

Abstract

The thesis deals with forensic psychiatry and violent crime in post-war Europe. It focuses on the changing perception of violent behaviour in psychiatric knowledge and its use in the assessments of violent crime in Czechoslovakia, West Germany, and the United Kingdom between 1945 and 1970. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of the impact of expert knowledge about human behaviour in the various post-war modernisation projects. The thesis begins by analysing the development of legal concepts of criminal responsibility and the role of psychiatrists as expert witnesses in court. The thesis is then divided into two main parts. The first part examines psychiatric knowledge about violence and crime through an analysis of articles and publications written by psychiatrists and other experts in the post-war period. It focuses on similarities and differences in psychiatric knowledge on both sides of the Iron Curtain, and on different interpretations of violent and aggressive behaviour. The second part studies psychiatric assessments of violent crimes in court, using selected case studies. It examines the impact of the war on domestic violence, infanticide, sexual homicide, and ethnicity and violent crime. The thesis is based on a comparative approach and combines the analysis of expert knowledge with the analysis of selected case studies.