vnitra, Hlavní správa veřejné bezpečnosti, 1954. p. 21.

generations of recidivists. 'Old' recidivists were those who grew up during the First Czechoslovak Republic, before the communist coup. Their criminality could thus be explained as a remnant of the class struggle.<sup>24</sup> The real challenge for the socialist state was, however, how to explain crime among offenders who had grown up in the post-1948 socialist society. Here, psychiatry and other disciplines offered a new explanation for criminality based on the concepts of criminal psychopathy and recidivism.

### **The Case of Jaroslav Papež: Forensic Psychiatry, Criminal Psychopathy, and the Socialist Criminal Justice System**

In 1960, the Czechoslovak Parliament enacted a new constitution enshrining the victory of socialism in the country. The new preamble of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic proclaimed that a socialist order had been successfully built and that the next step would be the transition to communism.<sup>25</sup> In the wake of the new Constitution, the socialist theory of criminal law changed. The new goal of the socialist criminal justice system was to fight against 'antisocial parasitic elements', 'violent criminals', 'individuals violating the socialist order', and 'imperialistic attempts to disrupt the socialist order'.<sup>26</sup> Special emphasis was put on dealing with 'antisocial elements', i.e. those who avoided 'honest' work and had 'parasitic' and 'amoral' ways of life, as well as those with long criminal records.<sup>27</sup> The main aim of the socialist criminal justice system was to 're-educate' criminals and turn them into 'proper working citizens'.<sup>28</sup> 'Educating' people so that they would comply with 'socialist morality' was an integral part of socialist criminological theory in the 1960s.<sup>29</sup> Based on the ideas of the Polish sociologist Andrzej Malewsky, Pavlovian medicine, and the theories of Russian neurologist Vladimir Bekhterev, criminologists began to stress 're-education' of criminals as the main purpose of the socialist criminal justice system.

From the perspective of forensic psychiatry, some criminal offences were more interesting than others. Forensic psychiatrists were especially interested in property crimes, violent crimes, sexual assaults, and 'social parasitism' because those crimes were often connected to psychopathy. However, it was unclear whether psychopaths should be held accountable for

---

<sup>24</sup> KORDA, Miroslav. 'Některé otázky vzniku a vývoje kriminální recidivy'. *Kriminalistický sborník*. VII: 12, p. 185

<sup>25</sup> Ústava československé socialistické republiky, 100/1960 Sb.

<sup>26</sup> Československé trestní právo, 1. Obecná část. Praha: Orbis, 1969, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> JÜTTNER, Alfred. *O kriminologii a kriminalitě*. Praha: Orbis, 1968, p. 195.



their crimes and treated like ‘ordinary criminals’, or be recognised as ‘insane’. In the first Czech textbook of forensic psychiatry, published in the 1930s, it was recommended that psychopaths not be considered ‘insane’ criminals because that would lead to an increase in the crimes they committed.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, the leading forensic psychiatric textbook of the 1960s stressed that psychopathy was a ‘condition’ of personality shaped by social relations and environment, and not a disease.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, psychopaths were responsible for their acts. Only in the most severe cases and in combination with delusions and paranoia could they be found ‘insane’ and thus not responsible for their crimes.

The greatest attention was given to sex offenders because psychiatrists, sexologists, and psychologists disagreed about how sex offenders should be dealt with by the penal system. This disagreement manifested itself at the 1966 trial of a sex offender and recidivist, Jaroslav Papež, who raped and murdered an 11-year-old boy in a cinema in Prague. Papež had previously been remanded twice for treatment for sexual abuse. After he raped the boy, Papež stabbed him several times with scissors.<sup>32</sup> It was a difficult case for the court to deal with because Papež had undergone treatment twice before. In both cases, he was released after being declared recovered. Furthermore, neither the court nor the experts could figure out the motivation for his violent crime. Sexologists and psychologists argued that Papež suffered from a mental disease at the time of the criminal act, but psychiatrists had exactly the opposite view.<sup>33</sup> For its part, the Prague Criminal Court argued that Papež killed the boy because he wanted to eliminate any witnesses to his sexual assault. It said that the primary motivation for the crime was Papež’s fear of being exposed and not his sexual deviation. The Supreme Court rejected this argument and requested a new psychiatric examination.<sup>34</sup> This third assessment, which was conducted to resolve the disagreement among the experts, agreed with the psychiatrists and found that Papež was a ‘psychopathic individual with schizophrenic personality traits and severe sexual deviation.’<sup>35</sup> According to the psychiatrists, his ‘sexual deviation’ was a manifestation of a personality disorder that began in childhood and therefore, it could not be recognised as ‘mental illness’.<sup>36</sup> Several months later, Papež was sentenced to death.

---

<sup>30</sup> See HÁJEK, František, MYSLIVÉČEK, Zdeněk. *Soudní lékařství*. V Praze: Jaroslav Tožička, 1935-1936. 4 sv.

<sup>31</sup> KNOBLOCH, Ferdinand, KNOBLOCHOVÁ, Jiřina. *Základní soudní psychiatrie pro právníky*, Praha: SPN, 1965, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> SUVOROV, Miloslav. ‘Jak chránit společnost před sexuálních deliktů?’ *Kriminalistický sborník*, roč. XI/1967, p. 653.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 641.

<sup>34</sup> Konečné projednání nejvyššího soudu. J. Papež odsouzen k smrti. *Rudé právo*, 1967, 4(15): 2.

<sup>35</sup> SUVOROV, Miloslav. ‘Jak chránit společnost před sexuálních deliktů?’ *Kriminalistický sborník*, roč. XI/1967, p. 656.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 656.

This case is significant not just because of the discussion among experts but also because of its coverage in the media. As it took place in a more liberal era at the end of the 1960s, newspapers and journals published several articles covering the trial. For example, *Rude Právo*, a national newspaper, informed its readers that ‘this savage act provoked outrage throughout the whole state’ and that ‘the protection of society requires imposing the death penalty’.<sup>37</sup> The newspaper described the criminal act in florid language, referring to the ‘bestiality of the murderer’, who was a fan of ‘junk fiction’ and ‘horror stories’, and who enjoyed ‘torturing animals as a child’.<sup>38</sup> The media depicted Papež as a bully and a beast. Reacting to these articles, the public wrote letters to the police, demanding the death penalty for Papež and expressing general disillusionment with the complexity of the trial proceedings.<sup>39</sup>

The case of Jaroslav Papež shows us how different actors approached the issue of criminal psychopathy in post-Stalinist Czechoslovakia. Lawyers and judges insisted that Papež was simply afraid of being revealed and that that was the reason he killed the boy. The experts pointed to his sexual deviation and disordered personality as the main cause of the crime, and the public drew its conclusions based on Papež’s image from the newspapers. The court’s final decision was based on Papež’s third psychiatric assessment, which stressed his sexual deviancy as the main motive for his act. Overall, the case of Jaroslav Papež marked the beginning of a long discussion among experts and state agencies about the most effective way of treating and handling sexual offenders.

### **Dealing with Criminal Psychopaths: Between Treatment and Surveillance**

Another challenge for psychiatrists and other experts was to find a suitable punishment for psychopaths and recidivists like Jaroslav Papež. In general, there were only two options for treating convicted criminal psychopaths: prisons and psychiatric hospitals. Psychiatrists pointed out that a prison sentence was not likely to re-educate a psychopath, because they often became troublemakers in prison collectives.<sup>40</sup> The second option — treating criminal psychopaths in psychiatric hospitals — was not the best solution either: even there, psychopaths disturbed other patients and medical staff and disrupted treatment procedures. As already mentioned, the main

---

<sup>37</sup> ‘Trest smrti vrahovi’. *Rudé právo*. 1967, 2/24, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Pachatel bestiální vraždy před trestním tribunálem’. *Rudé Právo*, 1967, 2/ 22, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> SUVOROV, Miloslav. ‘Jak chránit společnost před sexuálních deliktů?’ *Kriminalistický sborník*, roč. XI/1967, p. 642.

<sup>40</sup> KNOBLOCH, Ferdinand, KNOBLOCHOVÁ, Jiřina. *Základní soudní psychiatrie pro právníky*, Praha: SPN, 1965, p. 230.

goal of the socialist penal system was to ‘re-educate’ and ‘re-socialise’ psychopaths and recidivists. In this view, psychiatry and psychology were perceived as tools for effectively transforming a criminal’s mind, preventing psychopathic behaviour, and turning him into an exemplary ‘socialist citizen’ who would dutifully follow the rules of the socialist order.

Psychiatrists developed several strategies for dealing with criminal psychopaths. They stressed that the socialist health system should focus primarily on the prevention of psychopathy. That is why they recommended a variety of precautions that could be taken to prevent the development of psychopathy in society: improvement of prenatal care and family environments, eugenic interventions, and raising of public awareness of the problem, among others.<sup>41</sup> Treatment of criminal psychopaths in hospitals mainly involved psychotherapy combined with drug or biological therapies. Furthermore, establishment of special mental health units for psychopaths was proposed. As Ivan Horvai, a Czechoslovak psychiatrist, pointed out in his book about psychopathy:

The defence of society against psychopathic offenders and criminals, especially recidivists, must in the future be based on new principles that will lead to the establishment of new specialized medico-educational units instead of the present prison institutions. These new units will be able to assure effective resocialization.<sup>42</sup>

Horvai and other experts often supported this recommendation with the example of Denmark, where similar institutions were already established.<sup>43</sup> The new institutes would be fully responsible for the treatment of criminal psychopaths and would be an alternative to mental hospitals and prisons. However, the plan remained on paper and was never put into practice. This had something to do with the general system of psychiatric care in Czechoslovakia, which relied on institutional care in large hospitals. The patient population never underwent the process of deinstitutionalization.

Unlike psychiatrists, who focused on the therapeutic side of the problem, criminologists aimed to develop effective ways of monitoring, combating, and averting the illegal activities of criminal psychopaths. Criminologists were primarily interested in the ‘fluctuation’ of

---

<sup>41</sup> HORVAI, Ivan. *Psychopatie*. Praha: SZN, 1968, pp. 184-185.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 237-238.

<sup>43</sup> A discussion about establishing special institutions for psychopaths also took place in West Germany. See EGHIGIAN, Greg. ‘Deinstitutionalizing the History of Contemporary Psychiatry’. *History of Psychiatry* 22(2), 2011: pp. 201–214.

recidivists, i.e. how often did they change their addresses and jobs and where did they move?<sup>44</sup> The uncontrolled migration of recidivists between towns and across regions was perceived by criminologists as a serious threat to the socialist order. Large urban agglomerations and rapidly developing industrial towns especially were known as places where recidivists thrived. Their movement made it more difficult for the socialist criminal justice system to ‘protect society from the deleterious influence of criminal recidivists.’<sup>45</sup> Drawing their inspiration from other socialist countries, Czechoslovak criminologists proposed to combat recidivism with the following measures: restricting the freedom of movement of ‘dangerous recidivists’ on the territory of the state, systematically monitoring their workplace attendance, preventing them from concentrating in the industrial centres, and establishing a national register of recidivists and their crimes.<sup>46</sup> The socialist criminal system thus began to deal with crime by relying more and more on the expert knowledge of criminologists and other scientists.

## **Conclusion**

The rise of psychopathy as an object of forensic psychiatric science was related to broader changes in post-Stalinist Czechoslovakia:

First, twenty years after the communist coup, it was no longer possible to explain crime simply by reference to class struggle theory because there was a new generation of criminals who had been raised in the socialist society. Searching for a different explanation of the cause of crime, psychiatrists and other experts offered a new theory that placed the blame on psychopathy and recidivism. The concept of criminal psychopathy, a broad and loosely defined disorder, took the place of class conflict. Using new language borrowed from the social and human sciences, psychiatrists pointed out that the roots of criminal psychopathy could be identified in ‘dysfunctional family backgrounds’ and ‘disordered behaviour traits’. However, the new theory did not emerge without any disagreement. As can be seen from the examples of sex offenders and other criminal psychopaths, there were differences over whether psychopaths should be dealt with by prisons or mental health institutions.

Second, socialist criminal law underwent changes in the course of de-Stalinization. The communist state began to focus on the fight against ‘antisocial parasitic elements’, ‘violent

---

<sup>44</sup> PODLESKÝ, Jiří. Pohyb a pracovní činnost kriminálních recidivistů v souvislosti s kriminalitou. *Kriminalistický sborník* 1966(8): 503.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 505.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

criminals’, ‘individuals violating the socialist order’, and ‘imperialistic attempts to disrupt socialist order’. The main aim of the socialist criminal-justice system was to ‘re-educate’ criminals so that they would become ‘proper working citizens’. ‘Educating’ people, so they would comply with ‘socialist order’, was a new playground for psychiatrists, psychologists, and other experts. The diagnosis of psychopathy was a useful tool because it included a broad range of ‘pathological’ behaviours that could be criminalised.

Third, the growing influence of forensic psychiatry on crime policy had something to do with the ‘social’ turn in the human sciences in the post-Stalinist states of the Eastern Bloc. Scientists began to use new language that stressed the social environment and social relations in describing the position of human beings within highly developed industrial societies. The ‘rise of psychopathy’ in forensic psychiatric knowledge was, therefore, an outcome of the ‘scientification’ of the socialist criminal justice system.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> RAPHAEL, Lutz. Die Verwissenschaftlichung des Sozialen als methodische und konzeptionelle Herausforderung für eine Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 1996, 22(2): 165-193; REID, Susan. ‘The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution’. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40(2), 2005, 289-316.

## **Bibliography:**

ANTIC, Ana. 'The Pedagogy of Workers' Self-Management: Terror, Therapy, and Reform Communism in Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin Split', *Journal of Social History* 50/2016: 179–203.

ANTIC, Ana. 'Raising a True Socialist Individual: Yugoslav Psychoanalysis and the Creation of Democratic Marxist Citizens', *Social History* 44/2019: 86–111.

EGHIGIAN, Greg. 'The Psychologization of the Socialist Self: East German Forensic Psychology and its Deviants, 1945-1975', *German History* 22/2004: 181–204.

EGHIGIAN, Greg, Andreas KILLEN, Christine LUENBERGER (ed.), *The Self as Project: Politics and the Human Sciences in the Twentieth Century*, Osiris 22, 2007.

EGHIGIAN, Greg. 'Deinstitutionalizing the History of Contemporary Psychiatry'. *History of Psychiatry* 22(2), 2011: 201–214.

EGHIGIAN, Greg. *The Corrigible and the Incurable: Science, Medicine, and the Convict in Twentieth-Century Germany*, Michigan 2015.

EGHIGIAN, Greg. 'A Drifting Concept for an Unruly Menace: A History of Psychopathy in Germany'. *Isis*. 2015 (106): 283–309.

GJURIČOVÁ, Adéla. 'Proměna socialistického člověka v liberální individuum? Psychoterapie v Československu po roce 1968'. In: KOPEČEK, Michal (ed.): *Architekti dlouhé změny. Expertní kořeny postsocialismu v Československu*. Praha, Argo – Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Univerzita Karlova, Filozofická fakulta 2019, 185–221.

KOPEČEK, Michal (ed.). *Architekti dlouhé změny. Expertní kořeny postsocialismu (1980–1995)*. Praha: Argo, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, FF UK. 2019.

MARKS, Sarah, SAVELLI, Mat. *Psychiatry in Communist Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

MARKS, Sarah. 'Suggestion, Persuasion and Work: Psychotherapies in Communist Europe'. *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling*, 20(1): 10–24.

MILLINGTON, R. "'Crime Has No Chance": The Discourse of Everyday Criminality in the East German Press, 1961–1989'. *Central European History*, 50(1), 2017: 59–85.

OLŠÁKOVÁ, Doubravka, JANÁČ, Jiří. *Kult jednoty. Stalinský plán na přetvoření přírody v Československu, 1948-1968*. Praha: Academia 2018.

SOMMER, Vítězslav et al. *Řídit socialismus jako stát. Technokratické vládnutí v Československu 1956-1989*. Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2019.

SPURNÝ, Matěj. *Most do budoucnosti. Laboratoř socialistické modernity na severu Čech*, Praha: Karolinum, 2016.

- RAPHAEL, Lutz. Die Verwissenschaftlichung des Sozialen als methodische und konzeptionelle Herausforderung für eine Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 1996, 22(2): 165-193.
- REID, Susan. 'The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution'. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40(2), 2005: 289-316.
- SAVELLI, Mat. 'Diseased, Depraved or Just Drunk? The Psychiatric Panic Over Alcoholism in Communist Yugoslavia'. *Social History of Medicine*. 25(2), 2012: 462–480.
- SAVELLI, Mat. "“Peace and happiness await us”": Psychotherapy in Yugoslavia, 1945-85'. *History of the Human Sciences*, 31(4), 2018: 38–54.
- ZAJICEK, Benjamin. 'The Psychopharmacological Revolution in the USSR: Schizophrenia Treatment and the Thaw in Soviet Psychiatry, 1954–64'. *Medical History* 63(3), 2019: 249–269.
- ZAJICEK, Benjamin. 'Soviet Madness: Mild Schizophrenia, Mental Hygiene, and the Professional Jurisdiction of Psychiatry, 1918-1936'. *Ab Imperio* no. 4 (2014): 167-194.
- ZIMMERMANN, Volker, PULLMANN, Michal. *Ordnung und Sicherheit, Devianz und Kriminalität im Staatssozialismus: Tschechoslowakei und DDR 1948/49-1989: Vorträge der Tagung des Collegium Carolinum in Bad Wiessee vom 3. bis 6. November 2011*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014.