

*Critique of Violence in Late Communist Czechoslovakia*

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The project aims at revealing the practice and understanding the legitimate violence in late socialist Czechoslovakia. The primary concern is neither the party-state violence as such nor the dissident opposing views, but the popular views on its legitimate or rejected forms of violence. The project focuses on the reactions of various social groups when confronted with violent practices or their absence if they were anticipated. The population's experiences of disrespect reveal the intuitions of legitimate violence, the desirable forms and extent, the justification, etc.

Therefore, the project concentrates on the seemingly "non-political" forms of violence and their acceptance or rejection in the Czechoslovakia of the 1980s. This includes violent behaviour of specific groups (football fans, youth gangs in urban spaces), popular fears of intimidation and violence in "mafia"-milieus (such as illegal dealers, taxi-drivers, criminal groups in night trains etc.), chicanery in schools, alcoholism and drug abuse, ethnic conflicts, especially with Romas, but also with the increasing popularity of the Western cultural industry (film violence, pornography etc.). Although they seem to be "pre-political" or "non-political", these attitudes, both positive and negative, had great political significance. They enable us retrospectively to reveal the normative structure of a "good order", the popular visions of justice in the late socialism. These visions and attitudes also had (thus far the hypothesis) a great importance within the popular adoption of the vision of non-violence in 1989 and also played a crucial role in founding the new consensus at the beginning of the 1990s.