

## C O N T R I B U T O R O F N O T E

## Stanislav Kratochvil, Ph.D.

Czech Republic

Written by

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Over a long period of years, Stanislav Kratochvil, Ph.D. has overcome political and economic barriers in his ongoing efforts to bring new therapeutic ideas to the Czech Republic and neighboring countries. Graduating with a doctorate degree from Masaryk University in Czechoslovakia, Professor Kratochvil has maintained a clinical position as well as serving as Head of the Department of Psychology at the Psychiatric Hospital in Kromeriz. After the fall of the totalitarian regime in 1989, he was appointed Professor of Clinical Psychology at the Palacky University in Olomouc.

Kratochvil's sustained interest in hypnosis began when he was a student in the fifties. Because little professional information and no training was accessible, he began his own studies based on information he found in a book written by a Swiss psychiatrist, August Forel. He then practiced hypnotic techniques on colleagues who volunteered to work with him. Eventually, a Czech book on hypnosis in medicine, by Ivan Horvai became available. By that time, Kratochvil was already using his self-taught techniques in practice with individuals and groups. As his own observations differed from the theory presented, he began to investigate distinctions in active and passive hypnotic states. He began to search for literature from abroad, and "was fortunate" to obtain a book by Andre Weitzenhoffer that reinforced his own observations.

Throughout the 60's Kratochvil's investigations included evaluation of various factors that influence the active/passive dimensions of the hypnotic experience. He worked with a colleague, Dr. Peter Hajek and translated the Stanford and Harvard Hypnotizability Scales into the Czech



language. With his ongoing studies, Kratochvil recalls a "hunger" to communicate with other serious investigators and sought the opportunity to exchange ideas with world renowned experts.

When an International Congress for Hypnosis and Psychosomatic Medicine took place in Paris in 1965, Kratochvil obtained governmental permission to present a paper, although he could not take more than 40 French francs with him for the trip. At that congress, he established some important professional contacts attending presentations by Milton Erickson, M.D. and Ernest Hilgard, Ph.D. Beginning correspondence with Martin Orne, M.D., Ph.D., he considered the possibility of a trip to the USA to study with leaders in the field of hypnosis.

After the Soviet invasion in 1968, hope was lost for the democratization of the socialist system. Hilgard was able to arrange for Kratochvil to become a Visiting Research Scholar at the Stanford University Laboratory of Hypnosis Research during 1969 and 1970. There, he continued his research projects in cooperation with Professor Hilgard and his co-workers. In June of 1969, he was also able to arrange a trip to Phoenix, Arizona that provided an opportunity to study with Erickson. The last three months

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of his scholarship he spent in the Unit for Experimental Psychiatry in Philadelphia, studying under the friendly and competent guidance of Martin Orne and his wife Emily. "All of the visits and opportunities to study under these eminent mentors were invaluable, useful and stimulating," he stated.

The knowledge gained during his visits to the United States and the ongoing support from the physicians and psychologists with whom he developed professional relationships encouraged Kratochvil to continue his studies in hypnosis, even during intervals of political unrest in Czechoslovakia in which his own work was considered to be out of conformance with the communist ideology of the time.

In 1969, Kratochvil wrote a paper entitled *Hypnosis is not Sleep*, which was the first of his extensive contribution to the literature on hypnosis. Over the years, he has had nine books published in Czech, Polish and Russian languages. Six of those in Czech have been enlarged, updated and re-edited in the last three years. In addition to his European language contributions, Kratochvil has published six articles in English including in the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis* and the *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*. One of Kratochvil's series of nine scientific textbooks called *The Foundations of Psychotherapy* has had seven Czech editions and four Polish editions between 1970 and 2002.

Kratochvil's research, clinical work, teaching, and lectures have brought a great deal of advancement

to the perceptions and understanding of the value of hypnosis. His influence and teaching has reached both his own country and Poland where colleagues are able to participate in courses due to similarities in language. Kratochvil emphasizes that his own country, Czech Republic, lies in the heart of Europe, where it belongs traditionally, politically and culturally to Middle Europe and that during the totalitarian period under the Soviet regime, it was forced to be a part of the Eastern Bloc.

He has continued to enhance his own education and teaching by participating in the major professional meetings in the United States and Europe including many of those sponsored by the Erickson Foundation, where his face and good-natured enthusiasm have become familiar to regular attendees. Kratochvil credits Jeffrey Zeig, Ph.D., whom he met in 1984 at the European Congress on Hypnosis in Italy, with facilitating his ongoing attendance at conferences. "This gives me an extraordinary opportunity to update my Czech textbooks on psychotherapy, clinical hypnosis, and marital therapy with data about the most recent developments in these areas, and to repeatedly refresh friendly relationships with people whom I admire and like."

We recognize Stanislav Kratochvil, Ph.D. for his extensive and commendable work. His ongoing energy towards the advancement of education in hypnosis in psychotherapy, especially in the Czech Republic and in Poland is a benefit to mankind.