

Abstract

This doctoral thesis describes the formation, activities and dissolution of the Czech Society of Biotypology (1937–1959), herein used as an example of impact of the constitutional typology (human typology science) on the Czechoslovak medicine.

Human constitution science (in French and Romance languages called biotypology) classifies individual human beings on the base of morphological and physiological characteristics, with particular emphasis on forecast of future trends. The core of the science focuses on correlation between the physical appearance of a person and his/her mental characteristics.

The Czech Society of Biotypology (Česká společnost biotypologická – ČSB) was founded with ambitions not only to study human beings, but also to increase their potential. The whole movement was therefore conceived as an example of a sanitation scientific program in accordance with the governmental interest in rationalization of population care. The methodology of the thesis is based on Foucault's concept of biopower – change of power strategies and their constitutive influence on the development and change of social relations, values and individual strategies of persons. The story of formation and dissolution of ČSB is interpreted as a consequence of these changes.

The core of the thesis consists of a reconstruction of social life, above all through an analysis and interpretation of relevant documents. Analysis is mostly chronological and divides the development into three main periods: (I.) from formation of the Society to the beginning of the Protectorate (this period is interpreted as era of big ambitions); (II.) Protectorate period, when biotypologists contributed to the continuation of national scientific and social life; and a long (III.) period of a slow decline of the Society, ending in 1959 with a voluntary dissolution of ČSB, caused above all by an ideological change in the Czechoslovak science after 1948.

The end of the thesis mentions risks connected with the effort of biotypologists to use the discovered typological knowledge to gain a total overview and control over the population. They hoped to acquire knowledge that could be used as a base for an efficient usage of hidden strength of population. Constitutional medicine and biotypology was based on a requirement to control the life of individuals. Despite the relatively low success of ČSB, we consider it to be important evidence of political influence on science and nationalisation of health care.